



**Yinghua Academy**  
**Minnesota School District #4140**  
**2011-2012 Annual Report on Curriculum,**  
**Instruction and Student Achievement**

October 1, 2012



**Yinghua Academy 2011-2012 Annual Report  
on Curriculum, Instruction, and Student Achievement**

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Yinghua Academy opened with 90 students enrolled in the fall of 2006, and grew its enrollment 400% to a fall 2011 enrollment of 450. The fall of 2011 also marked the milestone of full articulation, as the school added its first 8<sup>th</sup> grade class. By the end of the year, 429 students were still enrolled and Yinghua's first class of students graduated.

Student enrollment has been increasing every year. The impact of opening additional kindergarten sections in 2008 and 2011 is most pronounced – increasing from 49 to 76 kindergarten students in fall 2008 and then from 77 to 98 kindergarten students from in fall 2011. Expanding kindergarten was a strategic decision made to stabilize the school's enrollment and financial health over the long term, given the more expensive immersion model, the impracticality of students entering mid-career, and the normal loss of enrollment over time that occurs in a school with families attending from over 80 different zip codes.

Current projections are to grow the school to a full capacity of 690 K-8 students in 2020.

Yinghua Academy is dedicated to a free-access quality education. As a charter school, Yinghua Academy provides an innovative and successful educational path for all students. Yinghua Academy follows all Minnesota statutes as they relate to application and admission procedures for public elementary schools. Yinghua does not discriminate in any way and all activities follow adopted policy #102 Equal Educational Opportunity. Enrollment is open to all students residing in any school district in Minnesota. Yinghua will accept all applications without question, unless the child does not meet the minimum age requirement for Kindergarten as set by the school board prior to the application period. For the 2011/2012 school year, a child was required to be 5 on or before September 1, 2011 in order to begin Kindergarten.

Each year Yinghua has an open application period; this year that period ran from January 3 to February 6, 2012 for the fall of 2012. All procedures and timing in regards to its application period are posted on [www.yinghuaacademy.org](http://www.yinghuaacademy.org) by October 1 as well as explained through several public open houses.

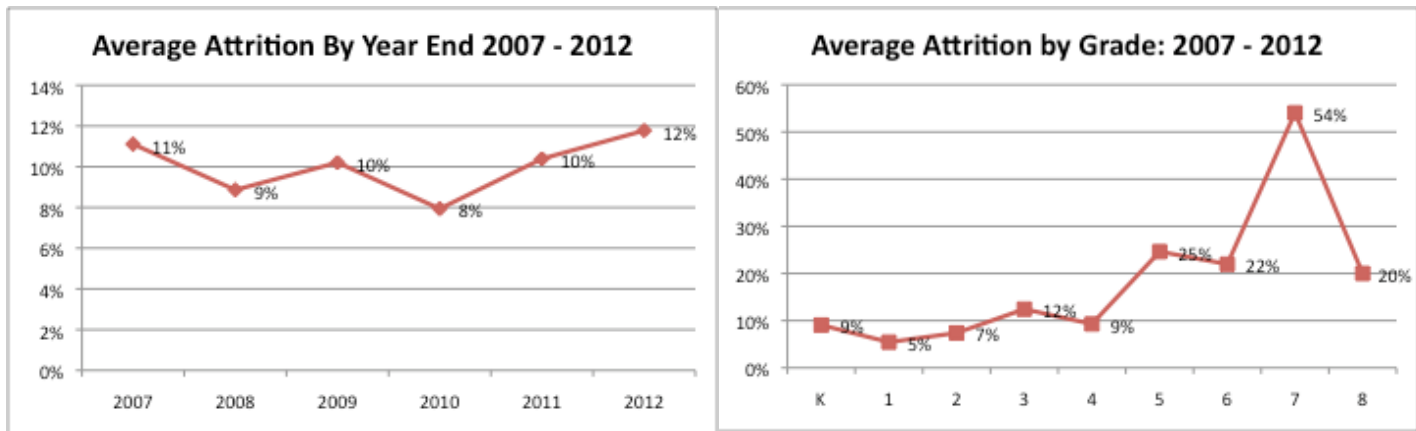
All applications are time and date stamped upon receipt in the main office. If more applications are received for a grade level than space is available, Yinghua Academy holds a public lottery. According to Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10, Yinghua offers preference to families with currently enrolled students and to children of staff. In order to get this preference, the parents must submit an application before the close of the open enrollment period. Preference is not

given for any other reason. The lottery is randomized. Students are also randomly ranked for a waiting list if applicable. Applications received after the open application period are considered on a first-come, first-served basis.

**Student Demographics for 2011-12:**

- Geography: Students attended from over 80 metro zip codes, including urban, suburban and rural areas
- Ethnicity: 48% Asian/ Pacific Islander, 45% Caucasian, 3% African American, 2% Hispanic/Latino, and 2% Native American
- English Language Learners: 6% were identified as ELL, and about 3% were heritage speakers of Chinese
- Free & Reduced Lunch: 11% qualified to receive free or reduced lunch
- Special Education: 9% were identified as receiving special education services

**SCHOOL ATTRITION**



Overall, attrition has been fairly stable, ranging from 8 to 12% each year Yinghua has been in operation, from the academic year ending 2007 to the academic year ending 2012.

When looked at by grade, the attrition rate has been fairly stable in grades K-4, ranging from 5-12% over six years of data by grade. The attrition rate in grades 5-8 is higher, ranging from 20 to 54%. Higher middle school attrition is not surprising since Yinghua’s middle school is just emerging from the development phase that was begun three years ago. With a new Executive Director who has experience in elementary and middle school (and high school) program development, Yinghua expects to have reduced attrition rates overall in future years, with projected averages of 10% for the elementary school and 20% for the middle school.



## GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

### Election of Yinghua Academy Board Members

According to the Yinghua Academy School Board’s by-laws and established procedures, the community elects new board members every June. As of July 1 every year, the newly-elected board members join the board; board members with expiring terms who did not run for reelection or were not reelected leave the board as of June 30. The most recent board elections were held May 25 – June 6, 2012, with a public meeting for candidates at the Annual Meeting of the School Board on June 4, 2012, and ballots tallied the evening of June 6, 2012.

2011-12 Election Date: June 6, 2012

2012-13 Anticipated Election Month: June 2013

### 2011-2012 School Year School Board Roster

*Board member email addresses are firstname.lastname@yinghuaacademy.org*

Name	Board Position	Group Affiliation (if teacher, file folder #)	Date Elected	Date Seated	Term Expiration	Phone Number	Meeting Attendance Rate
Bender, Lou	Member	Teacher #439740	June 2011	July 2011	June 2014	651-644-1774	95%
Grubish, Denny	Member	Parent	Appointed March 2012	March 2012	June 2013	651-738-4843	83%
Hansen, Ruth	Member	Teacher #416221	June 2011	July 2011	June 2014	952-808-0899	N/A
Jax, Scott	Member	Parent	Appointed July 2009; Elected June 2012	July 2009; July 2012	June 2015	763-424-6678	89%
Lawrence, Rosemary	Member	Community #232555	June 2011	July 2011	June 2014	612-281-7973	84%
Li, Taoyuan	Member	Teacher #377724	June 2009	July 2009	Resigned January 2012	651-415-1812	84%
Lu, Karen	Secretary	Parent	June 2011	July 2011	June 2014	612-929-2737	95%
O'Malley, Joel	Member	Parent	Appointed Sept, 2011	Sept. 2011	June 2013	952-686-8655	93%
Parish, Doug	Treasurer	Parent	June 2009	July 2009	June 2012	651-308-1239	58%
Pribbenow, Abigail	Chair	Parent	June 2009	July 2009	Resigned October, 2011	612-330-1477	100%
Shadowens, Jen	Chair (Secretary prior)	Parent	June 2010	July 2010	June 2013	612-706-8688	95%
Swenson, Kristin	Member	Parent	June 2010	July 2010	Resigned September, 2011	952-736-3698	75%

Biographical information about Yinghua Academy board members is available on the Yinghua Academy website, [www.yinghuaacademy.org](http://www.yinghuaacademy.org).



From June 2011 to June 2012, Board Members attended the following trainings:

*Required Board Training*

- 6/11/11 Finance, Governance, and Employment training provided by Friends of Education (Trainers: Ratwik, Roszak, and Maloney; Beltz, Kes, Darling, & Associates)
  - **Ruth Hansen, Rosemary Lawrence, Karen Lu**
- 10/7/11: Finance, Governance, and Employment Training provided by School Business Solutions (Trainer: Dr. Charles A. Speiker)
  - **Joel O'Malley**
- 10/29/11 Finance, Governance, and Employment training provided by Friends of Education (Trainers: Ratwik, Roszak, and Maloney; Beltz, Kes, Darling, & Associates)
  - **Lou Bender**
- 6/2/12 Finance, Governance, and Employment training provided by Friends of Education (Trainers: Ratwik, Roszak, and Maloney; Beltz, Kes, Darling, & Associates)
  - **Denny Grubish**

*Ongoing Board Training*

- 4/28/12: School Board Training Retreat with training provided by Morgan Brown and Al Fan of Charter School Partners; agenda included overview of best practices in Charter School Board and Annual Goalsetting
  - **Lou Bender, Denny Grubish, Ruth Hansen, Scott Jax, Rosemary Lawrence, Karen Lu, Joel O'Malley, Doug Parish, Jen Shadowens**
- 6/20 – 6/22/12: National Charter School Conference, attended 6 sessions on effective charter school boards, financial management, fundraising, and leadership
  - **Jen Shadowens**

*No Training Attended Because of Resignation*

- **Taoyuan Li, Abigail Pribbenow, Kristin Swenson**

**School Management and Administration**

The 2011-12 school year began with a Interim Executive Director and an Academic Director in place. The Interim Director, Mrs. Ursina Swanson, served at Yinghua from January 2011 through September 2011, at which time Dr. Luyi Lien, Academic Director, became the Acting Executive Director. In August, the School Board retained the services of Anne Rizzo, principal at Recruiting Strategies for NonProfits, to manage the Executive Director search, with the goal of extending an offer before winter break. The school's new permanent CEO/Executive Director, Mrs. Susan Berg, began work on 1/3/2012.



Mrs. Susan (Sue) Berg brings to Yinghua 35 years of teaching and leadership experiences in traditional public schools, charter schools, and private schools. Although she does not speak Mandarin, she has been connected to Chinese language and culture since 2006, and has spent much of her career working with an international community of students, families, and colleagues. At her core, Sue is an elementary teacher, having taught grades K-6 in public schools for 15 years in the Moorhead/Fargo area. She is also a seasoned educational leader and pioneer, with 20 years of progressive leadership work at SABIS Educational Systems, a network of schools offering international best practices in private and charter school formats. Locally, SABIS operates the private International School of Minnesota in Eden Prairie, a college preparatory school for Preschool-Grade 12. Sue taught for one year at ISM before moving into administration, as Head of Lower School at ISM, Assistant Regional Director for SABIS, and Director of ISM, for a total of twenty years of service. Mrs. Berg has successfully started and managed charter schools in many US states on behalf of SABIS, adjusting decisions to accommodate the legal and regulatory parameters of each state.

Yinghua Academy's Academic Director, Dr. Luyi Lien, has served as Academic Director of Yinghua Academy since the school's founding in 2006. She has taught elementary students in both Taiwan and the U.S.; holds a PhD. from the Department of Education from the University of Minnesota; and has published several elementary level textbooks in Taiwan. She provides daily support and resources to all teachers at Yinghua Academy and leads curriculum development and mapping for all grades.

### **Professional Development of Instructional Leaders**

Professional development plans were in place for both the Executive Director and the Academic Director for the school year ending June 2012.

*Mrs. Susan Berg, Executive Director*

Goal #1: Orientation to the Minnesota charter school sector and applicable law

Achieved: Established formal mentorship with Mr. Jon Gutierrez, Executive Director of St. Croix Preparatory Academy in Stillwater, MN, a Friends of Education school; attended Charter School Leader Training by University of St Thomas in April; attended the National Charter School Conference in June, 2012.

Goal #2: Training on roles and responsibilities of Executive Director relative to Board of Directors





Achieved: Full board and ED training through Charter School Partners in April 2012 to clearly articulate roles, boundaries, and job descriptions to ensure mutual success.

Goal#3: Increased familiarity with Chinese Language Instruction

Achieved: Attended the Asia Society's National Chinese Language Conference, April 12-14, 2012 in Washington D.C., and the K-12 Mandarin Administrators' Conference sponsored by the Confucius Institute at the University of Minnesota May 19, 2012.

Goal #4: Increased familiarity with Immersion Methods

Achieved: Received direction and coaching on effective immersion language instruction and pedagogy and administration from visiting experts in language education, including Dr. Mimi Met, Margaret Wong, Shuhan Wang and Kevin Zhang; Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition Institute on Chinese Immersion in June, 2012

Goal #5: Professional development on Data-Driven Instruction

Achieved: Attended a two-day seminar sponsored by Friends of Education on Data-Driven Instruction led by author and educator Paul Bambrick-Santoyo.

*Dr. Luyi Lien, Academic Director*

Goal#1: Build relationships with other academic professionals

Achieved: Established mentorship with an experienced principal, Ms. Audrey Buss. Ms. Buss was a teacher for 23 years, and has 14 years of administrator experience; member of Minnesota Elementary School Principal's Association (MESPA), attended 2011-2012 school year's professional conference and several division meetings through MESPA; also attended MESPA professional development seminars and workshops, topics included: (1) the breakthrough coach's: How to work less, produce more and still get the job done in sensible school week, provided by Malachi Pancoast; (2) three minutes walkthrough, provided by Kathy Larson.

Goal #2: Increased familiarity with Chinese Language Instruction

Achieved: Attended the Asia Society's National Chinese Language Conference, April 12-14, 2012 in Washington D.C., and the K-12 Mandarin Administrators' Conference sponsored by the Confucius Institute at the University of Minnesota May 19, 2012; member of Chinese Language Teacher Association (CLTA); attended CLTA annual meeting at the national ACTFL conference, where she presented her professional work on Nov. 19, 2011. Her presenting



topic was: 10 Effective Ways to Teach Chinese Characters, Promoting Chinese Literacy; presented a symposium on teaching Chinese in Vancouver, Canada at the University of British Columbia Center for Research in Chinese Language Learning and Literacy Education.

**Goal #3: Increased familiarity with Immersion Methods**

Achieved: Received direction and coaching on effective immersion language instruction and pedagogy and administration from visiting experts in language education, including Dr. Mimi Met, Margaret Wong, Shuhan Wang and Kevin Zhang; attended Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition Institute on Chinese Immersion in June, 2012.

**Goal #4: Professional development on Data-Driven Instruction**

Achieved: Attended a two-day seminar sponsored by Friends of Education on Data-Driven Instruction led by author and educator Paul Bambrick-Santoyo.

**STAFFING**

**2011-2012 School Management and Non-Classroom Staff Information**

Name	File Folder Number	Assignment	Years Employed by the School	Left During 11/12	Not Returning 12/13
Ursina Swanson	346803	Interim Executive Director	<1	x	x
Susan Berg		Executive Director	<1		
Luyi Lien		Academic Director	6		
Rob Tebandeke		Business Coordinator	2	x	x
Jennifer Vanyo		HR/Business Manager	<1		
Jennifer Olsen		Curriculum Coordinator	4		
Dave Waldoch		Facilities/Technology Coordinator	4		
Chemin Chu		Tech Coordinator	3		
Karen Calcaterra		Grant Administrator	3		
Deb Peterson		Office Manager	<1		
Mary Jo Feely	400447	Nurse	4		x
Zong Her		Health Aide	<1		
Helen Hindrawati		Food Service Coordinator	2		
Wiwit Sasmiasi		Food Service Assistant	<1		
Marsha Andrews		Aftercare/Enrichment Director/Health Aide/Administrative Assistant	2	x	x
Portia Strasser		Special Education Paraprofessional	<1		
Wan-Ju Chen		Special Education Paraprofessional	1		
Joyce Lu		Lunch	4		

		Monitor/Educational Assistant/Yinghua Care Staff			
Meagan Reissy	60206	ELL/ELA	<1		x
Suiru Shi (Lucy Seberson)		Educational Assistant	1		
Lanyi Wang		Educational Assistant	1		x
Nuermanguli Maimaiti	998375	Educational Assistant	3		x
ZhouYun Li		Educational Assistant	1		
Yi Li		Educational Assistant	2		
Philip Morris	459610	Reading and Assessment Specialist	3		
Pearl Cheng Chen		Yinghua Care Staff	2		
Margaret Kao		Yinghua Care Staff	2		
Sandy Pan		Yinghua Care Staff	2		
Diana Minner		Aftercare & Enrichment Coordinator	<1	x	x
Matt Dammann		Aftercare & Enrichment Coordinator	<1		
Brandon Johnson		Aftercare Staff	<1		
Eric Dahlman		Aftercare Staff	<1		
Libby Pomroy		Aftercare Staff	<1		
Demetrius Whittaker		Aftercare Staff	<1		x

*(This table contains information for ALL members of the school management administrative team, and also includes all staff employed by the school that did not serve as a classroom teacher (e.g. curriculum coordinators, social workers, counselors, administrative assistance, paraprofessionals, custodial, technology, librarians, etc.)*

### **2011-2012 Teaching Staff:**

*(This table contains information for all instructional staff)*

Name	File Folder Number	Assignment/Subject	Years Employed by the School	Left During 2011-12	Not Returning 2012-13
Yi-Ru (Ruby) Liou	997862	Kindergarten Classroom Teacher	3		
Tsui-Chin Hsu-Smith	997908	Kindergarten Classroom Teacher	1		
Vickee Nelson	997811	Kindergarten EA/Kindergarten Teacher	3		
Hsiu-Yu Yang	447466	Kindergarten Classroom Teacher	3		x
Hui-Tzu Wu	997911	Kindergarten Classroom Teacher	1		
Li Chen Lin	998126	First Grade	3		



		Classroom Teacher			
Mary Zhang	997861	First Grade Classroom Teacher	1		
Linlin Liu	997910	First Grade Classroom Teacher	1		
Victoria Chai	998022	Second Grade Classroom Teacher	2		x
Fang Wu	998091	Second Grade Classroom Teacher	3		
Hailei Xie	997912	Second Grade Classroom Teacher	1		
Shu-Mei Lai	998232	Third Grade Classroom Teacher	4		
Ya-ching Chang	998005	Third Grade Classroom Teacher	2		
Shu-Ching Lee	997860	Third Grade Classroom Teacher	1		
Ping Chen	998004	Fourth Grade Classroom Teacher	3		
Jingzi Xu	997936	Fourth Grade Classroom Teacher	3		
Hongyi Lan	997909	Fifth Grade Classroom Teacher	<1	x	x
Pamella Stommes	997794	Educational Assistant/Fifth Grade Classroom Teacher	<1		
Chia-Fang Chang	998122	Fifth Grade Classroom Teacher	1		x
Ruth Hansen	416221	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade English Teacher	2		
Bobbi Jo Rademacher	362236	4 <sup>th</sup> and 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade English Teacher	1		
Shih-Yu Kuo	997798	Middle School Chinese Teacher/Assessment Specialist	<1		
Chih-Jou (Jasmine) Hsu	997838	Middle School Chinese Teacher/Assessment Specialist	2	x	x
Keri Norell	403746	Middle School Classroom Teacher/Middle School ELA	6		x
Andrew Scheid	438750	Middle School Science Teacher	1		
Jan Kleinman	455908	Middle School Social Studies Teacher	1		
Kai-Li Cheng	997907	5-8 Music and Orchestra Teacher	1		
Sarah Henning	435770	K-4 Music Teacher	2		
Diane Zielke	352980	K-8 Art Teacher	1		x
Kari Kalsow	451978	Middle School Math Teacher	2		x
De Hanuman	458704	Behavioral Specialist/Physical Education Teacher	4		



Andy Henderson	442818	Physical Ed. Teacher	4		
Jeff Hagen	405431	Special Education Teacher LD/EBD/ECSE	<1		
Taoyuan Li	377724	Speech and Language Pathologist	4		

The Yinghua Academy teaching staff is selected using a three-tiered interview process; first interview with hiring committee, second interview teaching a model lesson, and the final interview with the administrative team to review policies and procedures, salary and benefit information, and job description.

Once a teacher or other educational staff member is employed at Yinghua, she/he is evaluated three times in the year. Yinghua Academy teachers are also asked to give weekly lesson plans to the Academic Director for review, and participate in monthly curriculum map “check-ins.” All staff also participate in weekly curriculum planning meetings and preparatory time.

The teacher retention rate improved dramatically at the end of the academic year because of the leadership of Yinghua’s new Executive Director from January to June 2012. On a staff survey given in May, 97% of staff responded that they are satisfied with their employment at Yinghua during the time that Mrs. Berg was on board. This number correlates with the return of most teachers and staff this fall 2012, with few exceptions.

## **FINANCES**

Not unlike other Minnesota charter schools, Yinghua Academy faced many financial challenges through the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2012 (“Fiscal Year 2012”). Yinghua Academy continues to manage expenses in a very careful approach given the increase in Minnesota aid holdback (30% vs. 35.7%). But the increase in holdback led to the school’s use of not only a \$350,000 line of credit, but also an additional \$300,000 short-term bridge loan during the month of June. Both will have been fully repaid as of 10/1/12. Overall, Yinghua managed to incur an interest expense similar to the 2011 level, at \$3,500.

Despite those funding challenges, Yinghua Academy again received the State of Minnesota School Finance Award (which it has received every year in which it was eligible to receive it: 2008 – 2012) and has again received an unqualified audit, containing no material weaknesses or significant deficiencies.



For the first time ever, though, Yinghua Academy ended the year with a net loss, attributable to the cumulative effect of management transition over the past two years. The three driving reasons behind the shortfall are overages in the non-routine salary budget (i.e., paid time off payouts, substitute teacher fees, overtime), a student count reporting error that was not resolved in time for the audit, and inconsistency in attributing grant expenses to grant funding. The Yearend Financial Statements were presented to the Board at its September meeting demonstrating the current 4% general fund balance. In response, the Board resolved to work with Mrs. Berg and the administration to restore and grow the general fund balance *this fiscal year* to the projected year end 2013 general fund balance goal of 11.7% (which was established in the budget models that were run for the expansion application this past spring). This will be achieved by revisiting the overall way the budget is constructed, challenging assumptions, discussing and weighing priorities, reducing expenses and adding revenues.

To that end, after carefully reviewing the situation over the past month, the Board Chair, Treasurer, Executive Director, Business Manager, and management company Beltz, Kes, Darling & Associates (BKDA) have resolved to proactively change how the finances are managed in terms of report contents, processes, and most importantly, communication, now that a new leadership team is in place. The Yinghua Academy Board will continue to actively partner with both the Executive Director and the Business Manager to provide oversight on financial matters. The Board reviews and analyzes all budgets, expenditure items, and bank account statements. The Finance Committee of the Board works most directly with administration and makes recommendations to the Board. The Finance Committee and Business Manager will continue to maintain and continuously improve internal controls, which include a separation of duties at both the school and with the management company, BKDA.

Grants and donations continue to remain a strong revenue source for Yinghua Academy. Donations and gifts totaled over \$104,000 in Fiscal 2012 that came from Yinghua families and the larger community. In preparation for a facility expansion, Yinghua will be pursuing larger unrestricted or general fund focused donations from individuals, corporations, and foundations in 2012-2013.

Following is a summary of Yinghua Academy's original budget, last revised budget, and financial results for Fiscal Year 2012 as well as our financial position at June 30, 2012. The Fiscal Year 2012 ended with a decrease to the combined fund balance by \$126,372 and represents a 28% decrease. The June 30, 2012 combined fund balance was \$324,122 which equates to a 7.5% fund balance percentage. When looking at the general fund balance alone, we ended the year



with a 4% general fund balance percentage compared to a projection of 11.1%. The Yinghua Academy Board approved the last revised budget on June 4, 2012 and is working on a revised working budget for November approval.

<b>Yinghua Academy</b>			
<b>Statement of Revenue and Expenditures</b>			
<b>For the year ended June 30, 2012</b>			
	<b>Original Budget</b>	<b>Revised Budget</b>	<b>Actual (Unaudited)</b>
<b>Revenues:</b>			
- State Revenues	\$3,217,760	3,258,553	3,214,240
- Federal Revenues	76,960	61,898	55,519
- Grants	487,997	487,997	357,068
- Other Revenues	58,280	89,000	87,416
- Donations and Gifts	81,000	85,000	104,275
- Food Service	165,000	136,000	137,994
- Community Service (Yinghua Care)	286,500	286,500	222,249
<b>Total Revenues:</b>	<b>4,373,497</b>	<b>4,404,948</b>	<b>4,178,761</b>
<b>Expenditures:</b>			
- Salaries and Benefits	1,951,348	1,945,312	2,081,650
- Building Lease and Operating Expenses	731,311	767,595	750,900
- Programming, General & Administrative	1,230,959	1,261,299	1,141,769
- Food Service	170,000	141,000	137,995
- Community Service (Yinghua Care)	259,000	259,000	192,819
<b>Total Expenditures:</b>	<b>4,342,618</b>	<b>4,374,206</b>	<b>4,305,133</b>
	-	-	-
<b>Surplus (Deficit):</b>	<b>30,879</b>	<b>30,742</b>	<b>(126,372)</b>
<b>Fund Balance:</b>			
- Beginning Fund Balance	450,500	450,500	450,500



- Add: Surplus (Deficit)	30,879	30,742	(126,372)
- Ending Fund Balance	481,379	481,242	324,128
<b>Combined Fund Balances Percentage:</b>	<b>11.1%</b>	<b>11.0%</b>	<b>7.5%</b>
<b>Yinghua Academy</b>			
<b>Balance Sheet</b>			
<b>As of June 30, 2011 (unaudited)</b>			
<b>Assets:</b>			
- Cash	\$ 68,931		
- Accounts Receivable	4,481		
- State Aid Receivable	1,132,605		
- Federal Aid Receivable	27,209		
- Prepaid Expenses and Deposits	100,335		
<b>Total Assets:</b>	<b>1,333,561</b>		
<b>Liabilities:</b>			
- Salaries and Wages Payable	219,673		
- Line of Credit	650,000		
- Accounts Payable	89,093		
- Payroll Deductions/Benefits Payable	40,889		
- Deferred Revenue	9,780		
<b>Total Liabilities:</b>	<b>1,009,435</b>		
<b>Fund Balance:</b>	<b>324,126</b>		

## ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

At Yinghua Academy, kindergarten through 4<sup>th</sup> grades follow a full Mandarin Chinese early immersion program. Most content is delivered in Mandarin Chinese, with the exception of some specialist programming (art, gym, elementary music) and English language arts.

Rigorous academic programming is a critical part of all curriculum design and implementation. Yinghua Academy teachers participate in significant hours of training to ensure that all instruction is delivered based on the best practices of immersion and foreign language research





and the Core Knowledge sequence. The curriculum designed by our Academic Director, Executive Director, and teachers is aligned with state and national standards and incorporates best-practice research.

Top priorities for Yinghua Academy academics over the next three years include making continuous improvement adjustments in the elementary program and continuing the development of a robust middle school program to serve Mandarin immersion students during the important middle school years. The school's first "full-immersion" class entered middle school in the 2011-2012 school year bringing with them the necessity of a curriculum that maintains Chinese language skills, in addition to high school preparatory content and increased mastery and independence of study skills. Prior to the start of the 2011-12 school year, Yinghua aligned its science curriculum to meet new MN State Standards including biology in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and chemistry in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The school added enhancements such as orchestra in 2011-12, and is considering the addition of choir and theater in future years. For the first time in 2011-12, Yinghua Academy middle school students experienced a capstone study abroad trip to China in June.

Continuous monitoring of the established K-5 curriculum will reveal areas for improvement. The school has established a standard protocol for using student assessment data to improve and inform instruction at all levels in an iterative way throughout the year.

### **Academic Goals**

Specific measurable goals for academic performance were set with our contract Authorizer, and include:

- 1) Absolute proficiency: Friends of Education measures the percentage of students who meet or exceed state standards according to the goals below:

#### *MCA Math*

*Goals:* 70% of all students enrolled for three years will score at least proficient by the third grade, and 75% of all students will score at least proficient by the fifth grade.

*Results:* **91%** of third grade students and **92.1%** of fifth grade students enrolled at Yinghua Academy for three years met or exceeded proficiency.



### *MCA Reading*

*Goals:* 70% of all students enrolled for three years will score at least proficient by the third grade, and 75% of all students will score at least proficient by the fifth grade.

*Results:* **85.1%** of third grade students and **92.1%** of fifth grade students enrolled at Yinghua Academy for three years met or exceeded proficiency.

### *MCA Science*

*Goals:* 65% of all students enrolled at the school for three years will score at least proficient in fifth grade.

*Results:* **85.3%** of 5<sup>th</sup> grade students enrolled at Yinghua Academy for three years met proficiency goals.

2) Comparative proficiency: Friends of Education measures the percentage of students who meet or exceed grade level and school wide proficiency rates compared to the Minneapolis school district for the same grades as offered by the School.

*Result:* Overall as a school, **90.8%** of all Yinghua Academy students in grade 3-8 achieved a score of Meets or Exceeds Standards in mathematics, **83.7%** achieved a score of Meets or Exceeds Standards in English reading. As a comparison, in the Minneapolis Public School District for 2011-2012, 27.2% meet or exceed in math, 56.9% met or exceed in reading.

3) Growth: Friends of Education measures the percentage of students achieving high growth, exceeding the state average percentage of students achieving high growth and the percentage of students achieving low growth less than the state average percentage of students achieving low growth.

*Results:* **51%** of Yinghua students had high growth on MCA Math testing compared to 35% statewide; **45%** of Yinghua students had high growth on MCA Reading testing compared to 34% statewide.



MCA Students growth as measured in the 2011-2012 school year				
	Statewide		Yinghua Academy	
	Low Growth	High Growth	Low growth	High Growth
Math	23.1%	35.4%	10.5%	50.9%
Reading	23.3%	34.3%	14.0%	44.7%

#### 4) Nationally-Normed Assessment

Goal: At least 75% of students taking the assessment will score above the national median.

Result: On the *NWEA Measures of Academic Progress*, **89.4%** of students met projected proficiency in reading, and **93.1%** of students met projected proficiency in mathematics.

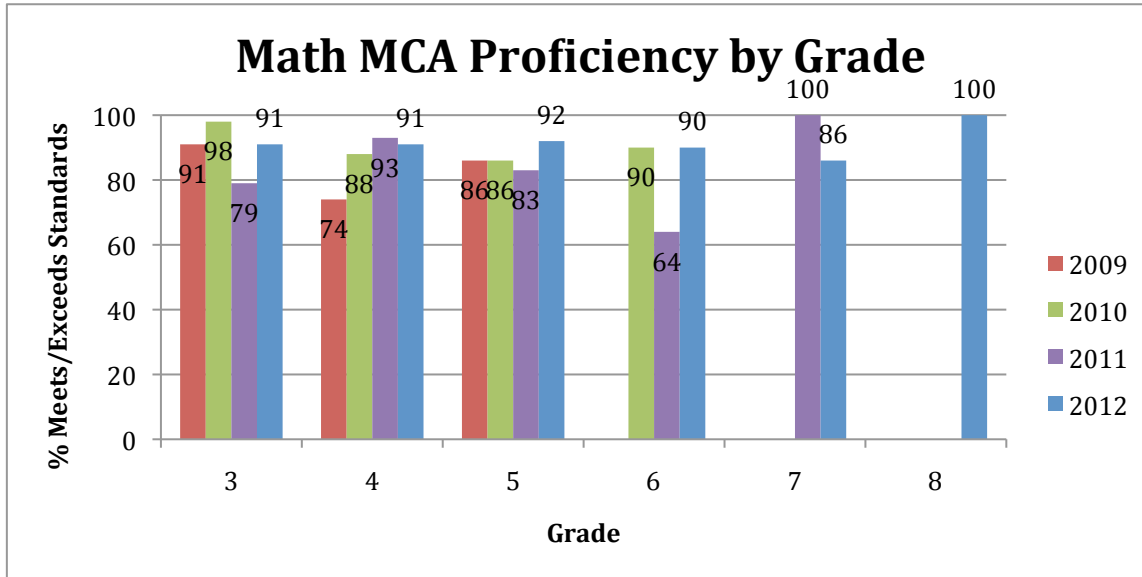
#### **Assessment and Accountability Data**

Yinghua Academy uses a variety of assessments to measure student achievement, including standardized tests, student academic performance-based assessments, portfolios of student work, and teacher observation and classroom-based assessment. Throughout the school year, educational staff continued to work with the Academic Director and our new Executive Director to develop units and lessons in accordance with the curriculum map as well as to collect data on academic achievement in the areas of Chinese and English language arts, math and science.

The following standardized testing occurred for the 2011-12 school year:

- Statewide MCA-II for grades 3-8 in math and reading, 5<sup>th</sup> grade science
- NWEA, for grades K-8
- SOPA (Student Oral Proficiency Assessment) for grades K, 2, 4-8
- Youth Chinese Test (YCT) Assessment of student Chinese reading and listening comprehension, grades 2-8
- STAMP language proficiency pilot assessment for middle school students who passed level 4 of the YCT test
- All ELL students participated in MN-SOLOM tests

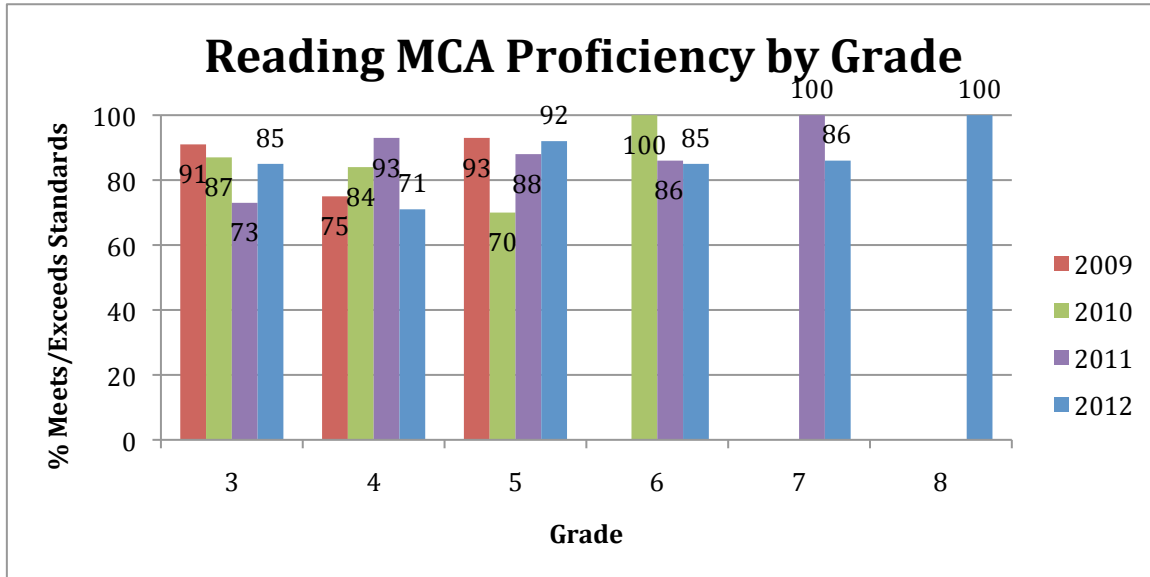
Results for MCA, NWEA, SOPA, and YCT are on the following pages.



Comparing by grade: In 2012, all grades improved their math MCA scores year over year except grade 4 (-2%) and grade 7 (-14%).

Comparing by students: In 2012, students in four out of 5 tested grades improved (or maintained 100% scores) year over year:

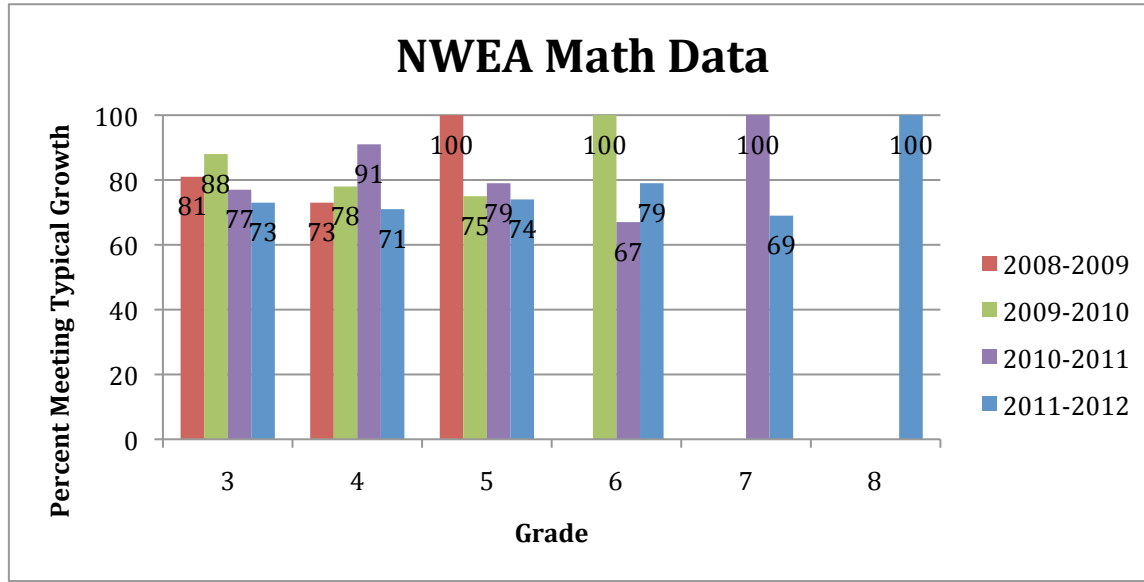
- 4th graders improved their score from 79% in 2011 to 91% in 2012
- 5<sup>th</sup> graders remained flat, scoring 93% in 2011 and 92% in 2012
- 6<sup>th</sup> graders improved their score from 83% in 2011 to 90% in 2012
- 7<sup>th</sup> graders improved their score from 64% in 2011 to 86% in 2012
- 8<sup>th</sup> graders remained flat, scored 100% in 2011 and 100% in 2012



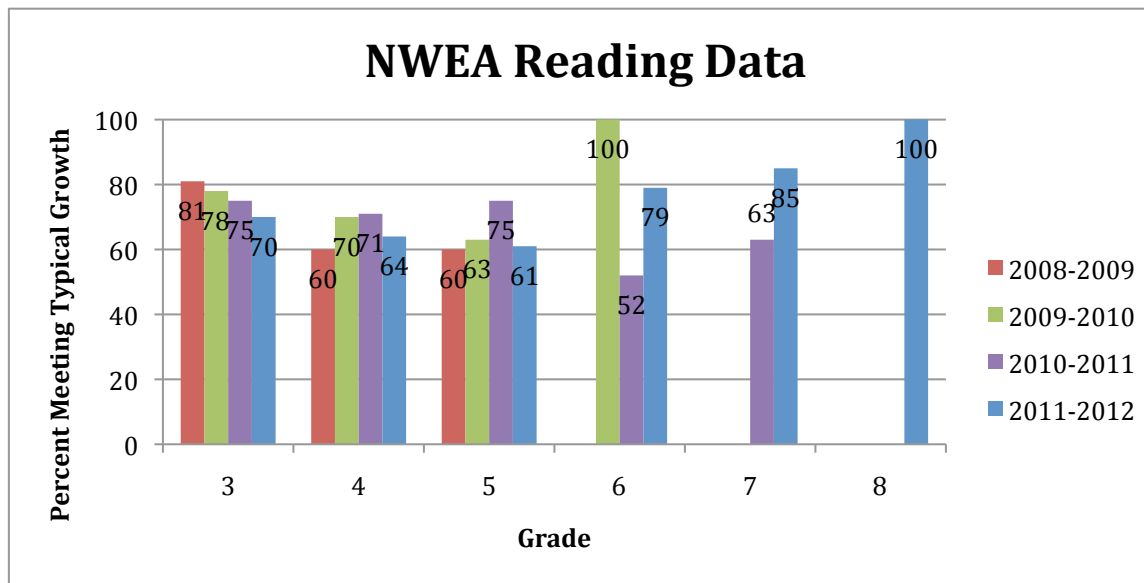
Comparing by grade: In 2012, all grades improved their Reading MCA scores year over year except grade 4 (-22%), grade 6 (-1%) and grade 7 (-14%).

Comparing by students: In 2012, students in three out of 5 tested grades maintained their scores, and two of the grades – 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> – experienced slight decreases year over year.

- 4<sup>th</sup> graders had a 2% decrease in their score, from 73% in 2011 to 71% in 2012
- 5<sup>th</sup> graders remained flat, scoring 93% in 2011 and 92% in 2012
- 6<sup>th</sup> graders had a 3% decrease in their score, from 88% in 2011 to 85% in 2012
- 7<sup>th</sup> graders remained flat, scoring 86% in 2011 and 86% in 2012
- 8<sup>th</sup> graders remained flat, scoring 100% in 2011 and 100% in 2012



In 2012, only grade 6 experienced an increase in NWEA Math scores. All other grades posted a decrease ranging from 4 to 31%.



In 2012, only grades 6, 7, and 8 experienced an increase in NWEA Reading scores. Grades 3, 4, and 5 all had decreases ranging from 5-14%.

Academic plans were made this past summer to address these decreases by grade, including teacher training, curricular changes, schedule changes to increase the minutes per week of Math and English Language Arts, and individualized student plans.



### Student Oral Proficiency Assessment (SOPA) in Mandarin Chinese

The Student Oral Proficiency Assessment (SOPA, for Grades 2-8)) and Early Language Listening and Oral Proficiency Assessment (ELLOPA, for Grades K-2) are innovative language proficiency assessment instruments designed to allow students to demonstrate their highest level of performance in oral fluency, grammar, vocabulary, and listening comprehension. These interactive listening and speaking assessments are designed for children who are learning a foreign language in a school setting. They include hands-on activities and are conducted entirely in the foreign language. Students are assessed in pairs by two trained test administrators and, during the activities or tasks, are encouraged to interact with each other as well as with the interviewers. The focus of the interview is to determine what the students can do with the language.

Yinghua student SOPA results demonstrate that language acquisition increases approximately one point (on the SOPA scale) per grade, from a score of 3.21 in K to a score of 8.00 in 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

The SOPA 9-point scale is:

- 1- Junior Novice Low
- 2- Junior Novice Mid
- 3- Junior Novice High
- 4- Junior Intermediate Low

- 5- Junior Intermediate Mid
- 6- Junior Intermediate High
- 7- Junior Advanced Low
- 8- Junior Advanced Mid
- 9- Junior Advanced High

### SOPA Results 2008-2012

Grades	Student Average			
	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
<b>Immersion Students</b>				
K	2.58	2.5	3.16	3.21
1	2.98	3.74	-	-
2	4.33	4.94	-	5.49
3	6.14	5.42	-	-
4	1.99	4.81	-	6.45
5	3.33	2.64	5.99	7.32
6	-	4.85	3.93	8.00
<b>Non Immersion Students</b>				
7	-	-	4.76	4.60
8	-	-	-	4.78

**YCT (Youth Chinese Test)**

In spring, 2012, students in 2-8<sup>th</sup> grades at Yinghua Academy took the Youth Chinese Test (YCT) administered by the Confucius Institute of Minnesota. The YCT is a standardized test developed by the office of the Hanban, the government office in the People’s Republic of China responsible for the study of Chinese worldwide. It assesses student listening comprehension and reading in Chinese, and additionally, at the level 4 test, Chinese writing ability.

Of the 227 Yinghua students who took the test, 219 passed their attempted level, for a combined passing rate of 96.5%.

The test levels are as follows:

Level 1	80 commonly used words and related grammar patterns
Level 2	150 commonly used words and related grammar patterns
Level 3	300 commonly used words and related grammar patterns
Level 4	600 commonly used words and related grammar patterns

**YCT Results 2011-12**

Grade	Level	Number of students	Number of passing students	Passing rate	Combined passing rate
2nd	1	46	45	97.8%	98.9%
	2	24	24	100%	
3rd	2	11	11	100%	98.1%
	3	54	52	96.3%	
4th	2	4	4	100%	98.7%
	3	8	8	100%	
	4	25	24	96%	
5th	2	3	3	100%	96.9%
	3	1	1	100%	
	4	32	29	90.6%	
6th	2	2	1	50%	75%
	4	2	2	100%	
7th	2	1	1	100%	100%
	3	10	10	100%	
8th	2	2	2	100%	100%
<b>Total</b>		<b>227</b>	<b>219</b>		<b>96.5%</b>





## **OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE**

### **Authorizer Relations and Communication**

Yinghua Academy's charter authorizer is Friends of Education. The charter authorizer provides strict financial and academic controls and ensures school adherence to national standards for charter school oversight and quality. Friends of Education monitors the three critical areas of charter school operations: academic performance, finance, and reporting and legal compliance, by monitoring student testing, conducting site visits, reviewing annual reports and communicating with MDE. Friends can be contacted at: Friends of Education, 200 East Lake Street, Wayzata, MN 55391 or [info@improveK-12education.org](mailto:info@improveK-12education.org). Contact information for Yinghua's Authorizer Liaison is R.E. Topoluk, Executive Director of Friends of Education, Phone 952.745.2717, Fax 952-745-2739, Email: [topoluk@tcfbank.com](mailto:topoluk@tcfbank.com).

Yinghua Academy's current charter contract with Friends of Education was renewed effective July 1, 2011 for a three-year period. This contract expires on June 30, 2014.

### **Yinghua Academy Compliance with Applicable Laws and MDE Reporting Requirements**

Yinghua Academy complies with all applicable laws, with the School Board at times seeking legal counsel to ensure compliance. The School Board in 2011-12 has engaged in substantive policy review and improved overall compliance with legal requirements in drafting and reviewing policies and procedures. Processes implemented by the board and by front office staff have improved overall timeliness regarding compliance with applicable laws and MDE reporting requirements.

Yinghua Academy works to be compliant with MDE reporting and regulations, including submitting reports such as the annual report and participation in Q-comp, DIRS reporting, MARSS data, etc. Yinghua school representatives attended required MDE trainings. In addition, one hundred percent of Yinghua Academy teachers had permission to teach from the State Board of Teaching.

Yinghua Academy followed state and local health and safety requirements and is committed to remain compliant with fire code, inspections, and other safety requirements; emergency drills have been conducted. Administrators and the school board have become aware of data system errors and gaps in our overall organization's knowledge of reporting systems and requirements;



steps are being taken to rectify these problems including a concerted effort to review data and keep close connections with MDE personnel to resolve any errors.

### **Strategic Plan Implementation**

The School Board also provided operational oversight at Yinghua Academy, ensuring successful implementation of the Yinghua Academy Strategic Plan, particularly in the areas of Organizational Sustainability, School Culture and Community, and Professional Development.

In 2011-12, the school board devoted significant operational support to organizational sustainability with the recruitment and hiring of a full-time Executive Director, addressed financial stability by managing the holdback and cash flow issues with a line of credit, expanded enrollment to four kindergarten sections in order to backwards-plan a target base of 60-70 middle school students/class by middle school, and successfully submitted and received an expansion application through MDE to operate two sites in the short term (a main campus and a kinder campus) while working with the City of Minneapolis, the Minneapolis Park Board, the Northeast Park Neighborhood Association, an architect, owner's representative, real estate attorney, and various potential sources of capital to realize the plan of expansion and remodel of the existing school footprint to accommodate all future K-8 students.

Additionally, the School Board created a School Culture and Community Committee in fall 2011 and held regular community Town Hall meetings to foster communication and address the needs of a nurturing and supportive school environment. The Board encouraged professional development for staff, with administration in 2011-12 emphasizing Responsive Classroom, Differentiated Instruction, and Professional Learning Communities. Administration created professional development plans and formalized personal and professional goal-setting among staff, fostering a learning community in which adults as well as students learn and grow. The school board and administration encouraged teachers to work toward completion of the Minnesota Department of Education licensing process for their grade level and/or subject area.

### **Non-Academic Goals**

Some specific measurable goals for non-academic performance were set in our contract by our authorizer, and include:

1) Student Attendance Rate

Goal: The school will maintain at least a 95% attendance rate.

*Result:* The attendance rate for 2011-12 was **96%**.

2) Parent Satisfaction Survey

Goal: At least 80% of parents returning the annual survey will indicate overall satisfaction with the school.

*Result:* According to an online survey of parents conducted April-May 2012 with a 33% response rate, **89%** reported being satisfied overall with Yinghua Academy. In addition, when asked if they would recommend Yinghua Academy to a friend, **90%** said yes.

3) Staff Satisfaction Survey

Goal: At least 80% of all staff returning the annual survey will indicate overall satisfaction at the school.

*Result:* In a staff survey conducted in June 2011 with a 57% response rate, **97%** indicate overall satisfaction with their employment at Yinghua during the preceding five months (since our new Director had been in place, Jan-May 2012). **79%** of respondents indicated they were happy working at Yinghua. In addition, when asked if they would recommend Yinghua Academy to a friend as a good place to work, **74%** said yes.

4) Professional Development Rate

Goal: 100% of all staff shall receive professional development each year, as demonstrated by school records.

*Result:* **100%** of staff received professional development training, including leadership team, administrative team, and board.

Yinghua teachers received training in a variety of areas, including immersion, differentiated instruction, classroom management and Responsive Classroom, student behavioral management, data-driven instruction, incorporation of technology in the classroom, action research, and employing backward design. Teachers have had opportunity for leadership and professional growth as mentors, team leads, participants in Professional Learning Communities, curriculum planning and development, and action research projects. Teachers participate in school governance as School Board members, and assume leadership roles with the QComp teacher incentive program and Q-Comp teams. Teachers also develop personal QComp goals.

## INNOVATIVE PRACTICES AND IMPLEMENTATION

Yinghua Academy established the first Chinese immersion program in the state of Minnesota. Yinghua Academy Chinese language teachers employ and share innovative and creative immersion teaching techniques and strategies while also following the guidelines of Minnesota State educational standards for academic learning, and National Standards for Foreign Language Learning. They also use the Core Knowledge Sequence as the backbone of curriculum design, and rely on the Responsive Classroom approach to create a positive learning community in each classroom. The Mandarin Chinese immersion incorporates both content-based instruction (CBI) and thematic based instructional approaches. The full early immersion program was designed in consultation with the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) and the University of Minnesota Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA). Immersion teachers employ innovative immersion teaching strategies, according to the Immersion Teaching Strategies Observation Checklist developed by Tara Fortune of CARLA, including:

- Integration of language, content and culture
- Continuous language growth and improvement of accuracy, with feedback techniques
- Making input comprehensible with body language, Total Physical Response, visuals, realia, routines and prior knowledge
- Creating a rich learning environment for the target language (with written text displayed in hallways and classrooms, native speakers in the classroom, target language resources)
- Using teacher talk effectively, with enunciation, rephrasing, modeling, and consciously recycling vocabulary and language structures
- Promoting extended student output and attending to diverse learner needs, with strategies such as cooperative group learning, student choice, learning centers, and presentation of material in a variety of learning styles.

These techniques contribute to the proficient rates of Chinese language ability that our students attain during their K-8 education at Yinghua. By immersing students in the Chinese language and culture, all students are becoming conversant and literate in the language. Yinghua Academy teachers are also trained in Differential Instruction to meet every student's needs and challenge every learner. They use Data-Driven Instruction, and closely monitor students' progress with formal and informal assessments.



Yinghua Academy also supported Chinese language and cultural learning by hosting cultural events, providing student performances for the Chinese New Year annual celebration, and through international collaboration with sister schools in China, including middle school teleconferencing, hosting visitors from the Number 8 Middle School in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia, and conducting the first study abroad trip with students, staff and chaperones to visit the sister school in June 2012.

Other innovative practices implemented during 2011-12 include the establishment of middle school electives, in-school homework labs, clubs, and student life activities, learning opportunities for students through artist residencies, field trips, before and after-care which included tutoring support and a before-school English language reading program, enrichment and athletic activities, and student wellness initiatives focused on youth well-being and safety, as well as nutrition and exercise.

## **FUTURE PLANS**

In spring 2012, the Board participated in an off-site retreat facilitated by Morgan Brown of Charter School Partners, with the goal of building an Annual Plan as a subset of the Yinghua Academy strategic plan, which the Board had approved in June 2011. The four areas of focus identified in the strategic plan are: Organizational Stability, School Culture and Community, Professional Development, and Academics. The Board set priorities for this work in three areas: dividing responsibility for each area between the Board and the School Administration; incorporating measures from Yinghua Academy's contract with Friends of Education into the plan; and improving the articulation of specific, measurable goals.

### **Organizational Sustainability**

Efforts at establishing organizational sustainability and building capacities in the coming year are focused on four main areas: Facilities, Financials and Fundraising, Board Development, and Community Engagement.

*Facilities:* The number one barrier to continued excellence for Yinghua Academy is the lack of adequate space to conduct its program. In the summer of 2013, the current school building will be renovated and expanded in order to remove this barrier. In order to reach that goal, the board will work through its Facilities Committee to complete a master plan by December, continue progress on zoning issues with the City and partnership with the Park Board, and settle on a work plan with a contractor. The goal of this project is to complete facilities that will



house a fully-articulated student body of 690, with facilities appropriate to grades K-8. The temporary kindergarten center will rejoin the main campus when the project is complete. The School Board continues to work with J. Kou Vang, President of St. Paul-based JB Realty Co. as an owner's representative who is experienced with charter school buildings.

*Financials and Fundraising:* Balancing facilities expansion and on-going school operations with the need for a healthy fund balance presents the second area for Board focus: raising and managing school funds. The school will continue to draw upon the professional business management services of Beltz, Kes, Darling and Associates (BKDA). Now with a new Business/Human Resource Manager sitting as part of the administrative team, Yinghua plans to work more closely with BKDA on a monthly basis to proactively manage finances. The relatively young school has been straining under the balancing act of a strong program, two campuses, the state holdbacks, management transition, and the need to grow our fund balance in the short and long term. The overriding goal is to stabilize the fund balance during the expansion phase so that it can grow once back in a consolidated campus. In addition, the Board plans to work closely with the Yinghua Academy Community Association (PTO) to develop a comprehensive fundraising plan to support the expansion.

*Board Development:* Keeping the school viable also involves developing a sustainable leadership structure for the future. This coming year, key projects for the internal growth of the Yinghua Board focus on the establishment of a standing governance committee which can monitor updates in policy, oversee an annual calendar of necessary actions, develop a plan for director recruitment and training, look ahead to the succession of board officers, recommend topics for professional development for the Board, and propose other improvements that will ensure the health and sustainable future of the Board. The governance committee will develop and refine an operations dashboard to keep the Board consistently informed. The board will also form an advocacy committee to discern best practices and people to advocate for Yinghua's needs with MDE and the state legislature.

*Community Engagement:* As Yinghua Academy matures, the need for strong connections outside the school grows as well. Program growth, learning partnership opportunities, fundraising ventures and continued development of best practices for charter and immersion education will depend not only on internal resources, but also on relationships with the Northeast Minneapolis community, with the local Chinese community, and with the charter school and immersion school communities. This year, the Board and a fully staffed Administration will turn intentional attention to developing these relationships for the future.

**Communication and School Culture**

After a year of focused work on communication and culture in the School, the Board is ready to embed that work in all of its committees and work areas. Parent education on key topics such as Chinese and American cultural expectations and immersion methods will be integrated into a schedule of community-building events. The Board will approve and implement a plan for communicating the core values of safety, learning, Chinese, happiness and global citizenship to all stakeholders. Examining parent and staff survey results, and adding a student survey to the mix, will initiate continuous improvement in conversation with all stakeholders. Special attention to those involved with the new Kindergarten center will help ensure its success as an interim measure, and contribute to meeting a student retention goal of 95%. A visual communications chart with guidelines for positive and respectful interactions will clarify which individuals within the community might best be approached with concerns, compliments, and suggestions. Articulating and measuring additional indications of positive engagement on the part of administration, staff, parents and students will allow the Board to monitor trends and more quickly respond with corrective action or encouragement as needed. Yinghua Academy is likely to work on communication and culture issues across the life of the organization; in 2012-13, the focus will be on moving this work from a designated committee to the whole community.

**Professional Development**

Professional development will also widen in scope this year, to include not only teachers, but also to include non-teaching staff, administration, and the Board. A school is a learning community, and this year 100% of adult leaders in the school will receive professional development. Drawing on Q-Comp Goals, licensure requirements, feedback from Professional Learning Communities and a consistent rubric for performance evaluation, teachers will have individual development plans. From performance evaluations, community surveys, and the expressed desires of individuals, supervisors, and work teams, the School will assess professional development needs and plan accordingly.

**Academics**

Continuous monitoring and refinement of Yinghua's academic program will guide on-going optimum learning opportunities for all students. In 2012-13, the School will refine fully the scope and sequence for continuous learning in all subject areas across grade levels, in both English and Chinese. Necessary adjustments discovered in the refinement process will be implemented. Refining teaching processes alongside curriculum also is essential. The high retention rate among the teaching staff this year presents the opportunity to build on previous



development of Data Driven Instruction through Professional Learning Communities, the Responsive Classroom class management approach, and immersion education methods. Setting student learning goals, and then monitoring and measuring progress, is a vital element of student success. In Mandarin, 2012-13 will bring us closer to the establishment of benchmark scores by which to monitor progress. In English, the School has a goal of exceeding Friends goals by at least 3%.

As the middle school moves another year closer to serving a full complement of Mandarin immersion students, the School will continue creating a program description, scope and sequence, and course design for these grades. Other academic goals for the year fall under the heading of communication: adjusting the format of report cards to improve their use as a measure of progress toward student learning goals, preparing a parent-friendly curriculum overview, and increasing communication with parents about curriculum. The School plans to add enhancements and student leadership opportunities in 2012-13, such as a second orchestra, a planning retreat and service learning opportunities for middle school, Student Life committees and activities, and more robust athletic, enrichment and school release day programs.

As a Minnesota charter school with an innovative approach to educating K-8 students in today's global society, Yinghua has had its share of challenges. But despite those challenges, Yinghua is a thriving community today, as any visit to its campuses will assure you. Yinghua is achieving its mission of preparing students to be engaged global citizens through rigorous academics and immersion in Chinese language and culture. This is supported by the school's top 10 ranking in the state this past spring among all public and charter schools, and its exceptional scores on both the SOPA and YCT tests. The school will continue to refine instruction to improve test scores by individual grade, to hone its financial management, to build a community that is respectful and engaged, and to advocate for its needs with the state, always committed to making decisions with the good of the students and the overall program at the forefront. Yinghua is a success story because of this commitment.

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