



**Spero Academy
District 4113
UST Annual Report
October 3, 2022**

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I. Academic Elements

A. Mission and Vision

Our mission is to provide students with a personalized and adaptive education to grow academically, emotionally, and socially.

We Believe ... Every child can learn, grow, and succeed when given the opportunity to reach his or her individual potential.

We focus our resources and energy on developing our core capabilities to develop our **Strategic Intents:**

- Create *differentiated programs* that integrate academics with social and emotional learning
- Comprehensively *identify individual education needs and learning styles*
- Utilize *collaborative teaming* among staff, specialists, and families to integrate and coordinate personalized education
- Structure learning environments with *small student-to-teacher ratios*
- *Assess student progress* across all learning areas

Spero Academy is uniquely focused on reaching the desired population of children with disabilities. While Spero Academy does not discriminate against neurotypical students, all programs are designed to benefit children with all forms of disabilities. The mission and vision reflect this focus and are consistently reviewed within the context of all programs. The Board has created an Accountability Committee and Governance Committee, both of whom work to ensure missional connections to all programs and overall school direction.

Spero Academy recognizes the intent of Charter Schools to be institutions of education reaching underserved student populations, or creative approach tailored for students with unique learning needs. Spero's intent is to address the gap in special education programs through specialized educational opportunities and individualized plans for every student to help all students reach their full potential.

The Mission of Spero Academy supports the primary purpose of charter schools by reaching an underserved student population and providing them with opportunities for specialized educational programming. Our extensive waitlist reveals the number of children in our community who are currently underserved. We believe it is our moral responsibility, and an obligation of all educators, to continue to meet the needs of children who would benefit from our mission and purpose.

Spero Academy opened its second campus in Brooklyn Park on August 15, 2022. The new Brooklyn Park Campus is intended to replicate the Minneapolis Campus, with intentional coherence in leadership and educational programming to ensure that students in each location receive programming of equal quality.

B. Accountability Plan Goals

Gauging the progress of students or success of our school based on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments and adaptations remain challenging, due to the fluctuating percentage of students who take the MCA III and the MTAS II. Decisions regarding which test a student will take are determined annually by the IEP team and documented accordingly. The IEP team uses an eligibility checklist to determine whether or not a student with an IEP will take either the MCA or MTAS.

Despite the availability of alternate assessments, the high percentage of Spero Academy students whose abilities and achievement are not conveyed well in any of these measures makes this measure less indicative of student learning and school success than in a school with a more typical student demographic. The results from state tests for 2021-2022 indicate a slight increase in proficiency for the MCA Reading assessment. The MCA Mathematics assessment indicates a very slight increase in proficiency. A slight overall increase in proficiency was seen in reading and mathematics for students who were assessed using the MTAS. Spero Academy received seven Parent Refusal forms for student participation in the statewide tests.

Table 1. Percent of students meeting or exceeding standards on MCA reading. (add partially meets and doesn't meet)

Percent Meeting or Exceeding on MCA Reading 2021-2022 School Year				
	# of Students Tested	% Partially Meeting	% Meeting	% Exceeding
Grade 3	13	8%	8%	0%
Grade 4	8	0%	25%	0%
Grade 5	11	0%	27%	0%
Grade 6	8	25%	12%	0%
Overall	30	17%	18%	0%

Table 2. Percent of students meeting or exceeding standards on MTAS reading.

Percent Meeting or Exceeding on MTAS Reading 2021-2022 School Year				
	# of Students Tested	% Partially Meeting	% Meeting	% Exceeding
Grade 3	9	0%	56%	11%
Grade 4	8	13%	38%	13%
Grade 5	4	40%	50%	0%
Grade 6	9	33%	22%	22%
Overall	20	64%	42%	30%

Table 3. Percent of students meeting or exceeding standards on MCA mathematics

Percent Meeting or Exceeding on MCA Mathematics 2021-2022 School Year				
	# of Students Tested	% Partially Meeting	% Meeting	% Exceeding
Grade 3	13	0%	15%	0%
Grade 4	9	11%	%	0%
Grade 5	12	0%	0%	0%
Grade 6	8	0%	0%	0%
Overall	30	3%	4%	0%

Table 4. Percent of students meeting or exceeding standards on MTAS mathematics.

Percent Meeting or Exceeding on MTAS Mathematics 2021-2022 School Year				
	# of Students Tested	% Partially Meeting	% Meeting	% Exceeding
Grade 3	9	22%	56%	11%
Grade 4	9	22%	44%	22%
Grade 5	4	75%	25%	0%

Grade 6	9	33%	66%	0%
Overall	20	38%	48%	8%

Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA)

Spero Academy has administered the NWEA for several years. Also known as the MAP Growth, this year it was on the menu of assessment choices that teachers could use to assess whether students were making individual progress in reading and mathematics.

Compared to the 2020-2021 NWEA Literacy scores, Spero students demonstrated a slight increase in scores in the 2021-2022 school year.

Table 5. Percent of students at or above national median – NWEA Reading

NWEA % At or Above National Mean – Reading			
	# of Students Tested Spring	% at or above National Mean	# at or above National Mean
Grade 1	8	38%	3
Grade 2	9	0%	0
Grade 3	12	25%	3
Grade 4	8	13%	1
Grade 5	13	31%	4
Grade 6	11	27%	3
Overall	58	22%	10

Table 6. Percent of students at or above national median - NWEA Mathematics

NWEA % At or Above National Mean – Mathematics			
	# of Students Tested Spring	% at or above National Mean	# at or above National Mean
Grade 1	6	50%	3
Grade 2	10	10%	1
Grade 3	13	15%	2
Grade 4	10	0%	0

Grade 5	14	7%	1
Grade 6	14	7%	1
Overall	67	14%	8

Other Assessment Measures in the area of Academic Achievement:

Spero Academy selected four assessments on which students’ progress is monitored and assessed. The assessments were chosen with particular focus on whether they were aligned with the Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards. In addition to the four assessments, benchmark data were gathered for every Spero Academy student in the key academic areas. An important feature of Spero Academy’s accountability plan is that the data gathered can be used for assessing whether the school is succeeding in meeting its mission and also used to inform day-to-day instruction.

For the 2022-2023 school year, Spero Academy will be implementing and/or replacing three district assessments. Two of the assessments for math and reading will address students who may be requiring an assessment at a more developmental level, such as at a pre-kindergarten level. These two assessments are *The Developmental Literacy Inventory*, which replaces the *Bridge*, and a developmental and Pre-kindergarten assessment were added to the *Spero Academy Mathematics Inventory*. The third assessment that will be newly implemented is a checklist, *The Spero Academy Social and Emotional Learning and Communication Checklist*.

Bridge Assessment. The *Bridge* is an early literacy development assessment that was chosen to assess students who were not yet at the reading readiness level, but whose reading program included instruction on early literacy concepts. It is a portfolio rating scale, originally designed for preschool students, but with applicability to early literacy learners who are from a wide range of abilities. It is an observation-based tool that can be used to “determine ongoing progress and children’s interests as well as inform daily practice related to early language and literacy development.”¹ The *Bridge* is divided into five major areas: Foundations of Reading, Alphabet Knowledge, Phonological Awareness, Literacy-Related Language, and Oral Language. Evidence is gathered for each of the areas using a guide for scoring. All evidence is dated and filed in a portfolio and scored.

Table 7. *BRIDGE* Grade Level Standard Scoring

Bridge - Grade Level Standard Scoring				
	Well Below Grade Level Standard %	Below Grade Level Standard %	At Grade Level Standard %	Above Grade Level Standard %
Kindergarten	<79%	80%-100%	X	X
1st	<100%	X	X	X
2nd	<100%	X	X	X
3rd	<100%	X	X	X
4th	<100%	X	X	X

5th	<100%	X	X	X
6th	<100%	X	X	X

Table 8. *BRIDGE* Student Scores, Spero Academy 2021-2022

Spero Academy 2021-2022 <i>BRIDGE</i> Scores				
	Not Meeting Standard	Approaching Standard	Meets Standard	Exceeds Standard
	%	%	%	%
September Score	100%	0%	0%	0%
June Score	100%	0%	0%	0%

Spero Academy Emergent Literacy Assessment (SAEL). The *SAEL* is an individually administered assessment broken down into 5 sections: Pre-Reading Skills, Phonics Skills, Decoding Skills, High Frequency Word Identification, and Listening Comprehension. All students should be administered the Listening Comprehension section regardless of their scores on other sections. A short explanation of the four tasks is presented below.

- Pre-Reading Skills: Recognition and naming of the upper and lower case letters of the alphabet, and alphabet production
- Phonics Skills: Consonant and vowel sounds, rhyming words
- Decoding Skills: CVC, consonant blends with short vowel sounds, r-controlled vowels, long vowels
- High Frequency Word Identification: Recognition of words common Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, and 1st grade.
- Listening Comprehension: Assessment of listening comprehension at a Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten and 1st grade level.

The *SAEL* was administered to the Spero Academy students who were in kindergarten and first grade or to any second through fifth grade students who were at the reading readiness level. The scores demonstrate a slight increase in Spero Academy students' reading skills from Fall to Spring.

Based on the results, teachers design instruction for the level at which the child is presently functioning, either as an emergent or transitional reader. Instruction is designed to provide the skills and competency necessary to move in a positive direction along the literacy skill continuum.

Table 9. *SAEL* Grade Level Standard Scoring

SAEL- Grade Level Standard Scoring				
	Well Below Grade Level Standard %	Below Grade Level Standard %	At Grade Level Standard %	Above Grade Level Standard %
Kindergarten	<49%	50%-69%	70%-87%	88%-100%
1st	<59%	60%-79%	80%-100%	X
2nd	<79%	80%-100%	X	X
3rd	<89%	90%-100%	X	X
4th	<100%	X	X	X
5th	<100%	X	X	X
6th	<100%	X	X	X

Table 10. *SAEL* Student Scores, Spero Academy 2021-2022

SAEL 2021-2022 Scores						Total Students in grade
	Well Below	Below	At	Above	Total SAEL	
Kindergarten	5/16 = 31%	5/16 = 31%	3/16 = 19%	3/16 = 19%	16	/18 = 89%
1st	6/15 = 40%	4/15 = 27%	5/15 = 33%	X	15	/21 = 71%
2nd	15/19 = 79%	4/19 = 21%	X	X	19	/24 = 79%
3rd	12/13 = 92%	1/13 = 8%	X	X	13	/22 = 59%
4th	12/12 = 100%	X	X	X	12	/20 = 60%
5th	4/4 = 100%	X	X	X	4	/21 = 19%
6th	3/3 = 100%	X	X	X	3	/17 = 18%

Whole-to-Part Reading Assessment. The *Whole-To-Part Reading Assessment* information assists with understanding the support skills needed to develop reading comprehension. The areas assessed support the integrated reading processes involved in successful silent reading, thus giving a teacher a better understanding of how best to focus instruction for each student. There are three parts to the assessment: Word Identification, Silent Reading Comprehension, and Language Comprehension.

Table 11. *Whole-to-Part* Grade Level Standard Scoring

Whole-to-Part Grade Level Standard Scoring	
40% or less on pre-K	0.25
Pre-K/ Pre-Primer	0.5
Kinder/ Primer	0.75
1st	1
2nd	2
3rd	3
4th	4
5th	5
6th	6
7th	7
8th	8

Table 12. *Whole-To-Part Word ID*, Student Scores, Spero Academy 2021-2022

WTP- Word ID 2021-2022 Scores						Total Students in grade
	Well Below	Below	at	above	total WTP WID	
Kindergarten					0	/18=
1st					0	/21=
2nd				1/1= 100%	1	/24= 4%
3rd			2/4= 50%	2/4= 50%	4	/22= 18%
4th						/20=
5th	2/2=100%				2	/21= 10%
6th	3/4=75%	1/4=25%			4	/17= 24%

Table 13. *Whole-To-Part Language Comprehension*, Student Scores, Spero Academy 2021-2022

WTP- Listening Comp 2021-2022 Scores						Total Students in grade
	Well Below	Below	at	above	total WTP-LC	
Kindergarten					0	/18=
1st					0	/21=
2nd						
3rd						/22= 14%
4th						/20=
5th						
6th						/17= 24%

Table 14. *Whole-To-Part Reading Comprehension*, Student Scores, Spero Academy 2021-2022

WTP- Reading Comp 2021-2022 Scores						
	Well Below	Below	at	above	total WTP-RC	
Kindergarten					0	/18=
1st					0	/21=
2nd						
3rd						/22= 18%
4th						/20=
5th						
6th						/17= 24%

The Spero Academy Mathematics Inventory (SAMI)

The *SAMI* is an individually administered assessment that tests students at three different grade levels, Kindergarten, 1st grade and 2nd grade with each test broken down into 3 sections: Numbers and Operations, Algebra, and Geometry and Measurement. The sections assess mathematics skills related to each specific section and are based on the Minnesota State Standards for each of the grade levels.

The *SAMI* was administered to Spero Academy students who were in kindergarten and first grade. The *SAMI* was administered to students in second grade through fifth grade who were either needed to take a paper test rather than an online test or who were at or below a 2nd grade mathematics level.

Table 15. *The Spero Academy Mathematics Inventory (SAMI)*, Grade Level Standard Scoring

SAMI - Grade Level Standard Scoring				
	Well Below	Below	At	Above
K	All Developmental Levels	Pre-K 40%-100%	K 80%-100%	1st 60%-100%
	Pre-K 20%-39%	K 20%-79%		2nd 40%-100%
1st	All Developmental Levels	K 80% - 100%	1st 80% - 100%	2nd 60%-100%
	PK 20% - 100%	1st 20% - 79%		
	K 20% - 79%			
2nd	All Developmental Levels	1st 80% - 100%	2nd 80% - 100%	X
	Pre-K 20%-100%	2nd 20% - 79%		
	K 20% - 100%			
	1st 20% - 79%			
3rd	All Developmental Levels	2nd 80% - 100%	X	X
	Pre-K 20% - 100%			
	K 20% - 100%			
	1st 20% - 100%			
	2nd 20% - 79%			
4th	All SAMI levels	X	X	X
5th	All SAMI levels	X	X	X
6th	All SAMI levels	X	X	X

Table 16. *The Spero Academy Mathematics Inventory (SAMI)*, Student Scores, Spero Academy 2021-2022

SAMI- Numbers and Operations 2021-2022 Scores						Total Students in grade
	Well Below	Below	At	Above	total SAMI- #	
Kindergarten	3/17= 18%	9/17= 53%	3/17= 18%	2/17= 12%	17	/18 = 94%
1st	7/13=54%	0/13=0%	6/13=46%	0/13=0%	13	/21 = 67%
2nd	16/20=80%	4/20=20%	0/20=0%	0/20=0%	20	/24 = 83%
3rd	9/9=100%	0/9=0%	0/9=0%	0/9=0%	9	/22= 100%
4th	9/9=100%	0/9=0%	0/9=0%	0/9=0%	9	/20=45%
5th	5/5=100%	0/5=0%	0/5=0%	0/5=0%	5	/21= 24%
6th	4/4=100%	0/4=0%	0/4=0%	0/4=0%	4	/18=22%

SAMI- Algebra 2021-2022 Scores						Total Students in grade
	Well Below	Below	At	Above	total SAEL	
Kindergarten	2/17= 12%	9/17=53%	5/17=29%	0/17=0%	17	/18 = 94%
1st	5/13=38%	2/13=15%	6/13=46%	0/13=0%	13	/21 = 62%
2nd	16/20=80%	3/20=15%	1/20=5%	0/20=0%	20	/24 = 83%
3rd	8/9=89%	1/9=11%	0/9=0%	0/9=0%	9	/22= 100%
4th	9/9=100%	0/9=0%	0/9=0%	0/9=0%	9	/20=45%
5th	5/5=100%	0/5=0%	0/5=0%	0/5=0%	5	/21= 24%
6th	4/4=100%	0/4=0%	0/4=0%	0/4=0%	4	/18=22%

SAMI- Geometry and Measurement 2021-2022 Scores						Total Students in grade
	Well Below	Below	At	Above	total SAEL	
Kindergarten	3/17=18%	12/17=71%	2/17=12%	0/17=0%	17	/18 = 94%
1st	7/13=54%	0/13=0%	6/13=46%	0/13=0%	13	/21 = 62%
2nd	16/20=80%	4/20=20%	0/20=0%	0/20=0%	20	/24 = 83%
3rd	9/9=100%	0/9=100%	0/9=100%	0/9=100%	9	/22= 100%
4th	9/9=100%	0/9=0%	0/9=0%	0/9=0%	9	/20=45%
5th	5/5=100%	0/5=0%	0/5=0%	0/5=0%	5	/21= 24%
6th	4/4=100%	0/4=0%	0/4=0%	0/4=0%	4	/18=22%

The Spero Academy assessment calendar can be found on our website at:
[Spero Academy District/State Assessment Calendar 2022-2023.pdf](#)

C. After School and Summer Programming

Spero Academy does not offer after school or summer programming at this time.

D. Parent Involvement

Spero Academy has a long tradition of surveying the school's major stakeholders, including the families of our students. Spero families were surveyed in the Spring of 2022 with the intent of measuring family satisfaction in a variety of areas. Twenty-eight surveys were returned from families, which is a response rate of approximately 25%. The results of these items indicate satisfaction for the majority of families.

Items from the survey are noted below, which includes feedback from families, staff, and students. Detailed survey results are reviewed by the school's administrative team and the Board's Accountability Committee and used to inform our efforts toward continuous improvement.

In 2021-2022, Parents were asked to rate Spero Academy as a safe and welcoming school. The results were very positive:

Safe and Welcome Schools

Question:	Percent Strongly Agree/Agree:
My child likes school	91%
The school building is a safe environment	100%
School-to-home communication keeps me well informed	91%
Communication from my student's teacher keeps me well informed	95%
Staff create a safe and welcoming environment	100%
When my family has an issue, I feel heard	95%

Spero Academy parents were then asked for feedback on school work and curriculum implemented at Spero Academy. Again, the results revealed a high level of satisfaction:

Schools and Learning


Question:	Percent Strongly Agree/Agree:
The schoolwork is challenging and requires my child's best efforts	95%
My child is learning a lot	95%
The school curriculum promotes student achievement in all areas	95%
Teachers have high expectations for the success of my child	95%
Teachers use a variety of teaching and learning activities to help my child learn	95%
Teachers help my child when they need it	100%
The school schedule supports and encourages school success	100%

When asked about the social and emotional climate of the school environment, Spero parents responded favorably across the board with regard to teacher-student relationships:


School Environment

Question:	Percent Strongly Agree/Agree:
Teachers and staff care about my child	100%
Students respect other students	91%
Adults in the school treat students with respect	100%
Students are treated fairly no matter their race or cultural heritage	100%

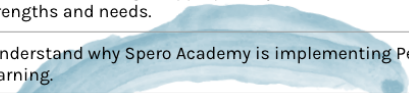
Spero Parents were asked for feedback specific to personalized learning. Results were favorable with regard to the programming implemented, with more mixed results when it came to student involvement in the design of their own learning program and environment:



Personalized Learning



Question:	Percent Strongly Agree/Agree:
The learning experience in my child's classroom is personalized for my child	100%
My child can show what they learned (in developmentally appropriate ways).	90%
My child's strengths and challenges are known by their teacher(s).	100%
My child often designs, or suggests new ways to demonstrate their learning (in developmentally appropriate ways).	71%
My child is challenged appropriately based on their individual strengths and needs.	100%
I understand why Spero Academy is implementing Personalized Learning.	100%



A copy of the 2021-2022 Survey Summary can be found in **Appendix A**.

E. Curriculum

The School Board Accountability Committee, composed of school personnel, staff and community members, assists in determining the school curriculum. This process of determining new curricula is driven by staff input. When reviewing curricula the Academic Team research and review needs, reporting all findings to the Board Accountability committee.

Spero staff are surveyed to gather information regarding interest, needs, and gaps in the areas of training, achievement, student body, etc. The subcommittee also reviews annual parent surveys to look for commonalities.

The Academic Team reviews the data to identify areas of specific curricular need, considering best practices, technology needs, and current research related to the population. The Team also evaluates the textbooks and curriculum using a district created form to affirm cultural diversity, gender neutrality, and disability inclusion, and to ensure that the material is not culturally appropriative. Teachers at different grade levels are then asked to trial samples of the curriculum and complete the same form.

The full Curriculum Review and Adoption Process can be found in **Appendix B**

The general and special education curricula adoption schedule is a rotating review schedule. An individual classroom or specific group of teachers may propose to review curricula out of the rotation in order to meet the current needs of students. If this need is

confirmed, a proposal is brought to the Accountability Committee for review and approval.

Through the above process, Spero Academy offers a wide variety of curricular choices for teachers. The current curriculum in each subject matter attempts to provide a curriculum that meets the needs of every student at Spero. This presents a challenge for Spero given the broad range of learning styles within our student population. We continue to find limited research-based curricula addressing the needs of students with severe cognitive disabilities. Nevertheless, Spero Academy's list of available curriculum options has grown considerably.

In the 2022-2023 school year, the Accountability Committee will review the current general education Mathematics curriculum. The special education Mathematics curriculum will be reviewed the following year, school year 2023-2024.

The Spero Academy Curriculum Review Cycle can be found in **Appendix C**.

F. Scheduling

One of the unique characteristics of Spero Academy is our eleven-month academic calendar. During those eleven months, students attend school Monday through Thursday with breaks scheduled throughout the year. With less time in between breaks this calendar has proven to support Spero students, their ongoing learning and progress. This weekly schedule leaves the occasional Friday to schedule professional development. Staff, overall, have been positive about the school schedule as it provides them time to pursue their education or their own professional development opportunities.

The school classroom schedules were adjusted so that the classroom schedules within each grade level correspond, enabling classrooms to come together in certain subject areas. For example, the teachers within each grade may choose to teach subjects such as social studies, science, art, community service projects, life skills, or STEM activities throughout the year. The students in that grade level are then placed in groups, regardless of ability level and the groups rotate through each unit throughout the year. This rotation process ensures that all students have access to the general education curriculum in these areas as well as an opportunity to learn alongside their grade level peers.

Spero Academy continues to establish an annual fund for professional development for all staff employees. Staff are encouraged to seek out development opportunities that align with their professional area and also contribute to the required CEUs needed to renew licenses through MDE. Additionally, the school has taken a very progressive approach to internal professional development days for all staff. Each year, there are five days of professional development at the beginning of the year to help prepare all staff for the level of service required in this school environment. Five additional days are planned throughout the year, based on needs that arise throughout the year as well as the annual training required by MDE.

G. Professional Development and Teacher Evaluation Systems

Outline of the School's Teacher Evaluation System:

Spero Academy adopted the Teacher Development and Evaluation (TDE) program distributed through MDE in 2013. Over the years, Spero Academy has continued to evaluate the TDE, making relevant changes and aligning the questions to better fit the focus of our school. The TDE process for Spero is outlined below:

- The Principal, Assistant Principal and the Academic Director will be responsible for the summative evaluations.
- Teachers will be asked to complete an *Individual Growth and Development Plan* where they will set goals for themselves based on self-assessment, using the *Spero Academy Performance Standards for Teacher Practice Rubric* and, if applicable, any summative reviews they have received previous to this year.
- Informal classroom observations will take place throughout the year so that the evaluators can become familiar with the teachers' teaching methods and the students before formal observations.
- 90-day Teacher Development Evaluations (TDE) with the newly hired teachers will take place in November 2022. The 90-day review for newly hired teachers will consist of teachers filling out a pre-observation form and lesson plan, the classroom observation, a teacher self-reflection, goal setting using the *Individual Growth and Development Plan*, and a post-observation meeting. These fall evaluations are considered formal but not summative. Newly hired teachers will receive one more formal observation in February and a summative evaluation in the spring.
- The TDE process for continuing/tenured teachers will be evaluated this year by the Principal, Assistant Principal, and Academic Director. In the last 5 years all teachers have received a summative evaluation in the spring of that year with informal observations throughout the year. This process will be changed to follow the three-year cycle as outlined in *The Teacher Development, Evaluation, and Peer Support Model: Implementation Handbook (MDE)*. Spero Academy has been implementing components of this three-year cycle, summative evaluations, informal observations, self-assessments, curriculum and professional development committees, and student learning goals in the form of the Personalized Learning Plans. This year Spero will implement peer reviewers, Professional Learning Communities, and will be changing the summative evaluation to year 3 of the professional review cycle.
- The teacher mentoring program is in place for probationary teachers. Accountability from mentors is in the form of scheduling three formal meetings each trimester with the mentee, filling out a mentoring log, and completing an informal observation of the mentee in the fall.

H. Innovative Practices, Initiatives and Future Plans

Innovative Practices

The Special Education Team developed a plan to utilize a portion of ESSER III funding to hire an additional special education teacher who will address learning loss by providing interventions in the area of math and literacy to small groups or individuals.

Spero Academy hosted two Vaccine Clinics with the Autism Society of MN (ASuM) and the Multicultural Autism Action Network (MAAN). The vaccine clinic supported Spero students, staff, and members in the community needing extra support to access a vaccination. The clinics were well attended with support from the nursing community as well as ASuM and MAAN.

The Principal and Academic Department finalized the contract with Regina Seabrook (American Dialogue Company) to guide us in developing an equity committee which will support the Spero community.

The Human Resources Department and Operations Department updated Compensation plans to support and retain current staff as well as recruit new staff and stay competitive with surrounding districts. Both Departments utilized a Teacher and Paraprofessional focus group to understand the expectations of current and future staff. We are currently 95% hired for the school year.

Initiatives

Leadership initiated a stipend of \$700.00 for each staff member to offset extra work needed to complete “Recovery Service” work to help support classrooms and students. Leadership also added two additional paid days off to supplement staff for mental health days.

The COVID Planning team developed best approaches to support students and staff through surges in COVID cases and the quarantine guidelines. The school nurse provided weekly testing for staff and students. They also coordinated the close contact tracing with positive COVID exposure. We transitioned quarantined classrooms to short term Distance Learning. The Principal, Academic Department, and teachers developed contingency plans and a Short-Term Distance Learning Check-List to help with the transitions. The majority of our families were very supportive of the changes but some families struggled with the quick adjustments to schedules.

The Special Education Department initiated construction and remodeled the Regulation Room. The newly remodeled room will host a new Regulation program. Two registered behavior technicians, supported by a Teacher on Special Assignment, pull students with high level behavior to work on 1:1 skill training. The team continues to seek out mental health support for students from outside sources.

Spero Academy's Principal and Academic Department developed a Professional Development Calendar for the year, drawing on input from a Professional Development Committee consisting of teachers, therapists, and paraprofessionals. This calendar covers training in curriculum, equity, disabilities, crisis prevention, suicide prevention, annual requirements, and bullying prevention. There are nine professional development days incorporated into each year as well as three Due Process Days.

A copy of the Professional Development Calendar can be found in **Appendix D**.

The teaching and paraprofessional staff, along with school support staff, have implemented collaborative curriculum and academic intervention support across grade-level classrooms. With support from the academic department, the educational staff are developing targeted instruction for emergent level readers in the 3rd-6th grade classrooms to support their literacy development. The teaching staff are utilizing best practices along with innovative instruction to develop interventions in the kindergarten to 3rd grade classrooms in the target areas of phonics. These initiatives are supportive of our mission and strategic plan.

Future plans

Spero Academy completed its eighteenth year of operation in June 2022 and continues to increase enrollment. As of August 30, 2022, two hundred and four (204) students are enrolled in grades K-6 at the Minneapolis and Brooklyn Park Campus with a waitlist of one hundred and thirty one (13) students. We anticipate adding another sixteen students to reach two hundred and twenty (220) students prior to year end. Both campuses are affected by nationwide staff shortages which have slowed enrollment. We do not want to enroll students with high needs without the staff to support them.

The Brooklyn Park Campus hopes to accommodate our increasing enrollment and help meet market demand for Spero Academy's specialized instructional program serving students with IEPs and students with ASD. The Brooklyn Park Campus will replicate the original Charter School, following the same mission, vision, educational model, and support services received at the Minneapolis Campus. Spero Academy's leadership team will oversee both the Brooklyn Park Campus and the Minneapolis Campus to ensure consistent, effective implementation of the educational model at both sites. The Minneapolis Campus will serve the south and east metro while the Brooklyn Park Campus will serve the north and west metro. Regardless of residence, families will be allowed to apply to one or both locations. Currently, families send their children to the Minneapolis Campus from the surrounding metro; some families living up to 40 miles away. Families choose the Charter School not because of its location but because of its specialized educational programming for students with IEPs and students with ASD. This commitment to Spero Academy's educational model is illustrated by comments further detail on the plan for building enrollment at the new Brooklyn Park Campus and maintaining enrollment at the existing Minneapolis Campus can be found in Marketing/Recruiting Plan in **Appendix G**.

The Brooklyn Park Schoolhouse opened August 15, 2022 with grades kindergarten through three (approx 60 students) with a matriculation model for increasing to full enrollment of grades kindergarten through sixth by the 2026-2027 school year. Current families will be given the opportunity to change locations if desired.

I. Awards

Spero Academy did not received any awards in this area during FY21

II. Governance and Operational Elements

A. Teacher Licensure Verification

A copy of Spero Academy Teacher Licensure Verification can be found in **Appendix F.**

B. Management and Administration

File numbers for licensed administrators are included with the Teacher Licensure Verification in **Appendix H.**

Administrative roles and responsibilities can be found in **Appendix G.**

Professional Development Plans for Administrative Team

Executive Director

Our Executive Director continues to address her professional development plan attending training opportunities in special education law, human resources, leadership, and school finance. The Executive Director continues to focus on fiscal management due to funding changes brought on by the pandemic and providing leadership and direction to staff and families.

The Executive Director attended the following Professional Development for the 2021-2022 school year: Cultural Competence Training - Ongoing; Two year Series
MN Association of Charter Schools (MACS) Regional Meeting: 08/19/2021
Special Education Fiscal Monitoring Training: Time and Effort: 11/03/2021
MN Association of Charter Schools (MACS) Regional Meeting: 11/09/2021
Special Education Fiscal Monitoring Training: Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CEIS) and Proportionate Share:12/01/2021
Special Education Fiscal Monitoring Training: Procurement: 01/11/2022
Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI) Training: 02/04/2022
Special Education Fiscal Monitoring Training: Transportation and Third party Reimbursement: 02/08/2022
Special Education Law & Leadership Conference: 04/20/2022
MN Association of Charter Schools (MACS) Regional Meeting: 04/21/2022

The Executive Director is a member of the University of St. Thomas Cohort that supports a Charter School Teacher Residency program.

A copy of the Executive Director's full Professional Development Plan can be found in **Appendix H.**

Principal

Our Principal is addressing her professional development by pursuing training opportunities through the Minnesota Department of Education and is currently participating in a bi-weekly training series on Peer Coaching. In order to best serve the needs of our community, she attends ongoing training sessions through the National Center for Homeless Education. The Principal is also completing CEUs to renew her K-12 administrative license and would like to become a member of Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association.

Assistant Principal

Our Assistant Principal has renewed his k-12 administrative license this year, which is active for 5 years. He is attending Minnesota Department of Education workshops for principals in the areas of teacher evaluations, peer mentoring, and Culturally Relevant Teaching.

Academic Director

Our Academic Director is pursuing professional development in several ways. She subscribes to *Education Next*, *Edutopia*, *Learning for Justice*, and *NEA EdJustice* online teacher resources and newsletters to stay abreast of current trends in education. She attends MDE training relevant to her position as District Assessment Coordinator and will continue to attend workshops in person and online in order to keep updated on various topics relevant to her position and the current times. This includes professional development in culturally responsive teaching, teacher mentoring and evaluation, team building, reviewing and researching curriculum, and topics related to Special Education.

Special Education Director

Our Special Education Director's professional development plan includes continuation of the Minnesota Administrators for Special Education (MASE), which offers weekly training throughout the year. Additional plans include training with the Minnesota Department of Education for special education changes and updates which include at least monthly directors forums in addition to other needs related to Special Education Finance or compliance monitoring. Other conferences planned for the 22-23 school year include, Indigo education related to Special education leadership and at least two School Law and Leadership conferences.

Operations Director

Our Operations Director plans to continue his professional development by attending various MDE training on fiscal monitoring, finance training, and leadership development. Additionally, the operations director will network with other schools to share resources and maintain up to date operational systems.

Special Education Coordinator - Minneapolis

Our Special Education Coordinator plans to continue her professional development by continuing to collect CEU's to maintain her teaching license and by attending various MDE trainings on due process, special education reforms and initiatives, and special education assessments.

Special Education Coordinator - Brooklyn Park

Our Special Education Coordinator is currently finishing up her Masters in Special Education and obtaining a license in Autism Spectrum Disorder. She will continue to collect CEU's to maintain her teaching licenses and attend various professional developments on due process and special education assessments.

Academic Coordinator

Our Academic Coordinator continues to attend professional development in the areas of curriculum, assessment, and instruction. They are currently participating in the LETRS training and the MnMTSS cohort provided by the MN Department of Education. They will continue to seek additional resources and training related to special education, differentiation, literacy and math skills development, culturally responsive education/ pedagogy, and educational leadership.

Data and Policy Coordinator

The Data and Policy Coordinator continues to attend regular training in state reporting through the Minnesota Department of Education and to expand their knowledge of charter school accountability and the legislation that affects charter schools through resources from Minnesota Association of Charter Schools.

Operations Coordinator

The Operations Coordinator is currently working on her Bachelors degree in Business Administration and Leadership from Southern New Hampshire University and will continue to pursue further job-specific training through the Minnesota Department of Education.

C. Organizational Strengths, Challenges and Plans

Spero Academy is currently positioned well and continues to outpace financial expectations.

With 85 percent of students in Special Education, the approved budgetary ratios are lower than usual. The addition of a new campus has increased the number of students without Individualized Education Plans as well as the number of students needing evaluations to determine services. The Special education team is working diligently on in-take for special education. The current estimate by the team is 14 total General Education students with over 90 percent Special Education by December 1, 2022. Spero Academy has a healthy waitlist for both campuses to meet the budgeted numbers, but we want to ensure that we are able to meet the staffing needs to support the increased enrollment.

The Board has gone through a healthy transition over the past year. Currently, the board has eight members. The maximum number allowed on the Board is eleven, so there are still two openings for appropriate members. The Board continues to seek out qualified candidates with expertise in desired fields.

D. School Enrollment and Attrition Trends**Spero Academy 2021-2022 Enrollment Trends**

- 31 new students enrolled:
 - 30 Kindergartners
 - 24 First graders
 - 17 Second graders
 - 14 Third graders
 - 2 Fourth grader

- 4 Fifth graders
- 25% of the new students are from Minneapolis
 - 75% students are from 14 other districts
- 6 students un-enrolled by 09/30/2021
 - 1 not the right fit
 - 1 mom decided to wait another year
 - 1 online school
 - 3 moved out the country (siblings)
- 2 students un-enrolled after 10/01/2021
 - 1 moved out of state
 - 1 passed away
- Staff worked to increase enrollment by:
 - Focusing on increasing name awareness through social media and fairs
 - Attending jobs fairs and hosting a multiple job fairs at Spero Academy
 - Returning to in-person information sessions

Table 17. Student Enrollment Trend

School Year	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total Enrollment
2012-2013	19	16	14	14	12	10	0	85
2013-2014	14	19	11	14	12	6	0	76
2014-2015	14	13	16	12	14	9	0	78
2015-2016	7	18	16	19	12	11	0	83
2016-2017	15	10	19	16	21	12	0	93
2017-2018	12	14	14	18	17	22	11	108
2018-2019	16	19	21	18	18	19	18	129
2019-2020	14	19	26	24	21	22	16	142
2020-2021	16	18	20	24	17	17	15	127
2021-2022	18	20	24	22	21	19	18	142

Table 18. Student Attrition

Grade	Students enrolled in the school on or before Oct 1	Students enrolled after Oct 1	Students who left after Oct 1	Students enrolled at the close of the school year	Students that remained enrolled in the school for the full year

K	19	0	1	18	18
1	22	0	2	20	20
2	24	0	0	24	24
3	24	0	2	22	22
4	23	0	2	21	21
5	21	0	2	19	19
6	18	0	0	18	18
Total	151	0	9	142	142

Our enrollment numbers increased to 142 students in SY2022. We fell slightly short of our projected enrollment of 145 due to students moving out of state/country, as well as the tragic death of one student in the Spring of 2022.

For the 2022-2023 school year we have increased our enrollment significantly due to the opening of the second location at Brooklyn Park. Brooklyn Park will have a total of 60 students enrolled, while the Minneapolis location will have a total of 160 students enrolled.

Spero Academy complies with Minnesota Statutes 124E.11 subd. 9 by reviewing and approving an annual enrollment preferences and lottery policy.

E. Community Partnerships

In the Spring of 2021, Spero Academy began a partnership with Every Meal (FKA The Sheridan Story) to participate in the Weekend Backpack Program.

During the 2021-22 school year, Spero welcomed volunteers from BMO Harris into the school to help with distribution, which gave us an opportunity to introduce members of the community to our school and our mission, who otherwise would not have known about us.

Spero Academy will continue to partner with Every Meal to provide the Weekend Backpack Program at our Minneapolis school house during the 2022-23 school year, and our new school in Brooklyn Park is now on the waiting list for sponsorship as well.

F. Board Member Orientation and Training Plan

Newly appointed Board Members receive an orientation meeting that is conducted by the Governance Committee. The orientation includes training on charter school statutes, Board and school policies, corporate By Laws which govern the

school, Board responsibilities and procedures, committee expectations, meeting protocols and strategic planning goals. Each new Board member is partnered with an existing Board member who will act as a Mentor. The expectation is for the Mentor and Mentee to meet, virtually or in person, outside of Board meetings during the new member's initial few months on the Board. The Mentor and Mentee may also meet virtually before Board meetings to discuss the agenda, giving time for the Mentor to answer any questions that the Mentee may have about agenda items.

Each year, quarterly training is provided to the Board on topics that are appropriate and applicable to the issues and ongoing educational needs of the school. Training topics are suggested by the Governance Committee. Board training is part of the Annual Work Plan for the Governance Committee. The Board Chair also asks for input from the whole Board membership on training topics. During the 2021-22 school year, virtual training was provided in the areas of Spero's budget and financing process, a presentation on the Intercultural Development Inventory and Intercultural Development Plan, a presentation of Spero's academic and behavioral testing assessments, and a training on the relationship between Open Meeting Law and the Spero Academy ByLaws.

In addition to virtual Board meeting training, Spero has purchased an online Webinar training series through Charter Source. Training topics include State mandated requirements for Governance, Finance and Employment. Additional training topics are New Board Member Basics, the Open Meeting Law and Charter School Budget Basics. These webinars can be viewed wherever and whenever a Board member desires. An additional benefit for Spero is that Charter Source collects user data which makes authorizer reporting easier.

The Board Chair and the Executive Director monitor the training information and the training topics are also included in the Board agendas for use in reporting and historical referencing. The Executive Director monitors mandatory training for new Board members to ensure that training is completed and accurately reported to the Authorizer.

G. Board Member Information

A copy of current Board Member information can be found in **Appendix I**.

III. Financial Elements

A. Fiscal Health

Spero Academy continues to be in a financially sound position, which is reflected

in the past audits which show no findings. Because our program model attracts students with special needs, we are able to meet the 90 percent threshold for funding reimbursement under Minn. Stat. 124E.21 (Subd.2). By maintaining this percentage threshold, Spero Academy is able to create a strong financial base with positive increases to our fund balance. Given the funding model under which Spero Academy operates, there is no minimum number of students that Spero Academy needs to enroll to maintain and ensure adequate funding. As long as Spero Academy maintains special education enrollment of 90 percent or greater, funding is covered at **100 percent reimbursement** including lease aid.

FY 22, Spero Academy

In addition, Preliminary year end financials:

- General fund expenditures exceeded revenues by (\$1,465,038) year-to-date.
- Total general fund revenue is at 100% of the year-to-date expected budget.
- Total expenditures overall are at 100% of the year-to-date budget.
- The federal title expenditures equal accrued revenues which are paid on a reimbursement basis.
- The accounts receivable balance is at \$226. The “Due from building company” balance at \$15,538. A detailed listing is included in the Supplemental Information report. Current year state-aids receivable is reported as \$995,015 and is an estimate of FY22 revenue owed to us by MDE year-to-date based on the 10% holdback. Prior year state aids receivable is \$0. The current Federal-aids receivable balance of \$52,133 represents grant-eligible expenditures in FY22 for which grant funds have not yet been received. The prepaid expenditure balance is \$23,018 and relates to payments which apply to future fiscal year(s).
- The year-to-date Net Income is \$128,670 which is a result of revenues exceeding expenditures to this point in the current fiscal year. [This compares to the 2021-22 revised budget which anticipated a year-end surplus of \$84,787.] Spero's total revenues are reported at \$10,023,718 which is 101% of the revised budgeted revenues, and total expenditures, reported at \$9,895,048 are slightly over 100% of the year-to-date budget. The Total Fund Balance, reported as \$1,674,865, represents year-to-date net income combined with Fund Balances carried over from the prior year. Of this Fund Balance, \$543,538 is “Reserved for MA billing” (\$466,651 + \$76,887 current FY MA billing surplus) and can only be utilized for specific types of future SPED eligible expenditures.
- Year-to-date food service fund expenditures exceeded revenues by (\$23,173) which was 40% over our budgeted projections.
- Year-to-date MA billing expenditures were \$14,311 (67% of YTD Budget) with income of \$91,197 (73% of YTD budget) received to date. The MA billing surplus of \$76,887 remains below the anticipated budgeted surplus of \$103,708.
- Covid based funding streams available to the school this year are approximately \$50,000 with varying expiration dates into 2024. These are reimbursement based grants, so funds will need to be expended before we can claim the revenues.

- Year-to-date Federal Special Ed. expenditures equal accrued revenues which are owed to us by MDE.
- Year-to-date State Special Ed. revenues exceed expenditures by \$1,370,077.
- The School's budgeted net income for the year is \$84,787. This would result in a projected cumulative fund balance of \$1,630,981 or 16.5% of expenditures at fiscal year-end.
- Preliminary results show a net income of \$128,670. This results from a Prior Year Special Ed. revenue adjustment of \$51,161 and the surplus in MA billing of \$76,887. Our preliminary ending fund balance is \$1,674,865, or 16.9% of total expenditures

Current enrollment figures (ADM).

Current ADM is 141.5 with 91.7% Special Education Students.

Comparison of previous year target ADM to actual ADM.

Our revised budget in FY22 projected an ADM of 143, the actual ADM was 141.5. We ended the year with 91.7% of students with an IEP

Average cash on hand for previous year

Spero Academy ended the year on June 30,2022 with 35 days of cash on hand.

The current Spero Academy Budget including Budget Projections can be found in **APPENDIX J.**

B. Internal Controls and Board Oversight

The following narrative outlines certain critical financial processes and procedures for Spero Academy, BerganKDV, and the school's Board of Executive Directors, which include both preventive and detective controls that are designed to safeguard Spero's financial assets and ensure the integrity of financial reports and measures. Preventive controls include, but are not limited to, segregation of duties and password protection for access to critical information and documents, while detective controls include account reconciliations and review of actual performance versus budget.

General

Spero Academy utilizes the Skyward Finance System, which was designed for use by school districts and is approved by the State of Minnesota for compiling and reporting a school's financial results.

During the school year, financial transactions are maintained primarily on the cash basis of accounting. At year-end, accrual entries are recorded to convert the school's books from cash basis activity to accrual basis activity for audit and closeout purposes as required by UFARS. All entries recorded in the finance system are supported with underlying supporting documentation that is available for audit purposes.

Cash and Investments, Receipts, Revenue, Receivables

The School's primary revenue sources consist of state/federal grants and aids. State/federal grants and aid are received via wire transfers (received by filing of progress or completion reports or SERVS reports). Generally, BerganKDV computes and records receivables (accounts, IDEAS, and state and federal programs) - including reconciling amounts with the IDEAS and various grant agreements. BerganKDV works with the School's Executive Director to identify federal financial assistance and to reconcile differences between EDRS/SERVS and UFARS.

While the majority of the school's receipts are received via EFT from the state or federal government, a minimal number of cash/checks are received in the school office. When cash is received in person or by mail, the receptionist opens it and routes all checks to the Operations Director. The Operations Director logs the check information into the Internal Security Record, copies the checks and cash for backup, and prepares a deposit slip documenting the revenue source. The deposit is transferred to the Executive Director for review and weekly deposit. All supporting documents for the non-state and federal deposits are delivered to BerganKDV which are reviewed on a monthly basis to ensure the proper UFARS account coding is applied before entering the revenue into Skyward.

The School Board has a policy that directs designated individuals on how to invest the cash on hand not required for immediate expenditure. On an as needed basis, the Board passes a resolution allowing these individuals to invest idle school cash in accordance with Minnesota Statute §475.66 as noted in the Minnesota Legal Compliance Audit Guide for Local Government. This resolution also allows these individuals to designate the depositories for investing and is considered to be the "investment policy" of the School.

BerganKDV is responsible for reconciling all banking and investing accounts and does so on a monthly basis. Any discrepancies between Spero accounting and the bank statements are researched and resolved prior to the close of the accounting period.

Cash Disbursements, Expenditures for Goods and Services and Accounts Payable
BerganKDV processes accounts payable for Spero Academy. As expenditures are required for the school, members of the school staff complete a Purchase Order, Supply Request Google Form, or Reimbursement Request, which is routed to the School Operations Director for approval. For those purchase requests, as well as all others, the Operations Director and Operations Coordinator at each campus complete a Vendor Payment Request(VPR) form and add specific information to aid in proper UFARS accounting. The VPR is routed to the Schools' Executive Director. The Executive Director reviews all VPR forms and approves expenditures by signing the forms. As vendor invoices come to the school for payment, a three-way match occurs between the Vendor Payment Request form, the goods receipt and the invoice. Any discrepancies between the documents are investigated and resolved prior to payment.

Once matched, the invoices and accompanying VPR forms are sent to BerganKDV where they are entered for payment into Bill.com. The matched invoice and VPR form provide sufficient approval of the expenditure enabling BerganKDV to enter the invoices into Skyward. Once entered, a weekly summary of payables is sent to the Operations Director and the Executive Director for review and approval. An affirmative approval is required from the School Executive Director to proceed with payment, while the Operations Director is assumed to approve payment unless an objection is raised.

Once matched, the invoices and accompanying VPR forms are sent to BerganKDV where they are entered for payment into the Skyward. The AP specialist at BerganKDV will review, assign and code invoices within a reasonable time frame to ensure invoices can be paid in a timely manner from within the date they have been received. When reviewing and coding invoices the AP specialist will assign the approver for each invoice as determined by the school's administration, per BKDV and the auditors. If the situation arises that the typical approver is also the recipient of the expense being approved either an alternate approver of appropriate status will be assigned in bill.com or the AP specialist will require a signature from that person on the expense or other confirmation that the expense is approved such as email confirmation. This will be retained and added to back up with the expense for auditing purposes.

Once invoices are completed, the Executive Director will log in and review the invoices; verifying amounts, descriptions and budgetary assignment are in line with the intent of the purchase. Once reviewed the Executive Director will check off and send approval within bill.com, which is retained with each individual approved invoice. If any items are deemed incorrect the Executive Director will deny the invoice and note the reason on the form for BKDV to reassess the item.

Invoices will be paid within the bill.com platform, after approvals have been received. Invoice payments will be scheduled out as funding allows. Payment may be sent via ACH (preferred method) or paper check.

If a check is necessary, BerganKDV receives approval, Bill.com can process checks to be mailed. Check runs are made on a regular weekly basis. "Emergency" checks are cut as needed which may or may not be included in the weekly payables reporting sent to the Finance Committee. Based on invoice due dates, checks are systematically prepared by BerganKDV and signed electronically. Only BerganKDV' employees have access to the password allowing check printing on behalf of Spero Academy. Once a check is prepared and printed, BKDA remits payment to the vendor and the original invoice is filed at the school for payment.

The AP Specialist will not pay any expenses without approval from authorized school representatives, either by bill.com approval or expressed request and approval in written form from the school representative, in case of an emergency payment situation.

All payments for the month are compiled in a report and delivered to the school for review by the School Executive Director and the Board.

BerganKDV prepares monthly financial statements and ensures that the School Executive Director, Finance Committee and Treasurer are aware of where the school is in relation to their budget.

Payroll and Related Liabilities

The school utilizes BerganKDV to prepare payroll. There are approximately 100-130 payroll checks cut each pay period. Payments made in cash are prohibited. All employees are paid twice each month. The Executive Director and Board establish salaries/rates of pay. Salaried teaching and non-teaching positions are paid based on individual contracts. Timesheets are not maintained, only attendance records are maintained for these positions. Hourly employees submit timesheets via the K-pay system. The Executive Director reviews the time sheets. The approved timesheets are submitted to BerganKDV. The personnel records are maintained at the school. Executive Director approval of vacation, holiday and sick leave compensation is reviewed during each payroll run by the

Operations Coordinator at each Campus to ensure the respective balances are accurate. Employment changes are generated by the Executive Director and subsequently sent to BerganKDV for inclusion into the finance system.

All payroll checks are prepared and signed by computer (digitized signatures). BerganKDV designates an employee who is the only person that has access to the payroll password. Payroll is made either by direct deposit or checks that are sent via a secure network to be printed at each campus for the employee. The direct deposit payroll batch is prepared by BerganKDV and must be authorized prior to payment by either the School Executive Director or the BerganKDV Finance Manager. Federal and State payroll withholdings are submitted electronically. All other withholdings are submitted by check through the US mail.

On a monthly basis, the BerganKDV Finance Manager reviews the payroll activity, prior to the drafting of the monthly financial statements. The payroll activity also is monitored at the school site to ensure accuracy of data; the School Executive Director reviews the direct deposit checks before payment by American National Bank (~90% of staff is paid via direct deposit) and reviews the payroll bank statement for reasonableness before it goes to BerganKDV. Since the School Executive Director signs off on time sheets, manual checks are considered approved then.

Debt and Debt Service Expenditures

The school uses separate types of debt to finance operations and to provide funds for capital and other improvements. The Board approves all debt.

Significant Accounting Estimates

State Aid is estimated through the MARSS system, which utilizes student enrollment to calculate a school's eligible aid. The MARSS system is a statewide database of student attendance and membership information by which each student has a unique identifying number that is used to track that student from one school to the next. This system significantly reduces the likelihood that a student could be inaccurately claimed for aid purposes since the State does not recognize a student for aid purposes if there are date overlaps for any student (no one District can claim a student if the dates the student was served overlap with those of another district—therefore all such differences are resolved between school districts, otherwise, no aid would be paid).

For capital assets, the Spero uses guidance made available from MDE and the national ASBO Association for purposes of estimating the useful lives of capital assets when calculating depreciation.

Fund Equity

Fund equity of the school is accounted for in accordance with prescribed accounts as determined by the Minnesota Department of Education and UFARS. The school is required to maintain reserved fund balances for unemployment, severance, transportation safety, equipment, facilities, disabled accessibility, building construction, and debt service. All other fund balances are unreserved. The BKDA 27 Finance Manager, in consultation with the Executive Director and Board Treasurer, are responsible for ensuring that fund balances are properly accounted for.

Federal Grant Programs

Each spring the school is notified of the projected entitlements for the various Title programs. The School's Executive Director is responsible for acknowledging/accepting the grant funds and developing the respective budgets. The school follows purchase/reimbursement protocol related to the various grants as outlined in the A133 circular. The required reports are filed on a timely basis with the federal government as well as state oversight agencies.

Finance Committee:

Spero Academy's Finance Committee is responsible for overseeing the financial welfare of Spero Academy and all financial reporting requirements of outside organizations. The Charter School has implemented sound Best Practice financial policies, oversight, and strategic forward thinking which has earned the Charter School a 17.4% fund balance at the end of Fiscal Year 2022 with 61 days cash on hand.

The Finance Committee oversees the creation of the annual budget, accounts for spending, controls contract bids, and works with the Executive Director to achieve long-term financial goals and success. This committee also ensures adequate internal controls over spending, oversees the fund balance, and communicates financial data to stakeholders. In each of the past eight years (2014-2022) the Charter School has earned the State School Finance Award for meeting statutory deadlines for submission of audited fiscal financial data and reporting criteria from the MDE.

Each year in the spring, a budget is prepared by administration for the following fiscal year, with input and oversight by the Finance Committee, with underlying assumptions and estimates clearly documented. The budget is subject at all times to review by the Authorizer. As noted above, the budget is primarily based on state and federal educational funding.

Spero Academy maintains a General Fund in which all the activity of the Charter School is recorded. A budget is prepared for the General Fund on the same basis of accounting as the year-end audited financial statements. Budgeted expenditure appropriations lapse at fiscal year-end. In the fall, after enrollment numbers are stabilized and government funding levels are known, the Finance Committee reviews the underlying assumptions and modifies the operating budget to reflect known changes. This modified budget is presented to the Board and adopted in the fall.

Standing members of the Finance Committee include Jenny Abb, Finance Manager (BerganKDV); Edi Becerra, Operations Director; the Executive Director and Special Education Director; and the Treasurer of the Board of Directors. Other interested board members may serve on the Finance Committee.

C. Awards

Spero Academy did not receive any new awards for school finance this year.