

Charter School Annual Report 2018-19



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

Contents: HSRA Annual Report for 2018-19

High School for Recording Arts: Introduction	4
School Enrollment and Student Attrition.....	5
Governance and Management.....	6
Governance	6
Authorizer	7
School Management, Administration and Staffing.....	7
Director’s Professional Development Plan	11
Staffing.....	12
Finances.....	13
Academic and Operational Performance	14
HSRA Academic Program Summary	14
HSRA Contract Goals and Performance in 2018-19	19
Program Successes	24
Program Challenges	27
Innovative Practices and Implementation.....	30
Future Plans	32

Per...	Requirement	Included in section...
Statute	Annual Report Posted to Website Is your annual report posted to the school website?	Posted at (http://hsra.org/Resource-Center.aspx)
Statute	Annual Report Distribution Was the annual report distributed to school employees, parents and legal guardians, and authorizer by publication, mail, or electronic means in a timely manner?	Yes
Statute	School Enrollment Does it contain school enrollment data?	See School Enrollment and Student Attrition
Statute	Student Attrition Does it contain student attrition information?	See School Enrollment and Student Attrition
Statute	Governance and Management Does it contain an update on governance and management?	See Governance and Management
Statute	Staffing Does it contain an update on staffing structure?	See Staffing
Statute	Finances Are there financial statements included?	See Finances
Statute & Contract	Academic Performance Is there an update on the academic performance?	See Academic and Operational Performance
Statute	Innovative Practices and Implementation Does the report discuss innovative practices and implementation?	See Innovative Practices and Implementation
Statute	Future Plans Does the report update on future planning?	See Future Plans

High School for Recording Arts: Introduction

The High School for Recording Arts, Minnesota Independent School District #4039, has now completed twenty-one years as an independent charter school, and is pleased to present this annual report for the 2018-19 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 specifies that: *High School for Recording Arts is defined by its commitment to find and nurture the genius and creativity of every student despite any life challenges or setbacks.*

Our school is built around the recognition that every learner has:

- *Special talents and strengths.*
- *Passionate interests.*
- *Impactful experiences.*
- *Unique perspectives.*

At HSRA, each student's unique experiences are matched with appropriate supports and connections to enhance that learner's potential.

We believe the key to meaningful learning lies in authentic acknowledgement of each learner's unique abilities and experiences. We encourage each learner's journey to explore and affirm meaning in their lives using creative learning opportunities and strategies. This leads to their active participation in the learning process.

HSRA/Studio 4 focuses on developing a learner's ability to see the importance of living, sharpening their talents and abilities so that they may develop self-efficacy, and contribute to a better space and place for them to prosper, grow, create, and be a change agent in their community.

This effort leads to our learners becoming positive contributors to their communities, productive and enterprising workers, good citizens and lifelong learners.

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 leading to further expansion in enrollment. The 2018-19 school year was HSRA’s fifth year in its own facility, a former Bally Fitness building which was renovated for the school and Studio 4 recording studios. The building is now owned by HSRA’s building company.

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.

The balance of this report is organized around the elements of Pillsbury United Communities’ Charter School Annual Report Checklist.

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.

This table identifies the number of students enrolled at the school during the 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19, and estimated 2019-20 enrollment. Data is based on October 1 enrollment.

School Year	9	10	11	12	Total	Growth Rate
2015-16	81	98	65	71	315	+13%
2016-17	13	42	71	192	318	+1%

2017-18	15	38	63	208	324	+2%
2018-19	7	28	55	189	279	-14%
Estimated 2019-20					325	

To accommodate the needs of its mobile student population, HSRA continues enrolling students throughout the year. Typically enrollment climbs from fall through the spring.

Student enrollment at HSRA has been fairly stable over the past several years, since the move to the new site, where the location and overall attractiveness of the building help HSRA recruit and retain more students than previously. Final Average Daily Membership for 2018-19 was 299.34, a decline from the 2017-18 figure which was 328.7. As of fall 2019, however, student numbers seem to have recovered, with 350 students enrolled by early November.

Governance and Management

Governance

HSRA is governed by a Board which holds regular meetings every two months throughout the year, with additional meetings scheduled as needed. During 2018-19 there were eight regular meetings and one special meeting for a total of nine meetings in all. Board members serve staggered three-year terms. Parent member Tonya Draughn left the Board in the fall; new parent member Dennis Welch was elected and was seated at the annual Board meeting in December, along with Community member Pamela Weems and Teacher member Darryl Young who were re-elected. Officers were also chosen at the annual meeting. Details on HSRA Board membership are provided in the table below.

2018-19 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	Chair; Teacher (#323788)	Nov. 2016	D e c . 2016	November 2019	651 287-0890; paula@hsra.org	9 / 9
Tonya Draughn	Secretary/Treasurer; Parent	Nov. 2015	D e c . 2015	November 2018	651 287-0890	3 / 3
Alicia Sullivan	Secretary/Treasurer; Community	February 2018	M a r c h 2018	Fall 2020	nileypricey14@gmail.com	4 / 9
Pamela Weems	Community	December 2018	Decembe r 2018	Fall 2021	Lovepromo00@aol.com	7 / 9
Dennis Welch	Parent	December 2018	Decembe r 2018	Fall 2021	dwelch@frandsenfinacial.com	6 / 6
Darryl Young	Vice Chair; Teacher (#384827)	December 2018	Decembe r 2018	Fall 2021	651 287-0890; darryl@hsra.org	9 / 9

Training was provided for the HSRA Board January 30, 2019. Staff from Designs for Learning provided training covering the three required areas of Governance, Personnel and Finance. This training was attended by all five members.

Authorizer

The High School for Recording Arts' Authorizer is Pillsbury United Communities. The 2018-19 school year was the final year of a five-year charter contract with Pillsbury. In the fall of 2018 HSRA submitted its Quality School Review Contract Renewal Application and in the spring of 2019 the contract was renewed for another five-year term, running July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2024.

The Authorizer contact is Larry McKenzie (mckenziel@puc-mn.org ; 612 302-3409).

School Management, Administration and Staffing

Management of HSRA is led by its Executive Director and facilitated through a Leadership Team. The 2018-19 school year was Tony Simmons' ninth year as HSRA's Executive Director. E.D. responsibilities include learning about effective strategies for serving today's urban youth in a creative, innovative learning environment; external advocacy, to raise HSRA's profile as a respected model for re-engaging urban youth; elevating HSRA's understanding and influence through alternative accountability measures; reporting to HSRA's governing board; monitoring school finances so as to ensure a financial plan that reflects the educational priorities of HSRA and sustains fiscal health; and on-site leadership / management of HSRA. In addition, the Executive Director focuses on the coaching and development of emerging leaders.

The HSRA Leadership Team includes the Executive Director; the Education Director; the Education Programming Director; the Business Manager; the Studio Director; the Director of Operations, and the Founder of HSRA. Each of the Directors is tasked with developing school systems and practices; and managing appropriate staff in their respective teams to ensure the mission, vision and practice of the school’s values are carried out in real time. A team of Assistant Directors support this work: the Assistant Director of Special Education, the Assistant Director of Educational Programming, the Assistant Director of Operations, and the Assistant Director of Student Support and Engagement.

The Director, Founder, Business Manager, Studio Director and Director of Operations are employees of Studio 4 and serve HSRA through the school’s contract with Studio 4. David Ellis and Tony Simmons (the Founder and Executive Director) have worked together since 1995-96, even prior to the inception of HSRA. Paula Anderson joined the HSRA team in 2003, and the other Leadership Team members have also been in place for several years. At its meetings the Leadership Team reviews goals and objectives, and current status of the school’s operations.

2018-19 HSRA School Management and Faculty					
Name	File Folder Number	Assignment	Years Employed by HSRA	Left During 2018/19	Not Returning 2019/20
Tony Simmons		Executive Director (via contract)	18	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Paula Anderson	323788	Director of Educational and Institutional Effectiveness	15	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
David Anderson		Special Education Para	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Riana Aulet		Accounting Clerk	7	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Layne Bellamy		Security Coordinator	19	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Layne Bellamy II		Special Education para	8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tikonwaun Blackamore		Lead Special Ed. Advisor	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Riccardo Box		Paraprofessional	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	x
Azia Brown		Promise Fellow	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	x
Matthew Brown		Operations Director (contract)	8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joey Cienian	452457	Director of Educational Programming	9	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
David Cox		Maintenance	14	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2018-19 HSRA School Management and Faculty

Name	File Folder Number	Assignment	Years Employed by HSRA	Left During 2018/19	Not Returning 2019/20
Charles Davis		Student Support Lead	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	x
Charlitta Ellis		CYS Program Director	8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
David Ellis		Founder (contract)	21	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jonathan Engelking		Promise Fellow	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Phillip Espinoza Day		Student Support	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aurora Fields		Promise Fellow	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	x
Dan Frey	445216	Assistant Director of Student Engagement	9	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Amanda Galloway		Lead Sped. Advisor	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jennifer Hinds		Admin. Coordinator	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	x
Montana Hirsch		Advisor	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Malik Hollon		Student Support Specialist	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Johnny Howard, Jr.		Special Education Para	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bonita Hughes		Business Manager (contract)	16	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tesha Johnson		CYS Program Facilitator	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vicki Mack	298175	Special Ed. Transitions	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	x
Leah McGinley		Special Ed. Lead Advisor	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stephanie Miska	384219	Assistant Director, Special Ed.	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gabe Moore		Special Ed. Para	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nakream Mosthi		Student Support	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Barbara Murphy	375984	Math Facilitator / Student Data Administrator	16	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agapito Otero		Facilities Coordinator	9	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brieana Peery		Student Support	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Torsten Peterson		Promise Fellow	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brian Sandifer		Special Ed. Cultural Liaison	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tabitha Wheeler	407062	Social Worker	16	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Michael Wilson	341907	Social Worker	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Phil Winden		Studio Director (contract)	21	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tyrone Winn		Front Desk	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Here is how HSRA's approach to professional development for its staff is described in its comprehensive School Review application for re-authorization:

At HSRA, because of our unique mission and the complex needs of the population of students we serve, we have extended and holistic professional development opportunities throughout the summer and school year. We train on our mission and culture, culturally relevant youth development, developing strong relationships, identify ACES and student trauma and effectively responding, restorative circles, restorative discipline and classroom management, working through unconscious bias towards student focused practices, and best practices in bringing in community partnerships. We spend an enormous amount of time working with teachers and support staff on developing skills with innovative and varied pedagogical approaches. In this we focus our training around creating culturally relevant curriculum, real-life and relevant learning opportunities, active learning in the classroom, arts integration, differentiation and modifications for all learners, embracing technology with blended learning and utilizing learning management systems, competency based learning and student driven / centered assessments, literacy integration, interdisciplinary teaching, as well as best practices in project based learning.

Each year we develop PLCs around staff reading groups and have read books such as Chris Emdin's *For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood*, Wayne Jennings' *School Transformation*, Ron Berger's *Learning that Lasts*, and this year Zaretta Hammond's *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain*. We work with a variety of community partnerships with local artists, nonprofits, and experts such as the Free Black Dirt Collective, The Humanities Center, Rock the Cause, KOFI, the Wilder Center, Domestic Abuse Partnership, The Legal Rights Center, and many more. We also work with specific trainers around Hip Hop Pedagogy, Social Justice Math, Quality Assessments, Check and Connect, and Reading Strategies such as Timothy Jones, Sam Seidel, Isaac Ewell, Michael Lipset, Alice Cook, Sayra Loftus, Nicole Nicodemus, Colleen Kaibal, Joletta Falkner, and Dr. Wayne Jennings.

Our staff participates in local trainings each year such as the MAAP conference, the Social Justice Education Fair, State Education Content Specific conferences, State Assessment Conferences, and variety of trainings with Pillsbury United, Designs for Learning, EdVisions, and MDE. Each year we send select staff to participate and bring back trainings from national professional development such as the Reaching At-Promise Students Association, the Deeper Learning Conference at High Tech High, Design Thinking Training at Stanford's D-School, and Big Picture Learning's national conferences.

Specific professional development for HSRA staff during 2018-19 included the following:

Week of August 6, 2018 (Summer 2018 training for all staff):

- School Culture / Norms / Mission Training, 2 hours
- Mindfulness Training, 1 hour
- Department Training, 2 hours
- Operations, Human Resources, Facilities Training, 3 hours
- Student Handbook and Data Privacy Training, 1 hour
- Department Training, 1 hour
- Design Thinking Training, 3 hours
- Sexual Harassment, Respectful Workplace, Education Law Training, 4 hours (external consultants)
- Design Thinking Training, 3 hours
- Education Philosophy Training, 2 hours (external consultant)

Week of August 13 (Summer 2018 training, continued):

- Validations - Competency Based Learning and Portfolio Training, 5 hours, on each of 2 days
- Active Shooter Training, 3 hours

- Restorative Practices Training, 1 hour
- Schoology / Blended Learning Training, 3 hours

Professional Development during the school year included:

- 9/19/18: Staff Training: Book Groups (Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain Pre-Reading, Group Formation- Discussion), 2 hours; Restorative Circle Training / Reflection, 1 hour; Timothy Jones : Hip Hop Pedagogy Training, 2 hours
- 10/10/18: Book Groups (Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain – Ch. 1 / 2)
- 10/17/18: Design Thinking Training, 2 hours; Civic Engagement / Open-Walled Learning Pedagogy Training, 1 hour; Portfolio Assessment training, 1 hour
- 11/14/18: Book Groups (Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain – Ch. 3 / 4); Legal Rights Center Training on Student Rights, 1 hour
- 12/12/18: Restorative Circle on Culture Building, 2 hours
- 1/16/19: Book Groups (Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain – Ch. 5 / 6)
- 1/25/19: Guided Study Training, 1.5 hours; "Slow Dating" with Breakfast - Team Building Activity
- 2/13/19: Book Groups (Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain – Ch.7), 2 hours
- 3/13/19: ACES training, 3 hours (external consultant and school social worker)
- 4/17/19: Team Building / Staff Celebration
- 5/15/19: Delta Bootcamp, 2 HOURS; Student Delta Grad Cohort Workshops

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. Mr. Simmons’ professional development plan includes continuing to learn about effective strategies for serving today’s urban youth, through attending conferences, workshops and networking with fellow educators; continuing to raise HSRA’s profile as a respected model for re-engaging urban youth in education; elevating HSRA’s understanding and influence through alternative accountability measures (including seeking to influence policy at the state and local level), and by demonstrating leadership on-site at HSRA.

At the school, a major focus for Mr. Simmons is supporting the development of emergent leaders, HSRA staff members who are being increasingly tasked with oversight of the day-to-day operations of the school. While he continues to act as a thought-leader in HSRA’s conversation about the type of program the school is and aspires to be, Mr. Simmons’ role has shifted from active management of the program toward mentoring/coaching support for newer leaders in the school. In addition to this role, two critical priorities for the HSRA director are leading innovation in pathways to 21st-century careers for students, and leading the school’s efforts to reach accountability goals for the authorizer while staying true to its innovative mission and model.

Mr. Simmons now serves as adjunct faculty at the High Tech High Graduate School of Education) HTH/GSE) in San Diego, CA (<https://hthgse.edu/>). As a result of his work at the HTH/GSE and in leading HSRA, he was invited to present the commencement speech to the 2018 graduating class at the HTH/GSE. His commencement address was subsequently published in substantial part in the July 13, 2018 edition of Education Week (see https://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/learning_deeply/2018/07/education_equity_requires_social_justice_warriors.html). Other presentations during 2018-19 included:

- Hewlett Deeper Learning Conference
- Stanford University D-School design and futures workshop (ethnographic)
- Education Graduate Students' Society at McGill University in Montreal
- Bush Foundation Conference
- Global Education Leadership Summit in Bangkok, Thailand
- New School Creation Fellowship visit to HSRA in May
- EMBER / Spring Point Partners Visit
- Charter Collaborative in Oakland, CA
- Soundset Festival, an independent hip-hop music festival held yearly in the Minneapolis-Saint Paul area over Memorial Day weekend
- Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs (MAAP) Conference
Sparkhouse Conference presented by the Washington, DC-based Education Reimagined which supports learner-centered education nationally
- South by Southwest Education Conference, Austin, TX

Also, Tony Simmons serves on governing boards of the local Education Evolving organization, and the national Reaching At-Promise Students Association RAPSA).

Staffing

In addition to the Leadership Team, HSRA administration has created career-ladder positions among its teaching staff in order to stabilize the program and ensure effective transition into the future. Lead positions include Assistant Director of Education, Assistant Director of Student Support and Engagement, and Lead Special Education Facilitator. All are filled by teachers.

HSRA's teaching staff was quite stable during the 2018-19 school year with no licensed teachers departing during the school year, and only two not returning for 2019-20. The table below lists all HSRA licensed teaching staff during 2018-19.

2018-19 High School for Recording Arts Teaching Faculty Information

Name	File Folder Number	Assignment/ Subject	Left During 2018/19	Not Returning 2018/19
Paula Anderson	323788	English Facilitator	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nicole Belle-Isle	419861	Special Ed. Facilitator	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joey Cienian	452457	Social Studies Facilitator / Director of Ed. Programming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Priscilla Dombek	442963	Special Ed. Reading Specialist	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maureen Foss	395378	Math Facilitator and college support specialist	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Haben Ghebregergish	511583	Math Facilitator	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jessica Johnson	445122	Special Ed. Facilitator	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Amy Lund	467214	Special Ed. Facilitator	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Barbara Murphy	375984	Math facilitator/Student Data Administrator	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Philip O'Neill	499550	Special Ed. Facilitator	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Michael Padgett	500825	Humanities Facilitator	<input type="checkbox"/>	x
Cynthia Rowell	385236	Math Facilitator	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Angela Shanley	440215	Special Ed. Facilitator	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cynthia Simpson	507433	Special Ed. Facilitator	<input type="checkbox"/>	x
Renee Swanson	452059	Science Facilitator / Asst. Director of Ed. Programming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toni Wilcox	425272	Humanities Facilitator	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Darryl Young	384827	Special Ed. Facilitator	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Finances

The financial stability of High School for Recording Arts has been solid during its 21 years of operations. The school has consistently maintained a positive fund balance and robust financial health. HSRA purchased its building, increased staffing over the past several years, and still added to its fund balance. Multiple funding streams are handled efficiently and effectively by HSRA's business office.

The Fund Balance has increased each of the past three years, with a substantial increase during Fiscal 2019, due in large part to HSRA receiving a \$500,000 donation from Springpoint, funds which are to be used to offset restrictive covenants associated with HSRA's building lease. However, the Fund Balance

would have increased during 2018-19 even without this generous donation. Average Daily Membership for Fiscal 2019 was 299.34, a decline from the 2017-18 figure which was 328.7. However, as noted above, enrollment seems to have recovered based on the first quarter of the 2019-20 school year. The budget for Fiscal 2020 is conservatively based on 320 students (HSRA had 350 students enrolled by the beginning of November 2019, and ADM of 311 for the year to that point). Note, below figures do not include HSRA's Building Fund.

HSRA Financial Summary, 2015-2019				
	Total Rev.	Total Exp.	Ending F.B.	F.B. - % of Exp.
FY 2015	\$4,499,245	\$4,198,878	\$687,520	16.4%
FY 2016	\$5,230,458	\$5,394,760	\$523,217	9.7%
FY 2017	\$5,876,340	\$5,794,852	\$604,706	10.4%
FY 2018	\$6,099,297	\$6,055,185	\$648,819	10.7%
FY 2019	\$7,216,960	\$6,564,699	\$1,301,080	18.0%

Academic and Operational 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, HSRA has had many examples of hard-won success. HSRA aims to track data in more complex ways that give a richer and more accurate picture of how the school is doing. Detailed academic performance results are included below, in the “HSRA Academic Performance in 2018-19” section.

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, and a school that provides a curriculum that puts special emphasis on learning through creativity and arts expression, relevant and impactful cultural learning experiences, skill development and coaching through barriers or gaps in a student’s skills. Students learn by creating interest-driven projects overseen by their advisor. Each student at HSRA creates their own personal learning plan which includes goal development around life skills, creativity, and academic progress. They do this with a strong relationship with a HSRA advisor who puts a special focus on the student individualizing their plan at our school to maximize personal fulfillment. Each student’s personal learning plan is supported with consistent coaching, check-ins, progress checks, and interventions to help students develop and achieve their goals in the ways unique to them.

HSRA uses a variety of innovative education strategies because it serves students who have a diverse set of needs, learning styles, proficiency levels, and barriers outside of school which produce a complex set of needs before students are ready to learn. In order to personalize learning experiences address student needs HSRA has created a multi-tiered choice based system in which students work to showcase skill development of core competencies in a site-wide validation portfolio. To do this they can learn in interactive workshops which utilize blended learning through Schoology, hands-on experiential inquiry and deeper learning, culturally relevant programming through the lens of hip-hop pedagogy, scaffolded project based learning training and assessment, and a significant amount of open-walled real-world experience. Students are also able to work with content specialists and project teams on individual projects, and work on their competency development with daily pop-up classes, field trips, project labs, community educators, and skill development certifications in our arts-based innovative learning labs.

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

Language Arts: HSRA's schoolwide approach to reading/literacy is through daily integrated humanities courses. These courses focus on literature and non-fiction reading which is of high interest and relevant to students' lives. The approach follows strategies advocated by Alfred Tatum in Teaching Reading to Black Adolescent Males, which seem highly applicable to HSRA's population. HSRA continued to pursue this approach during 2018-19, with education staff studying Culturally Responsive Teaching and The Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students, by Zaretta L. Hammond. Specific strategies include daily dictation, word walls, reading books in common supported by supplementary materials, support for learning vocabulary from context, free-writing, enrichment activities around books in community meetings and student projects, and writing exercises supported by expository writing lessons. 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 common practice that students keep journals or interactive notebooks 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. Students can use our learning management system Schoology to make up work, experience video lessons created by students and instructors, interact in digital community discussions, present work in portfolios, and model quality work for their peers in interactive demos.

Courses are offered daily during every block by multiple teachers, and students are able to sign up for the time that fits their schedule.

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 Language Arts classes/workshops included a Writing Workshop, an HSRA blog class, and a yearbook class. In addition, HSRA offered Short Story and Resume/Cover Letter building guided study opportunities. The Business of Music class includes guided study of poetry and lyrical analysis, via song lyrics. Finally, there was an English class in the studio called "Get on the Money Train" where students wrote music while studying and discussing English concepts.

Math: The HSRA math program is organized around Hip-Hop Math which incorporates social justice math alternating with direct instruction in the classroom and individualized competency pathways for each student.

The social justice aspect has real life math and focuses on math in the everyday world. Khan Academy is also available for students an online math program to supplement Algebra 2, Geometry, Probability and Statistics and Trigonometry programming. There is also an advanced math for the students that score very high on the MAP test in which they cover Probability and Statistics, Data Analysis, Trigonometry, and Precalculus.

At the beginning of each year (or during orientation when they enroll throughout the year), every student is administered the Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) test in order to establish baseline data. Initial results from these assessments are used to place students in targeted math groups.

In addition to Hip-Hop 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 2018-19 included: Aviation (math/physics), Culinary Math, and the TRACK program. 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 Principle. They learn some history of flight and about different types of planes along with math related to aviation.
- Junior Achievement finance curriculum: 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.
- Culinary Math: Students learn about conversions, work with fractions, unit price, best buy and put what they learn to use by converting recipes and then making the item.
- In conjunction with the special education program we offer an integrated math course offering called construction math where students learn construction and trade skills correlating with their competency progressions in math.

Finally, another important element of HSRA's math program is the Junior Achievement program. Recognizing a need to support general confidence, enjoyment and fluency with real-life, everyday math, HSRA offers courses and options to help students gain experience in these areas. The *Junior Achievement Company Program* supports learning about everyday math and also gives students hands-on experience with the financial aspects of planning and running a business. To support economics education and guide students through realistic personal financial planning and career exploration, HSRA utilizes the *Junior Achievement Finance Park* curriculum. In addition,, a Rock the Cause representative worked with HSRA students on financial aspects of the entertainment business.

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 religions 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, Economics, Civics, Personal Heritage Projects (exploration of family roots), Current Events (focused on news media/current events), Global Issues, Language Arts Rooted in History and Social Studies Content, History of American Music, Changemakers, Social Justice Travel Group, Street Law, Urban Music, Money Matters (economics), Hip Hop History, and Know Your Rights (civics curriculum offered in conjunction with the Studio).

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, an Environmental Science workshop called “Get Your Green,” Chemistry/Physics workshops such as "Design Zone" and Alpha Science are designed to increase subject knowledge, as well as develop critical thinking skills and scientific reasoning.

In Alpha Science, alpha students were encouraged to explore concepts of physics and chemistry through inquiry-based science projects. Guided projects included: studying fermentation, building a wind turbine, building phone amplifiers, building a boat and having a boat race at Foss Swim School and designing and expanding HSRA's garden.

In Biology, students explore 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 learn concepts of biology using student led inquiry, experiential learning, questioning and investigation with an emphasis on building science literacy skills, science inquiry skills and a sense of place and connectedness to the world of science.

In addition to classwork, interactive science notebooks and lab-intensive lessons, students in the biology class this year completed projects which looked at biology in relation to its impact on society. Projects included creating a podcast on human impact in the rainforest, collaboration with Macalester College on recycling programs, creating a science validation based song, and individual student projects on the impact of climate change on various habitats and animal species.

Urban Ecology, a one-month intensive workshop, was taught as well. Through this workshop students learned principles of urban ecology, had multiple site visits to support the content and met with community experts to expand their knowledge further. Site visits included a tour of downtown St. Paul's EcoDistrict, a tour of a native prairie oak savannah along the Mississippi River, a tour of the Ford Parkway Lock and Dam system, site visits to community gardens and a walking tour of University Avenue's stormwater management system. Students collaborated with Macalester College on developing community-based, site specific field trips to expand their knowledge on urban ecology.

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, which 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 podcasts, 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 and also a staff-supervised art group. 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 students have remained involved in graphic arts work including logo and package design, e.g. album design / labels. Graphic arts work continues, with an emphasis increasingly on material for online use, 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, and have produced advertising jingles and Public Service Announcement videos. A number of graphic arts projects have been carried out as part of HSRA's

innovative Visual Inclusion program, described below under *Program successes and best practices*.

Recent additions to HSRA's arts offerings have centered around sewing and fashion; students have created own lines of clothing and curated fashion shows featuring student-designed work such as customized shoes and closing items. Another new direction during 2018-19 involved integrated study of architecture and woodworking: HSRA students studied historic buildings, then built scale models of them in wood.

Music: HSRA students have extensive opportunities to study music and recording techniques in Studio 4's music studios. Since 2017 HSRA has had in place a full time Business of Music & Media class; the Language Arts component of this was strengthened during 2018-19. Over 50 HSRA students participate in the class and learn how to set up their own business and run their own record labels and media companies. Students learn about e-commerce, digital music distribution, radio promotion, news media publicity, entertainment law, digital media strategies, and artist management. They also earn certifications in those areas of study.

HSRA Business of Music students spearheaded a special project where they worked with digital distribution service TuneCore to release the entire HSRA back catalog of music. The project spanned 20 years of HSRA music; for the first time ever, 11 HSRA students produced music compilations were made available worldwide on services like iTunes, Spotify, and Amazon. HSRA students then undertook an ambitious project to promote the HSRA music catalog to radio stations and media outlets across the globe. Their promotional efforts secured airplay on college radio and public radio formats. It also earned news stories on NPR, WCCO, KARE 11, Pioneer Press and more.

The Business of Music and Media class has become an essential training ground for HSRA students to discover new talents and develop business skills in a real world setting. It has also inspired students to pursue communications, business and law degrees at the college level. On a weekly basis the Business of Music and Media class visits the job boards for entertainment companies like Warner, Sony, Spotify and more, and trains HSRA students to be able to compete for those jobs.

A HSRA graduate, currently studying Communications at St. Cloud State, said "I never thought I could go to college. I never thought I could have a job in the music industry until I took the Business of Music class at HSRA. I thought no one cared enough to give me a chance."

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 Contract Goals and Performance in 2018-19

The below table shows HSRA’s goals and measures developed for accountability with its authorizer, Pillsbury United Communities. There were goals in five areas: Academic; Mission, Vision and Strategies; Governance; Finance; and Operations and Leadership. Within each of the five areas there were multiple goals, which are stated below. The 2018-19 school year was the final year of HSRA’s previous contract with PUC; goals and measures for the 2019-2024 contract term differ in a number of ways.

Charter Contract Goal	Results, 2018-19
Academic Goals	
NWEA Growth Goal, Reading: Percentage of students who meet their RIT Growth Projections on the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) in Reading will show HSRA at least keeping up with the norming group.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal partially met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal currently not met <i>16/21 students who tested in both fall and spring, met or exceeded projected growth (76%)</i>
NWEA Growth Goal, Mathematics: Percentage of students who meet their RIT Growth Projections on the NWEA MAP in Mathematics will show HSRA at least keeping up with the norming group.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal partially met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal currently not met <i>14/25 students who tested in both fall and spring, met or exceeded projected growth (56%)</i>
Postsecondary / Workforce Assessment, Reading: HSRA seniors will show improvements in performance based on Accuplacer Reading Comprehension test results	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal partially met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal currently not met <i>65/87 seniors scored 38-78 or higher (75%; target was at least 50%)</i>
Postsecondary / Workforce Assessment, Mathematics: HSRA seniors will show improvements in performance based on Accuplacer Arithmetic test results	<input type="checkbox"/> Goal met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal partially met <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal currently not met <i>31/82 seniors scored 34 or higher on the Accuplacer Arithmetic test (38%; average of past 4 years is 49.5%)</i>
Credits earned, overall: Students enrolled for a full semester and in regular attendance will make expected progress toward graduation as shown by credits earned	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal partially met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal currently not met <i>Average number of credits earned by students meeting the criteria (total of 147) was 5.66 (target of 5.0), a significant increase compared to 2017-18 when the average was only 3.99.</i>

Charter Contract Goal	Results, 2018-19
Academic Goals	
Credits earned, newly-enrolled students: Students newly enrolled and in regular attendance will complete more credits their first full semester at HSRA, compared to their last previous full semester	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal partially met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal currently not met <i>10/19 students meeting the criteria earned more credits at HSRA than at previous school (6/10 1st Sem; 4/9 2nd)</i>
Support for transition to post-secondary education: HSRA will implement a PSEO action plan including more effective communication with the colleges and teachers HSRA's PSEO students have for their classes; a support group with the students on pitfalls and successful habits of college; and a class for all PSEO students in which they meet weekly to discuss successes and challenges in their respective programs.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal partially met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal currently not met <i>HSRA's college support specialist works directly with PSEO-enrolled students and those students' advisors, beginning with supporting them in applying for PSEO classes. Once students are in PSEO, the college support specialist continues to coach them, also communicating with their PSEO teachers.</i>

Charter Contract Goal	Results, 2018-19
Mission, Vision & Strategies Goals	
Student retention: HSRA will continue to out-perform national student-retention norms for drop-out recovery schools. Specific targets will be established to match available national data, measuring HSRA performance in an equivalent way	<input type="checkbox"/> Goal met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal partially met <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal currently not met <i>25/47 or 53% of newly-enrolling students persisted to the end of the school year (target of 70.8%)</i>
Graduation rate, annual (proportion of students enrolled 10/1 who are grad-eligible, combined with proportion of students who enroll later but are deemed grad candidates based on credits, who do graduate by year's end; target: at least 85% over term of contract)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal partially met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal currently not met <i>25/28 or 89% grad rate - HSRA staff identified a cohort of graduation-eligible seniors during the first quarter of the school year; students who enrolled later with sufficient credits to be graduation-eligible were added to the list, and those who did not remain continuously-enrolled were removed from the cohort. This resulted in a grad cohort of 28 students, of whom 25 graduated by June 2019.</i>
Post-secondary acceptance: HSRA graduates will be accepted to college or other post-secondary institutions as evidenced by acceptance letters in their digital portfolios (target: at least 90% acceptance rate)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal partially met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal currently not met <i>All graduates applied for and were accepted in a post-secondary program</i>

Charter Contract Goal	Results, 2018-19
Mission, Vision & Strategies Goals	
Personal learning plans: HSRA students in regular attendance will have active personal learning plans as judged by biannual review carried out by administration (target: at least 90% have active PLPs)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal partially met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal currently not met <i>All students in regular attendance have PLPs, monitored by their advisors.</i>
Project-based learning: HSRA students who are continuously enrolled and in regular attendance will earn at least some of their credits through school-based projects (target: at least 75% earn credits through projects)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal partially met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal currently not met <i>55/56 students meeting the criteria earned project-based credits, based on review of transcripts (57/59 met the criteria in 2017-18)</i>
Parent engagement: HSRA staff will engage caregivers of those students who are consistently living with a caring adult	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal partially met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal currently not met <i>158/160 students continuously-enrolled throughout the year and identified as living with a caring adult, were contacted (99%)</i>
Student engagement: HSRA students will continue to show higher ratings on EdVisions' Hope Survey than students at traditional schools	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal partially met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal currently not met <i>Overall Hope rating of 53.24 (spring 2019; traditional schools: 47.66)</i>
Student re-engagement: Proportion of HSRA students who previously dropped out of school, who remain enrolled through the end of the school year, will increase from year to year.	<input type="checkbox"/> Goal met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal partially met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal currently not met <i>Students' drop-out status prior to HSRA proved difficult to determine in many cases; data was not available to report on this measure the past two years, and the measure is not included in HSRA's new goals and measures starting 2019-20.</i>

Charter Contract Goal	Results, 2018-19
Governance Goals	
Board assessment: All HSRA Board members will annually complete a survey to identify areas for improvement	<input type="checkbox"/> Goal met <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal partially met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal currently not met <i>4/6 members completed survey either August 2017 or June 2018. Note, this measure has been revised for the new school goals, now stating the Board “will annually identify their training needs and carry out training to address those needs by June 30th.”</i>
Strategic planning: The HSRA Board of Directors will review and update its strategic plan annually.	<input type="checkbox"/> Goal met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal partially met <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal currently not met <i>HSRA Board discussed revisiting the strategic plan and updating it but did not carry this out during the 2018-19 year; is underway as of fall 2019.</i>

Charter Contract Goal	Results, 2018-19
Finance Goals	
Audit findings: HSRA will reduce the number of audit findings over time, moving toward the goal of no more than three minor findings (NOTE: measure lags a year, e.g. FY17 audit results reported to the Board fall 2017)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal partially met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal currently not met <i>No findings in the FY19 audit (reported to the HSRA Board 11/6/19)</i>
Fund balance: HSRA will demonstrate healthy finances by increasing its fund balance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal partially met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal currently not met <i>Fund balance increased by \$652,261, from \$648, 819 to \$1,301,080, per FY19 audited Financial Statement (due in large part to \$500,000 donation from Springpoint, to be used to meet debt covenants associated with the HSRA building).</i>
Fundraising: HSRA will raise an increasing amount of revenue from grants and donors	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal partially met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal currently not met <i>HSRA received over \$900,000 in grants during Fiscal 2019! This includes \$500,000 which is restricted, to offset debt covenants associated with HSRA's building lease.</i>

Charter Contract Goal	Results, 2018-19
Operations and Leadership Goals	
Professional Development Plans: At least 80% of staff employed throughout the year will have two PDP / Review meetings	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal partially met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal currently not met <i>28/28 educational staff employed throughout the year had two PDP / review meetings (100%)</i>
Staff SMART goals completion: At least 80% of HSRA educational staff employed throughout the year will complete SMART goals set forth in their initial meetings	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal partially met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal currently not met <i>28/28 educational staff employed throughout the year completed SMART goals (100%)</i>

Program Successes

Program successes and best practices in place as HSRA during 2018-19 included the following:

- Success through project based learning: 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 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.
- 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 / highly mobile students who remained continuously enrolled for a full semester, showed that these students earned an average of 3.3 credits per semester in 2017-18, and 4.6 credits in 2018-19. Earning five credits per semester is considered to be on-track for graduation, so many homeless students are making the expected academic progress. These results are particularly impressive when one considers that the list of homeless students includes many who attend sporadically.
- 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. 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.
- Peer Education. Since 2011 HSRA has acted as the nonprofit host of the HIV/AIDS/STD Prevention and Awareness (HAS) program (official name is Check Yo' Self Health and Wellness Center). This program provides prevention services to youth aged 13-24 for over 18 years, with funding through the state of Minnesota. 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.
- Requiring graduation portfolios from all graduates, including a college acceptance letter. This requirement for graduation has been in place since 2009-10. HSRA staff provide assistance to

seniors in applying to colleges; their acceptance letters are part of their graduation portfolio which is required for graduation. Students also work with the college placement specialist 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.

- Implementation of Check and Connect to retain students and keep them engaged in education. This is a research-based truancy prevention program developed at the University of Minnesota, focusing on practical strategies to prevent truancy and re-engage at-risk students and families. Advisors identify students who are at risk due to factors outside school, and a staff member works with the students to help them address challenges they are facing, and stay in school. The Check and Connect program is supported by two Americorps Promise Fellows at HSRA specifically to work with Check and Connect, each with a caseload of approximately thirty. The Check and Connect is now implemented by advisors with all students, while those with academic or behavior red-flags are referred to lead Check and Connect staff for more intensive assistance. The Assistant Director for Student Support coordinates the Check and Connect program; new students work with him for two weeks after which they are passed either solely to the advisor, or additional services recommended. There are several trainings on Check and Connect during the school year.
- HSRA students continued to create and perform music; notable music projects during 2018-19 included the following:
 - Students worked with Minnesota folk music icon Paul Metsa on a project exploring the beginnings of slavery and the progression of racial history and the civil rights movement in the US. Students in this community-based learning project wrote and recorded the song “Ain’t gonna Whistle Dixie Anymore,” which was later recorded with Sounds of Blackness and released worldwide through Rock the Cause records, with proceeds benefitting the Southern Poverty Law Center.
 - HSRA’s student-run record label Another Level Records mined HSRA’s music-vaults, to curate 20 years of HSRA students’ recordings. A total of 144 tracks on 12 compilations are now available worldwide on all digital service providers.
 - Another Level Records, participated in a partnership with Twin Cities-based nonprofit Rock the Cause and Ramsey County You Lead, through which the county awarded over 30 paid internships for HSRA students. These student interns managed ALR in a real-world setting, learning transferable job skills like internet commerce, writing press releases, engaging with the media, pitching news stories to the media, copyright law, digital content creation and radio promotion, and business communication.
 - Through a partnership with St. Paul Almanac and SPNN, HSRA students helped to create the award-winning film “Rondo Beyond the Pavement” which was featured in eight international film festivals, and won the Urban Media Filmmakers festival award for best student-made documentary.
 - HSRA’s Business Music and Media program traveled to the South by Southwest music and film festival in Austin, Texas where they participated in an industry panel on the business of music

and film studies, and performed for several hundred SXSW attendees.

- As part of the national response to the Parkland school shooting in February 2018, HSRA students were invited to include their original song “We Can” on the “Raise your Voice” compilation album benefiting organizations that work to end gun violence in the schools. As a result HSRA students were quoted in both Billboard and Rolling Stone magazines.
- Also during 2018-19, HSRA students contacted Minnesota Public Radio’s contemporary music show The Current, and were able to get seven of their songs programmed for radio airplay.
- HSRA students entered their remix of the baseball anthem “Take me out to the Ball Game” in Major League Baseball’s remix contest. The Lewiee Blaze and Mickey Breeze remix resulted in the two students winning the contest, after which they were flown to Cleveland Ohio to visit the Baseball Hall of Fame and attend an all-star game. The song can now be heard at baseball stadiums across the country.
- Through HSRA’s Business of Music program, students learned to form their own record labels with international distribution, resulting in #1 hit songs in several countries through streaming platforms like spotify and iTunes, and earning the independent HSRA entrepreneurs over \$110,000 in revenue.
- HSRA’s continuing success in raising funds from grants and donations is also worth noting. This provides evidence of the interest the HSRA program is generating outside the school walls, as well as providing additional revenues to support programming. During 2018-19 notable grants included:
 - Bush Foundation Creative Cohort grant, for \$100,000 to be received over 3 years
 - Kellogg Foundation grant of \$100,000 to support a “new narrative” multimedia campaign
 - Local artist Har Mar Superstar has donated to HSRA for general purposes. Also, People of Comedy, a local collective of comedians of color, donated to operating funds designated for HSRA’s Check Yo’ Self program.
 - Xperitas approved a Service Learning grant for \$38,000 for a service learning trip to Kenya
 - Youthprise granted HSRA \$22,500 for youth participatory action research
 - Hewlett Foundation provided \$150,000 for general support of HSRA’s program
 - Finally, HSRA received \$500,000 from Springpoint, funds to be used to offset restrictive covenants associated with the building. The HSRA board acted to commit these funds for the specific purpose of meeting the covenants associated with the building, upon the advice of the school’s auditor.
- Finally, HSRA’s school culture represents a major strength of the program. The organizational culture is identified in HSRA’s Strategic Plan as critical for the school’s success, with the first of the six Aspirations around which the Strategic Plan is built stating that HSRA will *Clarify the desired HSRA culture and make a plan to purposefully preserve and advance the school culture and mission.* HSRA has articulated a Statement of Culture which describes three critical elements of HSRA’s culture, which are fundamental to the school’s identity: a culture of care; a culture of innovative, multi-faceted learning; and a dynamic culture that embraces state of the art music studio and multi-media technology.

Program Challenges

The nature of HSRA’s student population creates a number of challenges. HSRA serves students who are highly mobile, many coming from unstable home settings. Most are over-aged and under-credited compared to their peers in traditional high schools (an analysis of student demographic data in October 2017 showed average age of HSRA students at 17.88 years). Most do not live with their parents; many are teen parents or carry out parental roles to younger siblings. Most are behind academically, many are involved in the criminal-justice system, and close to half are homeless at some point during the year.

As many of the students we serve come in with significant barriers in their lives, these are often matched with enormous resiliency skills. That being said, serving this population does create challenges which HSRA addresses through a number of strategies. HSRA’s advisory structure, student support and engagement team, transition specialists, and social work team work with each student on individual goals and skill development around Social Emotional Learning Competencies and Self-Advocacy skills. Students work to secure vital records, develop communication and organizational skills, code-switch in professional environments, secure housing and financial literacy skills to budget responsibly, develop life skills with support groups and projects, and develop post-secondary plans to be self-sufficient and successful when they graduate. HSRA employs two social workers (1.5 full-time-equivalents) who address issues of teen homelessness, striving to help students find stability in school and in their lives. The social workers connect 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. Since the 2012-13 school year, the social worker has been assisted on services relating to housing for homeless students, by a Housing Advocate who is provided through a McKinney-Vento Homeless Education grant on which HSRA collaborates with the Minnesota Internship Center Charter School.

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

HSRA Student Body, 2014-2018				
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Total enrollment, fall	315	318	324	279
Gender				
Male	58%	59%	58%	59%
Female	42%	41%	42%	41%

HSRA Student Body, 2014-2018				
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Ethnicity				
African-American	79%	68%	68%	63%
Multi-racial	-	14%	15%	18%
Caucasian	6%	8%	5%	5%
Hispanic	6%	8%	10%	12%
Asian or Native American	8%	2%	2%	3%
Eligible for free or reduced-cost lunch	84%	85%	86%	88%
Receiving special education services	17%	23%	27%	29%

The vast majority of HSRA’s students come from low-income backgrounds as shown by eligibility for free or reduced-price school meals. Twenty-nine percent had active IEP’s as of October 1, but more students are identified with special needs as the year goes on. About half of HSRA students are categorized as homeless or highly mobile at some point during the year.

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 to receive partial credit if they have to leave the program). While school staff strongly encourage students to remain enrolled, and make sure they know consistent attendance is necessary to make steady academic progress, the circumstances of students’ 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.

Other challenges which HSRA continued to address during 2018-19 included:

- A decline in enrollment from 2017-18 to 2018-19 – this was not large but represented the first such decline in several years. Publicity and student recruitment efforts were stepped up during the summer of 2019, and enrollment was back on-track in the fall, with 315 students enrolled by late September.
- The level of violence in the community, with crime in neighborhoods near HSRA and from which HSRA students come, continues to affect the school. HSRA continues to revisit its strategies for proactively addressing the effects of trauma on student behavior issues, practicing a system of trauma-informed behavior management with a strength based intervention system rooted in the principles of restorative justice. HSRA has a student support and engagement team consisting of five

trauma/behavior specialists who work to engage with students in advance of potential incidents. In addition, to address incidents when they do arise HSRA has a system of intervention teams that consist of a student's advisor, a student support staff member, a special education case manager if applicable, and a community or family member to mediate and create a restorative plan to violations of our school code conduct and handbook. The trauma/behavior specialists have caseloads of students referred to them by advisors or teachers, whom they work with on social/emotional and behavior challenges, in order to address issues proactively through informal interventions both in the behavioral and academic realms. HSRA also continues to maintain a crisis team as well as its security staff who include off-duty police officers.

HSRA's crisis-team is trained in the Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) methodology for de-escalating violent and potentially violent situations. HSRA staff are trained yearly on the Adverse Childhood Experiences Survey (ACES) and Trauma-Informed behavior response and classroom management with a variety of practitioners, social workers, and community experts. During 2018-19 Active Shooter training was added to HSRA's all-staff training.

- Serving a large special education population. HSRA serves a large proportion of students with special learning needs, including 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.

Special education students are integrated in all classes HSRA offers. This is done through the team teaching model and push in classes. HSRA has a reading specialist, who will provide direct instruction, in a non-general education class, for students whose reading level is 3rd grade and below. Students also have the opportunity to receive small group instruction in math. HSRA has a differentiation specialist (special education teacher) who works directly with general education teachers offering differentiation strategies to support a student who is on an 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 HSRA's students are aged 18-21. When a student enrolls at age 17 or 18 with only a handful of 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-, six-, and seven-year graduation rates which are better for HSRA, providing more chances to show the school's effectiveness in drop-out recovery. For instance, HSRA's 7-year grad rate increased, from

43% in 2017 to 57% in 2018.

- Attendance continues to be a challenge. Given the chaotic nature of students' lives outside school, attending school consistently is very difficult for many. Per almost-final 2018-19 attendance data, overall percent-of-attendance was 52.82%, essentially unchanged from the 2017-18 figure. Although this attendance data is within the national range for reengaged students, we still are constantly striving to improve based on our strategies. For example, HSRA's Student Support and Engagement department makes attendance and retention of students its main focus. To encourage students to remain engaged with their education and attend 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, remains a key part of the school's ongoing effort to engage and re-engage students in learning.

Innovative Practices and Implementation

HSRA subscribes to the motto: "We are not trying to get better in order to attract 'better' students; we are trying to get better to better serve the students we've got!" Since its inception twenty years ago, HSRA has sought to target dropouts and potential dropouts, and constantly looks for and uses best practices in addressing their unique needs. HSRA has always been committed to serving the underserved and to becoming an example of a "destination school" for opportunity youth. HSRA continues to target students who were not being served by traditional schools. For example, the school mission includes the statement that HSRA provides youth the opportunity to achieve a high school diploma through the operation and exploration of the music business and other creative endeavors.

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 include the following:

- Customized strategies for students build pathways to post-secondary education. Through its educational program, HSRA seeks to create pathways for students to develop the skills and knowledge they'll need to fulfill their post-secondary goals that will lead to a career. HSRA focuses particularly on developing and certifying skills linked with the music industry, photography, technical trades, entrepreneurial and business skills, as well as core academic and socio-emotional development necessary for success in the professional world. Students have access to PSEO while attending HSRA and many choose to take college classes at local community colleges. HSRA also has a robust program of college visits and college and job fairs in house.
- As a new approach to help its over-aged and under-credited students prepare to graduate and succeed in post-secondary education, HSRA established an Accuplacer Prep / Grad Lab for students who are eligible to graduate by year's end. In the Grad Lab, students take the Accuplacer reading and math tests and review their scores with their advisor and subject-area teachers, comparing scores with the cut-scores needed to avoid remedial classes in the degree-seeking program of their choice. If there is a gap, the advisor and teachers work with the student to establish a competency-based curriculum, and assign tutoring sessions to help students raise their scores, to the score they need. The Grad Lab was planned during 2018-19, with implementation beginning in the spring; 2019-20 will be its pilot year.
- 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.
- Commitment to cultivating a diverse staff, to match its diverse student body. This is how this aspect was described in HSRA's QSR application last fall:
We have always had one of the most diverse staff and student populations in Minnesota. Despite the challenges of finding licensed teachers of color in Minnesota, we ensure that our students see themselves in the adults working in the building. We have always had a diverse board, diverse leadership, and diverse ideas! We are committed to find ways to increase the number of licensed teachers of color at HSRA, and are interested in pursuing either formal or informal grow-your-own programs, perhaps in collaboration with other programs.
- 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.
- HSRA students continue to be involved in high-level group projects including corporate sponsorships often focusing on socially-relevant issues.
During 2018-19 a HSRA student got significant views in online media for their songs and videos, earning significant revenue on material recorded and produced in the HSRA studios by monetizing

Youtube, Spotify and other social music media. Also, a recent HSRA graduate recording under the name Nimic Revenue, worked with Def Jam to produce a song and a video entitled “Therapy,” recorded at HSRA, which has earned significant attention.

- The Check and Connect program, a research-based strategy to improve student attendance and retention, is another innovative practice in place at HSRA.
- Since 2011 HSRA has acted as the nonprofit host of the HIV/AIDS/STD Prevention and Awareness (HAS) program (official name Check Yo’ Self Health and Wellness Center). This program provides prevention services to youth aged 13-24 for over 18 years, with funding through the state of Minnesota. 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.
- 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.
- Finally, HSRA’s development of its facility constitutes an important innovation; this is how this aspect of the school was described in HSRA’s QSR application:
One other major way we have realized our mission over the past contract term is in purchasing, renovating, and expanding our building at 1166 University Ave. in St. Paul. It has long been our vision that our students have a permanent footprint in the community--a building that would truly make the students feel welcomed, valued, and that the community is invested in their development as people and future citizens. Most charter schools serving at-risk populations do not have the luxury of having permanent homes, much less homes with state-of-the-art recording studios. Purchasing the building was a long and arduous process. In fact, High School for Recording Arts is the only alternative high school in the United States to be given an investment-grade rating by Standard and Poor’s, with whom we have formal conferences annually. In purchasing the building, we sought not only to secure our future, but to secure a place for the arts in this increasingly visible and valuable part of the Twin Cities.

Future Plans

For the future, HSRA plans to continue the successful practices currently in place while continually reviewing and enhancing the program. For instance, HSRA plans full implementation of the Grad Lab, mentioned above in the Innovative Practices section, which is being piloted during 2019-20. Summer staff sessions and ongoing development activities carried out by school leadership enable HSRA to maintain quality and continue to improve the program.

Fully utilizing its new facility continues to be a major focus for HSRA. The long-term vision for HSRA's facility is to become a "Twin Cities Youth Village":

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.

The new facility is 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 the spring of 2017 HSRA was awarded a grant from the St. Paul Foundation to carry out a feasibility study of the Twin Cities Youth Village, to be designed by African American youth. The Village is envisioned to include: incubator business launch pads, educational and re-engagement incentives and opportunities for youth, youth residential lofts, self-sufficiency services, co-mentorship, public green space and an outdoor state of the art performance space.

Beginning in 2017, HSRA has had an effort underway to establish a school which will replicate the HSRA model in Los Angeles. Activities in support of replicating the model began in the summer of 2017, and have continued since, with a pilot program operating during 2018-19. The pilot site features every aspect of the mothership program in St. Paul. There is an advisory group of stakeholders, parents, community members, artists that are eagerly awaiting the culmination of years of research, planning and hard work. One of the leaders of the HSRA-Los Angeles effort provided this update:

In our first, pilot year in Los Angeles, we tripled our enrolment and doubled our average daily attendance. Together with our students, we visited recording studios frequented by some of the world's top recording artists, invited Grammy-winning guests into our own recording studio for collaborations and master classes, and started our own, student-run business making music for other businesses in our community. Through this business we produced songs for the Ever Forward Club and Comfort LA, both California-based social enterprises. Our students produced and released their first music video, performed at the world-renowned Deeper Learning conference, appeared in Netflix-produced music videos, appeared on the legendary BeatJunkies Radio, and earned Studio 4 certifications in the basics of sound engineering and musical production. Our students became cultural ambassadors and activists in their communities, taking part in ballot-day events to get out the vote and working to pass a bill that prohibits police from using "fear" as a reasonable excuse to employ the use of deadly force. Perhaps most importantly, for the health and wellbeing of our students and their families, we successfully placed 57% of our students in paid internships in the music industry. Through an innovative partnership with the Los Angeles youth worksource centers, we were able to certify our program as a youth work site, employing our students at \$13.25/hour for 120 hours during the school year. Through this program, our students ran their own record label on campus for credit in core courses.

Finally, HSRA remains committed to working with its authorizer and other committed parties such as the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) and RAPSAs, to identify or develop

relevant, appropriate and challenging measures of success for schools serving at-risk populations. This work is informed by ongoing research on effective strategies for drop-out prevention and recovery.