

Charter School Annual Report 2013-14



1166 University Avenue
St. Paul, Minnesota 55114
www.hsra.org / 651 287-0890

Produced by the High School for Recording Arts
and Designs for Learning

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High School for Recording Arts: Introduction

The High School for Recording Arts, Minnesota Independent School District #4039, has now completed sixteen as an independent charter school, and is pleased to present this annual report for the 2013-14 school year. The purpose of the High School for Recording Arts (HSRA) is to deliver an educational program that engages learners, many of whom have been expelled, have dropped out, or are otherwise not enrolled in school. **The mission of HSRA is to provide youth the opportunity to achieve a high school diploma through the exploration and operation of the music business and other creative endeavors:**

- Culturally Sensitive
- Alternative Educational Programming
- Personalized Project-Based Learning
- Diverse Population
- Drug-Free Learning Environment
- Adult-Supervised
- Positive Mentoring
- Safe Space
- Job Training

HSRA's vision statement, revised by school leadership in the spring of 2013, states that: **HSRA creates a culture of acceptance and creativity that realizes the full potential of all young people, despite previous challenges. We engage students through exploration of music, media, technology and the entertainment industry so that they acquire both core learning and real-world, 21st-century skills. In addition to earning a high school diploma, HSRA students are empowered to be responsible citizens and lifelong learners who pursue post-secondary education and productive careers.**

HSRA began as a pilot program developed by St. Paul-based recording studio, Studio 4 Enterprises, in December 1996. High School for Recording Arts was born in July 1998 with its approval as an independent charter school district by the Minnesota Department of Education. Youth in the community immediately exhibited interest in this program. Through word of mouth, enrollment in the program, which began with just fifteen learners, stabilized at 200-230 students at the school's first facility (550 Vandalia Street). During 2012-13, HSRA and Studio 4 leadership began planning a move to a new location, which was accomplished during the summer of 2013. The 2013-14 school year was HSRA's first year in its new facility, a former Bally Fitness building which was renovated for the school and Studio 4 recording studios.

The High School for Recording Arts educational program partners with a professional music production facility, Studio 4. Many students learn through individual and group projects related to core academic areas and to the music industry. Access to the recording studio helps keep students motivated for academic learning. Studio 4 shares space with Another Level Records, a student-operated recording company where many HSRA students work. ALR students create a weekly half-hour radio program called the Studio 4 All Access Top 4 Countdown, which airs on local radio station KMOJ FM. The program includes interviews and local news items as well as music created by high school students.

The balance of this report is organized around the ten required elements of charter school annual reports as specified by Minnesota statute (M.S. 124D.10, subd. 14).

School Enrollment and Student Attrition

The policy of the High School for Recording Arts is to accept all students who request enrollment, as long as they are Minnesota residents and in grades 9-12. Registration materials are available at the school or via the school’s website. Details on the demographics of students attending HSRA are provided in the “HSRA Student Body” chart, in the Program Challenges section below.

Student Enrollment and Attrition Rates

This table identifies the number of students enrolled at the school during the 2011-12, 2012-13,

School Year	9	10	11	12	Total	Growth Rate
2011-12	59	37	35	65	196	-11%
2012-13	53	46	35	53	187	-5%
2013-14	83	66	43	43	235	+36%
Estimated 2014-15					250	+6%

2013-14 and estimated 2014-15 enrollment. Data is based on October 1 enrollment.

Student enrollment at HSRA was fairly stable over the past several years prior to 2013-14, with Average Daily Membership around 200 students. To accommodate the needs of its mobile

student population, HSRA continues enrolling students throughout the year. Typically enrollment climbs from fall through the spring. During 2013-14, with the move to HSRA’s new facility, enrollment climbed significantly, with the school concluding the year with Average Daily Membership of 232.52. Though the school year began with many parts of the facility still under construction, the location and overall attractiveness of the building helped the school recruit and retain more students than ever.

Student enrollment was approaching 250 students as of late February, and had reached 261 as of April 16, though Average Daily Membership remained lower. Delay in opening the recording studios negatively impacted enrollment during the fall. Recruiting efforts continued throughout the year, including marketing via radio and local tv in outer-ring suburbs, and publicizing the school in the East African community – efforts to recruit students beyond the type of students HSRA has traditionally served. HSRA also seeks to increase student retention, which is at least as important to numbers as marketing – the Check and Connect program, implemented beginning this year, is a major effort toward improving HSRA’s ability to retain students.

For 2014-15, HSRA’s budget was built on 250 students, and the school looks well on the way to exceeding that figure as of late October, with 286 students enrolled as of Oct. 29.

Governance and Management; Director’s PDP

Governance

HSRA is governed by a Board which usually meets every two months throughout the year with additional meetings as needed. During 2013-14 there were six meetings. An election for board seats that came open was held in the winter of 2013-14; members who were elected were seated at the Annual Meeting Feb. 12. The parent member who was in place at the beginning of the school year, who had been appointed in the spring of 2013 to server out the term of the elected parent member, left the Board due to her son’s withdrawal from the school. Another parent was appointed to serve out the term, at the December meeting. Details on the HSRA Board are provided in the table below.

2013-14 School Year High School for Recording Arts School Board

This table contains information for ALL board members.

Name	Board Position, Group Affiliation	Date Elected	Date Seated	Term Expiration	Contact Information	Meeting Attendance
Paula Anderson	Vice-Chair; Teacher member (#323788)	Jan. 2014	Feb. 2014	Oct. 2016	651 287-0890; paula@hsra.org	6 / 6

Name	Board Position, Group Affiliation	Date Elected	Date Seated	Term Expiration	Contact Information	Meeting Attendance
Wayne Jennings	Chair; Community	Jan. 2014	Feb. 2014	Oct. 2016	651 644-2805; wayne@institute4learning.org	6 / 6
Melody Miller	Parent	N/A	June 2013	Feb. 2014 (resigned)		0 / 2
Carei Thomas	Treasurer; Community	Oct. 2012	Oct. 2012	Oct. 2015	cajole@qwest.net	2 / 6
Pamela Weems	Parent	N/A	Feb. 2014	Oct. 2015		4 / 4
Darryl Young	Secretary; Teacher (#384827)	Oct. 2012	Oct. 2012	Oct. 2015	651 287-0890; darryl@hsra.org	5 / 6

Authorizer

The High School for Recording Arts' Authorizer is Pillsbury United Communities. The 2013-14 school year was the final year of HSRA's charter contract with Pillsbury. The contract was renewed in the spring of 2014, for the maximum five-year term; the current contract runs July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2019. The Authorizer contact is Larry McKenzie (mckenziel@puc-mn.org ; 612 302-3409).

School Management and Administration

Management of HSRA is facilitated through a Leadership Team. The 2013-14 school year was Tony Simmons' fourth year as school director. During 2013-14 the leadership team included the school's Director; David Ellis, Founder; Paula Anderson, Education Director; Bonnie Hughes, Business Manager; and Phil Winden, Studio Director. The Director, Founder, and Business Manager are employees of Studio 4 and serve HSRA through the school's contract with Studio 4. At its meetings the Leadership Team reviews goals and objectives, and current status of the school's operations.

2013-14 HSRA School Management and Faculty					
Name	File Folder Number	Assignment	Years Employed by HSRA	Left During 2013/14	Not Returning 2014/15
Tony Simmons		Executive Director (via contract)	Contract, 13	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Paula Anderson	323788	Education Director/English Facilitator	10	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
David Anderson		Paraprofessional	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kowanna Anderson		Student Orientation Facilitator	13	x	x
Riana Aulet		Business Dept. Support	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diana Bady		HAS Program Coordinator	1	x	x
Todd Barnes		HAS Program Assistant	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Layne Bellamy		Security Lead	14	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Layne Bellamy II		Special Education para	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Matthew Brown		Technology Manager	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jodi Burke		College Counselor	1	x	x
David Cox		Maintenance	9	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Zach Cox		Special Education Para	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Charlnitta Ellis		HAS Program Director	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pierre Fulford		Front Desk	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Malik Hollon		Orientation Support	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Juan Jackson		HAS Program Coord.	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Amanda Galloway		HAS Program Facilitator	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Geoffrey Gill		Advisor	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regina Jackson		Paraprofessional	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Susan Kelley	346511	School Psychologist	Contract, 6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jaynetta Killebrew-Davis		Security	3	x	x
Roger Lind		Business Office Support	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jonathan Moore		Dean / Student Engagement Coord.	8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Barbara Murphy	375984	Math Facilitator / Student Data Administrator	11	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agapito Otero		Facilities Manager	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chadwick Phillips		Facilitator	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	x
TeLisa Powell		Special Education Para	8	x	x
Brian Sandifer		Cultural Liaison	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Zaire Saunders		Special Education para	1	x	x
Candace Stewart		Special Education Para	1	x	x
Tabitha Wheeler	407062	Social Worker	11	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Director's Professional Development Plan

HSRA's Director, Tony Simmons, does not have administrative licensure. He has a J.D. from Rutgers University, and practiced criminal, business and entertainment law before moving to

Minnesota in 2001 to join High School for Recording Arts/Studio 4. He participated in the Center for School Change Leadership Academy, which provided each participant with an education and a business mentor, opportunities to visit outstanding public schools in another city, support for a yearlong project designed to help improve school achievement, and several workshops. His professional development plan includes:

- Job Description and Annual Goals
- Development Plan
- Employee and Manager Performance Review Memo
- Performance Review template

Mr. Simmons was on a working group convened by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA), that examined alternative accountability measurements for charter schools serving at-risk populations and produced the report *Anecdotes Aren't Enough: An Evidence-based Approach to Accountability for Alternative Charter Schools*. This involvement began during 2012-13 and continued through 2013-14, including a presentation at the National Charter Schools Conference in Las Vegas in June 2014. Mr. Simmons also serves on the planning committee for the Reaching At-Promise Students Association (RAPSA), a national organization with a mission to *improve the lives of at-promise students by providing relevant and current professional development opportunities for all educators* (see www.rapsa.org).

Here in Minnesota, Mr. Simmons was the keynote speaker at the Minnesota Association on Alternative Programs' thirty-first annual conference in February 2014. The conference focused on "Diverse, Personal and Purposeful Learning" and was attended by alternative school educators across the state. Mr. Simmons also led a break-out session on the High School for Recording Arts.

A major focus for Mr. Simmons during 2013-14 was working with the school's attorney to streamline leadership communication and staff accountability processes.

Board Training

HSRA board members attended training provided by Designs for Learning on May 5, 2014. This training addressed mandated areas and was customized for HSRA.

HSRA Board members learn together during board meetings and through longer-serving, more experienced members coaching the newer members to help them improve their understanding of

how to meet the responsibilities of serving on a board. Also, HSRA is a member of the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools, and members receive MACS materials relating to governance.

Staffing

HSRA’s teaching staff leadership structure was revised during 2013-14 to include three positions drawn from among teaching staff:

- Assistant Director of Education
- Assistant Director for Student Support
- Lead Advisor

HSRA’s teaching staff was stable during the 2013-14 school year with the exception of one teacher not returning for 2014-15. The table below lists all HSRA licensed teaching staff during the 2013-14 school year.

2013-14 High School for Recording Arts Teaching Faculty Information				
Name	File Folder Number	Assignment/ Subject	Left During 2013/14	Not Returning 2014/15
Paula Anderson	323788	Education Director	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lael Booth	455315	Special Education Facilitator	<input type="checkbox"/>	x
Joey Cienian	452457	Social Studies Facilitator / Lead Advisor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maureen Foss	395378	Math Facilitator	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dan Frey	445216	English Facilitator / Asst. Director for Student Support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sayra Loftus	453220	Math Facilitator / Asst. Director of Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Barbara Murphy	375984	Math facilitator/Student Data Administrator	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dario Otero	47606	Special Education Facilitator	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tracy Richardson	412167	Special Education Facilitator	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Renee Swanson	452059	Science Facilitator	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stella Warira	448967	Special Education Facilitator	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Darryl Young	384827	Special Education Facilitator	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Finances

The financial stability of High School for Recording Arts has been solid during its 16 years of operations. The school has consistently maintained a fund balance and robust financial health. A budget for the 2013-14 year was approved on June 26, 2013. The original budget and the revised budget which was approved in the spring, are shown below. Student numbers were below the original projection of 250 students, but HSRA's final Average Daily Membership of 232.52 was the school's highest ever. While expenditures in some areas were lower than projected, there were increases in several areas as well. In the judgment of the Board, the school's deficit spending during 2013-14 (approximately 12% of revenues) was justified given the school's healthy existing fund balance, and the special circumstances of the first year in a new and substantially larger facility.

HSRA's beginning Fund Balance, as of July 1, 2013, was \$649,202. While the audit is not complete and figures may change, the projected June 30 ending Fund Balance, as of early December 2014, is \$387,052 (Fiscal 2014 deficit projection increased slightly, from \$247,212 projected in the June 2014 final-revised budget, to \$262,150). The deficit is accounted for due to expenditures in several areas being larger than anticipated. The largest variances (increases in expenditures) were the following:

- Consulting fees including police officers for building security, moving costs, and contract for school nurse services
- Non-instructional supplies including purchases associated with the move to the new building, i.e. increases in technology accessories, office equipment and supplies
- Additional lease cost for extended lease at HSRA's old building
- New furniture and technology equipment purchased for move to new building

While HSRA did not meet its financial performance target in the 2013-14 goals, it is well-positioned to meet the revised target in this area for 2014-15, which is to maintain a positive fund balance in Fiscal 2015 (after which the fund balance is to increase by at least 1% in Fiscal 2016).

HSRA Budget, 2013-14			
		Original	Final-revised
REVENUE			
	General Ed Aid	2,371,643	2,207,164
	Special Ed-State	263,779	313,936
	Special Ed-State – prior year	-	116,325
	Special Ed-Tuition Reimbursement	124,131	147,734

HSRA Budget, 2013-14		
	Original	Final-revised
Special Ed – Federal	48,514	48,514
Lease Aid	351,000	322,920
Title I	87,090	87,089
Title II	10,782	10,782
Donations/Fund Raisers	100,000	25,000
Fed Lunch	52,500	25,000
Fed Breakfast	18,550	3,000
St Lunch	3,600	1,500
St Breakfast	1,350	500
HAS Program total revenues	293,187	293,187
TOTAL REVENUE	\$3,726,125	\$3,602,652
EXPENSES		
Administration/Supervision SPED DFL	14,500	17,250
Licensed Teacher	316,607	324,647
Spec Ed Licensed Teacher	188,388	222,042
Non Licensed support	145,600	70,320
Non Licensed support-SPED	146,300	188,940
Sped Social Worker	63,722	50,688
Certified Paraprofessional	-	42,000
Non Instructional Support	139,761	125,567
Non Instructional Support Maintenance	15,791	15,039
FICA/Medicare	108,222	110,889
PERA Employer	32,440	32,053
TRA Employer	41,006	41,816
Employee Insurance	138,354	136,000
Disability Insurance	3,000	3,000
Re-employment SUI	23,260	23,260
Accounting/Legal	38,000	42,884
Marketing/Recruiting	30,000	20,000
Consuling – Fed Prog	-	10,000
Mgmt/Consulting - Others	35,000	40,000
Mgmt/Consulting - Designs	31,500	31,500
Mgmt/Consulting – Studio 4 – Overall	1,082,418	143,466
Mgmt/Consulting – Studio 4 – School Admin	-	496,612
Mgmt/Consulting – Studio 4 – Music prog	-	342,110
Mgmt/Consulting – Studio 4 – Operations	-	66,215
Mgmt/Consulting – Studio 4 –Fin. Mgmt	-	55,179
Student Field Trips	3,500	3,500
Communications	25,000	10,000
Postage & Delivery	4,000	4,000
Utility Services	30,000	30,000
Insurance	20,500	26,000
Repairs & Maintenance	30,000	30,000

HSRA Budget, 2013-14			
		Original	Final-revised
	Transportation	116,875	80,500
	Operating Leases/Rent	390,000	364,300
	Non Instructional Supplies	48,000	55,398
	Non Instructional Supplies-Maintenance	15,000	10,000
	Special Education Non Instructional Supplies	500	500
	Textbook/Workbooks	1,000	250
	Instructional Supplies	500	750
	Instructional Supplies – SPED	4,000	1,000
	SE Testing	3,000	500
	Wiring	-	94,200
	Other Equipment & Furniture	110,000	80,232
	Technology Equipment	135,000	66,068
	Loan Interest	11,475	1,000
	Dues & Subscriptions	17,000	17,000
	Food Service contractor	76,000	42,500
	HAS Program total expenditures	293,188	293,188
	TOTAL EXPENSES	3,852,407	3,819,863
	Increase (Decrease) Fund Balance	(206,782)	(247,212)

Academic Performance

HSRA Academic Program Summary

Despite the daunting challenges in serving a population whose problems seem so entrenched, so multigenerational, and so difficult to solve, we have had many examples of hard-won success. HSRA has begun to track data in more complex ways that give a richer and more accurate picture of how the school is doing.

In response to requests for richer, more complex data, the Minnesota Department of Education has enabled educators and parents to sort data by subgroups, thus allowing schools to compare achievement levels of different demographics with similar populations. The categories by which we can sort do not include the risk factors that our students have in their lives, but they do allow us to sort by ethnicity and Special Education status, as well as to view five- and six-year graduation rates. This data shows that while HSRA’s four-year graduation rate may be quite low, many students persist and graduate by the fifth or sixth year (whereas for the state as a whole, 5-

and 6-year graduation rates are not much higher than four-year rates). The tables below show graduation rates for HSRA compared to the state as a whole and the St. Paul district, for Black students, Free and Reduced Lunch-eligible students, and Special Education students¹.

Graduation Rates for Selected Demographics						
	Black, Non-Hispanic		Special Education		Free and Reduced Lunch	
	MN	HSRA	MN	HSRA	MN	HSRA
4-year Grad rate	58%	22%	58%	22%	64%	17%
5-year Grad rate	59%	48%	64%	48%	66%	32%
6-year Grad rate	60%	63%	68%	63%	67%	53%

For Black students, HSRA’s six-year grad rate is within 9% of the state as a whole; for Special Education students it is within 5% as shown below.



MDE data at present doesn’t allow for sorting by two or more criteria simultaneously; if this were possible, comparisons would quite likely look more favorable for HSRA – for instance, Special Education students and Black students at HSRA are almost entirely Free and Reduced Lunch-eligible (the student body as a whole was 90% Free/Reduced last year), whereas this is not the case for these students statewide.

HSRA’s academic programs engage and retain young people who might otherwise end up on the streets without a high school education. HSRA is a project based learning environment. Students

¹ Data lags a year, showing graduation status up to spring 2013.

learn by creating interest-driven projects overseen by their advisor. The project based curriculum provides a way for learners to navigate through the subject areas they must master on their path toward graduation. Instead of breaking up learning into specific subject areas, a learner decides on a project to work on, then seeks out teachers with relevant content-area expertise to support the project. In addition to addressing academic content standards, student-designed projects at HSRA provide hands-on experience in managing one's own work, problem solving, and how to work together as a team.

In addition to individual projects, there are group projects, small classes, and a variety of guided study opportunities based on students interests and needs. HSRA is increasing the number of community-based learning experiences available for our students; we are focusing on building more connections to the community. Community-based projects HSRA ran during 2013-14 included:

- The *Visual Inclusion Program* (VIP) at HSRA is a school-based project at HSRA that has been running since the 2011-12 school year. VIP teaches special education students how to explore the world through multiple forms of visual communication. This project was designed to create transitional opportunities for special education students by developing entrepreneurial skills, post-secondary options, community engagement and leadership skills. VIP students become experts in the field of video production and technology. VIP students are empowered by co-designing their own projects with the special education team. The program is specifically designed for the special education student, but can include opportunities for the special education to act as a consultant with regular education students. The intent of this process is to focus on each student's creative strengths and to create skills in self - advocacy, while acting as a technology consultant. VIP was designed as a unique and innovative program that will disarm the negative stigma that is sometimes created in association with special education programs. HSRA's VIP contracted with the Center for School Change to create videos promoting post-secondary enrollment options, dual-credit and IB courses with area high school students. This was done via a grant called Jump Start, funded by the Center for School Change, Minnesota Dept. of Education and TARGET to encourage at-risk students to pursue continuing education. HSRA produced these videos using the VIP model.
- This year our program instituted multiple Junior Achievement courses and activities, assisted by the generous support of State Farm:
 - *JA Finance Park* helped boost our economics education and guided students through realistic personal financial planning and career exploration. The Finance Park aspect of Junior Achievement was made available to all HSRA students as a guided study. Students

concluded their guided study by completing an online simulation, which gave them a real life scenario to financially plan around. Many students added an individual project to summarize their learning from this program

- *JA Job Shadow* provided our students with the opportunity to engage in various workplaces and discover new careers, by actively shadowing employees of places such as AT&T Corporate, Microsoft, and Rock the Cause (RTC). Some students continue to stay in touch with their job shadow partner and RTC worked extensively without JA Company (see below) on their endeavors throughout the year.
- *The JA Company Program* was a year-long group project where students went through all the steps it takes to start up, run and liquidate a real company. By organizing and operating an actual business enterprise, students not only learn how businesses function, they also learn about the structure of the U.S. free enterprise system and the benefits it provides.
- *Re@l Marketing* was a new project at HSRA during 2013-14, in which students helped to create an app for the iPad. The app was for youth interested in baby sitting. They used the app to create business cards, business plans and learn from situational stories about baby sitting. Our students helped to create Voice Overs, Production Beats, and other content for the app. The app is now for sale at the iTunes store (see <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/re-babysitting-inc.-get-organized/id829802854?mt=8>).
- A graphics group project carried out during 2013-14 was the Post-Secondary Outcomes Survey project. The purpose of the project was to support this annual survey of special education students, done by the Department of Education. A year after graduation, MDE attempts to contact every special education student to survey them regarding what they have done since graduation. The Department was concerned with a low rate of return for these surveys, and turned to HSRA for assistance promoting the survey to graduates. HSRA students created a flyer to tell high school alumni about the survey, and created a video showing students getting motivated and succeeding in their lives after graduation. Promotional materials have been turned over to MDE for next steps.
- *Urban Music* – The Urban Music Project continued in 2013-14 as a yearlong class where the students researched the historical constructs that have led to so many Black and Brown people being imprisoned today. Topics included the 13th amendment, Jim Crow Laws, the prison industrial complex, the war on drugs, police harassment, the New Jim Crow, recidivism, children of incarcerated parents, illegal immigration and a culminating project focusing on self-awareness/introspection. Students interpreted these topics through songs which they wrote and performed. Through *Urban Music* students develop a sense of social

consciousness and a self-concept that one can have a positive effect upon their community, as well as learning about audio engineering, songwriting, instrumentation, mixing and mastering.

Here is a summary of how the HSRA program allows students to meet the State Standards in academic core areas:

Language Arts: Beginning in the fall of 2008, HSRA changed its schoolwide approach to reading/literacy, from Critical Reading to Daily Language Arts, which occupies a 60-minute period every morning and afternoon for rotating advisory groupings.

Daily Language Arts (DLA) focuses on literature which is of high interest and relevant to students' lives. The DLA approach follows strategies advocated by Alfred Tatum in *Teaching Reading to Black Adolescent Males*, which seem highly applicable to HSRA's population. Specific DLA strategies include daily dictation, word walls, reading a book in common (all students and staff) supported by supplementary materials, support for learning vocabulary from context, free-writing, enrichment activities around DLA books in community meetings and student projects, and writing exercises supported by expository writing lessons. During 2013-2014 HSRA students and staff read *Salvage the Bones* by Jazmyn Ward, and nonfiction supplemental texts relating to this; also, one-on-one tutoring was provided by HSRA staff for students who were taking the MCA in reading.

In addition to DLA, HSRA students take a number of different English/Language Arts courses. They must demonstrate a range of writing skills, from five paragraph essays to journals to research papers with documentation. HSRA students engage in many forms of inquiry, both by themselves and in small groups. It is now common practice that students keep DLA journals where they respond to questions, reflect on the day's reading, develop and record new vocabulary, and refine their personal voice. Using these journals, along with larger group readings and multimedia activities helps HSRA students develop their skills as readers, writers, and most importantly, critical thinkers.

Public speaking opportunities abound at HSRA, and students are coached to improve their skills. HSRA also uses reading across content areas, and other disciplines which include reading, writing and speaking skills in their courses and projects. In addition to DLA, Language Arts classes/workshops during 2013-2014 included Poetry in Motion, Hip-Hop, History and The Arts, MCA-II Writing, and Book Groups (students read and discussed a specific work, facilitated by a teacher).

Expository writing and response-to-text writing were taught in DLA for all students. Guided study opportunities in Language Arts included Accessing Information, Intro to English (grammar and basics of writing), Literary Analysis, Effective Communication, MCA Writing, Introduction to High School Poetry, Intermediate and Advanced High School Poetry, and Grammar.

Math: The HSRA math program is organized around *Concentrated Math*, required of all students. Concentrated Math is a highly individualized program of instruction designed in accordance with the Minnesota Academic Standards in Mathematics. Utilizing a deeply differentiated spiral curriculum that cycles through the four mathematics content strands, students receive the appropriate level of work in targeted math groups. Each group learns the same general topic, but groups vary in speed

and depth in which they explore each topic. This creates a sense of community among the levels and blurs the lines between “low” and “high” level groups. The highest level group will explore the most advanced skills and applications related to a given topic, while the lowest group may spend more time on the remedial skills needed to complete the standards and applications tied to the topic. Since age is not a deciding factor in the groups, purely math skill level, this structure allows us to expose the all students to the content on the MCA exams. It provides lower level students the chance to get the remediation they need, while still becoming comfortable with the topics they will see on the exam. We witnessed a rise in student confidence in even studying for the exams, as they had seen and experienced success with related material.

At the beginning of each year (or during orientation when they enroll throughout the year), every student is administered the Northwest Evaluation Association’s Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) test in order to establish baseline data. Initial MAP test results are used to place students in targeted math groups. The results of the test informed the Concentrated Math program throughout the year (the MAP was re-administered in Winter and Spring of 2014).

In addition to Concentrated Math, HSRA students take additional Math courses in order to meet state standards and build the mathematical literacy skills to succeed in everyday life. Math classes/workshops offered during 2013-14 included: Skills to Pay the Bills, Sports Math (geometry/statistics focus), Aviation (math/physics), the Junior Achievement Company Program, (physics/math), and Khan Academy Workshops. There are also guided study opportunities in Math available to students. Here are some details on three of these courses:

- Aviation: Students learn about the parts of a plane, how they move and how to fly. Students learn the physics behind flight of lift, thrust, gravity and drag along with Bernoulli's Principal. They learn some history of flight and about different types of planes along with math related to aviation.
- Skills to Pay the Bills: Students in Skills to Pay the Bills learn about interest and credit and the different ways that you can earn interest and get credit. They learn about budgeting and setting goals in their budget to get bigger items. Students learn the difference between good credit and bad and scams that are out there, such as short term payday loans. They learn about net worth and net income and about taxes.
- Sports Math: Students learn about the different statistics that are done in football, baseball, and basketball and how to figure the statistics out. Using geometry skills they learn about arcs and angles when shooting or throwing that gives the best distance or chance of making a shot or throwing on target. They learn about the geometry in the shapes of the fields, courts and rings. Students use reflection points to find the hole in one in mini golf and for shooting pool.

Reflecting on the 2013-14 school year, HSRA math facilitator Sayra Loftus commented –

- Incorporating Khan Academy as a supplement to our Concentrated and additional math courses provided key support in meeting each of our students’ individual needs. Students utilize this valuable online tool as a motivating way to review remedial skills, but also to explore advanced courses with the guidance of a math instructor. This program motivates students by providing instant feedback and video tutorials that are designed for visual learners. It is also a valuable teacher tool as it provides organized data to inform instruction and assignments.
- Recognizing a need to support general confidence, enjoyment and fluency with real-life, everyday math, courses and options were offered to help students gain experience in these areas. The *Junior Achievement Company Program* also gives students hands-on experience with the

financial aspects of planning and running a business. Additionally, we were able to boost our economics education and guide students through realistic personal financial planning and career exploration with the *Junior Achievement Finance Park* curriculum.

Social Studies: The Social Studies Program at HSRA meets the requirements laid out in the state standards through a combination of traditional classes, guided study opportunities and individual projects. The content and format of these different elements is designed to develop both subject knowledge and primary skills in a number of areas. Subject knowledge covered includes but is not limited to key events, people, places and concepts in U.S. and world history, rights and responsibilities of citizens, the role of government, economic systems and religion and cultures of the world. The program also focuses on developing key skills such as gathering, interpreting and analyzing information, understanding cause and effect, consideration of diverse perspectives, evaluating primary and secondary resources, developing and discussing ideas and concepts, and active involvement in social, economic and political issues. Social Studies workshops/classes included U.S. History, Civics, Finding a Place I Can Call Home (exploration of family roots), Now News (focused on news media/current events), Global Issues, American and World Literature: The Language of Suffering and Conflict (English/Social Studies), Street Law, and Urban Music.

Science: HSRA students can take a number of courses, or participate in guided study opportunities and/or projects to meet the state standards in science. HSRA science courses and other learning opportunities, such as various Biology workshops, Chemistry/Physics workshops and Senior Science, are designed to increase subject knowledge, as well as develop critical thinking skills and scientific reasoning. During 2013-14, with the move to the new building, there is a dedicated science room which allowed science facilitators to do much more hands on activities and science labs. Teaching staff focused on adding more labs to science classes.

Students in biology class explored life science topics related to the interdependence of living organisms, environment and ecosystems, genetic variation, cellular biology, the environmental effects of human consumption, consumerism and industrial production and science concepts related to environmental science and climate change. Students also explored science content in a Science of Cooking class and a Mysteries of Science class. Students continued to learn about the principles of science, technology, engineering and math by studying environmental issues, electricity and renewable/alternative energy sources, green jobs/economy, and skills needed for such jobs. Content for the STEM subject areas was developed over the previous two years via the grant-funded Get Your Green project; while Get Your Green funding was discontinued in 2013-14, the content continued to be taught.

A new class was developed in the 2013-2014 school year geared toward HSRA students who are within two credits of completing their science credits. The class, called Senior Science, gives students the opportunity to explore science that is relevant to them from not only a science perspective, but as a productive member of society. They explored topics such as how the brain works, how drugs affect the brain and how cancer develops in the body. Students then took the topics and developed relevant projects to educate the community about the topics. One example is the Cancer song and video that senior science students created in order to educate others about how cancer works.

All coursework and curriculum is designed to meet state graduation standards. Students are always

encouraged to do their own science project on subjects of their interest, and this includes earth and space science, physical science, and the life sciences.

Arts: High School for Recording Arts students meet state arts standards through active engagement in a number of artistic endeavors. They learn the technology and theory behind creating and recording music, receive individual instrumentation lessons, participate in choir and other singing groups, and perform often—both in school and at various public events. They create and host their own radio show on KMOJ FM, a Twin Cities commercially successful radio station, and are involved in video production. They also have classes in dance and theatrical improvisation. They take courses in the history of music. There is an art therapy course called Artist Café, run by the school social worker. During 2013-14, HSRA students worked with Scott Harold of Rock the Cause to learn about digital releasing of albums; they produced an album called *The Next Move*, which was released digitally. To be a graduate of HSRA, students must demonstrate study of and achievement in the arts, as well as participation in an artistic community. HSRA continued to offer a class called "Hip-Hop, History and The Arts". Within the class, students learn about different artistic ways of expression from (poetry, drawing, acting, music, etc.).

Initially sponsored by Lubrication Technologies, Inc., HSRA students have remained involved in graphic arts work including logo and package design, e.g. DVD label and jewel case designs. Graphic arts work continued in 2013-14 and includes individual projects and teaming with group projects as the latter need graphic-arts work done. HSRA students have also participated in commercial ventures, have produced jingles and Public Service Announcement videos.

The curriculum provides incentives for further study and higher education, lays the groundwork for personal business development, and builds students' confidence and familiarity with the services and institutions of society. Through these programs, HSRA helps turn youth with the potential of being social problems into productive members of society. HSRA's programs prepare youth to take jobs in the recording industry as well as teaching the business and job skills necessary for entry level and skilled positions in various occupations.

The HSRA program seeks to implement the Community Learning Centers (CLC) model, a national education reform design focusing on integration of learning into the community, individualizing the learning program, and obtaining active involvement of all students in their own learning. A particularly critical feature of the CLC model for the HSRA program is the advisor/advisee system. Each student has an advisor who is responsible for understanding all the points that a learner needs to cover to complete their education, which points the learner has already completed, and which they need to complete.

HSRA Academic Performance in 2013-14

Accountability for results is at the core of the charter school concept. HSRA's Goals and Performance Targets were updated for 2013-14, the final year of its charter contract. There were

six Performance Target areas relating to the academic program: Reading; Mathematics; attendance; graduation rate; Culture of Learning; and Culture of Innovation. There were also four Performance Targets relating to operational aspects: financial, parent engagement, operations, and governance. The operational targets fit more logically in the Operations section of this report so these targets and measures are reported on there.

A table summarizing the six academic Targets and Measures follows, with text in the right-most three columns in boldface type to note whether HSRA did not meet, partially met, or met the target. The table is followed by details regarding each of the six targets and associated measures. after which data pertaining to each of the six is summarized.

High School for Recording Arts Performance Targets and Measures for 2013-14			
Targets 1-6 (Academic Program)			
Performance Target/Measure	Not meeting target	Partially meeting target	Meeting target
Performance Target 1: Students will make sufficient progress in reading to meet or exceed state academic standards in reading.			
Measures:			
• HSRA's Index Rate for AYP Reading Proficiency will increase from 28.57 in the spring of 2013.	No increase	Any increase	Increase sufficient to make AYP in Reading Proficiency
• Northwest Evaluation Association's Measures of Academic Progress in Reading will show HSRA students at least keeping up with the norming group in reading based on a pre-post comparison.	Less than 30% of tested students meet Growth Targets on the MAP in Reading	30-49% of tested students meet Growth Targets on the MAP in Reading	50% or more of tested students meet Growth Targets on the MAP in Reading
Performance Target 2: Students will make sufficient progress in mathematics to meet or exceed state academic standards in math.			
Measures:			
• HSRA's Index Rate for AYP Mathematics Proficiency will increase from 22.73 in the spring of 2013.	No increase	Any increase	Increase sufficient to make AYP in Mathematics Proficiency

High School for Recording Arts Performance Targets and Measures for 2013-14			
Targets 1-6 (Academic Program)			
Performance Target/Measure	Not meeting target	Partially meeting target	Meeting target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northwest Evaluation Association's Measures of Academic Progress in Mathematics will show HSRA students at least keeping up with the norming group in mathematics based on a pre-post comparison. 	Less than 30% of tested students meet Growth Targets on the MAP in Mathematics	30-49% of tested students meet Growth Targets on the MAP in Mathematics	50% or more of tested students meet Growth Targets on the MAP in Mathematics
Performance Target 3: HSRA students' attendance rate will improve:			
Measures:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average attendance of students enrolled at HSRA will increase in 2014-15 and 2015-16 from a baseline set during 2013-14, HSRA's first year at its new facility. 	Not applicable (new measure in 2013-14)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance rate for students returning to HSRA for the second (or more) year will be greater than attendance rate for students enrolled for the first time. 	Not applicable (new measure in 2013-14)		
Performance Target 4: HSRA's Graduation rate will increase in 2014-15 and 2015-16 from a baseline set during 2011-14, HSRA's first year at its new facility.	Not applicable (new target/measure in 2013-14)		
Performance Target 5: Culture of Learning: HSRA will create and maintain a culture of learning, as demonstrated by the following indicators:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HSRA graduates will be accepted to college or other post-secondary institution as evidenced by acceptance letters in their digital portfolios. 	Less than 90% acceptance rate	90-99% acceptance rate	100% acceptance rate

High School for Recording Arts Performance Targets and Measures for 2013-14			
Targets 1-6 (Academic Program)			
Performance Target/Measure	Not meeting target	Partially meeting target	Meeting target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 80% of students newly enrolled at HSRA and in regular attendance will complete more credits their first full semester enrolled at HSRA, compared to the last full semester at their previous school (limited to students in grades 10-12; and will not include students who were incarcerated prior to enrolling at HSRA). 	Less than 70% of students in this group increase number of credits earned	70-79% of students in this group increase number of credits earned	At least 80% of students in this group increase number of credits earned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HSRA will carry out parent satisfaction surveys each year. Our expectation is that at least 75% of parents will report satisfaction with the program. 	Less than 70% of parents report satisfaction with the program	70-74% of parents report satisfaction with the program	75% or more parents report satisfaction with the program
Performance Target 6: Culture of Innovation: HSRA will create and maintain a culture of innovation, as demonstrated by the following indicators:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HSRA students in regular attendance will have active personal learning plans (PLP) as judged by biannual review carried out by administration. Active means a completed PLP form, the PLP is reviewed with the student regularly and used as a framework for the student's program. 	Less than 80% have active PLPs	80-89% have active PLPs.	90% or more have active PLPs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 90% of students continuously enrolled at HSRA and in regular attendance will earn at least some of their credits through school-based projects. 	Less than 80% of continuously enrolled students earn credits through projects	80 - 89 % of continuously enrolled students earn credits through projects	At least 90% of continuously enrolled students earn credits through projects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HSRA students will continue to show higher ratings on EdVisions' Hope Survey than students at traditional schools. 	HSRA students' Hope Survey indicators are the same as or lower than for students at traditional schools	N/A	HSRA students' average Hope Survey indicators are higher than for students at traditional schools

Performance Target 1: *Students will make sufficient progress in reading to meet or exceed state academic standards in reading.*

- Reading Measure #1: *HSRA's Index Rate for AYP Reading Proficiency² will increase from 28.57 in the spring of 2013.*

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) ratings for reading are based on continuously-enrolled 10th graders' scores on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) taken in the spring. HSRA had 33 October 1-enrolled 10th graders who took the Reading MCA and had valid scores. Of these students, five met standards, four partially met standards and the others did not meet standards. This resulted in an AYP Index Rate of 21.21 which is a decrease from the previous year's Index Rate, so HSRA did not meet this target.

Though it is problematic to rate a school based on this small sub-set of students, Reading does continue to be an area of challenge for many of HSRA's students, and an area of focus for improvement. During the summer of 2014, all HSRA instructional staff (including paraprofessionals) attended a week-long training with a reading specialist from Hamline University, focusing on the Common Core curriculum and instructional techniques. Knowledge and strategies from this training are being incorporated into teaching for the 2014-15 year.

- Reading Measure #2: *Northwest Evaluation Association's Measures of Academic Progress in Reading will show HSRA students at least keeping up with the norming group in reading based on a pre-post comparison.*

HSRA students took the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) test three times during the 2013-14 school year, in October, in January, and finally in late May/first week of June. Fall-to-spring MAP results comparison shows that 48 students took the test both times³, of whom 19 met or exceeded their projected spring scores (40%). HSRA partially met this target. HSRA staff noted that many students are more engaged in the fall, and it is difficult to get students to test in the spring. HSRA is striving to do better with turnout for the MAP in 2014-15 (in the Fall 2014 MAP test window, a total of 178 students took the Reading MAP, a higher figure than ever before).

² Note, while the State of MN still reports AYP figures, the state now uses a "Multiple Measures Rating" system for accountability purposes. The Multiple Measures Rating system considers Proficiency levels on the MCA's as 1 of 4 measures.

³ One hundred twenty-four students took the Reading MAP in the fall; 100 students took the test in the spring.

It is also worth noting that the norming group for MAP test score-growth projection, the group of all students who took the tests the most recent time the norms were set, is not demographically similar to the students served by HSRA. An initiative undertaken by the federally-funded Building Charter School Quality initiative identified a large sample of alternative education students, in grades 7-12, and analyzed their MAP test score growth over a period of two years, to arrive at alternate growth goals for alternative-education students⁴. Analysis of HSRA's fall 2013 / spring 2014 MAP Reading results with the alternate growth goals shows that 26 of the 48 students met or exceeded projected spring scores (54%). This provides a better indicator in that HSRA students are being compared on this measure with a more demographically-similar cohort. However, these results should also be interpreted with caution as the numbers of students in some of the comparison groups (results were analyzed by 10 RIT-score-point bands) were quite small.

Performance Target 2: Students will make sufficient progress in mathematics to meet or exceed state academic standards in math.

- Mathematics measure #1: *HSRA's Index Rate for AYP Mathematics Proficiency will increase, from 22.73 in the spring of 2013.*

AYP ratings for math are based on continuously-enrolled juniors' scores on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) taken in the spring. HSRA had 41 October 1-enrolled juniors who took the Math MCA and had valid scores. Of these students, two Met standards based on test results, two Partially met standards, and the others did not meet standards. This resulted in an AYP Index Rate of 7.31 which is a decrease from the previous year's Index Rate, so HSRA did not meet this target.

Low scores on the Math MCA provides further evidence that most students are far behind in basic academic skills upon enrolling at HSRA. MAP scores measuring growth from fall to spring on the Math MAP show about half meeting growth projections, in spite of challenges in getting students to take these tests toward the end of the school year.

- Mathematics measure #2: *Northwest Evaluation Association's Measures of Academic*

⁴ *Alternative Growth Goals for Alternative Education Students*, by Jody L. Ernst and Jennifer J. Turnbull: Colorado League of Charter Schools, 2013.

Progress in Mathematics will show HSRA students at least keeping up with the norming group in mathematics based on a pre-post comparison.

As with the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) in Reading MAP, HSRA students took the Mathematics MAP test three times during the 2013-14 school year. Fall-spring MAP results comparison shows that 68 students tested both times⁵, of whom 33 met or exceeded their projected spring score (49%). HSRA partially met this target. HSRA staff noted that many students are more engaged in the fall, and it is difficult to get students to test in the spring. HSRA is striving to do better with turnout for the MAP in 2014-15 (in the Fall 2014 MAP test window, a total of 181 students took the Mathematics MAP, a higher figure than ever before).

As with the Reading MAP scores, HSRA MAP results in Math were also analyzed using alternate growth goals created by the Building Charter School Quality initiative. Analysis of HSRA's fall 2013 / spring 2014 MAP Math results with the alternate growth goals shows that 36 of the 68 students met or exceeded projected spring scores (53%).

Performance Target 3: HSRA students' attendance rate will improve.

- Attendance measure 1: *Average attendance of students enrolled at HSRA will increase in 2014-15 and 2015-16 from a baseline set during 2013-14, HSRA's first year at its new facility.*

As of early November, HSRA's overall average percent-of-attendance for the year was reported at 53.15%.

Attendance continues to be a challenge for HSRA, as for most schools serving a similar demographic. HSRA staff strive to keep all students engaged, and contact students or their families when they are unexpectedly absent. There are a range of supports for students with life challenges interfering with regular school attendance, including a Homeless Liaison, at HSRA two days per week through a federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Education grant shared with another charter school for the second year during 2013-14. Also, during the first semester there were challenges relating to HSRA's facility, in that the school year opened with the facility only partially operational. A new initiative begun at HSRA to enhance student attendance and retention was the Check and Connect program. This is a research-based truancy prevention program developed at the University of Minnesota, focusing on practical strategies to prevent

⁵ One hundred thirty-one students took the Math MAP, Fall '13; 138 students took the test in the spring.

truancy and re-engage at-risk students and families. Advisors identify students who are at risk due to factors outside school, and one of three staff members works with the students to help them address challenges they are facing, and stay in school. The Check and Connect program is being strengthened in 2014-15 with two Americorps Promise Fellows at HSRA specifically to work with Check and Connect, each with a caseload of approximately 30 general education students.

- Attendance measure 2: *Attendance rate for students returning to HSRA for the second (or more) year will be greater than attendance rate for students enrolled for the first time.*

Analysis of HSRA attendance data after the end of the 2013-14 school year showed a total of 409 students who were enrolled for some part of the year. Of these students, 182 were re-enrolling and 227 were new to HSRA. Differential analysis of attendance for new students vs. returnees showed that new students' attendance rate was actually slightly higher: 54.2% vs. 51.5%. HSRA leadership believes that the underlying assumption behind this measure – students can be expected to attend more consistently, the longer they are at HSRA – is likely not valid. As students age they become more independent, but also more likely to be homeless, and more likely to have babies, factors which interfere with regular school attendance. This measure has not been included in targets for 2014-19.

Performance Target 4: HSRA's Graduation rate will increase in 2014-15 and 2015-16 from a baseline set during 20113-14, HSRA's first year at its new facility⁶.

End-of-year student data as of September 2014 showed that there were 60 students who met the criteria to be included in this measure, of whom 51 graduated by year's end (85%). The figure of 60 students includes all continuously-enrolled students who were seniors/deemed eligible to graduate by the spring of 2014.

Improving the graduation rate continues to be a challenge which is why the graduation rate, along with attendance rate, remains one of HSRA's Performance Target areas. The total number of students HSRA graduated during 2013-14 was 59.

⁶ Graduation rate is defined as: proportion of continuously-enrolled students in the program as of Oct. 1 who are deemed graduation candidates based on credits, combined with the proportion of students who enter later but who are deemed graduation candidates based on credits, who graduate by year's end.

Performance Target 5: Culture of Learning: HSRA will create and maintain a culture of learning, as demonstrated by the following three indicators:

- Culture of Learning measure #1: *HSRA graduates will be accepted to college or other post-secondary institution as evidenced by acceptance letters in their digital portfolios.*

HSRA maintained a 100% rate of post-secondary institution acceptance, so this target was met. The digital portfolios are presented at a committee meeting chaired by an administrator, convened by the student with their advisor, another student and if possible family and community members.

- Culture of Learning measure #2: *At least 80% of students newly enrolled at HSRA and in regular attendance will complete more credits their first full semester enrolled at HSRA, compared to the last full semester at their previous school (measure limited to students in grades 10-12; and will not include students who were incarcerated prior to enrolling at HSRA).*

HSRA attendance data was analyzed in the fall of 2014 to compare credits earned by students in their first full semester at HSRA, compared to credits earned the last previous full semester. Number of students in this group became quite small when the 75% attendance screen was used; also, credits-earned data from students' previous school was not always available. Data that was available showed the following:

- For semester 1 (fall 2013), there were 12 grades 10-12 students who were new to HSRA, not previously incarcerated, and for whom credits-earned data was available from the previous school. These students earned an average of 5.7 credits at HSRA in the fall, which compares with an average of 4.7 credits earned in the last full semester at their previous school.
 - For semester 2 (spring 2014), there were five grades 10-12 students who were new to HSRA (six students who were counted for fall, were not included again in the spring), not previously incarcerated, and for whom credits-earned data was available from the previous school. These students earned an average of 5.5 credits at HSRA in the spring, which compares with an average of only 1.9 credits earned in the last full semester at their previous school.
- Culture of Learning measure #3: *HSRA will carry out parent satisfaction surveys each year. Our expectation is that at least 75% of parents will report satisfaction with the program.*

HSRA parents were asked to complete a satisfaction survey at a parent events in the fall and in the spring. A total of 26 surveys were completed; all 26 respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statements that *My student enjoys going to HSRA*; and all but one agreed or strongly agreed with *I would recommend HSRA to my friends or others*. HSRA met this target.

Performance Target 6: Culture of Innovation: HSRA will create and maintain a culture of innovation, as demonstrated by the following three indicators:

- Culture of Innovation measure #1: *HSRA students in regular attendance will have active personal learning plans (PLP), as judged by biannual review carried out by administration. Active means a completed PLP form; the PLP is reviewed with the student regularly and used as a framework for the student's program.*

HSRA administration reported that virtually all students who are in regular attendance have an active PLP as defined in this measure. Review of data by advisors in the fall showed the following:

- For semester 1 (fall 2013) there were a total of 46 students continuously enrolled throughout the semester; all but one of these students had active PLPs.
- For semester 2 (spring 2014) there were 48 students continuously enrolled throughout the semester, all of whom ad active PLPs.

- Culture of Innovation measure #2: *At least 90% of students continuously enrolled at HSRA and in regular attendance will earn at least some of their credits through school-based projects.*

Analysis of HSRA student data in the fall of 2014 showed there were a total of 112 students continuously enrolled throughout the year, of whom 37 were in regular attendance as defined by attending at least 75% of the days enrolled. Of these 37 students, 33 or 89% earned at least some credits through projects (mean-average of 2.6 credits; median of 2.0). HSRA narrowly missed this target.

- Culture of Innovation measure #3: *HSRA students will continue to show higher ratings on EdVisions' Hope Survey than students at traditional schools.*

The Hope Survey instrument measures several constructs relating to school environment and the

extent to which students feel supported, engaged, and optimistic about their ability to succeed. There is a composite scale on which scores run from 0-64. HSRA's Hope Survey data shows an average Hope score of 52.58 for students who took the survey in the spring, a small decline from 2012-13 but still ahead of all schools' average of 49.15.

Operational Performance

This section addresses HSRA's Operational Targets and Measures, followed by program successes, and descriptions of the challenges faced by HSRA during 2013-14. The program challenges relate to HSRA's academic program but are not as tightly linked to academic measures of performance, and hence seem to fit most logically in this section.

HSRA Operational Targets and Measures for 2013-14

As noted above, HSRA's has ten Goals and Performance Targets. The first six Targets relate to the academic program and are addressed above, in the Academic Targets and Measures for section. Below are Targets 7-10, which relate to operational aspects of the program. As with the Academic Targets, text in the right-most three columns has been placed in boldface to note whether HSRA did not meet, partially met, or met the target.

High School for Recording Arts Performance Targets and Measures for 2013-14			
Targets 7-10 (Operational)			
Performance Target/Measure	Not meeting target	Partially meeting target	Meeting target
Performance Target 7: HSRA will maintain and continue to improve its financial health and its finance systems.			
Measures:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSRA will reduce the number of audit findings over time, moving toward the goal of no more than two minor findings (e.g. Segregation of duties, auditor adjustment/year-end closing process). 	Number of audit findings increased from the previous year	Same number of audit findings as in the previous year	Fewer audit findings than in the previous year

High School for Recording Arts Performance Targets and Measures for 2013-14			
Targets 7-10 (Operational)			
Performance Target/Measure	Not meeting target	Partially meeting target	Meeting target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fund Balance: For 2013-14, HSRA's year-end Fund Balance will decrease by no more than \$206,782. The Fund Balance to be used is that presented in the audited financial statement. 	Fund balance declines in 2013-14 by more than \$206,782	N/A	Fund balance declines in 2013-14 by less than \$206,782
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of HSRA's total revenue from donors will increase in 2014-15 and 2015-16, over a baseline set in 2013-14. 	N/A – new measure in 2013-14		
Target 8: Parent engagement			
HSRA will continue to increase its level of parental engagement.			
Measures:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HSRA will increase parental attendance at parent presentation/conference nights, open house, and Special Education meetings in 2013-14 by at least 10% over the 2012-13 attendance figure of 76 	An increase of 5% or less for 2013-14 compared to the previous year	An increase of 5-14% for 2013-14 compared to the previous year	An increase of at least 15% for 2013-14 compared to the previous year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HSRA will establish a parent advisory committee during the 2013-14 school year. 	No committee exists	A committee exists, but they meet fewer than three times per year.	A committee exists, and they meet three or more times per year.
Target 9: Operations			
HSRA will continue to improve its individualized professional development.			
Measures:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the 2013-14 school year, HSRA will continue to implement the individualized Professional Development Plan included in its charter renewal application. 90% of HSRA staff members employed throughout the year will have two PDP/Review meetings with administration. 	Fewer than 70% of staff have two PDP meetings during the 2013-14 school year	70-90% of staff have two PDP meetings during the 2013-14 school year	At least 90% of staff have two PDP meetings during the 2013-14 school year

High School for Recording Arts Performance Targets and Measures for 2013-14			
Targets 7-10 (Operational)			
Performance Target/Measure	Not meeting target	Partially meeting target	Meeting target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 90% of HSRA staff employed throughout the year will complete SMART goals sets forth in their initial meetings. 	Fewer than 70% of staff members complete their SMART goals by the end of the 2013-14 school year.	70-90% of staff complete their SMART goals by the end of the 2013-14 school year.	At least 90% of staff complete their SMART goals by the end of the 2013-14 school year.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During 2013-14, HSRA Departments will establish SMART goals and measures, for each of the three Departments 	Department goals not established	Department goals established for one or two Departments.	Department goals established for all three Departments
Target 10: Governance			
The HSRA Board of Directors will increase its effectiveness in planning for the future.			
Measures:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The HSRA Board of Directors will attend customized trainings to enhance its skills. 	Three or fewer HSRA Board members attend customized training	Four HSRA Board members attend customized training.	All five HSRA Board members attend customized training.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The HSRA Board of Directors will review its Strategic Plan by January 2014, and will update the plan during the summer of 2014. 	No strategic plan exists.	A strategic plan exists, but is not comprehensive or feasible.	A strategic plan exists and is comprehensive and feasible.

Performance Target 7: Financial: HSRA will maintain and continue to improve its financial health and its finance systems.

- Financial measure #1: *HSRA will reduce the number of audit findings over time, moving toward the goal of no more than two minor findings*

Per the Auditor’s report to the HSRA Board at its February 2014 meeting, there were eight findings in the 2012-13 audit. HSRA partially met this target, with the same number of findings as the previous year. HSRA continues to pursue organizational improvements in an effort to reduce incidence of audit findings.

- Financial measure #2: *Fund Balance: For 2013-14, HSRA's year-end Fund Balance will decrease by no more than \$206,782. The Fund Balance to be used is that presented in the audited financial statement*

HSRA's projected fund balance reduction, as of early December 2014, was \$262,150. HSRA will not meet this target. In the view of the Board, this one-time deficit spending is justifiable given the special circumstances of a school adjusting to a new facility. In particular, there were significant facility-related costs included in FY14 expenditures, which were not part of the original budget.

- Financial Measure #3: *Proportion of HSRA's total revenue from donors will increase in 2014-15 and 2015-16, over a baseline set in 2013-14.*

Proportion of revenues raised from grants and donations during 2013-14 was 1.8%, per unaudited figures as of June 2014; this will be the baseline from which an increase will be sought in FY15. HSRA hired a development specialist in the spring of 2014, and will continue to seek revenues from a variety of donors.

Performance Target 8: Parent engagement: HSRA will continue to increase its level of parental engagement.

- Parent engagement measure #1: *HSRA will increase parental attendance at parent presentation/conference nights, open house, and Special Education meetings in 2013-14 by at least 10% over the 2012-13 attendance figure of 76.*

Review of 2013-14 school year data showed attendance of parents at three parent events (two student presentation nights, in November and March; and a Family Fun Night in May) plus parents who attended special education I.E.P. meetings totaled 179. This is a large increase compared to last year, so HSRA exceeded this target.

- Parent engagement measure #2: *HSRA will establish a parent advisory committee during the 2013-14 school year*

A family advisory board was established in the spring of 2014, so HSRA met this target. The family advisory board met for the first time on March 27. There was a second meeting April 27,

which constituted the spring Title I parent meeting, and a third meeting May 22. HSRA met this target.

Performance Target 9: Operations: HSRA will continue to improve its individualized professional development.

- Operations measure #1: *During the 2013-14 school year, HSRA will continue to implement the individualized Professional Development Plan included in its charter renewal application. 90% of HSRA staff members employed throughout the year will have two PDP/ Review meetings with administration.*
- Operations measure #2: *90% of HSRA staff employed throughout the year will complete SMART goals set forth in their initial meetings*

Administration reported, initial meetings were held in the fall and PDP's including SMART goals established, for all staff with the exception of two members of the leadership team. There was a follow up meeting in late spring/summer 2014, though these meetings focused on planning for the 2014-15 year rather than review of the 2013-14 PDP. SMART goals were monitored later during the 2013-14 year but results were not tracked in a centralized way such that data was available to establish the fraction of staff who met their SMART goals. The Performance Target referencing setting PDPs and reviewing completion of SMART goals has been retained for 2014-19.

- Operations measure #3: *During 2013-14, HSRA Departments will establish SMART goals and measures, for each of the three Departments.*

HSRA's three departments – Academic, Studio and Administration – all set and met SMART goals for 2013-14, so this target was met. Student Support and Engagement, and Security were added as their own departments for 2014-15.

Performance Target 10: Governance: The HSRA Board of Directors will increase its effectiveness in planning for the future.

- Governance measure #1: *The HSRA Board of Directors will attend customized trainings to enhance its skills.*

HSRA board training was held May 5, 2014; with all sitting Board members in attendance. The trainer, Designs for Learning, covered Finance, Personnel, and Governance.

- Governance measure #2: *The HSRA Board of Directors will review its Strategic Plan by January 2014, and will update the plan during the summer of 2014.*

HSRA's Strategic Plan was reviewed by administration during February 2014, and by the Board at its April 2014 meeting. The Board delegated review and updating of the strategic plan to administration; review was completed during the summer and status of the existing plan reported to the Board at the August 2014 meeting. The plan has not yet been updated as of November 2014, but HSRA met the measurable element of this target which references having a comprehensive and feasible strategic plan in place.

Program Successes

Program successes and best practices in place as HSRA during 2013-14 included the following:

- HSRA students who remain continuously enrolled are making progress in Reading and Mathematics as shown by fall and spring pre-post scores on the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP). Analysis of 2013-14 pre-post data using growth goals based on a population of alternative-education students shows that a majority of students with both test seasons' scores met or exceeded projected spring scores. In Reading, 26 of 48 students met or exceeded projected scores or 54%; in Math the figure was 36 of 68 students or 53%.
- Renewal of the charter contract: In the spring of 2014 HSRA's charter contract was approved by its authorizer, Pillsbury United Communities, for the maximum term of five years.
- Successful restructuring of the school, with the establishment of three departments: Academic, Studio and Administration. Lead staff from each of the three departments meet on a regular basis to plan improvements; each department established a SMART goal during 2013-14 to guide the effort to improve.
- Continuing to effectively serve Homeless students. A large proportion of HSRA's students experience homelessness, as discussed below in the Program Challenges section. However, an analysis of semester-credits earned, by homeless students who remained continuously enrolled for a full semester, showed that these students earned an average of 4.6 credits per

semester in 2012-13, and 3.9 per semester in 2013-14. Earning five credits per semester is considered to be on-track for graduation, some homeless students are making close to expected progress. While the number of credits earned declined somewhat from 2012-13 to 2013-14, it is worth noting that the number of homeless students remaining continuously enrolled for a full semester at HSRA increased substantially, from 92 to 152.

- At HSRA, every student has a Personal Learning Plan (PLP), developed by the student, their advisor and with involvement by parents requested. The PLP reflects the student's own interests and aspirations, as well as their needs in terms of earning academic credits toward graduation. PLPs are informed by assessment data such as MAP test results.
- Continuing success of the Visual Inclusion Program (VIP), a strategy designed to create transitional opportunities for special education students by developing entrepreneurial skills, post-secondary options, community engagement and leadership skills. First established during 2011-12, VIP empowers special education students by focusing on their creative strengths, and allowing them to use these strengths while learning about video production and technology.
- HSRA student projects that keep learning relevant to students' lives included the Junior Achievement programs, Re@l Marketing and HSRA's student-run weekly radio program, *Studio 4 All Access*.
- Requiring graduation portfolios from all graduates, including a college acceptance letter. This requirement for graduation has been in place since 2009-10. HSRA's guidance counselor provides assistance to seniors in applying to colleges; their acceptance letters are part of their graduation portfolio which is required for graduation. Students are also required to work with the guidance counselor on their Financial Aid Form. Staff have observed that the college application process helps students think through what they want to do after graduation, helping them prepare for the next stage in life.
- Effective support for the advisory system. HSRA's lead advisor serves as a mentor to all advisors, with particular attention to new staff. The lead advisor coaches instructional staff in state standards and HSRA's graduation process, so staff understand how to help meet graduation requirements through HSRA's portfolio-based system. Time is scheduled for each advisor to meet with the lead advisor. The lead advisor monitors the other advisors' students' work in reading and math to ensure standards are met, and observes the advisors to assure their effectiveness in working with students on projects. HSRA's staffing model includes lead

teachers who create content for the DLA and math meetings/trainings, and carry out professional development under the oversight of the lead advisor and Education Director. HSRA's Assistant Director models best instructional techniques, and also does observations. A formal plan is in place for advisors to observe and evaluate each other; after advisors observe colleagues they discuss best practices and learned from each other so all are able to enhance their instructional strategies. Beginning in 2012-13, when HSRA's schedule shifted from four-days weeks back to a five-day schedule, the school day starts late on Fridays, so there is time Friday morning for an all-staff meeting and advisor and other committee meetings, before students arrive.

- During the past several years, HSRA has utilized Daily Language Arts as its schoolwide approach to reading/literacy. Daily Language Arts (DLA) focuses on literature which is of high interest and relevant to students' lives. There is a 45-minute period every afternoon for schoolwide DLA. The DLA approach follows strategies advocated by Alfred Tatum in *Teaching Reading to Black Adolescent Males*, which are highly applicable to HSRA's population. Specific DLA strategies include schoolwide books read in common, daily dictation, word walls, support for learning vocabulary from context, free-writing, enrichment activities around DLA books in community meetings and student projects, and writing exercises supported by expository writing lessons. Beginning in 2012-13, HSRA has put a special emphasis during DLA on nonfiction and supplemental texts. As part of HSRA's effort to continue enhancing its Language Arts program, leadership arranged for a week-long training during the summer of 2014, with a reading specialist from Hamline University. All instructional staff, including paraprofessionals, attended the training which focused on the Common Core curriculum and instructional techniques. Knowledge and strategies from this training are being incorporated into teaching for the 2014-15 year.
- HSRA's approach to math is through a Concentrated Math program in which all students participate. Concentrated Math is a highly individualized program of instruction designed in accordance with the Minnesota Academic Standards in Mathematics. The curriculum follows a three-year cycle with each of the three years devoted to one or more of the four mathematics content strands. At the beginning of the school year, each student is administered the NWEA MAP test in math; development of the Concentrated Math program is informed by the results of this assessment.
- In the spring of 2013, HSRA won a grant from the Laura Jane Musser fund to support cross-cultural exploration between HSRA and Connection High School in Hawaii. This project was carried out during 2013-14, with HSRA students visiting Connection High School in the fall and students from Hawaii visiting HSRA in the spring. The students collaborated on a music

cd, which is complete but remains to be mixed and mastered as of fall 2014.

- Also during 2013-14 HSRA was fortunate to receive a number of grants. External support enhances particular aspects of the program, and also gives evidence of interest in our program by outside funders. In particular, HSRA would like to thank the following funders:
 - Promise Fellow grant, supporting two Promise Fellows who will focus on the Check and Connect program for 2014-15
 - Global Citizens Network grant for \$46,000, awarded in the spring, to take 10 students and two staff to Kenya for volunteer work, on a health care center during 2014-15 (HSRA plans to seek matching funds in order to take more students)
 - Allina Health Systems grant for \$5,000, to support HSRA's physical fitness program
 - The Minnesota Department of Education, and collaborating charter school Minnesota Internship Center, for a Homeless Education (McKinney-Vento) grant. For the second year, this grant provided a homeless liaison, at HSRA two days a week, and supports for homeless students attending HSRA, for \$10,000.
 - Shavlik Family Foundation Grant for \$24,542.82 to purchase new technology for a new program in coding and graphic design.

Program Challenges

The nature of HSRA's student population creates a number of challenges. We serve students who are highly mobile, many coming from unstable home settings. Most do not live with their parents; many are teen parents or carry out parental roles to younger siblings. Most behind academically, many are involved in the criminal-justice system, and close to half are homeless at some point during the year. Serving this population creates challenges which HSRA tries to address through a number of strategies. We employ a full time social worker who addresses issues of teen homelessness, trying to help students find stability in school and in their lives. The social worker connects students to human services resources that can help with issues of housing and medical care. HSRA also has a school nurse (via a contract for services) on-site regular hours each week, who can refer students to medical care. Starting in the fall of 2012, the social worker is being assisted on services relating to housing for homeless students, by a Homeless Liaison who is provided through a grant on which HSRA collaborated with the Minnesota Internship Center Charter School.

The below table sheds light on HSRA's student demographics.

HSRA Student Body, 2010-2014				
	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Total enrollment, fall	220	196	187	235
Gender				
Male	55%	60%	57%	52%
Female	45%	40%	43%	48%
Ethnicity				
African-American	85%	89%	82%	78%
Caucasian	6%	4%	7%	12%
Hispanic	4%	3%	3%	1%
Asian or Native American	5%	4%	8%	9%
Eligible for free or reduced-cost lunch	85%	96%	92%	90%
Receiving special education services	23%	25%	21%	23%

During 2013-14, 90% of HSRA students were eligible for free or reduced-price school lunch; 23% had active IEP's as of October 1. The following risk factor data was collected during the 2013-14 school year:

- Of HSRA students that do live with a parent or guardian, about half of those parents/guardians struggle with addiction issues.
- Upon enrollment, 65% of students report being formally involved with the criminal justice system.
- Upon enrollment, almost 40% of students report being kicked out or excluded from their previous schools.
- HSRA students' average age as of the beginning of the 2013-14 school year was 17.9⁷; about half the students in attendance are over 18.
- The average HSRA student is over a year and a half behind in credits upon enrollment.

Almost 50% of HSRA students were officially reported as homeless at some point during the 2013-14 school year. Also, per an intake survey done in the fall of 2013, 73% of incoming students had been out of school prior to enrolling, for an average of 6.47 months.

As the above data documents, HSRA's individualized program helps highly mobile students by providing a learning setting that they can leave and then return to without forfeiting whatever progress they had made, as would be the case in a school with conventional semester-long courses (HSRA does offer semester-long courses as well, but students who are engaged are able

⁷ Calculated based on the age of all 408 students who were enrolled at any time during the 2013-14 school year, but using their age as of the first day of school in September 2014.

to receive partial credit if they have to leave the program). While we strongly encourage students to remain enrolled, and make sure they know consistent attendance is necessary to make steady academic progress, the circumstances of their lives sometimes force them to leave school for a time. Also, to accommodate students enrolling at different times during a term, there is an orientation program that takes several days, during which enrolling students go through organized activities to learn about the program and create an individualized learning plan. The orientation is offered multiple times during the year, not only during the first week of school.

To enhance safety, HSRA has implemented the Crisis Prevention Institute's methodology for de-escalating violent and potentially violent situations. The aim is for crisis situations to be handled more effectively, by being taken out of learning areas by a staff person, resulting in fewer disruptions of student learning. HSRA staff have been trained in the Nonviolent Crisis Intervention approach. This is a nationally-recognized training developed by the Crisis Prevention Institute (<http://www.crisisprevention.com/>) based in Brookfield, Wisconsin. HSRA's Operations Director is certified as a CPI trainer, and provides training in the approach to other staff.

Other challenges faced by HSRA during 2013-14 included:

- Serving a large special education population. HSRA serves a large proportion of students with special learning needs: Twenty-three per-cent as of October 2013. HSRA serves many students who have special needs which are not identified immediately. The most common areas of disability are Learning-Disabled and Emotional-Behavioral Disabilities. The proportion of special education students served is typically around 30% per program staff. In serving its special-needs students, HSRA staff have found that on the one hand, African American youth are often over-identified for special learning needs in previous schools; and on the other hand, other schools are often slow to send documentation of students' IEP's. At HSRA every student has a Personal Learning Plan (PLP); for special-needs students, the PLP advances the goals of the IEP.
- The federal/state requirement that high schools be evaluated based on students' on-time (four-year) graduation rate is problematic for HSRA. By design the school serves students who are significantly behind in credits and academic skills; about half of our students are aged 18-21. When a student enrolls at age 17 or 18 with only a handful for high school credits from previous schools, it is impossible for that student to graduate "on time." Newly entering students have consistently been a year and a half behind in credits on average. State-monitored measures now include five- and six-year graduation rates (reported on above, beginning of the Academic Program Summary section) which are better, but still problematic as students who only enroll for a short time and then fail to graduate, are counted against the school in these calculations. The state's graduation measures also do not include students

who graduate in their seventh year or after they turn twenty-one; HSRA had seven such students during 2013-14.

- Attendance continues to be a challenge, as is recognized by the inclusion of attendance rate in HSRA's Performance Targets. Per almost-final 2013-14 data, it appears the overall percent-of-attendance declined by about 3% from 2012-13 to 2013-14. To encourage students to remain engaged with their education and keep attending school regularly, HSRA has implemented a set of strategies including phone calls to students who are unexpectedly absent, home visits to targeted students, and supporting students in their efforts to access transportation, housing, healthcare, and jobs, factors which interfere with many students' ability to attend school consistently. The Check and Connect program, first implemented in 2013-14, is part of the school's ongoing effort to engage and re-engage students in learning.
- A number of program audits which HSRA was required to complete beginning in September 2013 constituted another challenge to the school during 2013-14. At the beginning of the school year, while the school was still moving into its new facility, MDE required a MARSS audit, on the 2011-12 school year. Documentation was located and the audit completed, resulting in an adjustment of only 0.58 of one ADM. This was followed by an audit of the Title I and II programs, a Special Education program audit, and a Food Service program audit, all of which were completed by spring 2014. In addition to these programs which were carried out for the Dept. of Education, the HAS program was audited by the state Dept. of Health, which is a major grantor of HAS.
- Finally, moving at the last minute to a new facility was a major challenge for HSRA during 2013-14! The new building is a major improvement for the school, with more and better space for both academic learning and the recording studios, but it was not ready for the school to move in until just a week before school started in the fall of 2013. At that point, many parts of the building were still under construction. The recording studios were not available for use until January 2014, so recording projects had to be put on hold; and the school kitchen was not ready until early spring (students were served bag lunches until then).

Innovative Practices and Implementation

As the only public high school in Minnesota that is co-located with a professional music recording studio, HSRA is a highly innovative program! HSRA also employs recognized best practices for drop-out recovery. The Reaching At-Promise Students Association (RAPSA, online at www.rapsa.org) lists the following best practices for drop-out recovery:

- Open entry / open exit enrollment
- Individualized learning pedagogies tailored to student needs and goals

- Technology and innovative modalities such as blended learning and project-based learning
- Access to and/or partnerships for wrap-around services for students

HSRA has been using these practices since its inception.

In addition to the music recording industry focus and utilization of best practices for drop-out recovery, innovative practices in place at the school during 2013-14 included the following:

- Professional Learning Communities for HSRA teaching staff, using Critical Friends protocols. Staff observe each other teaching and provide feedback, on a peer-to-peer basis. This was begun during 2010-11, and has continued since with good results. Also, two teaching strategies were adopted from *Teach Like a Champion: 49 Techniques that Put Students on the Path to College*, by Doug Lemov. The strategies were No Opt Out, and Cold Calling (first adopted in 2010-11, and continued since).
- HSRA's project-based focus, described elsewhere in this Report, is an innovative approach to meeting academic standards while utilizing students' own interests to power the learning process. The project-based learning focus is supported by well-equipped workspaces: each student has their own desk and computer, providing an office-like work environment.
- High-level group projects including corporate sponsorships often focusing on socially-relevant issues, e.g. Junior Achievement *Company Program* and Jump Start, Re@l Marketing, and the Post-Secondary Outcomes Survey project.
- Integration of student learning with real-world practice, e.g. by supporting public events with artistic performance, sound and technical support; and access to commercial radio exposure for public service announcements and publicity.
- The Check and Connect program, described above in the Academic Performance section as a strategy to improve student attendance and retention, is another innovative practice HSRA began during 2013-14.
- In January 2011, HSRA agreed to begin acting as the nonprofit host of the HIV/AIDS/STD Prevention and Awareness (HAS) program which had been managed by The City Inc. in Minneapolis (official name Check Yo' Self Health and Wellness Center). When The City Inc. closed, the HAS program appealed to HSRA to act as its fiscal agent and host. This program has provided prevention services to youth aged 13-24 for over 18 years, with funding through the state of Minnesota. Last spring, the Check and Connect crew from HAS won the Teenwise Minnesota Teenagers of the Year Award. HSRA benefits from the co-location of this program at its facility because this allows better accessibility for HSRA students to the STD education, prevention and testing resources HAS provides. This relationship continued since. HAS is now organizationally integrated into HSRA, and moved with HSRA to its

- new facility for the fall of 2013.
- Team-teaching around real-world authentic projects.
 - The Visual Inclusion Program, described elsewhere in this report, which creates transitional opportunities for special education students by developing entrepreneurial skills, post-secondary options, community engagement and leadership skills.

Future Plans

For the future, HSRA plans to continue the successful practices currently in place while continually reviewing and enhancing the program, through summer staff sessions and ongoing development activities.

Fully utilizing its new facility continues to be a major focus for HSRA. HSRA created a campaign called The Sound of Learning (online at www.soundoflearning.org) to inform the community about the school's relocation and to raise funds for the new facility. Here is how the campaign describes "The sound of our future" –

The Twin Cities Youth Village has the potential to be one of the most recognizable symbols in the midwest. The vision that HSRA founder David "T.C." Ellis and program director Tony Simmons have had has emerged into a reality. Education is just the beginning. The Village would feature campus housing to assist our young people who need residency. A community-learning center could assist students in their schoolwork and the Open Arms Substance Abuse Prevention Program would provide a safe place for teens facing issues with addiction. The Village would help expand the project-based curriculum forward to enhance educational possibilities. All of these facets encompass amazing potential. You can help High School for Recording Arts complete the vision that its founder set forth years ago.

The new facility was envisioned as a youth-centered, 21st century learning and community center featuring Studio 4's state of the art music recording studios, gymnasium, and commercial kitchen. HSRA leadership is proud to take HSRA into its next chapter with this new facility which aims to be a beacon of hope to the youth of our community and their families.

In planning the move to a new facility, HSRA staff initiated a process to re-imagine HSRA. This process included considering revising the staffing structure to fit the new space and to streamline communications. HSRA is positioning itself for capacity building to fully take advantage of the opportunities available with this larger and high-profile space. Revision of staffing structure began during 2013-14 with the establishment of three departments; Student Support and Engagement, and Security were added as departments during 2013-14. HSRA leadership is continuing to consider revisions to school organization to ensure good results and staff

accountability.

HSRA also plans to create a community learning resource center, specifically for engagement with the community, including parents. The resource center, which will be developed in the coming years, will include a computer lab and other resources available to the public. HSRA also has plans to work with a major financial institution to provide financial literacy related training to families and community.

HSRA is moving forward on different components of the Twin Cities Youth Village, the first of which is providing housing for students who are homeless and highly-mobile (about one-third of HSRA's student body). HSRA is committed to working with community partners, individuals and organizations that share the goal of housing for our students, to make this a reality.

Specific new initiatives planned during 2013-14 included:

- Training for HSRA instructional staff, on Common Core curriculum and instructional techniques. This was provided by a reading specialist from Hamline University during the summer of 2014.
- Full implementation of the Check and Connect program, supported beginning fall 2014 by two full-time Promise Fellows, grant-supported positions which HSRA was able to obtain for the first time.
- Additional paraprofessional staff to act as advisor assistants, enhancing content teachers' ability to work directly with students. These positions were hired part way through the fall 2014 semester.

Finally, HSRA is committed to working with its authorizer and other committed parties such as the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) and the Reaching At-Promise Students Association (RAPSA), to identify or develop relevant, appropriate and challenging measures of success for schools serving at-risk populations. This work is informed by recent research on effective strategies for drop-out prevention and recovery: examples include the Jobs for the Future report *Reinventing Alternative Education* (online at <http://application.jff.org/alternativeeducation/index.php>), and the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools' report on *Closing the Achievement Gap: An Innovative Accountability System for Charter Schools Serving Significant Populations of Students Under Minnesota's Graduation Incentives Law*, released January 2013. The Anecdotes Aren't Enough report, created by a NACSA working group of which Program Director Tony Simmons was a member, is available at <http://charteringquality.org/anecdotes-arent-enough/>. Mr. Simmons continues to participate in a national working group convened by NACSA to study alternative measures for alternative populations and make recommendations. HSRA is planning to gather additional data on students

in anticipation of acceptance of alternative measures for schools that are serving as drop-out recovery programs.