

# SEVEN HILLS CLASSICAL ACADEMY

## **Annual Report—2008-09**

### **School Mission**

*Seven Hills Classical Academy ("Seven Hills") provides students with a classical education in an academically rigorous environment designed to promote strong citizenship and life-long learning.*

### **Vision Statement**

Recognizing that all students have a right to pursue academic and personal excellence, Seven Hills challenges students by:

- Providing a caring and structured small-school environment
- Maintaining high expectations of students, staff, and the community
- Inspiring critical thinking, creativity, and an appreciation for beauty through active implementation of the Core Knowledge curriculum
- Promoting a strong value system that embraces cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy and self-control ("CARES")

### **Sponsor Information**

#### **Friends of Education**

Liaison: R.E. Topoluk  
EX0-01-A  
200 East Lake Street  
Wayzata, MN 55391-1693  
Telephone: (952) 745-2717  
Fax: (952) 745-2739

Seven Hills executed its Charter School Contract with Friends of Education ("Friends") on August 26, 2005. Its third year of operations closed on June 30, 2009. The school is currently in its second renewal year with the sponsor. Per the renewal agreement Friends continues to monitor the school's operations in three critical areas: academic performance, finance, and reporting and legal compliance. The monitoring program is described below.

Academic Performance. Monitoring academic performance occurs through three basic avenues: testing, site visits, and review of annual reports.

*Testing.* Friends requires regular testing to measure student performance, and student performance results must meet or exceed the results required by non-chartered public school students. The testing required by Friends is set forth in the Charter School Contract with Seven Hills. Generally, however, testing data is reviewed each semester to ensure that Seven Hills' goals are being met, both in terms of individual student performance and for the school as a whole. Testing data is compared with other schools to measure performance. Seven Hills' academic, student and school wide goals are set forth in the school's sponsor agreement and related to the 2008-09 academic year and were, as follows:

1. Student Academic Goals (MCAs):
  - a. Math: 90% of all students enrolled at the School for three years ("continuously-enrolled students") will score at least proficient. The number of continuously-enrolled students scoring at least proficient will increase 20% each year. The School will demonstrate higher grade level and school wide proficiency rates than the Bloomington school district and Hillcrest Elementary School.
  - b. Reading: 90% of all continuously-enrolled students will score at least proficient. The number of continuously-enrolled students scoring at least proficient will increase 20% each year. The School will demonstrate higher grade level and school wide proficiency rates than the Bloomington school district and Hillcrest Elementary School.
  - c. Science: 90% of all students enrolled at the School for three years will score at least proficient. The School will demonstrate higher grade level and school wide proficiency rates than the Bloomington school district and Hillcrest Elementary School.
2. Student Academic Goals (NWEA measures of Academic Progress):
  - a. MAP Math: 60% \*of students enrolled continuously for at least two full academic years will meet or exceed their targeted RIT growth in FY09, 62% in FY10 and 64% in FY11. On average, each grade will meet or exceed its average RIT growth targets. (\*"Classes in which 50% or more of students met their growth target show above average growth in relation to the norm group."  
<http://www.nwea.org/support/details.aspx?content=543>)
  - b. MAP Reading: 60% of students enrolled continuously for at least two full academic years will meet or exceed their targeted RIT growth in FY09, 62% in FY10 and 64% in FY11. On average, each grade will meet or exceed its average RIT growth targets.
3. Attendance: The School will maintain at least a 95% student attendance rate.
4. Parent Satisfaction. At least 90% of all parents returning the annual survey will indicate overall satisfaction with the School.
5. Staff Satisfaction. At least 90% of all staff returning the annual survey will indicate overall satisfaction at the School.

*Site Visits.* Friends engages in both unannounced and scheduled site visits. In addition to general observation and classroom visits, site visits may include interviews with Seven Hills' Executive Director, business manager, selected school teachers, students, and available parents and board members. Friends site visits also include an analysis as to whether the facility, school climate, and learning program constitute an effective learning environment promoting the academic goals. Friends provides feedback following each site visit; feedback may be oral and/or written.

*Annual Reports.* Friends requires that Seven Hills prepare an annual report which details the school's evaluation of meeting each of its academic performance goals.

To assist with its sponsoring responsibilities with respect to academic performance, Friends has contracted with the Minnesota Humanities Center, formerly the Minnesota Humanities Commission. The Center's staff assists in the implementation of academic programs at over thirty schools in Minnesota and has done so over the past ten years. Through its contract with the Minnesota Humanities Center, the Center assists with monitoring the implementation of the academic program at Seven Hills. Friends also implements a support network for the schools it is sponsoring to engage in mutual support and problem solving.

Finance. Friends' oversight of financial affairs is accomplished primarily through a review of financial statements and the independent audit.

*Financial Statements.* Prior to July 1<sup>st</sup> of each year, Seven Hills must submit to Friends an annual budget which has been adopted by the School Board. Seven Hills must also submit monthly financial statements to Friends as well as cash flow projections when requested by Friends. The financial statements must contain budget and actual expenses and contain explanations for all items exceeding budget and the manner in which the excess items will be resolved.

*Independent Audit.* By December 15<sup>th</sup> of each year, Seven Hills must submit to Friends its independent audit report, with any school management response due to Friends on or before January 15<sup>th</sup>. Seven Hills' annual independent audit report for 2008-09 was completed in July and August of 2009 and was conducted by Larson Allen LLP, 220 South Sixth Street, Suite 300, Minneapolis, MN 55402 [Main 612-376-4500, Fax 612-376-4850, [www.larsonallen.com](http://www.larsonallen.com)].

As a secondary mechanism to monitor financial affairs, site visit interviews with the school business manager and board members provide opportunities to review financial operations.

Reporting and Legal Compliance. Friends' oversight of reporting and general legal compliance is accomplished primarily through review of documentation, site visits, and communication with the Department of Education.

*Governance.* Seven Hills must submit board meeting minutes to Friends on a timely basis, generally prior to the next scheduled school board meeting. Friends may attend board meetings on either an announced or unannounced basis and is available to attend specific meetings upon request by Seven Hills.

*Annual Reports.* Friends requires that Seven Hills submit an annual report which details the school’s evaluation of meeting State reporting requirements.

*Site Visits.* Friends engages in both unannounced and scheduled site visits. In addition to general observation and classroom visits, site visits may include interviews with the Executive Director, business manager, selected school teachers, students, and available parents and board members. Site visits may also include a review of pertinent files. General observation, interviews, and review of selected files during site visits facilitate determination by Friends of Seven Hills’ general compliance, including compliance with the Minnesota Open Meetings Law, Public Employment Relations Act, teacher licensing requirements, student immunization compliance, Minnesota Human Rights Act, Minnesota Pupil Fair Dismissal Act, Minnesota Public Schools Fee Law, special education requirements, financial controls, and open enrollment processes.

*Department of Education.* Friends has asked that the Minnesota Department of Education inform Friends if Seven Hills is not reporting properly and to share copies of all pertinent correspondence between Seven Hills and the MDE. Friends adopts a similar procedure regarding compliance with local, State and Federal laws.

Remediation. Should Seven Hills fall short of its agreed-upon academic standards, financial targets, or fail in any aspect of reporting and legal compliance, Friends engages in a range of possible interventions including:

- Friends notifies the school leader or board chair of areas of concern
- Friends formally notifies the school board of areas of concern and may ask that the school board develop a performance improvement plan
- Friends initiates a notice and action plan whereby Friends states its intention to revoke sponsorship.

Friends complies with all state requirements regarding sponsorship withdrawal.

## **Governance**

### **Board of Directors – 2008-09**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Email</b>
Mike Stanchfield (parent; board treasurer)	5501 Portland Ave. So. Minneapolis MN 55417	H: 612-825-4441 w: 612-766-7764	MStanchfield@faegre.com
+resigned 7/08 and re-appointed 10/08. Attendance: 12/08; 1/09; 2/09; 3/09; 6/09 (71%)			
Sara Eschle (teacher)	15661 Crocus Ct. Rosemount, MN 55068	952-210-5643	<a href="mailto:seschle@shcamn.org">seschle@shcamn.org</a> (1 <sup>st</sup> ) Link0038@tc.umn.edu

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+attendance: 7/08; 8/08; 9/08; 10/08; 11/08; 12/08; 1/09; 3/09; 4/09; 5/09; 6/09 (92%)			
Mike Olmstead (parent; board secretary)	1300 E. 100 <sup>th</sup> Street Bloomington, MN 55425	H: 952-888-3016 w: 952-253-3099 c: 612-750-7989	<a href="mailto:mjolmstead@yahoo.com">mjolmstead@yahoo.com</a> olmstead.mike@gmail.com
+attendance: 7/08; 9/08; 10/08; 11/08; 12/08; 1/09; 2/09; 3/09; 5/09; 6/09 (83%)			
Susan Pearce (parent; board)	7225 Oak Grove Blvd. Richfield, MN 55423	H: 612-866-3052 c: 651-785-8987	<a href="mailto:spearce7@msn.com">spearce7@msn.com</a>
+attendance: 7/08; 9/08; 10/08; 11/08; 12/08; 1/09; 2/09; 3/09; 4/09; 5/09; 6/09 (92%)			
Tracy Benson (parent)			
+attendance: 7/08; 8/08; 9/08; 10/08; 11/08; 12/08; 1/09; 2/09; 3/09; 4/09; 5/09; 6/09 (100%)			
John Rimstad (parent)			
+attendance: 7/08; 8/08; 9/08; 10/08; 11/08; 12/08; 1/09; 2/09; 3/09; 4/09; 5/09; 6/09 (100%)			
Erin Day (teacher)	8600 Bloomington Avenue South Bloomington MN 55425	W: 952-426-6000	<a href="mailto:eday@shcamn.org">eday@shcamn.org</a>
+attendance: 7/08; 8/08; 9/08; 10/08; 11/08; 12/08; 1/09; 2/09; 3/09; 4/09; 5/09; 6/09 (100%)			
Julie Ball (teacher)	8600 Bloomington Avenue South Bloomington MN 55425	W: 952-426-6000	<a href="mailto:jball@shcamn.org">jball@shcamn.org</a>
+attendance: 7/08; 8/08; 11/08; 12/08; 1/09; 2/09; 3/09; 4/09; 5/09; 6/09 (83%)			
Margaret O'Brien Executive Director Ex-officio member	8600 Bloomington Avenue South Bloomington MN 55425	W: 952-426-6000	<a href="mailto:mobrien@shcamn.org">mobrien@shcamn.org</a>
+attendance: 7/08; 8/08; 9/08; 10/08; 11/08; 12/08; 1/09; 2/09; 3/09; 4/09; 5/09; 6/09 (100%)			

Don Swetala, parent and board vice-chair, suffered illness throughout the year and eventually resigned in September of 2008. Mike Stanchfield, who had resigned in July of 2008, was re-appointed to his position following the resignation of Don Swetala. Steve Wendorf, parent and founding board member, resigned his position on the board in August of 2008 to accept a position on the Board of Beacon Preparatory School, a separate charter school housed in the same physical facility as Seven Hills.

The Board of Directors meets monthly on the first Tuesday of each month, unless re-scheduled. Minutes of the Board of Directors are submitted to Friends of Education and are posted to the school's website, as are requisite financial documents. Copies of all minutes and financial reports are maintained in the main office of the school. The By-Laws call for May board elections. In May of 2009, an election was held which resulted in the following new members whose membership became effective on July 1, 2009: John Thompson (parent); Claire Emery (teacher); Nicole Peterson

(teacher); Heather Compton (teacher). The following board members' terms expired and they did not run for re-election: Susan Pearce; Mike Olmstead; Mike Stanchfield. The current members' attendance has been consistent and is referenced above. All board members have received and will continue to seek out board training on governance and finance as is statutorily mandated.

## **Teaching Staff**

<b>Curriculum Director:</b>	<b>File Folder Number</b>	<b>Comments:</b>
Julie Ball	382298	Returned 08-09
<b>Kindergarten:</b>		
John Becker	430959	Returned 08-09 (K-aide)
Jennifer Harrison	396541	New 08-09
Nicole Peterson	421959	Returned 08-09
Celeste Wiederholt	381944	Returned 08-09
<b>First Grade:</b>		
Amanda Getz	439989	New 08-09
Tracy Nelson	380906	New 08-09
Kelsey Passa	430418	Returned 08-09
Antonella Vitale	439023	New 08-09 (1 <sup>st</sup> -aide)
<b>Second Grade:</b>		
Lisa Carlin	419280	Returned 08-09
Janelle Mellgren	385030	Returned 08-09
Elaine Riegner	421490	Hired as long term sub 2/09
Jane Russell	438019	Returned 08-09 (maternity leave 2/09)
<b>Third Grade:</b>		
Erin Day	416936	Returned 08-09
Claire Emery	422213	Returned 08-09
<b>Fourth Grade:</b>		
Sarah Fruin	443000	New 08-09 (resigned 11/08)
John Langins	440033	New 08-09 (hired 11/08)
Greg Wammer	409332	Returned 08-09
<b>Fifth Grade:</b>		
Sara Eschle	419429	Returned 08-09
Emily Trnka	396457	New 08-09
<b>Phy. Ed.:</b>		
Suzanne Splinter	332621	Returned 08-09
<b>Music:</b>		
Kimberly Wood	378727	New 08-09
<b>Special Education:</b>		
Laura Christoff-Doyle	252620	Returned 08-09
Katherine Petty	446124	New 08-09 (hired 2/09)

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Jenelle Swenson	385602	New 08-09 (hired 10/08)
Laurie Wagner	334403	Returned 08-09 (resigned 2/09)

**Enrichment Coordinator:**

Heather Compton	430473	Returned 08-09
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**Per Shared Service Agreement with Beacon Preparatory School/Sixth Grade:**

Leah Lellman	397704	New 08-09
Kerry Tieman	415975	Returned 08-09

For the academic year, 2008-09, new hires were made to fill non-returning or grade changing staff positions (i.e. two first grade, one third grade) and for added grades (i.e. one 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, one 5<sup>th</sup> grade and one 6<sup>th</sup> grade).

**School's Executive Director:**

The school's Executive Director is Margaret R. O'Brien. Miss O'Brien has served as the Director of the school since it opened in 2006. Prior to securing the position as Executive Director, Miss O'Brien worked as one of the Directors of a five thousand student charter school in Chicago, Illinois. Miss O'Brien earned an accounting degree; she was a practicing attorney for thirteen years; earned her masters' degree in elementary education as well as completed sufficient coursework to secure her administrative licensure from Illinois. Understanding the requirements of the Minnesota Statutes, Miss O'Brien enrolled at the University of Minnesota and will be taking courses to secure her superintendent's license from MDE as soon as possible.

**Program Successes, Analysis and Best Practices**

**Student Demographics**

Enrollment: Total = 339

Kindergarten:	66	(3 classes: 23, 21, 22)
First Grade:	67	(3 classes: 22, 23, 22)
Second Grade:	70	(3 classes: 24, 23, 23)
Third Grade:	46	(2 classes: @ 23 each)
Fourth Grade:	46	(2 classes @ 23 each)
Fifth Grade:	44	(2 classes: 23, 21)

Free Lunch: 43 students (12.68%)  
Reduced Price Lunch: 18 students (5.31%)  
Full Price Lunch: 278 students (79.94%)  
Special Education: 56 students (16.52%)

Native Americans: 4 students (1.18%)  
Asian: 8 students (2.34%)  
Hispanic: 11 students (3.24%)

African American: 29 students (8.55%)

Caucasian: 288 (84.96%)

In each year of its operations, Seven Hills has been fully enrolled with a waiting list. At the end of FY09, a parent survey indicated that 98% of the families in attendance at the school would be sending their students again in the Fall of FY10.

Seven Hills' academic, student and school goals, are set forth below in the Accountability Measures, Data and Strategies to Meet Student Needs section of this Annual Report. Each of the stated goals is followed by a brief discussion, including supporting data, of the school's successes and progress towards meeting those goals in 2008-09.

A key contributing factor to the success of Seven Hills is that the entire community supports a rigorous, structured and disciplined academic program. All students are viewed as gifted as we seek to challenge them to the best of their individual abilities. The community will not compromise with its vision, and all staff are dedicated to bringing each child up to, and when possible, beyond grade level. Thus, embedded in its academic programming, Seven Hills has an enrichment program designed to accommodate both remediation and gifted and talented needs.

## **School Curricula**

The critical components of the Seven Hills educational program are described below. These may be modified or supplemented according to student needs.

## **Core Knowledge Scope and Sequence**

Seven Hills believes that the *Core Knowledge Scope and Sequence*, implemented through classical instructional strategies, supports each student's ability to meet the highest of academic standards. Inspired to produce extraordinary levels of achievement, teachers work with students, from a very young age, to master basic and foundational skills and engage in in-depth studies of high-interest level concepts.

The *Core Knowledge Scope and Sequence* holds that a grade-by-grade core of common learning is necessary to ensure a sound and fair elementary education by:

- mapping out a complete program that provides each student with a broad-based education, free of significant gaps,
- clearly defining the knowledge and skills that each student must master at each grade level to create high levels of academic expectations, and
- eliminating many of the gaps and repetition characterized in standard curriculums.

Science and Social Studies at Seven Hills follows in close alignment with the sequence of units as delineated in the Core Knowledge Scope and Sequence. Relying

generally on the Pearson History and Geography Social Studies texts and FOSS and Delta Science kits, teachers are able to present the most meaningful learning opportunities possible, understanding each child's learning styles, interests and ability levels.

Differences in student ability and variances in their readiness are accommodated with all of the curricular programs. Through frequent work sampling and ongoing assessments embedded within the *Sequence* and the reading and math programs, teachers will be able to identify any student who is struggling with any part of the curriculum.

## **A. Mathematics**

### **Singapore Math: Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> Grades**

Singapore Math is a unique approach to teaching math that focuses on building students' problem-solving, mental math, and high-level thinking skills. By starting with the concrete then moving to the pictorial, and finishing with the abstract, Singapore Math adds greater depth to math instruction and improves students' mastery of basic math concepts.

## **B. Balanced Literacy Program Using Guided Reading and Classical Literature**

Seven Hills implements the *Scholastic Guided Reading Program*, which is implemented in a context whereby a teacher supports each reader's development of effective strategies for processing texts at increasingly challenging levels of difficulty. The teacher works with a small group of children who demonstrate similar reading processes and are able to read similar levels of text with support. The ultimate goal in Guided Reading is to help children learn how to use independent reading strategies successfully. The Guided Reading program is aligned with Core Knowledge in that it focuses on building knowledge and greater understanding in a systematic, structured, cohesive, and consistent manner. The program further instills in the young reader a lifelong interest in reading and literature.

### **a. Phonics: Kindergarten-2<sup>nd</sup> Grades:**

The *Hampton-Brown Phonics and Friends* program is based on systematic and direct instruction in phonics skills. The program combines modeling and practice of reading strategies to help children read with automaticity and accuracy and to write with conventional spelling. Through these experiences, children will move from phonics to literacy and become independent readers and writers.

**b. Grammar**

**Shurley English: 1<sup>st</sup> through 3<sup>rd</sup> Grades**

Shurley English is a sequentially oriented curriculum that incorporates the use of rhythm, repetition and student teacher interaction in teaching all aspects of grammar, incorporating Minnesota State Standards.

**Junior Analytical Grammar: 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Grades**

Junior Analytical Grammar incorporates the instruction of all parts of speech and parts of sentences in classic sentence diagramming. There is a focus on skills' practice, short writing activities that reinforce concepts and assessments to evaluate student progress.

**c. Spelling:**

Zaner-Bloser Spelling Connections program is taught in First through Fifth grades. Students learn spelling patterns and strategies with emphasis on the alphabetic principle, structural and visual patterns, and the relationships of letters within words and as they progress, move to focusing on word derivations and vocabulary study.

At the Middle School level, students who need additional support in spelling instruction receive instruction through their Reading teacher at an individual level.

**d. Handwriting:**

**Zaner-Bloser Handwriting**

Zaner-Bloser Handwriting uses a step-by-step approach to teaching handwriting. Students develop a solid foundation skill that encourages and supports all of their writing, reading, spelling and assessment efforts. The Keys to Legibility, (shape, size, spacing, and slant), provide students with a system for learning and assessing their handwriting.

**e. Writing:**

**Lucy Calkins Writer's Workshop: Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> Grade**

In Kindergarten through Fifth grade, Lucy Calkins Writer's Workshop is implemented featuring units of writing that are presented sequentially and take students through the process of oral and pictorial storytelling through emergent into fluent writing.

**f. Classical Literature:**

The schools' mission and vision statements contemplate in-depth studies, as appropriate at each grade level, of the volumes of classical literature comprising a Core Knowledge library including original texts, such as the

Declaration of Independence. Literature in a fully integrated classroom supplements the Core Knowledge sequence and dove-tails with the Scholastic Guided Reading program.

### **C. Music and Visual Arts**

Music and the arts are essential complements to both our greater vision and the *Core Knowledge Scope and Sequence*. An early introduction to the arts provide Seven Hills' students with opportunities to sing, dance, listen and act in an atmosphere that encourages greater participation. Seven Hills music and visual arts programs impact the academic achievement, high level thinking, and well rounded nature of Seven Hills students.

### **D. Physical Education**

The Physical Education program at Seven Hills is designed to reflect National Standards for growth and development in the areas of physical fitness and nutrition, social and emotional health, motor skill acquisition, and intellectual skill and concept development. Additionally, to align with the school goals, each grade level has units and activities designed to integrate with the Core Knowledge curriculum. These are used to reinforce the concepts and vocabulary covered by classroom teachers. The C.A.R.E.S. values are highlighted in each class and provide the framework for social skill goals and objectives for Seven Hills students respectively.

### **E. Latin and Spanish Instruction**

Core Knowledge holds that early elementary education is the best time to introduce the study of language structures. Language structures in turn serve as the foundation for understanding the complex vocabulary, concepts, and paradigms of more advanced studies. A full immersion Spanish program is presented to the children in grades Kindergarten through Fourth grade through O' Neill Language Academy. As part of their studies in Classical Education, 5<sup>th</sup> graders study Latin and Vocabulary of Classical Roots. Extensive research led to the Seven Hills decision to introduce Latin to students in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. The school's Latin program is content rich, drawing from the cultural influences, texts, and history which shaped the language.

### **F. Character Education**

Seven Hills Classical Academy is not only committed to academic excellence, but to ethical standards—including our core virtues of Cooperation, Assertion, Responsibility, Empathy, and Self-Control. Seven Hills students and teachers call these our C.A.R.E.S rules and practice applying these characteristics in our daily lives.

Additionally, Seven Hills adopts the CORE Virtues program of: respect, compassion, courage, diligence, patience, responsibility and perseverance, closely aligning with the *Core Knowledge Scope and Sequence*. At Seven Hills the community holds that, through great children’s literature, students can effectively learn core virtues.

## **G. Enrichment Program**

In January of 2007, Seven Hills initiated an enrichment for all program. This program serves as a vehicle to address the needs of all children - it’s gifted and talented population as well as those students who demonstrated weaknesses or challenges impeding academic progress. Additionally, the entire population participates in ongoing extension activities associated with the Core Knowledge curriculum. Students participate in semester long activities in a high interest areas focusing on math, science, social studies, writing and/or fine arts. In this way, all children are challenged to extend their knowledge on topics that are covered in the classroom.

Data supporting the success of the programs implemented at Seven Hills can be found in the NWEA MAP test results and MCA II test results that are set forth in the Accountability Measures/Data and Strategies to Meet Student Needs section of this Annual Report.

## **Program Challenges**

### **(1) Data Driven Instruction Model Implementation**

The growth of Seven Hills enrollment staff and students led to the need for more training and focused individualized assistance. Staff comfort with using each assessment, interpreting results, and making instructional and content adjustments based on the results runs the gamut from expert to novice. Targeting training at the appropriate level for each staff member presented challenges with scheduling. New staff members were faced with adapting to new systems and surroundings and were asked to look at each student’s individual needs from day one. Staff members that were new to our community were often familiar with giving classroom level assessments for the purpose of grade reporting only. They required individual coaching in using the information each day to tailor lessons and to employ varied teaching methods to ensure optimal mastery for each student.

The creation of an Assessment Coordinator position for the 2009-2010 year will allow for more training for new staff members and more specifically focused training for returning staff. Every employee, experienced or new, finds the time commitment required to implement our program effectively to be extensive. In the future, the Assessment Coordinator will be able to take some of the recording responsibilities, allowing classroom teachers place more of their efforts on the students themselves.

## **(2) Singapore Math**

The implementation of the Singapore Math program resulted in significant improvement in Math scores in the K-3<sup>rd</sup> grades in 2007-08. Introducing the program in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade during the 2008-09 academic year posed challenges in the areas of instructional pacing preparing students for the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA-II's) in Spring of 2009 and professional development of staff who have extensive training in the Singapore Math curriculum versus new teaching staff. The Q Comp Plan has allowed for extensive training in Singapore Math and other areas of the curriculum where there has been a demonstrated need for greater instructional knowledge and development particularly when considering a Differentiated Instruction model.

For the 2009-2010 school year, 5<sup>th</sup> grade will implement Singapore Math. Administration will be paying particularly close attention to the alignment of Singapore Mathematics to the Minnesota State Standards in Mathematics, assessments, and pacing of instruction to prepare for the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments in Spring of 2010.

## **(3) Literacy**

The K-5 literacy program is flexible in that it can be adapted to meet the needs of each student individually. While differentiated instruction in literacy is extremely beneficial to the students, it poses challenges to the teachers as it is difficult to ensure that all grade level objectives are being presented and met. A Literacy Specialist position was added for the 2009-2010 school year to provide teachers with a focused resource pertaining to literacy instruction. Teachers will be aided in determining appropriate instructional materials, pacing and methodology, and the school's literacy program will become more streamlined across the grade levels, ensuring that students are meeting the standards set forth by the state of Minnesota.

As a fundamental part of the trivium, logic study focuses on informal and formal logic, as well as supplying students with the tools to create their own valid arguments. The mastery of logic is a requisite skill for mastering other subjects. Logic will be taught starting at the 5<sup>th</sup> grade level informally using analogies and Socratic Seminar to foster critical thinking in 2009-10.

## **Accountability Measures/Data and Strategies to Meet Student Needs**

### **Academic, student and school goals**

Seven Hills' academic, student and school goals, are set forth below followed by a brief discussion of the school's progress towards meeting those goals in 2008-09.

Student Academic Goal(s): (1) 90% of students enrolled at the school for three years will score at least proficient in Math and Reading. The number of continuously enrolled students scoring at least proficient will increase 20% each year and the school will demonstrate higher grade level. 90% of all students enrolled for three years will score at least proficient and school wide proficiency rates than the Bloomington School district and Hillcrest Elementary School. (2) 60% \*of students enrolled continuously for at least two full academic years will meet or exceed their targeted RIT growth in FY09, 62% in FY10 and 64% in FY11. On average, each grade will meet or exceed its average RIT growth targets. (\*"Classes in which 50% or more of students met their growth target show above average growth in relation to the norm group."  
<http://www.nwea.org/support/details.aspx?content=543>) The school's progress toward meeting student academic goals is set forth in the Standardized Assessment Data section below.

Student or School Goal: Student attendance will average above 95%. This will be validated by attendance figures logged in the school office and submitted to the MDE.

#### **2008-09 Percent Attendance as reported to MDE:**

Kindergarten:	95.0%
First Grade:	96.0%
Second Grade:	96.5%
Third Grade:	96.7%
Fourth Grade:	96.1%
Fifth Grade:	95.8%
Average Daily Attendance (K-5 <sup>th</sup> ):	96.0%

Student or School Goal: At least 85% of parents, staff, and students will indicate a "satisfied" rating or above on a school survey administered annually in the spring in regards to both the educational program and the school climate and culture.

Seven Hills administered two surveys in 2008-09 to all parents. Staff and students were surveyed in the Spring. The rating scale on the surveys was between "1," indicating not satisfied, and "5," indicating very satisfied. The categories listed for the parent surveys included: Director, Office Staff/Receptionist, Facilities, Teachers, Educational Services, Technology Services and Values/Character Building. There were numerous subcategories. The student surveys were developed to speak to their likes and dislikes of the school, its program and culture in an age-appropriate format.

Approximately five percent (5%) of approximately 180 returned surveys assigned Seven Hills a rating of 1 to 3 for between 5 and 7 of the subcategories. This was the case in both the Winter and Spring. A substantial majority, well in excess of 90% of the parents, assigned either a 4 or 5 rating for all subcategories, representing overwhelming positive feedback to the curriculum and culture of the school in a growing population. Where the parents indicated a need for improvement persisted in

the areas of (1) extra-curricular activities; (2) busing and transportation concerns (transportation is provided at no cost to all parents/families, including a majority of the students who reside in areas outside Bloomington); and (3) timely updates being made to the webpage. With regard to academics, relatively few, if any, negative comments were received in either the Winter or Spring parent surveys and 100% of the teachers received all 4s and 5s.

Approximately 95% of the students indicated that they were very satisfied with their education and the environment in which they are learning and nearly 100% of the teachers indicated that they were very satisfied with the school, the curriculum and the school culture. Surveys were taken and provided to the Board of Directors in the Executive Director’s annual review process. All teachers and all other staff who were offered contracts returned for the 2009-10 academic year.

With regard to state reporting requirements, Seven Hills met all charter school state reporting deadlines. Additionally, where federal funding dictated documentation and reporting, Seven Hills met all reporting deadlines as well.

**Standardized Assessment Data**

During September of 2008, all of the children took the NWEA MAP tests to set an initial benchmark for assessments and measurement of student achievement. The 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade students took the MCA tests in the Spring, and, at year end, all students took the NWEA MAP tests, the results of which reflected those students who were successful in reaching targeted growth rates. Seven Hills has determined growth based upon the students meeting targeted growth numbers established by the NWEA MAP test program.

The Fall to Spring 2008-09 NWEA MAP Test results reflect the following information regarding growth for the current (2008-09) 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade classes.

**2008-09 NWEA MAP Test Results\*\***

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Fall 2008</b>	<b>Spring 2009</b>	<b>% Meeting Target Growth*</b>
<b>Kinder</b>	Math	154	173	84
	Reading	149	170	86
<b>1st Grade</b>	Math	172	191	83
	Reading	169	190	89
<b>2nd Grade</b>	Math	189	202	60
	Reading	187	200	67
	Language Usage	188	201	58
<b>3rd Grade</b>	Math	199	212	64

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	Reading	195	209	80
	Language Usage	198	210	80
<b>4th Grade</b>	Math	209	225	91
	Reading	205	214	72
	Language Usage	204	213	62
<b>5<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	Math	217	225	64
	Reading	206	214	71
	Language Usage	212	217	62
	*target growth determined by NWEA			

\*\*Results indicate that the school is exceeding student academic goal(2).

**2009 MCA II Results\*\***

<b>Grade</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>ALL</b>
<b>Reading</b>	89	83	70	81
<b>Bloomington</b>	81	80	76	77
<b>State Average Proficiency-Reading</b>	78	75	72	72
<b>Math</b>	91	87	55	78
<b>Bloomington</b>	80	76	70	66
<b>State Average Proficiency-Math</b>	82	75	66	64

\*\*Results indicate that the school, while exceeding Bloomington District and state proficiency levels, continues to work towards meeting student academic goal (1).

**Remediation/Enrichment Groups (strategies to meet student needs)**

The 2008-09 Grade Level Assessment Teams analyzed data from the NWEA MAP test results for tests administered during 2008-09 as well as the 2008 MCA scores for the 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> graders. Their analysis resulted in the identification of specific groups of children who were targeted as those who (1) require remediation, (2) require ongoing support and re-teaching, and (3) require enrichment and extension activities. During the two weeks prior to the beginning of the academic year 2008-09, Grade Level Assessment Teams were formed. All staff members participated as a member of one of three teams: K-1 Team, 2-3 Team and 4-5 Team. The Teams were given the following assignments:

1. School Weeks 1 & 2: review and analyze NWEA and MCA test results with the objective of identifying group and individual strengths and weaknesses. Place all students in a low, medium or high group.

2. Week 3: Share identified weaknesses and strengths of each child and generate a list of concepts to incorporate into curriculum, prioritizing from greatest to least need. Pick up to four on which to work.
3. Break up into small grade level groups to:
  - a. discuss strategies for implementation of instruction in order to effectively meet the needs of the students
  - b. develop realistic measurements for assessment purposes: how will the classroom teacher know that concepts are being mastered? How will students demonstrate proficiency, if not mastery in areas of identified weakness?
4. Meet weekly to discuss implementation and modifications, as needed:
  - a. remediation in areas where goals are not being met
  - b. adding new goals (going down the list of pre-determined priorities) as goals are being met to the whole team's satisfaction
  - c. dialog on ongoing assessments, results, review/re-teaching of previously mastered concepts.

For those students falling into the 'low' or remediation group, targeted areas for remediation were identified. In addition to teacher observation and 2008-09 academic achievement reports, the Assessment Teams used NWEA as a resource, as reports identifying specific weaknesses and strengths of each student were generated. Within the report, very specific strategies and suggested activities were outlined which address identified weaknesses. This information was analyzed by the various assessment teams who generated plans identifying suggested strategies to meet the needs and remediate the targeted areas of weakness. Effective October 1<sup>st</sup>, students received small group instruction and one-on-one instruction in specific targeted areas. Individualized and ongoing assessments reflected areas of mastery and continuing needs.

For those students falling into the 'middle' group of students, target areas for whole group support were identified. Again, Grade Level Assessment Teams analyzed teacher observations, prior year's academic performance and standardized test scores. Each classroom teacher's instruction was driven via data from 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09 and Fall 2008 standardized test results thereby focusing on skills/concepts identified as posing a general challenge to the classes. Ongoing assessments reflected mastery and areas requiring further instruction. (Differentiated Instruction Model)

For those students falling into the 'high' or enrichment group, students were challenged to excel. Via the Differentiated Instruction model, students engaged in small group instruction and independent learning activities to ensure continued growth and academic progress. Ongoing assessments reflected mastery/academic excellence as well as areas requiring further instruction.

## **Academic Goals for 2009-10**

At its August 2009 Board Meeting, the Board of Directors approved the academic goals for the 2009-10 academic year. The goals are those articulated in the school's

with the school's sponsor. The following are the student academic goals, as well as student or school goals, that were approved by the school's Board of Directors:

**Goal 1: State Assessment Tests (MCA-IIIs)**

Sub Goal #1: Math: 90% of all students enrolled at the School for three years ("continuously-enrolled students") will score at least proficient.

Sub Goal #2: Math: The number of continuously-enrolled students scoring at least proficient will increase 20% each year.

Sub Goal #3: Math: The School will demonstrate higher grade level and school wide proficiency rates than the Bloomington school district and Hillcrest Elementary School.

Sub Goal #4: Reading: 90% of all continuously-enrolled students will score at least proficient.

Sub Goal #5: Reading: The number of continuously-enrolled students scoring at least proficient will increase 20% each year.

Sub Goal #6: Reading: The School will demonstrate higher grade level and school wide proficiency rates than the Bloomington school district and Hillcrest Elementary School.

Sub Goal #7: Science: 90% of all students enrolled at the School for three years will score at least proficient.

Sub Goal #8: Science: The School will demonstrate higher grade level and school wide proficiency rates than the Bloomington school district and Hillcrest Elementary School.

**Goal 2: NWEA Measures of Academic Progress**

Sub Goal #1: MAP Math: 60% \*of students enrolled continuously for at least two full academic years will meet or exceed their targeted RIT growth in FY09, 62% in FY10 and 64% in FY11.

\*"Classes in which 50% or more of students met their growth target show above average growth in relation to the norm group."

<http://w/ww.nwea.org/support/details.aspx?content=543>

Sub Goal #2: MAP Math: On average, each grade will meet or exceed its average RIT growth targets.

Sub Goal #3: MAP Reading: 60% of students enrolled continuously for at least two full academic years will meet or exceed their targeted RIT growth in FY09, 62% in FY10 and 64% in FY11.

Sub Goal #4: MAP Reading: On average, each grade will meet or exceed its average RIT growth targets.

**Goal 3: Attendance**

The School will maintain at least a 95% student attendance rate.

**Goal 4: Satisfaction Surveys**

Sub Goal #1: Parent Satisfaction. At least 90% of all parents returning the annual survey will indicate overall satisfaction with the School.

Sub Goal #2: Staff Satisfaction. At least 90% of all staff returning the annual survey will indicate overall satisfaction at the School.

In addition to the standardized assessments (NWEA MAP tests and MCA tests), student achievement is measured in a variety of ways, both formally and informally. Portfolios, essay writing, project completion, teacher observations, parent surveys, oral assessments, concept quizzes and tests, anecdotal reports, student self-assessments, etc., are used in all academic settings. Having a Differentiated Instruction model, it is imperative for the teachers to use data from standardized, formative and summative assessments, in order to effectively implement the curriculum so as to challenge all ability levels and to meet both remediation and enrichment needs.

## **Contact Information**

For any clarification or questions regarding information contained in the Annual Report, please contact:

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