



**2020-2021**

Annual Report

## VISION

St. Paul School of Northern Lights endeavors to model and share best practices in progressive education. We resolve to create an enduring community fully participating in a democratic society that relies on an educated populace, embarking on a lifetime of inquiry and advocacy.

## MISSION

Exploring our urban ecosystem, St. Paul School of Northern Lights ensures a progressive, relationship-based learning process, educating students to be kind, curious, critical thinkers who are advocating for positive change in their diverse communities.

## GOALS

- Improve all pupil learning and all student achievement (per MN Statute 124E.01)
- Create an equitable learning environment where students, families, and teachers will feel valued and empowered
- Promote the pursuit of intercultural competence, proving diversity as an educational strength
- Inspire and improve public schools and their communities through place-based education
- Provide professional development opportunities and invite educational dialogue for and with the greater community
- Build stronger communities, one student at a time



# PRINCIPLES

## URBAN ECOSYSTEM EXPLORATION

Learning will happen in the classroom and as we explore our surrounding community and natural spaces, forging meaningful connections between students and their environment.

## RELATIONSHIP-BASED

Relationships are the essence of St. Paul School of Northern Lights. We understand the value of belonging to and building a strong community. We build community through kindness, valuing all of our members, and sharing our learning across classrooms and grade levels.

## DIVERSITY AND EQUITY

Respecting and celebrating difference, we will focus on intercultural development as a school for and with the community. We will set cross-cultural goals for understanding, acknowledge challenges, and navigate differences together, empowering all community members to communicate respectfully.

## PROGRESSIVE LEARNING

Students are born curious and ready to learn. We seek to preserve children's innate knowledge of self and curiosity about the world in which they live. Our teachers use a dynamic and interactive approach that encourages students to explore deeply. We hold space for students to learn to balance work, life, and play.

## ADVOCACY

Children are capable citizens who can and do positively contribute to their communities. We recognize and foster students' individuality and encourage them to use their knowledge and skills for the common good. Our school is intentional about ensuring that all students understand critical concepts around identity, allyship, and social justice. We believe that developing empathy and community engagement can and should be central to the learning experience.



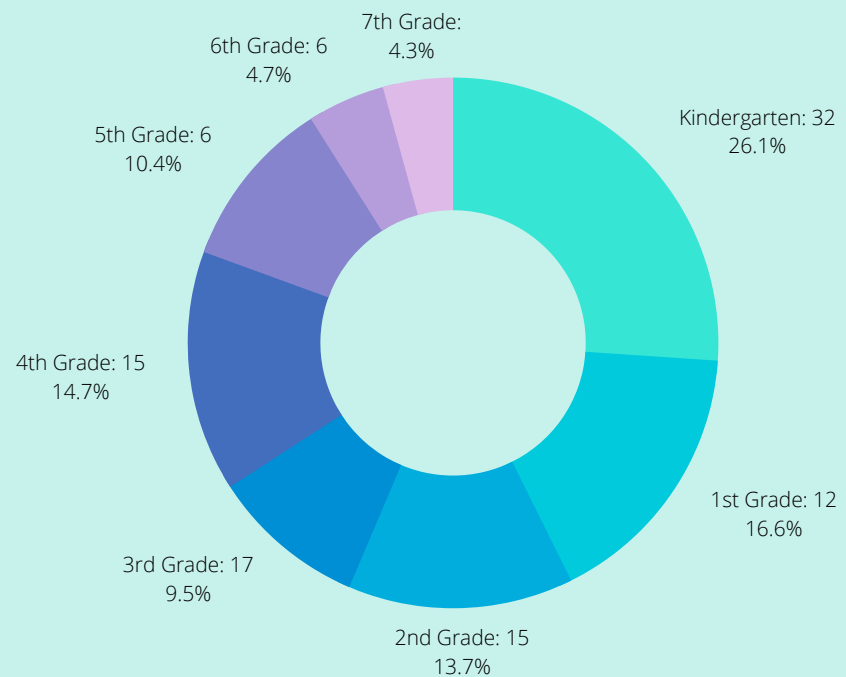
## Contact Information

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## Enrollment

St. Paul School of Northern Lights expanded to 7th grade and had, on average, **208 students enrolled** for the 2020-2021 school year. At the end of the year, the following number of students were enrolled in each grade level:



**17.6%** of our students, on average, qualified for free or reduced-price meals.

Based on October state reporting, **22.3%** of our students identified as Hispanic, BIPOC, or two or more races.

## Student Attrition

Over the course of the school year, **12** students transferred out of and **29** students transferred into Northern Lights. Of students enrolled at the end of the school year, **44** did not return for the current year.

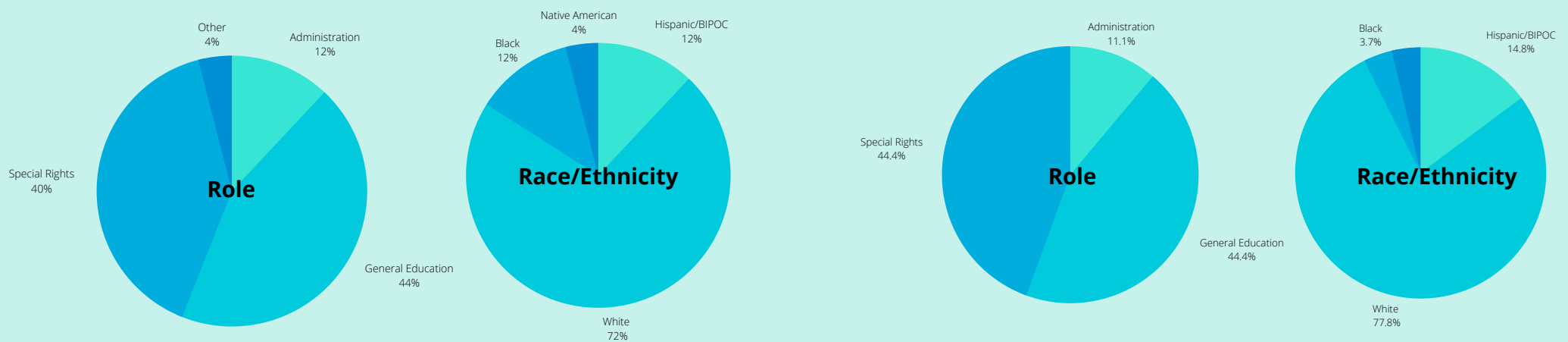
# Governance and Management

St. Paul School of Northern Lights is governed by a **Board of Directors**. Over the course of the 2019-2020 school year, the Board was comprised of between 7 and 8 members and maintained a parent majority. School founder Rebecca Batalden served as the Board Chair. Board elections were held in September for an open licensed teacher position. In addition to regularly scheduled monthly Board meetings, Board members worked with other members of the school community in the following committees: **Parent & Family Group, Advancement, Equity, Finance, and Governance**. The Board of Directors delegates management of the school to Rachel Ngendakuriyo, the School Leader. St. Paul School of Northern Lights contracted with Dieci School Finance for business management services in the first half of the year, then transitioned to contracting with The Anton Group. All Board members participated in required initial Board training. Annual Board training was held in November.

## Staffing

Beginning of year: 25 Staff

End of year: 27 Staff



The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted staffing during the 2020-2021 school year. Many staff members were reassigned to provide child care for children of critical workers.

All teachers held appropriate licenses or permissions for the positions they held. The School Leader held a Principal license. Staff development was impacted by the pandemic, but staff participated in professional development throughout the school year in areas including Reggio-inspired practices, crisis prevention, restorative practices, and school leadership.

# Finances

Revenues:

\$2,966,715

Expenses:

\$2,444,793

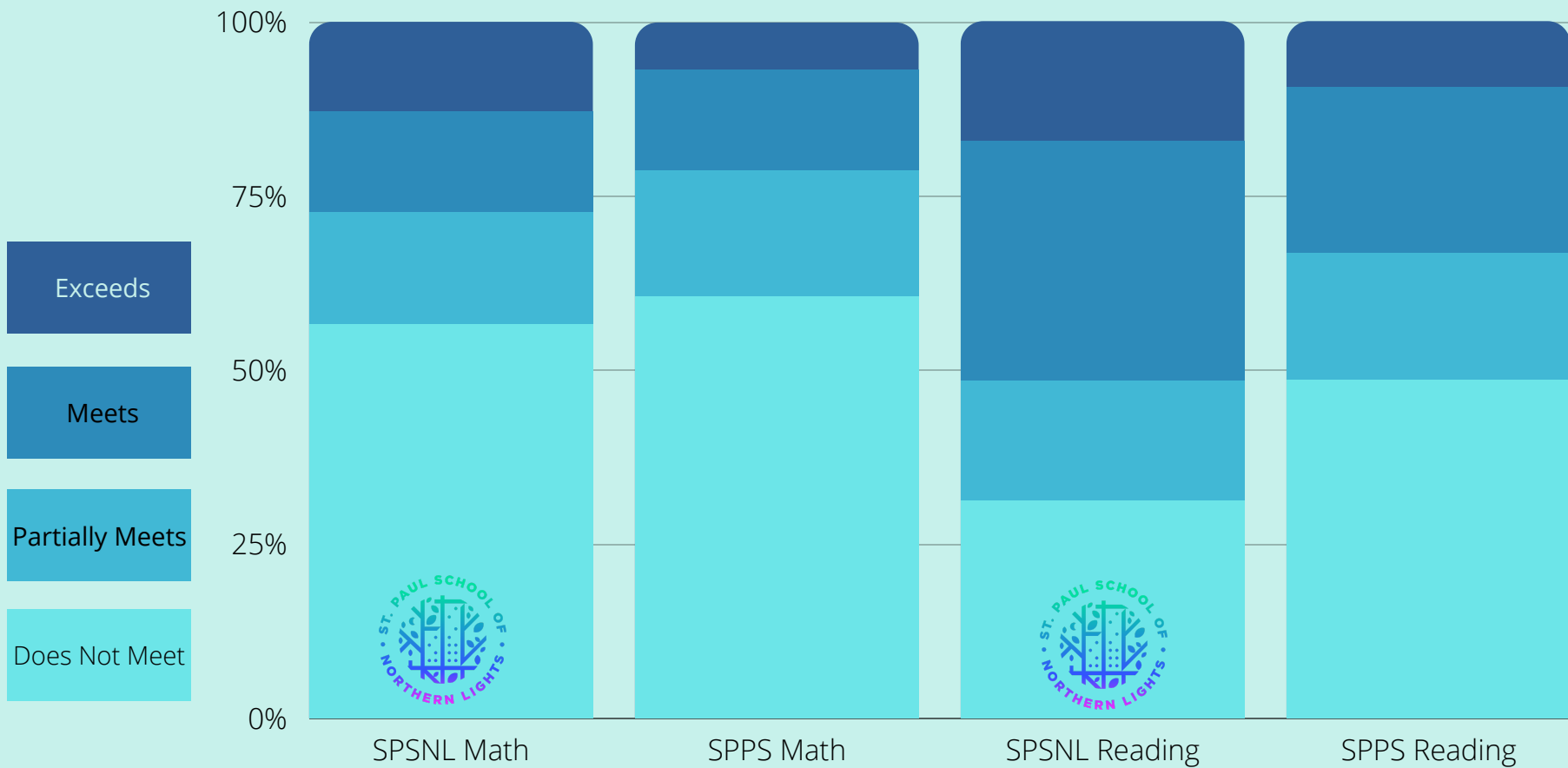
Year-end Fund Balance:

21.7%



## Academic Performance

Measures of academic performance were significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.



Performance on grade-level expectations as measured by the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments

# Innovative Practices and Implementation

St. Paul School of Northern Lights draws on **three educational philosophies** to create an **innovative and unique blend of practices**: 1) schools in Reggio-Emilia, Italy, 2) educational practices in Finland, and 3) place-based education. These core pillars are built upon our **connections** to one another and the world in which we live. At the foundation are the **relationships** the students and teachers have with one another. Teachers and students are constructors of knowledge **side by side**. St. Paul School of Northern Lights **empowers** its learners, both student and staff, with **dialogue, reflection, and collaboration**, modeling **lifelong learning** as a **joyful** process. To that end, our instructional approach reflects **flexibility** in teaching methods and pace with an **openness** to children **expressing their knowledge in many forms**. We believe a primary role of the teachers and staff of the school should be **observing** and supporting **student-driven inquiry**. Offering **multi-age classrooms** allows for children at all levels, ages, and stages to **appreciate difference and embrace collaborative roles**. We value **deeper understandings** through the **indivisibility of all subjects**, leading to **dynamic, hands-on experiences** whenever possible where students apply **critical thinking skills**.

## Future Plans

St. Paul School of Northern Light's forward planning continues to be impacted dramatically by the conditions created by the COVID-19 pandemic. **St. Paul School of Northern Lights will expand to serve 8th grade students in the 2021-2022 school year**, and will continue to determine what possibilities exist for expansion into a full K-12 school.