



# TEACHERS IN PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

## An inventory of new opportunities for teachers

*An updated comprehensive inventory of known teacher professional practice initiatives serving public and private K-12 schools throughout the United States*

**August 2006 (Second Edition)**

**ee** education | evolving

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## ABOUT THE CONCEPT OF AN 'OPEN SECTOR' IN EDUCATION

Much of the work being done by Education|Evolving is to help create and sustain an “Open Sector” in public education – in Minnesota and elsewhere in the country. By “Open Sector,” we mean a “space” in public education that is open to new entrants – new schools that are started from scratch by teachers, parents, community organizations and multi-school networks. The “Open Sector” is also open to new authorizers or sponsors – entities other than school districts that oversee schools. The “Open Sector” is open to new learning programs and to new ways of governing and managing schools. And, as part of a broadening definition of public education, the “Open Sector” is open to all students who choose to attend schools in that sector.

The “Open Sector” is based on the premise that we cannot get the degree of change and improvement we need in education by relying only on fixing the schools we now have. And, to get enough new schools that are fundamentally different, we need a combination of public policies and private actions that will allow new schools to



emerge and that will create an environment in which they can succeed. This kind of positive environment for creating and sustaining new schools can be established on a state-level through actions led by state policy makers. It can also be done – and is certainly needed – in major urban communities all across America.

Though chartered schools may be the most visible part of the “Open Sector” today, this concept of a positive environment for creating and sustaining successful new schools is not limited to charters. The “Open Sector” can also include schools operating within a district or state on some kind of contract other than a charter – as long as they are truly autonomous, accountable and open to all students who chose them.

There is also no prescribed or uniform learning program presumed by this vision for creating many more schools new. In fact, there’s an urgent need to better understand, respect and address the individual differences in students. It’s likely, however, that successful new schools in the “Open Sector” will be smaller and that they will make it possible for all students to take a more active role in their learning and to develop more direct and nurturing relationships with adults.

## ABOUT THIS REPORT AND ITS AUTHOR

This publication is the third report under an initiative by Education|Evolving designed to encourage teachers, teachers union, district and school leaders, policy leaders, the media and others to rethink some of the underlying premises that have historically defined the teaching profession. For far too long, teachers have had no choice but to pursue their profession as employees of schools and districts in a traditional employee-employer relationship. That’s now changing, with several different models emerging for teachers working together in professional practice arrangements – much like attorneys, accountants or architects. This publication includes an updated inventory of these arrangements, as well as an updated directory of informational resources and contacts. This information will be regularly updated on EIE’s web site – [www.educationevolving.org](http://www.educationevolving.org)

The research and writing for this publication was done by Education|Evolving associate **Kim Farris-Berg**, with guidance and assistance from EIE associates **Ed Dirkswager**, **Joe Graba** and **Ted Kolderie**, who also contributed the report’s context-setting introduction. Final editing and production supervision was provided by EIE’s coordinator, **Jon Schroeder**.

# Teachers in Professional Practice

## An inventory of new opportunities for teachers

The latest in a series of reports on the changing face of public education

AUGUST 2006  
Second Edition

### PREFACE: The Professional-partnership Model is a Conceivable Model, for Organizing School and Teaching

In our time of rapid technological change it is really no longer possible to project the future from the past. As late as the 1980s the future of communications still looked like the telephone, evolving into fax and perhaps into picturephone. Then came the Internet, the Web and email.

In thinking about education, too, it is well to consider that things might not always be the way they have always been. In some respects the practices that have survived the longest, that we most take for granted, might be the next to change. And might need to be the next to change.

In thinking about teachers and teaching, for example, it might be well to be cautious about assuming the traditional role of teacher-as-employee. Forever, true, the teacher has been an employee. In private education as in public education, the rule was absolute: If you wanted to be a teacher you had to be an employee. You could have the choice that other professionals have; to be employed or to work for yourself, alone or with others in some kind of partnership. You had to be an employee.

Early signs now suggest this might be changing. As this inventory of emerging professional arrangements makes clear, teachers across the country are experimenting now

with what we recognize in other fields as essentially professional partnerships. We can see enough already to know that this is clearly a conceivable way to organize the work-life of teachers; to organize school.

Indeed, the professional partnership arrangement seems to have the potential to deal usefully with some of the problems in public education that have proved most resistant to the efforts of management in the employer/employee, boss/worker model of traditional K-12.

The dominant notion in this country at the moment is that improving teaching is something the boss does. Principals, superintendents, commissioners and governors struggle endlessly to find some way to "make" teachers be-better and do-better; over and over trying new programs of 'professional development' or 'pay-for-performance'.

The limited success of these efforts at improvement-through-management does suggest that some other approach might usefully be tried. We might at long last try approaching teachers as professionals; telling them *what* we want and leaving it to them, organized in collegial groups and made responsible for performance, to figure out how the job can best be done.

The partnerships and co-operatives appearing now in Massachusetts, Minnesota, and Milwaukee are in budding form--elsewhere in the country are at this stage a small beginning. But the significance of an innovation is not best measured by the size at which it first appears. Or by the auspices under which it first appears.

It is clearly conceivable for teachers like other professionals to work with partners in groups they collectively own; serving a client in an arrangement that gives them both the autonomy we associate with professionalism and the accountability we expect from professionals. The potential implications for public education were explained in *Teachers as Owners*, a book edited in 2003 by Edward J. Dirkswager for Education/Evolving and published by Scarecrow Press (available at Amazon.com).

The potential was underscored by the finding from Public Agenda's survey of teachers in 2003. The question to a national sample of teachers was: "How interested would you be in working in a charter school run and managed by teachers?" The question asked respondents to affirm an interest in coming into the charter sector in order to express their interest in teacher professional practice. Still, the interest is startling to most people: 58 percent of teachers said they would be somewhat or very interested; 65 percent of the under-five-year teachers and 50 percent of the over-20-year teachers.

The idea is gaining recognition. Both the Minnesota model (in 2005) and the Milwaukee variation (in 2006) have made the "final 50" in the Innovations in American Government Competition run annually by the Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

But the old conceptions hang on; have a powerful hold on people. All the discussion about teachers and teaching still assumes the employee model. And research has been slow to pick up even on what is beginning to happen. As John Witte of the University of Wisconsin has

pointed out, research searches for 'central tendencies'; wants to generalize. It looks for 'most' and 'on the whole' and 'overall'. It pays less attention to individual, particular developments that turn out to be the really significant innovations.

This is a serious error, both for policymaking and for research.

From what we know so far it does appear that, where teachers work in collegial groups, their attitudes and behaviors differ remarkably from those we see in conventional school settings. The same seems true of student attitudes and behaviors. (For a sense of this, see the remarks by the lead teachers in two such partnerships, made to audiences in Washington D.C. in November 2003: "Teacher Professional Partnerships: A Different Way to Help Teachers and Teaching", Education/Evolving, January 2004. Online at: [www.educationevolving.org](http://www.educationevolving.org))

Better teacher and student attitudes and behaviors are not in and of themselves 'better learning'. But if you are looking to grow bananas it makes basic sense to plant where there is fertile soil and a lot of rain. 'Conditions' matter.

And there are new opportunities now to try new arrangements.

In a number of major cities the leadership responsible for K-12 education—often, now, the mayor—is interested in starting schools new: high schools, especially. In starting new, outside the old organizational framework, it is possible to try new and different arrangements. So, not surprisingly, leadership in New York City, Chicago and elsewhere has been interested in the idea of teacher partnerships; in which the teacher-group gets the authority to organize and run the school and accepts responsibility for fiscal and student performance.

One of the most intriguing developments is the decision by some teacher union locals--most conspicuously in New York--to start new schools themselves. It is open for these to be organized as partnerships.

It is clear that the model will change, will be adapted, as it moves from one organizational and political

setting to another. This happened as the initial model, organized by the EdVisions Cooperative, moved from Minnesota to Milwaukee and later to Fall River, Massachusetts. Almost certainly it will happen again.

This report describes the ways the early efforts at a professional model do vary. Some are formal; by which we mean organized under state law as a partnership, cooperative, limited-liability corporation, etc. Some are informal; some of these intending at some point to formalize their status and some not.

Variations in the organizational form are both predictable and appropriate. There is room for options building off the central idea, which is to give an organizational reality to the impulse everywhere to get

teachers to feel and to work collegially and collaboratively . . . to move from the old culture of 'my classroom' to the new collegial culture of 'my school'. This probably is more successfully accomplished through professionalism than through management.

In these and other efforts to set up the teacher-partnership or teacher-cooperative arrangement this report, prepared by Kim Farris-Berg, will be helpful.

As always, Education/Evolving would be interested in comments you may have about the idea, or about the organizational forms described in this report. And, in knowing about any similar efforts being made, of which we may not yet be aware.

**Ted Kolderie**

# AN INVENTORY OF TEACHER PROFESSIONAL PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

Teacher professional partnerships (TPPs) are formal entities, organized under law (partnerships, cooperatives, limited-liability corporations, etc.), that are formed and owned by teachers to provide educational services. TPPs may enter into contracts to run entire schools, a portion of a school or to provide some other educational service. Teachers are in charge and they manage or arrange for the management of the schools and/or services provided. The school district is not managing the school; nor is a district-appointed single leader in charge (e.g. a principal).

Education/Evolving uses the term ‘teacher professional *practice*’ to describe informal entities, not organized under law. This inventory profiles in detail only formal teacher professional partnerships and those with a stated intention of becoming formal that are already operating or in the planning phase. The inventory also profiles models of TPPs designed by groups of teachers that once intended to create formal partnerships but for various reasons did not carry out their plans. Some informal teacher professional practices that have not stated an intention of becoming formal are briefly mentioned in this inventory. Readers should note that there may be many more informal practices that Education/Evolving is not aware of.

With differing state laws, the varying preferences of teachers in professional practice, and the varying preferences of the schools they serve, the TPPs profiled in this inventory differ greatly in structural design. There is no “one way” or “best way” to structure a TPP. In fact, the best way to structure a TPP is to do so in a way that works best for the teachers who co-own it. Whether that structure is a “good structure” will be determined by the TPP members over time. It will also

be determined by the clients that choose to contract with them (often the boards of the schools they serve<sup>1</sup>) and the entry and exit of the consumers of their services (parents and students). A TPP is usually accountable by contract to the board of each school it serves. If it does not meet a board’s standards, the TPP will lose its contract.

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In preparing this inventory, now in its second edition, Education/Evolving is an interested observer as TPPs continue to change and evolve. In trying to describe TPPs and their evolution, we encounter questions: Will some models be more replicable than others? Are models “formal” or “informal”? Is whether a TPP is “formal” or “informal” meaningful to its operation? Are the models growing or shrinking? What are the implications for public schools and unions and states?

We also think about the factors causing TPPs’ evolution. We notice that the operating TPPs Education/Evolving profiled in the first edition have made changes to accommodate growth, to accommodate changing membership, to accommodate state laws, and to adjust aspects of their organizations that could be improved.

At one time EdVisions Cooperative directly ran the chartered Minnesota New County School in Henderson, Minnesota. Today EdVisions is a service cooperative, providing payroll and benefits administration as well as some other services to 12 chartered school sites throughout Minnesota. It has gotten away from the business of directly running

<sup>1</sup> The parties to the TPPs that enter contracts are typically the TPP and the school, not the TPP and the board of the school. This paper sometimes implies that the board is a party to the contract to help clarify the accountability relationship between the TPP and the boards. While boards typically oversee the contract terms, and act as “the clients” they have not yet been a party to an official contract.

schools, instead delegating its authority to run the schools to teams of teachers working collegially at the sites.

A newly formed TPP, the first of its kind in the state of Massachusetts, has created a model that picks up some aspects of the earlier existing TPPs, but adds ideas that are altogether new. TPPs in the planning phase, also profiled in this inventory, are likely to do the same.

Two “planning phase” models profiled in the first edition have for various reasons been shelved before their intended formal launch. One informal TPP has failed. We report aspects of their stories in this edition.

Education/Evolving encourages readers to consider the elements of the inventory with a relaxed attitude. Try to accept the variety and the trial-and-error; the confusion that might settle-in when one cannot easily fit a notion into a well-defined box. The planes we fly today are not the same as the one invented by the Wright Brothers. Nor will the planes in operation fifty years from now be much like the ones we use today. There will be varying models to accommodate various needs. Innovations change and improve. That is common experience elsewhere and should be here, too. Some of these early models may not be the best models you can imagine, but they’re a start nonetheless.

To be clear about the methods used to gather the information presented for this inventory, all profiles were developed with information reported directly from and approved by a representative of each TPP upon solicitation (largely via email and phone) from Education/Evolving. Where indicated, secondary sources were used. Subjective commentary about the impact or effects of structural design is the opinion of the TPPs, and not necessarily the opinion of Education/Evolving. The information is self-reported. Consequently, this report is not intended to be an analysis of how the TPPs or schools operate in practice. Instead, this inventory documents the growing number and varieties of TPPs.

All the same, Education/Evolving has observed that very different types of schools emerge when teachers are in charge. School culture changes when democratic governance becomes a reality. Teacher attitudes and behaviors change dramatically. Having accepted responsibility for the school the teachers realize their success depends on the students. So they give students serious responsibilities. Parents and students can contribute usefully to school governance; students sometimes helping to select people to work at the school. Teachers turn this positive culture into student success. Members of the cooperative often continue as teachers while assuming administrative roles.

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So, why an inventory? Education/Evolving simply wishes to track the innovation. We watch it evolve. We think about TPPs’ implications for K-12 public education and advance the ideas nationally. The inventory helps us to do that. But in gathering information we realized that others might be interested as well.

If you are thinking about starting a TPP, you might find this inventory helpful to gain knowledge about an array of options as you consider the various decisions related to the organizational structure you will design. Education/Evolving encourages you to think beyond these organizational models, however. Your addition of new models and improvements on the existing models may help to strengthen TPPs as an innovative option for professionalizing teaching and as one means to creating high-performing learning communities at all levels of public and private education.

If you already own a TPP, you might be interested in this document as a way to help legitimize your arrangement. You might pick up elements of other TPPs’ structures for your own TPP. You might use the inventory to recruit new colleagues who may not be familiar with the idea, but could learn about it—and the developing models across the country.

If you are a policymaker or an administrator in the education field considering the notion of TPPs, you might read this with an eye toward how to structure state law or how to create an administrative climate that will allow TPPs to operate efficiently and effectively. In Milwaukee, for example, the district administration is already taking steps to accommodate the teacher professional partnerships and practices that run eight of its instrumentality chartered schools.

When teachers collectively run a school, for example, a district administrator might not always get the same person on the phone when calling for information. It seems a simple thing, but even this takes an adjustment of cultural expectations, and Milwaukee Public Schools is figuring out how to shift its culture in practice.

A willingness to advance and adopt a new state chartering law in Wisconsin might help as well. Policymakers could for example arrange to eliminate a requirement that the charter be issued to an individual. The current law might not be as open as it could be to the idea of teachers collectively running an organization. Even so, Milwaukee TPPs have worked out an arrangement for each TPP to elect a “lead teacher” who signs the chartering contract on behalf of the school.

Whatever your interest in the inventory, this document represents a “snapshot” of TPPs across the nation at one point in time. Education/Evolving would like to hear from you with questions, comments, and suggested additions. Even if you are in the early stages of creating a TPP or shaping policy and/or practice to accommodate TPPs, we would like to know about your efforts. Please contact us: [info@educationevolving.org](mailto:info@educationevolving.org) or [kfarris-berg@cox.net](mailto:kfarris-berg@cox.net)

## **Formal teacher professional partnership organizations serving public schools**

As of May 2006 there were ten operational teacher professional partnerships (TPPs) and practices serving 21 chartered schools.

In Minnesota, EdVisions Cooperative contracts with 12 chartered school boards, throughout the state, to implement and manage the schools’ educational programs and administer the learning sites.

In Wisconsin, two independent teacher cooperatives manage the educational programs and learning sites at two respective instrumentality-chartered schools of Milwaukee Public Schools. Six other practices are operating, informally, as cooperatives and managing six respective instrumentality-chartered schools. This inventory will frequently refer to the Milwaukee practices as ‘partnerships’ (with quotes), not to indicate that they are formally organized as partnerships under law but as a loose term to indicate that that the teachers view themselves as co-managers/partners.

The two formal Milwaukee teacher professional partnership organizations are: Individualized Developmental Educational Approaches to Learning (I.D.E.A.L.) Charter School Cooperative and Professional Learning Institute (P.L.I.) Cooperative. The six informal practices include: Academia de Lenguaje y Bellas Artes (ALBA) ‘Partnership’, Advanced Language and Academic Studies (ALAS) ‘Partnership’, The Alliance School ‘Partnership’, Community High School ‘Partnership’, Downtown Institute of Arts and Letters (DIAL) ‘Partnership’, and Milwaukee Learning Laboratory & Institute (M.L.L.I.) ‘Partnership’. The schools share the teacher partnership or practice names, but the school and the associated partnership or practice are separate entities in each case.

In Massachusetts, Witham Fjord, LLC (a limited-liability company) contracts with Fall River Maritime Public Charter School.

More information on the structures, management, and services offered by operational TPPs serving public schools is outlined in the following profiles.

## **Massachusetts**

### **Witham Fjord, LLC**

**Legal Structure:** Limited-liability company (LLC) pursuant to the provisions of the Massachusetts Limited-Liability Company Act, Chapter 156C of the Massachusetts General Laws.

**Governing Board:** The owners of the company are self-governing. Witham Fjord’s governance is now and will always be separate from the governing board of the school it serves.

#### **Witham Fjord, LLC**

**CONTACT:** Roger W. Bourassa, Partner  
E-mail: rogerbourassa@verizon.net  
P.O. Box 88  
Fall River, Massachusetts 02722  
Phone: 508-415-5027  
Web site: www.withamfjord.com

**TPP ESTABLISHED:** 2006  
**# OF SITES SERVED:** 1  
**# OF PARTNERS:** In first year, two partners and two associate members. In second year, will add two associate members (a total of six). Will recruit additional associate members in year five.

**Site Served:** Witham Fjord contracts with Fall River Maritime Public Charter School (FRMPCS) to implement and manage the school’s educational program and administer the learning site.

**TPP mission, vision, values:** The mission of Witham Fjord is to provide exceptional educational services for student-centered, project-based learning

environments. Witham Fjord will implement, administer, and manage any and all services associated with running a successful school, including educational programming and instruction. Witham Fjord will maximize the quality of its services and motivate its members to achieve high and consistent levels of productivity.

#### **Witham Fjord, LLC**

##### **Site Profile**

#### **Fall River Maritime Public Charter School**

**SPONSOR:** Massachusetts Department of Education

**TPP ESTABLISHED:** 2006  
**SCHOOL WILL OPEN:** 2007  
**GRADE LEVELS SERVED:** 5-8

**CHARTERED SCHOOL BOARD MAKE-UP:** 5 community members including a professor at MA Maritime Academy, an elementary school principal, a member of the Prince Henry Society, and director of operations at a residential treatment program for “difficult adolescents”

**# OF TEACHERS (PROJECTED):** Planned student-to-teacher ratio of 10:1. All will be licensed.

#### **ENROLLMENT (PROJECTED):**

School Year	Grades	Enrollment
2006-07	5	20
2007-08	5-6	40
2008-09	5-7	60
2009-10	5-8	80
2010-11	5-8	80

**TESTS:** Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), Progress Toward Standards (PRS), Woodcock-Johnson III, and Word Identification & Spelling Test

**UNIQUE FEATURES:** student-centered; project-based learning; maritime-focused curriculum; students have freedom to take risks and still develop skills; restorative justice

**Membership structure:** Witham Fjord’s membership will eventually be comprised of teachers, educational specialists, and others with administrative, financial, and management expertise to ensure the company’s business plan is successfully carried out. In

its first year, Witham Fjord's members include educators with business experience.

Witham Fjord defines teachers as "partners" and "associate members", and refers to partners and associate members together as the "Team". The partners have "sole and exclusive control of TPP activities," but the Team works together to share responsibilities in managing FRMPCS. Associate members are employees that report to the Team, and in some cases to the partners.

Partners elect a "lead facilitator" (who must be a partner) who is responsible for communicating with the FRMPCS Board of Trustees as well as facilitating Witham Fjord's general administrative decisions and day-to-day management of FRMPCS. The lead facilitator defines the culture of Witham Fjord and holds members to the LLC's mission and vision.

Partners make key organizational decisions with input from associate members. Key decisions require a majority vote of the partners with the lead facilitator breaking a tie vote. This includes decisions regarding curriculum, instruction, student achievement, fiscal planning, personnel, and operations.

Upon one year of service with Witham Fjord associate members are eligible for partner, and therefore, part owner of the LLC.

Teachers who become partners or associate members of Witham Fjord will already be certified to teach in Massachusetts or will take and pass, within their first year of employment, the Massachusetts tests for educational licensure.

As defined in the contract between Witham Fjord and FRMPCS, Witham Fjord partners will be responsible for acquiring new teacher-members and, if necessary, terminating their membership. New members are hired for a specified term as noted in a signed agreement. The agreement may be terminated by mutual agreement, the election of the partners, or for cause.

**Performance measurement and improvement:**

Each partner and associate member is responsible for developing and presenting (in collaboration with a specified team) their own, individualized performance and evaluation processes, methods, and procedures for the Team to review, evaluate, and accept.

The lead facilitator manages the process to assess Team members. The process includes compiling and weighing performance inputs from the FRMPCS Board, peers (fellow Team members), students, and parents. Partners and associate members identify each member's strengths and areas of development as well as areas of growth and remediation. The Team supports fellow members by communicating each member's strengths and talents, ensuring a continuous mentorship process.

All members are actively engaged in an ongoing feedback process from multiple sources that incorporates mentoring and coaching principles into the daily work of the Team. This process fosters candor, authenticity, employability, humility, and self-reflection.

The approach of continuous feedback has the following effects: it assists members of Witham Fjord to identify needed competencies and areas where organizational development is needed; it reinforces the leadership and self-directed team model; it maximizes the strengths and talents of each member; it links the success of Witham Fjord and student success to performance; it reinforces positive attitudes; and it permits intrinsic motivation, including personal action plans by members.

Witham Fjord values professional development of its members as key to the success of the educational program it provides to FRMPCS. Prior to the school's operation, members had the opportunity to learn about governance with a teacher ownership model (from the Gates-EdVisions Schools Project), reading instruction for learning and/or reading for disabled students (Jean-Fryer Schedler), Teaching for Understanding (ATLAS

Communities), and The Responsive Classroom (Northeast Foundation for Children).

Ongoing professional development activities are determined by the Team, based on the assessment of data gathered throughout each school year. Where appropriate, to enhance the student-centered, project-based learning environment at FRMPCS and to address areas of need based on data gathered, the Team will participate in professional development opportunities made available through the Massachusetts Charter School Association. The association's courses include Essential Data for Educators, Supporting At-Risk Students for Academic Achievement, and Project-based Curriculum—Meeting Standards, Capitalizing on Teacher Creativity, Fulfilling the School's Mission.

A multitude of other organizations also provide opportunities for the Team to acquire and develop valuable skills and knowledge in particular areas, including, but not limited to: Title I Dissemination Project (supports the education efforts of Title I directors, coordinators, teachers, and parents); National Middle School Association; The Society for Naval Architects and Marine Engineers; Coalition for Essential Schools (creates and sustains equitable, intellectually vibrant, personalized schools); and Francis W. Parker Essential Charter School and Teachers Center (provides opportunities for educators to gather for collective inquiry and meaningful dialogue about teaching and learning).

**Compensation:** As an LLC, partners determine (in their sole discretion) the compensation of associate members (employees) for their services, as well as their own salaries.

**Start-up funding:** The Fulton Project, a nonprofit entity that is committed to planning, developing, implementing, and supporting a small, alternative maritime-focused educational environment for the emerging adolescent, received a planning grant to develop FRMPCS from the Gates-EdVisions Schools

Project<sup>2</sup> in the amount of \$10,000. A portion of this funding was used to start-up Witham Fjord, which incorporated specifically for implementing the educational program outlined by The Fulton Project. Gates-EdVisions awarded additional implementation funds after FRMPCS' charter was officially granted in March 2006. The Fulton Project and FRMPCS plan to raise additional annual funding for the benefit of the school (mainly) and Witham Fjord.

**Sources of revenue:** The primary source of revenue for Witham Fjord is the contract it has with FRMPCS to implement and manage the school's educational program and administer the learning site. In the first year of operation, no money will be transferred to Witham Fjord for services. Witham Fjord and FRMPCS have decided to financially manage themselves as one and the same because they are dependant on one another for successful operation.

**Determining fees to charge the schools served (for teaching, administration):** Witham Fjord has determined that, in its initial contract with the school, the TPP will not charge a fee-for-service at all. Therefore, FRMPCS will not pay Witham Fjord for services. Financial management of the school and the TPP will be viewed as one and the same. The TPP, as an LLC, will nevertheless keep its own financial records. In the future, if a fee-for-service is added, it will be defined in the contract between FRMPCS and Witham Fjord.

**Financial management:** In accordance with the Massachusetts Charter School Recommended Fiscal Policies and Procedures Guide, the FRMPCS Board of Trustees will have ultimate responsibility for the financial health of the school. The FRMPCS board will maintain sole authority to adopt the annual operating and capital budgets. The board has the authority to pay Witham Fjord a fee-for-service, but for now does not do so. Witham Fjord works with the FRMPCS board

<sup>2</sup> See footnote about the Gates-EdVisions Project on page 38 for more information.

treasurer and finance committee to make budget recommendations to the board, justifying each line-item recommendation with a worksheet.

The FRMPCS board maintains sole authority to purchase property, incur debt, invest funds, choose a bank, and choose an auditor. In addition, the FRMPCS board has signatory authority for authorizing all cash transactions. For ease of operations, the FRMPCS board extends signatory authority to Witham Fjord's lead facilitator. A separate member of Witham Fjord is responsible for business administrative functions. Dual signatures are required for individual checks over \$5000.

The partner or associate member responsible for business management generates monthly reports, including a budget variance report (budget vs. actual) and a projected cash flow report. These reports are first submitted to the FRMPCS board's finance committee and the Witham Fjord Team for review. Team review ensures adherence to line-item limits because any overage by one member of Witham Fjord could adversely affect another member. After initial review, Witham Fjord and the FRMPCS finance committee submit monthly financial reports to the full board.

**Liability and business insurance:** Witham Fjord's education management service contract with FRMPCS (still in draft form as of April 2006) says that Witham Fjord shall purchase and maintain insurance which will protect Witham Fjord and FRMPCS officers, trustees, employees, and students from claims.

**Administration:** The Team is responsible and held accountable for managing FRMPCS. Each partner and associate member is responsible for: (1) administering and managing a designated "basic service" (in his or her role as a "academic management specialist" or "content area specialist") and a designated "administrative service" in the areas of financial management, general administration, student conduct and records, or academic programs; (2) facilitating meetings on a rotational basis, following the same

meeting process and formats; and (3) explaining and training team members about processes, including cross-training a back-up member.

The lead facilitator is responsible for: (1) facilitating processes to assess programs, students, and team members; (2) facilitating Witham Fjord meetings, including those addressing FRMPCS' review of Witham Fjord and school progress; and (3) ensuring consistency and quality in the decision-making process and other adopted processes.

An experienced and qualified partner is designated with the responsibility for facilitating the decision-making process regarding personnel, fiscal planning, or operations. Partners ultimately make key organizational decisions for these areas. The facilitator of the decision-making process must: (1) conduct a needs assessment; (2) create a design team to include partners and associate members to address area of focus; (3) research best practices and review literature; (4) develop and present an action plan to the Team; and (5) organize a vote by the partners, and if approved, implement the action plan.

**Learning program:** Partners, in consultation with associate members, make key organizational decisions regarding curriculum, instruction, and student achievement. According to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 89(x), the FRMPCS board, in consultation with the Witham Fjord partners will determine the school's curriculum. Consequently, the FRMPCS board will approve the curriculum that Witham Fjord desires to apply at FRMPCS on, at most, an annual basis. Witham Fjord partners are able to make decisions to adjust the curriculum, within the approved overall framework, without board consent.

An experienced and qualified partner or associate member is designated with the responsibility of facilitating the decision-making process regarding curriculum, instruction, and student achievement. S/he works in collaboration with a specified team of partners

and associate members to assess student achievement, report results, and propose curriculum or pedagogical changes to the Team.

The development, supervision, coordination, and continual assessment of the educational content and pedagogical approach are crucial for the success of FRMPCS. The facilitator of the decision-making process must: (1) conduct a needs assessment; (2) create a design team to include partners and associate members to address area of focus; (3) research best practices and review literature; (4) develop and present an action plan to the Team; and (5) organize a vote by the partners, and if approved, implement the action plan.

Witham Fjord provides FRMPCS a maritime-focused educational program. Team members, students, and parents create an educational environment where students learn basic skills such as reading, writing, and computation, as well as explore and discover a multitude of concepts in science and technology, history and social sciences, mathematics, literature, and the arts, through maritime studies.

The curriculum is a challenging student-centered and project-based learning program. Student-designed Individual Courses of Study (ICS) are the vehicles for project-based learning, moving students beyond dependency in learning to become independent learners. ICS provide students with the autonomy to actively engage in doing meaningful work, asking questions, discussing ideas, applying skills and knowledge in interesting as well as thought-provoking situations, and integrating it with other content areas. In addition to ICS, students participate in a variety of other learning experiences including teacher-created learning experiences, self-paced skills development programs, and explicit instruction.

## **Minnesota**

### **EdVisions Cooperative**

**Legal Structure:** Cooperative organized under Minnesota Statute, Chapter 308A. The members also formed a nontaxable nonprofit organization with 501(c)3 status called EdVisions, Inc., so the group can receive grants. Some grants received are very large. Consequently EdVisions, Inc. has its own staff, separate from that of the cooperative, to manage the projects. More about one such project, called The EdVisions Schools Project, is described in the “planning phase” section later in this profile.

**Governing Board:** A nine-member board governs EdVisions Cooperative (EdVisions). It is a Carver-model board, meaning that the board focuses on policy development and decisions about organizational purpose rather than decisions about the means to achieve the purpose. The board delegates decisions about the “means” to the executive director and to individual site-management teams (see “membership structure”, below, for more information about site-team powers). Voting members (shareholders) elect board members to three-year terms at their annual meeting. Terms are staggered, so only a small amount of board positions turn over each year.

### **EdVisions Cooperative**

**CONTACTS:** Doug Thomas, Executive Director  
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Ron Newell, Learning Program Director  
E-mail: ron@edvisions.coop  
501 Main - Box 518  
Henderson, MN 56044  
Phone: 507-248-3738  
Web site: www.edvisions.coop

**TPP ESTABLISHED:** 1994  
**# OF SITES SERVED:** 12 (described below)  
**# OF MEMBERS:** Approximately 233.

**Sites Served:** EdVisions agrees in its contracts with twelve separate chartered school boards to

implement and manage the schools' educational programs and manage the learning sites. The cooperative delegates this responsibility to site-management teams—one for each school site. The sites are: Avalon Charter School. EdVisions Off-Campus High School. El Colegio Charter School. Green Isle Community School. Lafayette Charter School. Minnesota New Country School. Naytahwaush Community School. Nerstrand Elementary School. Northern Lights Community School. RiverBend Academy. River Heights Charter School. SAGE Academy.

EdVisions Cooperative also contracts with the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools (MACS) and EdVisions, Inc., which are considered “service-contract sites”. EdVisions provides payroll and benefit administration services to the employees of these organizations in exchange for an annual fee-for-service that makes all of the employees associate members of the cooperative.

**TPP mission, vision, values:** EdVisions' mission is to:

- increase learning opportunities for pupils.
- encourage the use of different innovative teaching methods.
- establish new forms of accountability for schools.
- develop and conduct appropriate career development programs for teachers.
- create new professional opportunities for teachers including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program of a school.

EdVisions' founders created the cooperative to address the need for new roles for public educators. EdVisions challenges the existing frameworks of traditional educational thinking. It is made up of teachers and other education professionals who believe teachers should assume new professional roles and create opportunities for direct involvement in owning and operating various educational entities.

EdVisions believes that the cooperative model allows entrepreneurial educators to create responsive, innovative, and efficient educational programs in their own communities. EdVisions is dedicated to professional practice and educator development.

**Membership structure:** According to EdVisions' leaders there are two levels of membership—associate members and shareholders. As of March 2006, there were 233 members in all. Associate members are persons employed by the cooperative to teach and work as part of a “site-management team” at one of the 12 school sites. Employees of EdVisions, Inc. and the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools (MACS) are also associate members. Associate members simply receive payroll and benefit administration services from EdVisions. In all, as of March 2006, there were 203 associate members of EdVisions.

Site-management teams identify and recommend new colleagues and are responsible for the learning program and administration of their independent sites. They pay an annual fee-for-service to EdVisions (see “sources of revenue”, below), at which point all teacher-employees and other professional staff (for example: aides and paraprofessionals) at the site are approved by the cooperative and enrolled as associate members for the year. EdVisions, Inc. and the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools (MACS) follow a similar process for seeking associate-level membership for their employees. To the students and families at each school, associate members who are teachers are known as teacher-advisors.

EdVisions does not use a tenure system. Each associate member is contracted to a one-year, at-will contract. Associate members do not have a vote on EdVisions Cooperative matters, including election of the board. They do not receive patronage dividends.

“Shareholders,” also known as “voting members,” *do* vote on EdVisions Cooperative matters. One must apply for membership, and the EdVisions

board votes on the application. If approved, the applicant must purchase a share for \$100 to become a shareholder. As of March 2006, there were 58 shareholders.

Some shareholders are also associate members. As of March 2006, there were approximately 20 people who were both. The cooperative has determined that only those who are both (who engage in cooperative business) are eligible to receive patronage dividends.<sup>3</sup> Shareholders who are not both are considered “non-patronage members.” EdVisions is trying to sell all associate members on also being shareholders, but leaders report that many associate members do not yet understand the advantage.

In 2004, patronage refunds were given to the shareholders who are also associate members, but the prevailing wisdom has been to spend down the excess prior to the end of the year by using the funds for a fall conference of all EdVisions members, for scholarships awarded to members for obtaining advanced degrees, and for other purposes similar to these. In 2005, for example, EdVisions awarded six scholarships of \$2000 each to members seeking advanced degrees.

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Site management teams are responsible for making site-related decisions<sup>4</sup>, including curriculum and budgeting decisions, and negotiating the contract particulars with the school board at their site. They must ultimately take their decisions to the EdVisions board for review and approval. The review and approval process allows the board to pose questions and/or ask for clarification about site-team decisions. Site teams are *not* responsible for personnel decisions. Personnel decisions are made at the EdVisions board level.

Each site creates and operates its own process for determining candidates for recommendation. The

<sup>3</sup> Thirty-eight (of the 58) shareholders are not on site payrolls. The cooperative has determined that members of this group who do not do cooperative business could legally, but will not in practice, receive patronage dividends.

<sup>4</sup> Site-team members are responsible for making site-related decisions irrespective of whether they are shareholders and/or associates.

EdVisions board then approves the membership when it approves the mandatory fee-for-service contract with the site (see “sources of revenue”, below).

Any member may terminate his or her membership by petitioning the EdVisions board. When a site management team recommends dismissal of one of its associate members, EdVisions makes the final decision. If the associate member is dismissed, s/he is removed from the rolls unless s/he petitions to become a shareholder.

**Performance measurement and improvement:**

EdVisions supplies general ideas for member development (such as creating a brain-compatible learning environment, a democratic-learning community, sound management and financial-management practices, and professional growth opportunities) and for teacher-advisor roles and responsibilities, but each site team is responsible for creating its own criteria and processes. EdVisions expects each site team to create a professional development plan for each member as well as a strategic plan for its school.

**Compensation:** Members of each site team collectively determine the salaries and benefits of their fellow team members. Members consider member development plans, survey data from parents and students, and performance toward graduation standards when determining the compensation or retention of each member.

**Start-up funding:** Teachers formed EdVisions in 1994 without any outside source of funding. EdVisions has not depended on any funding other than fee-for-service revenues from site teams (see “sources of revenue”, below).

**Sources of revenue:** The ongoing source of revenue for each site team is the contract EdVisions Cooperative has with the chartered school it is contracted to serve (EdVisions has twelve such contracts in all). EdVisions contracts with each chartered school to provide a given set of services for a given fee. The site

team negotiates the contract, but each chartered school pays EdVisions directly for the services in lump-sum.

EdVisions then passes the fee to the site team delivering services to that chartered school. Since the site team has control over its own budget, site-team members work within the limits of that fee to collectively negotiate their own salaries and benefits.

EdVisions earns revenue by charging a fee-for-service to the site teams and service-contract sites typically a percentage of the amount that the respective site team allocated to salaries and benefits. The EdVisions board determines the actual percentage, which in March 2006 was two percent. The money pays for EdVisions to manage payroll and benefits services. As each site or service-contract site grows, so does the fee paid to EdVisions.

**Determining fees to charge the schools served (for teaching, administration):** The site team for each school site negotiates the lump-sum fee when it negotiates the contract with the school.

**Financial management:** EdVisions employs a CPA who completes all payroll and benefits management, including tax, retirement, and other obligations. Site teams supply the CPA with the data necessary. The CPA completes all financial reports. The treasurer of the EdVisions board, and ultimately the full board, oversees the CPA's work. An external financial review audit is carried out each year (by Peterson & Co. of Mankato, Minnesota) to review the cooperative's books.

**Liability and business insurance:** Local providers competitively bid to provide liability and other types of insurance. The Executive Director enlists the bids and the EdVisions board votes on which provision to accept.

**Administration:** Each site team is responsible for carrying out the specific contract EdVisions has entered into with their site's (chartered school's) board. The site team is responsible and accountable to

EdVisions for all managing and decision making at its site, including determination of teacher salaries and benefits and keeping the learning/instructional programs updated and viable. The cooperative membership maintains a rigorous member-development program to keep all members up-to-speed with administrative knowledge.

Having ownership of the learning programs at the various sites requires that EdVisions members do the following: (1) take the necessary steps to be financially accountable; (2) take care that students and parents are served according to their needs; and (3) evaluate and assess site programs with proper processes and report results to the sponsors, state, and community.

EdVisions charges a fee-for-service (see "sources of revenue", above) to each of its member sites. In exchange, EdVisions provides payroll and benefits administration, member development services, and help with evaluation and assessment of programs.

**Learning program:** EdVisions sites use a student-centered model for project-based learning. A high-level of direct parent involvement in the students' learning, positive relationships between students and their teacher-advisors, and the sense of nurturing and community are all critical elements of the cooperative's success. Students get unbridled attention and activity. Parents get constant feedback. And teachers get a sense of professionalism that they believe was too often missing in traditional public education.

Learning is student-directed. There are no courses, no bells, and teachers do not deliver lessons. Computers are available for student research, data storage, and creative design. There are numerous opportunities to learn in and from the community.

Instead of taking traditional courses, students complete ten standards/performance-based projects each year. The teacher-advisors counsel and guide the projects to help all students master a specific standard as they develop and complete projects. Students acquire basic

skills with one-on-one assistance, when necessary, and in small groups when more effective and efficient. All groupings are flexible and outcome-driven, not time-driven. Seniors are required to present a major research project involving community experts. Most students complete some post-secondary work.

To help site teams to measure student achievement, EdVisions Cooperative provides a testing service via the Northwest Evaluation Association's Measure of Academic Progress. All but one of the high school sites also elected to pay for services that will measure achievement as part of the Hope Study, which in part determines whether or not adolescents in a project-based learning environment experience improvement in their motivation to learn. With two sets of data points, EdVisions sites have been able to improve Hope scores over time. The longer individual students are at EdVisions sites, Hope scores go up. Data indicate that if a school has significant positive environments for autonomy, belongingness (peer and teacher support), and control, then it can be expected that Hope scores will increase. More information about the study is available at the following Web site:

[http://www.edvisions.coop/html/hope\\_study1.shtml](http://www.edvisions.coop/html/hope_study1.shtml)

### **EdVisions Cooperative plans to grow across Minnesota and to be an educational development organization**

In March 2006, EdVisions Cooperative reported a plan to grow across the state of Minnesota. EdVisions will also be an educational development organization developing small, progressive learning communities nationwide. EdVisions Cooperative promotes a democratic learning and leading model which includes the following attributes: (1) Student governments to support active engagement in school decision making; (2) Practicing restorative justice/circle processes; (3) Promoting the value of citizenship through involvement in the greater community; (4) Teachers evaluated by

peers, students, and parents; (5) Teachers model ownership and democratic behavior (incorporating a consensus model) to inspire students, parents, and the community to take ownership and actively engage in school decision making; (6) Coaching and mentoring for assimilation and continuous improvement; (7) Self-directed, project-based learning; (8) Publicly-demonstrated achievement; and so on.

### **EdVisions Cooperative Site Profiles<sup>5</sup>**

In March and April 2006, representatives from all of the EdVisions Cooperative sites profiled below provided their most recent available data.

#### **Avalon School**

**CONTACT:** Gretchen Sage-Martinson  
E-mail: [gretchen@avalonschool.org](mailto:gretchen@avalonschool.org)  
1745 University Avenue  
St. Paul, MN 55104  
Phone: 651-649-5495  
Fax: 651-649-5462  
Web site: [www.avalonschool.org](http://www.avalonschool.org)

**SPONSOR:** Hamline University  
**SCHOOL OPENED:** 2001  
**GRADE LEVELS SERVED:** 7-12  
**YEAR OF LAST FINANCIAL AUDIT:** 2004-2005

**CHARTERED SCHOOL BOARD MAKE-UP:** 4 EdVisions site team members, 3 parents and/or community members, 2 students (non-voting members)

**# OF EDVISIONS SITE TEAM MEMBERS:** 19  
**# OF LICENSED SPECIALISTS:** 17  
**# OF NON-LICENSED PERSONS:** 0

**STUDENTS:**  
Enrollment: 149  
Male: 52% Female: 48%

<sup>5</sup> The EdVisions site teams, though formally part of EdVisions Cooperative (a formal TPP), could each co-own a formal TPP that would contract with the board of the school to serve the site. None has elected to do so. Collegial groups of teachers already run the schools with authority delegated from EdVisions, but EdVisions operates as a "service coop" and does not operate at the school level. EdVisions does not impose structures for decision making at the sites. As of May 2006, those processes are informally arranged and implemented by the teachers at each site.

American Indian: 1%  
 African American: 18%  
 Asian: 5%  
 Hispanic: 8%  
 Caucasian: 69%

Limited English Proficiency: 1%  
 Free and Reduced Price Lunch: 23%  
 Special Education: 18%  
 Mobility: unavailable

**ATTENDANCE RATE:** 90% (Average Daily Membership was 151)  
**GRADUATION RATE:** 89%  
**TESTS:** BST, MCA, NWEA (MAP)

**UNIQUE FEATURES:** project-based learning; multi-age grouping

**EdVisions Off-Campus High School**

**CONTACT:** Keven Kroehler  
 E-mail: [kkroehler@edvisionshighschool.com](mailto:kkroehler@edvisionshighschool.com)  
 P.O. Box 307  
 Henderson, Minnesota 56044  
 Phone: 1-800-617-7857  
 Fax: 1-866-665-2752  
 Web site: [www.edvisionshighschool.com](http://www.edvisionshighschool.com)

**SPONSOR:** Volunteers of America  
**SCHOOL OPENED:** 2005  
**GRADE LEVELS SERVED:** 7-12  
**YEAR OF LAST FINANCIAL AUDIT:** 2005

**CHARTERED SCHOOL BOARD MAKE-UP:** 2  
 EdVisions site team members, 2 parents, 1 community expert

**# OF EDVISIONS SITE TEAM MEMBERS:** 4  
**# OF LICENSED SPECIALISTS:** 4  
**# OF NON-LICENSED PERSONS:** 0

**STUDENTS:**  
 Enrollment: 40  
 Male: 52.5% Female: 47.5%

African American: 2.5%  
 Asian: 2.5%  
 Caucasian: 95%

Limited English Proficiency: 0%  
 Free and Reduced Price Lunch: 6%  
 Special Education: 8%  
 Mobility: unavailable

**ATTENDANCE RATE:** unavailable  
**GRADUATION RATE:** not applicable (first year of operation)  
**TESTS:** BST, MCA, NWEA (MAP)

**UNIQUE FEATURES:** project-based learning; offers teens around the state the option of designing their own projects, carrying them out, and sharing them with others via webcam, laptop, and live meetings in different areas of the state

**El Colegio Charter School**

**CONTACT:** David Greenberg  
 E-mail: [david@el-colegio.org](mailto:david@el-colegio.org)  
 4137 Bloomington Avenue  
 Minneapolis, MN 55407  
 Phone: 612-728-5728  
 Fax: 612-728-5790  
 Web site: [www.el-colegio.org](http://www.el-colegio.org)

**SPONSOR:** Augsburg College  
**SCHOOL OPENED:** 2000  
**GRADE LEVELS SERVED:** 9-12  
**YEAR OF LAST FINANCIAL AUDIT:** 2004-2005

**CHARTERED SCHOOL BOARD MAKE-UP:** 4  
 EdVisions site team members, 1 parent, 5 community members

**# OF EDVISIONS SITE TEAM MEMBERS:** 11  
**# OF LICENSED SPECIALISTS:** 9  
**# OF NON-LICENSED PEOPLE:** 2

**STUDENTS:**  
 Enrollment: 85  
 Male: 48% Female: 52%

American Indian: 6%  
 African American: 26%  
 Hispanic: 55%  
 Caucasian: 13%

Limited English Proficiency: 28%  
 Free and Reduced Price Lunch: 90%  
 Special Education: 12%  
 Mobility: 150 unique students were served while enrollment averaged 85.

**ATTENDANCE RATE:** 70%  
**GRADUATION RATE:** 2005 had a class of 10 graduates. Traditional definitions for graduation rates do not apply, as many students entered El Colegio behind on credits.  
**TESTS:** BST, MCA, NWEA (MAP)

**UNIQUE FEATURES:** arts and culture focused; bilingual education (Spanish and English); project-based learning combined with classroom instruction

**Green Isle Community School**

**CONTACT:** Kirsten Kinzler  
 E-mail: kirsten.kinzler@greenislecommunityschool.org  
 190 McGrann Street  
 P.O. Box 277  
 Green Isle, Minnesota 55338  
 Phone: 507-326-7144  
 Fax: 507-326-5434  
 Web site: www.greenislecommunityschool.org

**SPONSOR:** Volunteers of America  
**SCHOOL OPENED:** 2005  
**GRADE LEVELS SERVED:** K-6  
**YEAR OF LAST FINANCIAL AUDIT:** 2005

**CHARTERED SCHOOL BOARD MAKE-UP:** 2  
 EdVisions site team members, 1 parent, 4 community members

**# OF EDVISIONS SITE TEAM MEMBERS:** 7  
**# OF LICENSED SPECIALISTS:** 7  
**# OF NON-LICENSED PERSONS:** 0

**STUDENTS:**  
 Enrollment: 65  
 Male: 45% Female: 55%

Hispanic: 6%  
 Caucasian: 94%

Limited English Proficiency: 2%  
 Free and Reduced Price Lunch: 14%  
 Special Education: 9%  
 Mobility: unavailable

**ATTENDANCE RATE:** 97%  
**GRADUATION RATE:** not applicable (first year of operation)  
**TESTS:** MCA II, NWEA (MAP)

**UNIQUE FEATURES:** multi-age classrooms; school-wide K-6 homerooms meet daily to create safe school culture where positive social interaction and character development are stressed; service-learning opportunities; comprehensive, integrated curriculum with dissemination support from the highly regarded Nerstrand Community School; active partnerships with parents and community members

**Lafayette Charter School**

**CONTACT:** Andrea Harder  
 E-mail: harder@lafayettecharter.k12.mn.us  
 P.O. Box 125  
 351 - 6th Street  
 Phone: 507-228-8943  
 Fax: 507-228-8288  
 Web site: www.lafayettecharter.k12.mn.us

**SPONSOR:** Gibbon, Fairfax, & Winthrop School District  
**SCHOOL OPENED:** 1999  
**GRADE LEVELS SERVED:** Pre-K - 8  
**YEAR OF LAST FINANCIAL AUDIT:** 2004-2005

**CHARTERED SCHOOL BOARD MAKE-UP:** 4  
 EdVisions site team members, 3 parents

**# OF EDVISIONS SITE TEAM MEMBERS:** 16  
**# OF LICENSED SPECIALISTS:** 10  
**# OF NON-LICENSED PEOPLE:** 6

**STUDENTS:**  
 Enrollment: 96  
 Male: 45% Female: 55%

Limited English Proficiency: unavailable  
 Free and Reduced Price Lunch: 62%  
 Special Education: 11%  
 Mobility: unavailable

**ATTENDANCE RATE:** 96%  
**GRADUATION RATE:** unavailable  
**TESTS:** MCA, MAPS  
**OTHER EVALUATION METHODS/TOOLS:** on-site greenhouse to provide hands-on learning for agriculture curriculum; weekly assemblies and multi-aged homerooms focusing on character education; guitar, piano, and voice lessons offered during the school day; physical education offered 40 minutes daily to all students

**Minnesota New Country School**

**CONTACT:** Dee Thomas, Director  
 E-mail: dgthomas@mncs.k12.mn.us  
 210 Main Street, P.O. Box 488  
 Henderson, MN 56004  
 Phone: 507-248-3353  
 Fax: 507-248-3604  
 Web site: www.mncs.k12.mn.us

**SPONSOR:** LeSueur/Henderson School District  
**SCHOOL OPENED:** 1994  
**GRADE LEVELS SERVED:** 7-12  
**YEAR OF LAST FINANCIAL AUDIT:** 2004-2005

**CHARTERED SCHOOL BOARD MAKE-UP:** 4  
EdVisions site team members, 3 parents

**# OF EDVISIONS SITE TEAM MEMBERS:** 11  
**# OF LICENSED SPECIALISTS:** 9  
**# OF NON-LICENSED PEOPLE:** 8

**STUDENTS:**  
Enrollment: 115  
Male: 57% Female: 43%

African American: <1%  
Hispanic: 7%  
Caucasian: 92%

Limited English Proficiency: 0%  
Free and Reduced Price Lunch: 26%  
Special Education: 26-29%  
Mobility: 7%

**ATTENDANCE RATE:** 89%  
**GRADUATION RATE:** 95 students have graduated since 1995  
**TESTS:** BST, NWEA (MAP)

**UNIQUE FEATURES:** project-based learning; no classes, no bells; service learning projects

**Naytahwaush Community School**

**CONTACT:** Betsy LaVoy  
E-mail: [betsy@ntwcommunitycharterschool.org](mailto:betsy@ntwcommunitycharterschool.org)  
2531 – 310<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Naytahwaush, Minnesota 56566  
Phone: 218-935-5025  
Fax: 218-935-5263  
Web site: [www.ntwcommunitycharterschool.org](http://www.ntwcommunitycharterschool.org)

**SPONSOR:** Volunteers of America  
**SCHOOL OPENED:** 2005  
**GRADE LEVELS SERVED:** K-6  
**YEAR OF LAST FINANCIAL AUDIT:** 2005

**CHARTERED SCHOOL BOARD MAKE-UP:** 1 teacher; 1 paraprofessional; 1 parent, 5 community members

**# OF EDVISIONS SITE TEAM MEMBERS:** 12  
**# OF LICENSED SPECIALISTS:** 8  
**# OF NON-LICENSED PERSONS:** 5

**STUDENTS:**  
Enrollment: 75  
Male: 45% Female: 55%

American Indian: 100%

Limited English Proficiency: 0%  
Free and Reduced Price Lunch: 93%  
Special Education: 15%  
Mobility: not applicable (first year of operation)

**ATTENDANCE RATE:** 85%  
**GRADUATION RATE:** not applicable (first year of operation)  
**TESTS:** MCA II, NWEA (MAP)

**UNIQUE FEATURES:** hands-on, integrated, thematic learning through environmental studies, local history, integration of technology, the arts, and service learning; community circles; relevance; high levels of parent and student involvement; strong partnership with White Earth Reservation Tribal Council

**Nerstrand Elementary School**

**CONTACT:** Barb Grote  
E-mail: [barb\\_grote@faribault.k12.mn.us](mailto:barb_grote@faribault.k12.mn.us)  
205 Second Street South  
Nerstrand, MN 55053  
Phone: 507-333-6850  
Fax: 507-333-6870  
Web site: [www.nerstrand.charter.k12.mn.us](http://www.nerstrand.charter.k12.mn.us)

**SPONSOR:** Faribault School District  
**SCHOOL OPENED:** 1999  
**GRADE LEVELS SERVED:** K-5  
**YEAR OF LAST FINANCIAL AUDIT:** 2004-2005

**CHARTERED SCHOOL BOARD MAKE-UP:** 4  
EdVisions site team members, 3 parents

**# OF EDVISIONS SITE TEAM MEMBERS:** 16  
**# OF LICENSED SPECIALISTS:** 10  
**# OF NON-LICENSED PEOPLE:** 6

**STUDENTS:**  
Enrollment: 153  
Male: 50% Female: 50%

African American: 1%  
American Indian: 1%  
Caucasian: 97%

Limited English Proficiency: 0%  
Free and Reduced Price Lunch: 12%  
Special Education: 8%  
Mobility: unavailable

**ATTENDANCE RATE:** 96%  
**GRADUATION RATE:** unavailable  
**TESTS:** MCA, NWEA (MAP)

**UNIQUE FEATURES:** multi-age grouping; service learning emphasis

**Northern Lights Community School**

**CONTACT:** Dave Hagman  
 E-mail: dhagman@nlcschool.org  
 305 Bridge Street  
 Warba, MN 55793  
 Phone: 218-492-4400  
 Fax: 218-492-4402  
 Web site: www.nlcschool.org

**SPONSOR:** Northwood's Children's Services Foundation  
**SCHOOL OPENED:** 2005  
**GRADE LEVELS SERVED:** 6-12  
**YEAR OF LAST FINANCIAL AUDIT:** July 2005

**CHARTERED SCHOOL BOARD MAKE-UP:** 2 EdVisions site team members, 4 parents, 1 community member

**# OF EDVISIONS SITE TEAM MEMBERS:** 9  
**# OF LICENSED SPECIALISTS:** 7  
**# OF NON-LICENSED PERSONS:** 4

**STUDENTS:**  
 Enrollment: 95  
 Male: 58% Female: 42%

American Indian: 5%  
 African American: 5%  
 Caucasian: 90%

Limited English Proficiency: 0%  
 Free and Reduced-Price Lunch: 17%  
 Special Education: 8%  
 Mobility: unavailable

**ATTENDANCE RATE:** 96%  
**GRADUATION RATE:** not applicable (first year of operation)  
**TESTS:** BST, NWEA (MAP), SAT-9

**UNIQUE FEATURES:** project-based learning; caring community both inside and outside of school walls; application and use of the multiple ways that students learn; welcoming parents and community members as active and valuable parts of school; using students' interests and passions as starting places for their learning

**RiverBend Academy**

**CONTACT:** Bill Macemon  
 E-mail: bmacemon@riverbendacademy.com  
 110 North Sixth Street  
 Mankato, MN 56001  
 Phone: 507-387-5524  
 Fax: 507-387-5680  
 Web site: www.riverbendacademy.com

**SPONSOR:** MN Department of Education  
**SCHOOL OPENED:** 2000  
**GRADE LEVELS SERVED:** 6-12  
**YEAR OF LAST FINANCIAL AUDIT:** 2004-2005

**CHARTERED SCHOOL BOARD MAKE-UP:** 5 EdVisions site team members, 2 parents, 2 community members

**# OF EDVISIONS SITE TEAM MEMBERS:** 21  
**# OF LICENSED SPECIALISTS:** 15  
**# OF NON-LICENSED PEOPLE:** 6

**STUDENTS:**  
 Enrollment: 115  
 Male: 53% Female: 47%

African American: 5%  
 Asian: 2%  
 Hispanic: 3%  
 Caucasian: 90%

Limited English Proficiency: 0%  
 Free and Reduced Price Lunch: 53%  
 Mobility: Throughout the year, enrollment fluctuates between 108 and 120 students.

**ATTENDANCE RATE:** 85%  
**GRADUATION RATE:** unavailable  
**TESTS:** BST, MCA, NWEA (MAP)

**UNIQUE FEATURES:** focus on visual and performing arts; technology integration

**River Heights Charter School**

**CONTACT:** Jill Wohlman  
 E-mail: jwohlman@riverheightscharter.org  
 River Heights Charter School  
 60 East Marie Avenue  
 West Saint Paul, Minnesota 55118  
 Phone: 651-457-7427  
 Fax: 651-554-7611  
 Web site: www.riverheightscharter.org

**SPONSOR:** EdVisions, Inc.  
**SCHOOL OPENED:** 2004  
**GRADE LEVELS SERVED:** 9-12  
**YEAR OF LAST FINANCIAL AUDIT:** 2005

**CHARTERED SCHOOL BOARD MAKE-UP:** 2  
 EdVisions site team members, 1 staff, 1 parent, 1  
 community member, 1 student

**# OF EDVISIONS SITE TEAM MEMBERS:** 4  
**# OF LICENSED SPECIALISTS:** 7  
**# OF NON-LICENSED PERSONS:** 0

**STUDENTS:**  
 Enrollment: 142  
 Male: 53% Female: 47%

American Indian: 2%  
 African American: 8%  
 Asian: 75%  
 Hispanic: 20%  
 Caucasian: 69%

Limited English Proficiency: <1%  
 Free and Reduced Price Lunch: 20%  
 Special Education: 14%  
 Mobility: unavailable

**ATTENDANCE RATE:** unavailable  
**GRADUATION RATE:** As of June 10, 2005, three  
 out of eight senior students had absolutely  
 completed all requirements. The remaining five  
 have either now finished or are still working toward  
 finishing.

**TESTS:** BST, MCA NWEA (MAP)

**UNIQUE FEATURES:** project-based learning;  
 community based; strong advisor/advisee program;  
 restorative justice measures

Teachers' desire to establish and work within a  
 teacher-owned professional organization was a  
 major reason why they created RHCS. The  
 founders, formerly teachers at a district alternative  
 education program, were uncertain that the district  
 they worked for would sustain the learning program  
 that had worked so well for the students. They  
 believed that establishing and belonging to a  
 teacher professional partnership would be the  
 surest means of sustaining the program and  
 implementing other ideas for operating a school and  
 serving students well.

## SAGE Academy

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 Marilyn Thompson, Program Director  
 3900 - 85<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
 Brooklyn Park, MN 55443  
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 Fax: 763-424-1867  
 Web site: www.sageacademy.org

**SPONSOR:** Osseo School  
**SCHOOL OPENED:** 2002  
**GRADE LEVELS SERVED:** 9-12  
**YEAR OF LAST FINANCIAL AUDIT:** 2004-2005

**CHARTERED SCHOOL BOARD MAKE-UP:** 3  
 EdVisions site team members, 2 parents

**# OF EDVISIONS SITE TEAM MEMBERS:** 11  
**# OF LICENSED SPECIALISTS:** 8  
**# OF NON-LICENSED STAFF:** 3

**STUDENTS:**  
 Enrollment: 87

Students of Color: 27.4%

Limited English Proficiency: 2.5%  
 Free and Reduced Price Lunch: 32%  
 Special Education: 19.5%  
 Mobility: 4%

**ATTENDANCE RATE:** 95.5%  
**GRADUATION RATE:** 100%  
**TESTS:** BST, MCA, PLAN, NWEA (MAP)

**UNIQUE FEATURES:** Mentorship; service learning;  
 project and expeditionary-based learning

## Wisconsin

As of March 2006, the teacher professional  
 partnerships and practices formed by Wisconsin teachers  
 were all serving instrumentality-chartered schools of  
 Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS).<sup>6</sup> Two are  
 cooperatives and six will apply to receive their formal  
 status as cooperatives in 2006. In Wisconsin, the  
 chartering authority resides with the school district,

<sup>6</sup> The difference between a teacher professional partnership and a  
 teacher professional practice is that a partnership is formally organized  
 under law. See page 3 for more detail.

except in Milwaukee and Racine, where other entities can be, and are, charter authorizers. Still, over ninety percent of schools chartered by the Milwaukee and Racine districts are legally established as instrumentalities of the districts.

All chartered schools in Wisconsin that are not instrumentalities of districts must arrange a contract with a non-district entity that deals with administrative tasks, hiring, compensation, and so on. In instrumentality-chartered schools, the sponsoring district is usually responsible for these tasks.

For some instrumentality-chartered schools, however, MPS has given teacher cooperatives and informal teacher practices the authority to handle all or some aspects of such duties. The cooperatives and informal practices are formally approved to carry out these tasks by waivers that the schools receive from the master contract under a memorandum of understanding with the union and MPS. Teachers that operate cooperatives and informal practices in Milwaukee collectively accept the authority and responsibility for the success of the school while remaining employees of MPS (under the district's master contract) and dues-paying members of the teachers' union.

According to John Parr, a Milwaukee-based leader in establishing TPPs nationally, Wisconsin teachers are restricted to the option of operating an instrumentality charter school if they wish to participate in the State Teachers Retirement System and be covered by a master labor contract.

ooo

Each of the Milwaukee instrumentality-chartered schools operated by a teacher cooperative or informal practice has its own contract with MPS. The contracts all have the same general content. Some aspects of the contracts require all teacher cooperatives and informal practices to meet a static set of standards. Yet the contracts also allow for the cooperatives and informal practices to choose the ways in which they will

accomplish those actions as well as the learning program they will offer at the site.

This inventory will first outline the structures that are common to all of the Milwaukee cooperatives and informal practices. Then the inventory will outline what each individual cooperative or informal practice has determined to be the most effective mode of operation for its organization.

## **Arrangements common to all Milwaukee formal teacher cooperatives and informal teacher professional practice organizations**

***Legal structure:*** Cooperatives, organized under Chapter 185 of Wisconsin law, given 501(c)3 status under the Internal Revenue Code. The cooperatives were established to create a state of mind about how the school would be managed. Also, so there would be a formal entity to apply for 501(c)3 status so the teachers could seek and accept, directly, grant money from foundations.

As of May 2006, only I.D.E.A.L. Charter School and P.L.I. Cooperatives were formally organized as cooperatives. All others stated their intention to apply to be cooperatives with 501(c)3 status in 2006. To acknowledge that the teachers operating the six informal practices view themselves as co-managers/partners, this inventory will frequently refer to the organizations as 'partnerships'. The quotes are used intentionally to help readers discern that the term 'partnership' does not indicate the practices are formally organized, under law, as partnerships. (A partnership is a legal status, like "cooperative" or "LLC".)

***Site served:*** Each instrumentality-chartered school run by a teacher cooperative or 'partnership' has its own contract with Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS). In MPS the district issues the charter to the first person

listed on the charter petition—"the person who is seeking to establish the charter school." The law requires that the contract be signed by the "person who will be in charge of the charter school." While the teacher cooperatives and 'partnerships' distribute responsibility, it is the lead teacher who signs the contract. The lead teacher is the direct liaison between MPS and the teacher cooperative or 'partnership' and is ultimately held responsible for seeing that the charter is meeting the provisions set forth in the contract with MPS.

**Governing board:** Governing boards for the teacher cooperatives and 'partnerships' differ by site. Some of them do not give much thought to the powers and make-up of their cooperative or 'partnership' board, but pay more attention to the powers of a body at the school (often made-up of parents, students, community members, and teachers) that make (or in some cases approve the cooperatives' or 'partnerships' recommended) policy and budget decisions. These Milwaukee cooperatives and 'partnerships' are comfortable abiding by the decisions made by that body at their school, and do not get wrapped-up in the technicalities of organizational design and theory. See the individual Milwaukee profiles for more specific details on the make-up and powers of the various governing bodies.

**Teacher cooperatives' and 'partnerships'**  
**mission, vision, values:** The mission, vision, and values of the teacher cooperatives and 'partnerships' differ by site. See the individual profiles for more specific details.

**Compensation:** Currently, all of the teacher cooperatives and 'partnerships' in Milwaukee operate chartered schools that are legally established as instrumentalities of MPS. This arrangement allows teachers to remain employees of MPS (under the master contract) and dues-paying members of the union local.

Members of each teacher cooperative or 'partnership' therefore receive their salaries according to the salary scale outlined in the collective-bargaining

agreement. They also receive the same pension and other benefits negotiated by their bargaining unit—Milwaukee Teachers Education Association (MTEA). For each school run by a teacher cooperative or 'partnership', the compensation terms are outlined in a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with MPS and the MTEA.

**Membership structure:** All full-time teachers at each school site are members of the teacher cooperative or 'partnership' associated with that school. All members have the same rights and privileges, including the right to select their leaders. There are no capital requirements.

MPS has the authority to hire and, if necessary, fire teachers from each chartered school operated by a cooperative or 'partnership' because the schools are instrumentalities of the district. When positions are open at a cooperative- or 'partnership'-run school, any MPS teacher may apply for the position (in accordance with the master contract) so long as s/he meets the position's licensure requirements. The cooperative or 'partnership' has the right to interview all the candidates and select the teacher(s) that MPS will assign to the school. If positions are not filled by a certain date, however, the candidates (by seniority) may select to work at cooperative- or 'partnership'-run school.

A teacher recently used this option, selecting a cooperative-run chartered school because the teacher was attracted to the idea that the school did not have a principal who would act as an authority figure. The teacher soon learned, however, that s/he did not fully understand what it meant to work in a teacher-cooperative setting and in the type of educational program that the TPP committed to in the charter contract. One outcome of this situation is that both MTEA and MPS have now informally agreed that this must be avoided in the future.

In spring 2006, MTEA and MPS started the process of developing a new memorandum of understanding that will apply to all Milwaukee teacher cooperatives and 'partnerships'. If adopted, this MOU

will provide that all cooperatives and ‘partnerships’ can use the interview process to fill any vacant licensed-teacher positions at the school. “Selection” will not be an option. One impact of this MOU will be to give the teacher cooperatives and ‘partnerships’ a reason to determine what they would do if there were no interested candidates—reduce the number of students at the school or increase the class sizes? This is a question that all schools and districts (not just teacher cooperatives, ‘partnerships’, or other TPPs) could face.

In any case, a teacher de-selected by a teacher cooperative or ‘partnership’ returns to the pool of MPS-employed teachers for reassignment. Membership in the teacher cooperative or ‘partnership’ is terminated when the teacher is reassigned to another school.

**Performance measurement and improvement:**

As part of the MOU that each school run by a teacher cooperative or ‘partnership’ has with MPS and the MTEA, each cooperative or ‘partnership’ has the right to use a peer review system. All have elected to use a system that was developed and approved for a traditionally-run district school. The memorandum states that: (1) formal evaluation is completed at a specific time of the year, and (2) a committee must reach consensus about the teacher being evaluated. The teacher cooperatives and ‘partnerships’ use this review process annually. MPS provides each teacher cooperative and ‘partnership’ with a list of the tenured teachers who are required to be evaluated in accordance with the master contract with the union. Since Wisconsin treats tenure as a property right, MPS evaluates non-tenured teachers.

Review committee membership is determined by each individual teacher cooperative or ‘partnership’. Some of the individual teacher cooperative and ‘partnership’ profiles, below, outline the committee membership in detail.

An evaluation of “unsatisfactory” could result in the teacher being removed from the school. A teacher de-selected by the teacher cooperative or ‘partnership’

members returns to the pool of MPS-employed teachers for reassignment. For more information see “membership structure”, above.

**Start-up funding:** Start-up funding sources differ by teacher cooperative and ‘partnership’. See the individual profiles for more specific details.

**Sources of revenue:** There is not an ongoing source of revenue for each teacher cooperative or ‘partnership’, unless the teacher cooperative or ‘partnership’ has a grant which it is responsible for managing. The ongoing source of revenue for each instrumentality-chartered school is the contract it has with Milwaukee Public Schools to carry out a specific educational program. Since the school each teacher cooperative or ‘partnership’ serves is an MPS instrumentality chartered school, the *district* (and not the school itself) receives the funding from the state on a per-pupil basis.

The district then sends the money to the school (see “financial management”, below). In addition, each school receives funding for state programs, including Title I funds (again, channeled through the district) based upon the percentage of the student body that is eligible for free and reduced-price lunch.

Like any other public schools, schools that are managed by teacher cooperatives or ‘partnerships’ are eligible to receive special education funding, bilingual education funding, and, at the elementary level, funding from Wisconsin’s Student Guarantee in Education (SAGE) program (aimed at reducing class sizes in the earliest grades).

**Determining fees to charge the schools served (teaching, administration):** The teacher cooperatives and ‘partnerships’ do not determine the fees they will charge to the schools for their services since the prevailing contract between MPS and each cooperative- or ‘partnership’-run school allows the district to set its own administrative fee and since teachers’ salaries are determined by the salary scale outlined in the collective-

bargaining agreement. Each teacher cooperative or ‘partnership’ just uses whatever funds remain to operate the school and does not seek to earn dividends.

**Financial management for the teacher cooperative or ‘partnership’:** Since each school is an instrumentality chartered school of MPS, each school’s funds are administered through the district, which receives the per-pupil funding (and any other special program funding) from the state. Any grants the school might receive would also go directly to MPS. The district transfers these funds, less an approximately two to three percent administrative charge, to each teacher cooperative or ‘partnership’ to run its associated school.

Each Milwaukee teacher cooperative or ‘partnership’ does not conduct financial management for the cooperative or ‘partnership’ itself. Since funds are not paid to these groups for services, they do not have any funds to manage unless they receive grants specifically for the cooperative or ‘partnership’. The cooperatives and ‘partnerships’ do manage the schools’ finances, however. The methods for doing so are determined by each individual teacher cooperative or ‘partnership’. See the individual profiles for more specific details. Whatever the selected methods, each cooperative or ‘partnership’ must send the final school budget to MPS for review and approval.

**Liability and business insurance:** Each school run by a teacher cooperative or ‘partnership’ contracts with MPS to handle the purchasing of liability and business insurance.

**Administration (payroll, records, benefits, purchasing, legal services, etc.):** MPS provides all administrative services for each teacher cooperative or ‘partnership’-run school, and makes an administrative charge to each school for these expenses prior to transferring the lump-sum fee owed to each school by contract. (Each cooperative or ‘partnership’ uses the lump-sum fee to implement the learning program and manage the school.) Examples of these administrative

“charge backs” include testing services, audit reports, district-level disciplinary hearings, and building maintenance.

Each teacher cooperative or ‘partnership’ can administer purchasing through the MPS purchasing department. MPS charges a fee-for-service, yet purchasing via the district saves money because the district can negotiate the best prices given its buying power (it is responsible for approximately 223 schools). All students receive county bus passes.

Members of each teacher cooperative or ‘partnership’ make shared decisions about the day-to-day operations of the school. Cooperative or ‘partnership’ members share responsibilities rather than one person being charged with total administrative responsibility for the school. Specific administrative processes and functions are determined by each individual cooperative or ‘partnership’. See the individual profiles for more specific details.

**Long-term goals:** Each teacher cooperative or ‘partnership’ determines its own long-term goals and processes for setting them. See the individual profiles for more specific details.

**Learning program:** Each teacher cooperative or ‘partnership’ has control over and accountability for the performance of the learning program. The cooperatives and ‘partnerships’ must submit their Educational Plan to MPS for review and approval as part of the school’s requirements to access Title I funding. The learning programs and management of/decision-making processes about the programs are determined by each individual cooperative or ‘partnership’. See the individual profiles for more specific details.

## Profiles of Milwaukee teacher cooperatives and 'partnerships'

Data presented for the sites served by Milwaukee teacher cooperatives and 'partnerships' are partially extracted from the Milwaukee Public Schools Web site at <http://mpsportal.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/portal/server.pt>. At the time of publication, the most recent available data was for the 2004-2005 school year. If the school opened in 2005, no data were available. In March and April 2006, all teacher cooperatives and 'partnerships' supplemented MPS' information with their own data, based on the 2005-2006 school year. DIAL 'Partnership' did not provide data since it will open in the 2006-2007 school year.

### Formal Milwaukee teacher cooperatives

I.D.E.A.L. Charter School Cooperative and P.L.I. Cooperative are formal cooperatives with 501(c)3 status. Their profiles follow:

#### **I.D.E.A.L. Charter School Cooperative**

I.D.E.A.L. Charter School Cooperative (I.D.E.A.L. Cooperative) was the first teacher cooperative in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The 2005-2006 school year marked the fifth year of I.D.E.A.L. Charter School's five-year contract with MPS to implement the learning program and manage the site. The school will enter a second five-year contract with MPS in 2006.

**Governing board:** I.D.E.A.L. Cooperative does not operate under a governing board. The Shared Governance Council of the school (SGC), made up of parents, teachers, and community members, makes school policy and budget decisions and approves the Education Plan before it is submitted to MPS for review and approval.

The cooperative manages itself using three committees that members elect: finance, personnel, and

### **I.D.E.A.L. Charter School Cooperative** **Site Profile: I.D.E.A.L. Charter School**

#### **COOPERATIVE AND SITE CONTACT:**

Barbara Ernest  
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4965 South 20<sup>th</sup> Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53221  
Phone: 414-304-6200  
Fax: 414-304-6215  
Web site: <http://www2.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/ideal/>

**DISTRICT:** Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS)  
**TPP ESTABLISHED/SCHOOL OPENED:** 2001  
**GRADE LEVELS SERVED:** K-8  
**ENROLLMENT:** 194  
**CLASS SIZE:** 22  
**NUMBER OF SCHOOL DAYS:** 182  
**YEAR OF LAST FINANCIAL AUDIT:** 2005

**SHARED GOVERNANCE COUNCIL (SCHOOL BOARD) MAKE-UP:** 13 total. 8 teachers, community member, education assistant, and 3 parents

**# OF COOPERATIVE MEMBERS:** 11  
**# OF LICENSED SPECIALISTS:** 11  
**# OF NON-LICENSED STAFF:** 0

#### **STUDENTS:**

Male: 48% Female: 52%

American Indian: 2%  
Asian: 2%  
Hispanic: 16%  
African American: 31%  
Caucasian: 45%  
Other: 4%

Limited English Proficiency: 5%  
Free and Reduced Price Lunch: 63%  
Special Education: 15%  
Mobility: 11%

**ATTENDANCE RATE:** 93%  
**PROMOTION RATE (Grade 4 to 5):** 100%

**TESTS:** WKCE, Terra Nova

#### **OTHER EVALUATION METHODS/TOOLS:**

Portfolio assessment of student work quarterly and annually. Portfolio is comprised of writing samples, teacher evaluations, math assessments, and more.

**TECHNOLOGY:** 50 desktop computers; 50 wireless laptops; a media center; computer-equipped classrooms; school-wide network.

curriculum. Some committee responsibilities are detailed later in this profile. The curriculum committee is made up of cooperative members only. The finance and personnel committees are made up of members of I.D.E.A.L. Cooperative and one member of the SGC.

**TPP mission, vision, values:** I.D.E.A.L.

Cooperative exists to provide a professional organization for teachers who strongly believe in individualized, developmental, and educational approaches to learning. The cooperative is rooted in the wisdom and success of IGE (Individually Guided Education), combining current research and successful practice to create a technology-rich curriculum that will prepare I.D.E.A.L. Charter School students for the future. They also value creating and working in a learning environment that is child-centered, promoting active learning and exploration.

**Start-up funding:** I.D.E.A.L. Charter School received \$150,000 in start-up funding from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, the entity that administers the federal grant money to start charter schools in Wisconsin. The cooperative itself was established with volunteered time.<sup>7</sup>

**Financial management for the site:** The I.D.E.A.L. Cooperative finance committee manages school and cooperative finances. The committee presents a budget to the entire SGC for approval. The SGC has final authority over the entire budget with the exception of the salaries, which must be as specified under the master contract.

**Long-term goals:** Every year, the entire cooperative membership and the SGC develop an Education Plan that identifies specific short and long-term goals (including those required by the No Child Left Behind Act). The cooperative submits the plan to MPS for approval.

<sup>7</sup> Unlike the Milwaukee teacher cooperatives and ‘partnerships’ serving high schools, IDEAL Cooperative and teacher ‘partnerships’ serving elementary schools were not eligible for a grant from the Gates-EdVisions Project because the project’s funding (as well as other Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation support) was limited to those starting high schools.

**Learning program:** I.D.E.A.L. Cooperative’s curriculum committee determines the learning program and reports to the SGC on activities and evaluation at least once a year.

I.D.E.A.L. Cooperative forms its education program around five major constructs: (1) multi-aged, inclusive classrooms; (2) shared governance model where the school is managed by teachers and governed by parents, students, teachers, and community members; (3) students actively engaged in meaningful learning; (4) assessment by performance, product and demonstration; and (5) community involvement.

## **Professional Learning Institute (P.L.I.) Charter School Cooperative**

**Governing board:** Professional Learning Institute Charter School Cooperative (P.L.I. Cooperative) operates under a governing board comprised of full-time teacher-members. Ad hoc committees are made up of members of the P.L.I. Cooperative and of the Shared Governance Board for P.L.I. Charter School (SGB). The SGB, made up of parents, students, teachers, and community members, makes policy decisions and approves the Education Plan before it is submitted to MPS for review and approval. Some responsibilities of the committees are outlined later in this profile.

**TPP mission, vision, values:** P.L.I. Cooperative has the following vision for the chartered school it serves: Picture a school where every student feels important, wanted, and protected. Picture a school where every student develops confidence in her/his abilities, pursues new skills and knowledge while learning not to fear mistakes. Picture a school where every student feels in control of themselves and their destiny and accepts responsibility for self and actions. Picture a school where every student gives back to the school and community by sharing effort, knowledge, and time.

The P.L.I. Cooperative's mission is to foster conditions that promote active learning for each individual student by following a continuous cycle of

**P.L.I. Charter School Cooperative Site Profile: P.L.I. Charter School**

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 4965 South 20<sup>th</sup> Street  
 Milwaukee, WI 53221  
 Phone: 414-304-6180  
 Web site: www.plidragons.org

**DISTRICT:** Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS)  
**TPP ESTABLISHED/SCHOOL OPENED:** 2003  
**GRADE LEVELS SERVED:** 9-12  
**ENROLLMENT:** 145  
**CLASS SIZE:** 17-18  
**NUMBER OF SCHOOL DAYS:** 182  
**YEAR OF LAST FINANCIAL AUDIT:** 2005

**BOARD MAKE-UP:** 4 advisors, 2 community members, 3 parents, 1 student  
**# OF LICENSED SPECIALISTS:** 8  
**# OF NON-LICENSED STAFF:** 1

**STUDENTS:**  
 Male: 48% Female: 52%

Asian: 1%  
 Hispanic: 22%  
 African American: 28%  
 Caucasian: 43%  
 American Indian: 2%  
 Other: 4%

Limited English Proficiency: 3%  
 Free and Reduced Price Lunch: 50%  
 Special Education: 27%  
 Mobility: 12%

**ATTENDANCE RATE:** 88%  
**GRADUATION RATE:** 100%  
**TESTS:** WKCE, TERRA NOVA  
**OTHER EVALUATION METHODS/TOOLS:**  
 Public Project Exhibitions, SRI Reading, MPS Writing Proficiency, Accelerated Math

**TECHNOLOGY:** School-wide PC server; 10T internet connection & e-mail through MPS; a Dell PC for each student; MAC multimedia stations; laptops

researching, planning, performing, analyzing, and applying results, so that all students not only meet district graduation requirements, but also develop the skills to be successful in life and whatever professions they choose.

P.L.I. Cooperative lives by core values that were determined by the P.L.I. Charter School staff and student body during the first week of its first year. They include: pride, honesty, fun, respect, responsibility, determination, and teamwork.

**Start-up funding:** P.L.I. Cooperative received start-up funding from the Gates-EdVisions Project.

**Financial management at the site level:** The P.L.I. Cooperative finance committee presents a budget for the school to the entire SGB of P.L.I. Charter School for approval. The SGB has final school-level authority over the entire budget with the exception of the salaries, which must be as specified under the master contract. The SGB must also approve any purchases over \$5000. P.L.I. Cooperative submits the final budget to MPS for review and approval.

**Administration (payroll, records, benefits, purchasing, legal services, etc.):** Payroll records are kept by P.L.I. Charter School's secretary and authorized online by the lead teacher.

Either a committee of teachers or the entire membership assigns teachers to duties (the latter taking place when the decision will affect most of the school). One teacher takes care of special education compliance. Another facilitates and reports on meetings of the membership. Another manages bookkeeping and the checking account. Another manages major breaches of discipline, Title I (including standardized testing), and the state-required "at-risk" reports.

**Long-term goals:** Every year, the entire P.L.I. Cooperative membership and the SGB of P.L.I. Charter School develop an Education Plan that identifies specific goals (including those required by the No Child Left Behind Act). As part of the plan, P.L.I. Cooperative

identifies base line data, sets measurable goals, identifies resources, and sets timelines for completion or evaluation of results.

Learning program: P.L.I. Cooperative's curriculum committee determines the learning program and reports to the SGB at least once a year. The cooperative must submit their Educational Plan to MPS for review and approval. The program revolves around a personalized, "hands-on" project and internship-based approach. Each individual student's interests drive his/her projects.

**Milwaukee teacher 'partnerships' applying to become formal cooperatives in 2006**

Six Milwaukee teacher professional practices plan to complete the process of becoming formal cooperatives with 501(c)3 status in 2006. As stated earlier, this inventory refers to these TPPs as 'partnerships'. Their profiles follow:

**ALAS 'Partnership' (Advanced Language and Academic Studies High School)**

Governing board: All major decisions are made by all members of the Advanced Language and Academic Studies (ALAS) 'Partnership'. The School Governance Council, comprised of parents, community members, teachers, support staff, and students, provides guidance and input to the 'partnership'. Elections are held annually in May for all positions.

'Partnership' mission, vision, values: "ALAS" is a Spanish word that means wings ALAS 'Partnership's' mission is to provide every student with a rigorous curriculum that will enhance their opportunities for future study and career possibilities. To accomplish this, ALAS 'Partnership' built its learning program around several important constructs:

**ALAS 'Partnership'  
Site Profile: Advanced Language and Academic Studies High School**

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E-mail: peterslm@mail.milwaukee.k12.wi.us  
971 West Windlake Ave.  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53204  
Phone: 414-902-7300  
Fax: 414-902-7315

**DISTRICT:** Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS)  
**SCHOOL OPENED:** 2004  
**GRADE LEVELS SERVED:** 9-12  
**ENROLLMENT:** 250  
**CLASS SIZE:** 20-25  
**NUMBER OF SCHOOL DAYS:** 182  
**YEAR OF LAST FINANCIAL AUDIT:** 2005

**BOARD MAKE-UP:** 6 parents, 2 students, 2 teachers, 1 support staff, 1 founding member  
**# OF LICENSED SPECIALISTS:** 14  
**# OF NON-LICENSED STAFF:** 4

**STUDENTS:**  
Male: 48% Female: 51%

Hispanic: 95.4%  
African American: 3.4%  
Caucasian: .4%  
Other: .8%

English Language Learner: 61.4%  
Free and Reduced Price Lunch: 80.9%  
Special Education: 14.3%  
Mobility: 10%

**ATTENDANCE RATE:** 88%  
**GRADUATION RATE:** 96%  
**TESTS:** WKCE, Terra Nova

1. Transformative, critical pedagogy;
2. A rigorous, university preparatory curriculum delivered through integrated instruction and extended instructional blocks;
3. Development of high levels of bilingualism/biliteracy;
4. Parental and community involvement;
5. Assessment by performance, product, and demonstration.

ALAS 'Partnership' will educate all students to be academically proficient in both Spanish and English. Students will graduate with a profound understanding and commitment to their communities. Respect for social class, school culture, and climate is the cornerstone of the program, as are high expectations for all students. The 'partnership's' goal is to graduate productive citizens who are prepared to enter university programs and who are also capable of getting on a career track to family-supporting employment.

ALAS 'Partnership' integrates "culturally relevant teaching" (Ladson-Billings, 1994) into this framework. This concept enforces the notions of community-building, cultivation of relationships beyond school walls, and an atmosphere of collaboration and mutual responsibility.

The "pedagogical lens" is one of "transformative pedagogy" which Cummins (2000) describes as using "collaborative critical inquiry to enable students to analyze and understand the social realities of their own lives and of their communities."

ALAS 'Partnership' leaders say their instruction goes beyond the "sanitized curriculum" still prevalent in most educational settings and is, by definition, anti-racist, anti-linguicism, anti-sexist, and anti-classist. The 'partnership' fosters critical, life-long learners who know how to access, interpret, and critically use new and emerging information.

Eight bilingual teachers left South Division High School, a traditional district school, to start ALAS 'Partnership' and create the chartered ALAS High School. ALAS is housed within Kosciuszko Middle School, where enrollment was down to about 600 students in 2004 because Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) was transitioning to more kindergarten-to-eighth grade schools.

**Start-up funding:** ALAS High School received two planning and implementation grants. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation invested \$150,000. The

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction invested \$200,000.

**Financial management at the site level:** ALAS 'Partnership' members share the tasks for financial management and decision-making. The lead teacher has the primary responsibility for tasks related to financial management including signing off on checks, payroll, and managing the annual audit.

**Administration (payroll, records, benefits, purchasing, legal services, etc.):** All 'partnership' members handle daily administration and decisions. Individual members assume responsibility for specific tasks.

**Learning program:** ALAS 'Partnership' provides a small school environment with a rigorous, balanced curriculum according to Best Practices for English-Language Learners as established through educational research, emphasizing interdisciplinary links among subject areas. Teachers, with encouragement from their university partner Sandra Pucci, Ph.D. of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, decided to integrate curriculum and successfully collaborate.

ALAS 'Partnership' believes that traditional comprehensive high schools foster a fragmented culture of separate disciplines and separate teaching. The integrated curriculum model, on the other hand, encourages teachers and students to make crucial learning links between subjects, which is necessary in the world beyond school. The 'partnership' encourages its members to take university classes to expand their content areas (i.e. history, science, mathematics, etc.) and participate in professional associations and activities with the purpose of reinvigorating their practice within this new school context.

Integrations involve several different components, from large project-based units to historically framed enterprises. Integrations of science and mathematics are paramount. The 'partnership' maximizes opportunities to integrate lessons with

students' personal, community-based knowledge to make instruction meaningful (Gonzalez et al. 1995).

Implementing literacy across the curriculum is a high priority. Although many entering freshmen in MPS have an average fourth-grade reading level (according to ALAS 'Partnership'), students at the traditional, large high schools move from room-to-room and the schools emphasize segregated content areas. Teachers in these environments find themselves at a loss as to how to make curriculum accessible to "low-literacy" students and improve literacy skills. ALAS 'Partnership' is able to empower teachers to implement reading, writing, and learning strategies across content areas so that all students can acquire advanced academic literacy and gain equal access to the curriculum.

ALAS 'Partnership's' curriculum follows, and often exceeds, the Wisconsin State Standards and Milwaukee Public Schools learning targets in all subjects. The program follows Wisconsin's Model Academic Standards for business and technical literacy, specifically in the area of Information and Technology Literacy. Students learn the value of technology as a tool to enhance expression, building their cultural and academic capital.

### **ALBA 'Partnership' (Academia de Lenguaje y Bellas Artes)**

**Governing board:** All major decisions are made by all members of the ALBA 'Partnership'. The Student Governance Council (SGC), comprised of parents, community members, and teachers, also provides critical input on major decisions. The SGC collaborates with 'partnership' members to develop goals, allocate the school budget, and interpret general policies while remaining true to the vision of the 'partnership'.

ALBA 'Partnership' has strong parental support and community involvement. The parents of ALBA students are genuine and vital partners in education.

### **ALBA 'Partnership' Site Profile: Academia de Lenguaje y Bellas Artes**

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**CONTACT:** Brenda Martinez  
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1515 West Lapham Boulevard  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53204  
Milwaukee, WI 53233  
Phone: 414-902-8323  
Fax: 414-902-8424

**DISTRICT:** Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS)  
**SCHOOL OPENED:** 2005  
**GRADE LEVELS SERVED:** Four-year-old K - 5  
**ENROLLMENT:** 120  
**CLASS SIZE:** 20-25  
**NUMBER OF SCHOOL DAYS:** 180  
**YEAR OF LAST FINANCIAL AUDIT:** 2005

**# OF LICENSED SPECIALISTS:** 8  
**# OF NON-LICENSED STAFF:** 2

**STUDENTS:**  
Male: 47%      Female: 53%

Hispanic: 99%

Limited English Proficiency: 50%  
Free and Reduced Price Lunch: 96%  
Special Education: 5%  
Mobility: 21%

**ATTENDANCE RATE:** 93%  
**PROMOTION; GRADE 4 TO GRADE 5:** 90%  
**TESTS:** WKCE-CRT, MPS Writing Assessments

**OTHER EVALUATION METHODS AND TOOLS:** StAR Assessment, Accelerated Reader; Spanish/English reading verifications; CABS: classroom assessments based on standards, portfolios; gallery exhibits; ACCESS for ELLs; school climate survey given to parents, staff and students

They are active in the classroom where they share their unique knowledge and cultural background. Parents are also part of the interview and evaluation process of teachers and organize events for students and 'partnership' members throughout the year.

**'Partnership' mission, vision, values:** ALBA 'Partnership' offers an educational program that is founded on the conviction that bilingual students can reach their full potential academically, in English and Spanish, when challenged through a rigorous curriculum that develops critical thinking, problem solving, and creativity. Students develop self confidence and self worth since their Hispanic cultural identity is both recognized and valued through the curriculum.

ALBA 'Partnership' is working hard to ensure students exceed district proficiency standards across grade levels in all academic subjects and reach their own potential. The 'partnership' anticipates that, of ALBA students enrolled since kindergarten, all will be fully bilingual by third grade. At this stage, students will have acquired literacy skills in English and Spanish and be able to employ these skills across the curriculum. ALBA 'Partnership' members are committed to achieving this goal by identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the students and implementing new instructional methods and activities to reach every child.

**Start-up funding:** ALBA School received development funding from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

**Financial management at the site level:** ALBA 'Partnership' members share tasks for financial management and decision making, and the lead teacher takes on a majority of the tasks. All 'partnership' members and the SGC approve the budget at the school level.

**Administration:** Daily administration and decisions are handled by all 'partnership' members. Individual members assume responsibility for specific areas such as records and benefits.

**Learning program:** ALBA, which means the dawn of a new day in Spanish, offers a new opportunity in bilingual-elementary education by not only providing a developmental bilingual Spanish program, but also curriculum which integrates the fine arts and creative

writing with emphasis on the Latino contributions and cultural art.

Teachers belonging to ALBA 'Partnership' are able to adapt the curriculum to individual learning strengths while maximizing learning through a respectful, nurturing, and encouraging environment where parents, teachers, and community members work in cooperation.

ALBA 'Partnership's' educational program is founded on the conviction that bilingual students can reach their full potential academically, in English and Spanish, when challenged through a rigorous curriculum that develops critical thinking, problem solving skills, and creativity. ALBA 'Partnership' prepares students to be bilingual and bicultural learners in a global society. Members believe native language literacy is a critical component in developing academic English.

## **The Alliance School 'Partnership'**

**Governing Board:** The Alliance School 'Partnership' is working to form a School Governance Council (SGC), made up of the 'partnership's' teacher members, which will be based on the traditional MPS design with an action-team model for working. The SGC will be responsible for decision making and goal setting. The Parent Teacher Organization is responsible for community building.

The Alliance School 'Partnership' members vote to select their committee leadership and their lead teacher. The lead teacher acts as a liaison between MPS and The Alliance School 'Partnership', as well as between 'partnership' members and the various committees. The lead teacher also facilitates staff meetings, professional development, curriculum, and so on.

**'Partnership' mission, vision, values:** The Alliance School 'Partnership's' goal is to meet the needs of students who are not succeeding in the traditional high

school environment due to harassment, intimidation, physical and/or emotional abuse. It is a safe place where students are treated fairly at all times, regardless of appearance, ability, sexuality, or beliefs.

The Alliance School 'Partnership's' vision is to incorporate the following concepts, ideologies, and practices at The Alliance School:

- a safe environment where students will be treated fairly regardless of sexuality, ability, appearance, or beliefs
- a year-round schedule to provide for the continuum of support and services beyond the traditional academic day
- an inquiry-based approach to learning where students encourage the direction of learning by creating the questions that need to be answered.
- a college-like, flexible schedule where students are able to choose classes that fit their schedules, educational objectives, and personal interests
- a strong focus on service learning where students are encouraged and expected to be change agents in their own communities.
- a program where every student is connected with a mentor who can help him or her achieve personal and professional objectives
- a curriculum that incorporates the arts with the core academic classes
- a democratic governance where teachers, students, parents, and community members are encouraged to participate in the decision-making of the school.
- an inclusion program that involves special education students in all aspects of the general educational environment.

**Start-up funding:** The Alliance School 'Partnership' received start-up funding for the 'partnership' and school development from The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The school received

**The Alliance School 'Partnership'**  
**Site Profile: The Alliance School**

**CONTACT:** Tina Owen  
E-mail: LdyOwen2003@yahoo.com  
234 West Galena Street  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53212  
Phone: 414-227-2550  
Web site: <http://www.allianceschool.org>

**DISTRICT:** Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS)  
**SCHOOL OPENED:** 2005  
**GRADE LEVELS SERVED:** 9-12  
**ENROLLMENT:** 104  
**CLASS SIZE:** 15-25  
**NUMBER OF SCHOOL DAYS:** 190  
**YEAR OF LAST FINANCIAL AUDIT:** 2005

**BOARD MAKE-UP:** 2 cooperative members, 2 parents, 2 students, 2 community members  
**# OF LICENSED SPECIALISTS:** 10  
**# OF NON-LICENSED STAFF:** 0

**STUDENTS:**  
Male: 45% Female: 55%

Asian: 2%  
Hispanic: 7%  
African American: 47%  
Caucasian: 43%  
American Indian: 1%

Free and Reduced Price Lunch: 51%  
English Language Learner: 1%  
Mobility: N/A (first year)

**ATTENDANCE RATE:** 79%  
**GRADUATION RATE:** N/A (first year)  
**TESTS:** WKCE, TERRA NOVA  
**OTHER EVALUATION METHODS/TOOLS:**  
Presentations of learning

**TECHNOLOGY:** 40 desktop computers on site; videography equipment; digital photography; projection technology

development funding from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

**Financial management at the site level:** The Alliance School 'Partnership' members share tasks for financial management and decision making. The lead teacher presents financial updates to the members at

weekly meetings and the 'partnership' uses decision-making protocols make financial decisions. The lead teacher also manages paperwork and data entry around financial management and submits and keeps records for compliance concerns.

**Administration (payroll, records, benefits, purchasing, legal services, etc.):** Members of The Alliance School 'Partnership' share responsibilities for administration. One member handles all concerns dealing with transportation. Another member deals with school health and nutrition. Another member deals with purchasing, and so on. All major decisions are made as a 'partnership' by consensus, but members with distinct administrative responsibilities are seen as the experts in their respective areas.

**Learning program:** The Alliance School 'Partnership' provides and implements a curriculum that is a combination of service learning and expeditionary learning, where students are involved in community-improvement projects and personal-growth activities.

### **Community High School 'Partnership'**

**Governing board:** The Community High School 'Partnership' does not have a governing body, and respects the decisions of the School Governance Council (SGC). Parents make up at least 51 percent of the council. Students, 'partnership' members, and community members share the remaining seats. This typically amounts to two students, two parents, and one community representative.

The SGC makes overall policy decisions. Teacher-members of Community High School 'Partnership' make shared decisions about the day-to-day operations of the school. Members decided upon a co-leader structure, for example. One co-lead teacher is responsible for internal (school) administrative duties. The other co-lead teacher is responsible for external relations with MPS as well as managing the budget.

### **Community High School 'Partnership'** **Site Profile: Community High School**

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1017 North 12<sup>th</sup> Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53233  
Phone: 414-934-4057  
Fax: 414-934-4067

**DISTRICT:** Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS)  
**SCHOOL OPENED:** 2004  
**GRADE LEVELS SERVED:** 9-12  
**ENROLLMENT:** 121  
**CLASS SIZE:** 20  
**NUMBER OF SCHOOL DAYS:** 191  
**YEAR OF LAST FINANCIAL AUDIT:** 2005

**BOARD MAKE-UP:** School Governance Council is comprised of parents (at least 51%), staff, students, and community representatives.

**# OF LICENSED SPECIALISTS:** 11  
**# OF NON-LICENSED STAFF:** 1

**STUDENTS:**

Male: 50% Female: 50%

Hispanic: 5%  
African American: 91%  
Caucasian: 3%  
American Indian: <1%  
Other: <1%

Limited English Proficiency: 0%  
Free and Reduced Price Lunch: 78%  
Special Education: 38%  
Mobility: 21%

**ATTENDANCE RATE:** 77%

**GRADUATION RATE:** N/A

**TESTS:** WKCE, Terra Nova

**OTHER EVALUATION METHODS/TOOLS:**

Senior Portfolio; written and performance assessments; service learning evaluations; outside assessors; and more

**TECHNOLOGY:** desktop computer lab; mobile computer lab; graphics equipment

**'Partnership' mission, vision, values:**

Community High School 'Partnership' emphasizes:

1. Close partnerships with parents and the professional community;

2. Personalized instruction to address individual needs and interests;
3. A climate where teachers and students know each other well and work in an atmosphere of trust and high expectations;
4. Democratic and equitable school policies and practice; and
5. Research-based design influences.

**Start-up funding:** Community High School ‘Partnership’ received start-up funding for the ‘partnership’ and school development from The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The school received development funding from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

**Financial management at the site-level:** Community High School ‘Partnership’ members present the budget to the SGC for approval. The council has final authority at the school level to determine the budget with the exception of salaries, which must be as specified under the master contract.

**Administration (payroll, records, benefits, purchasing, legal services, etc.):** Payroll records are kept by Community High School’s secretary and authorized online by a lead teacher.

Either a committee of teacher-members or, when the decision will affect most of the school, the entire membership assigns teachers to duties. One teacher takes care of most of the special education compliance. Another may manage bookkeeping and the checking accounts. Another may manage breaches of discipline. Another may manage areas such as Title I (including standardized testing), and the state-required “at-risk” reports.

**Long-term goals:** Community High School ‘Partnership’ identifies base line data, sets measurable goals, identifies resources, and sets timelines for completion or evaluation of results. The ‘partnership’

uses this information to determine curriculum and influence school policies.

**Learning program:** Community High School ‘Partnership’ submits their Educational Plan to the SGC for review and approval prior to submitting it to MPS for review and approval. The ‘partnership’ determines the learning program and reports to the SGC at least once a year as part of the Educational Plan.

Community High School ‘Partnership’ offers an individualized, academically rigorous, and community-focused educational setting. Students influence social change by putting their ideas into action through local service projects and internships. Relationships with businesses and universities allow students to analyze, critique, and present ideas both collaboratively and individually.

The small school setting allows for the personalized relationships necessary to support strong academics individually tailored to the strengths of each student. These experiences combine to prepare students to perform confidently in college, in the workplace, and beyond.

### **Downtown Institute of Arts and Letters (DIAL) ‘Partnership’**

**CONTACT:** William Stotts  
 E-mail: dialhighschool@aim.com  
 Milwaukee Education Center Campus  
 227 West Pleasant Street  
 Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53212  
 Phone: 414-581-2548

The Downtown Institute of Arts and Letters (DIAL High School) ‘Partnership’ contracts with Milwaukee Public Schools to implement the educational program and manage the learning site at DIAL High School. Opening in fall 2006, DIAL High School will be a small, year-round arts and humanities high school with a fully-integrated curriculum centered on multicultural Great Books as well as Advanced Placement course

preparation. DIAL High School features a convenient downtown campus with a flexible, modular schedule offering classes from 7 AM to 5 PM.

Students are able to choose classes in six art areas, Great Books, philosophy, world religions, Latin, French, and other humanities, as well as pre-Advanced Placement (AP) and AP courses. DIAL High School welcomes all students in a safe and tolerant environment regardless of ability, orientation, beliefs, or appearance. Each student will have a personalized education plan, faculty advisor, and an ongoing, individualized program of community learning and social service centered in the downtown Milwaukee arts district.

### **Milwaukee Learning Laboratory & Institute (M.L.L.I.) 'Partnership'**

**Governing Board:** The Milwaukee Learning Laboratory & Institute (M.L.L.I.) 'Partnership' does not have a governing body and respects the decisions of the of the school decision-making body which is made up of three teachers, four students, and four parents. The M.L.L.I. decision-making body makes policy decisions and approves the Education Plan before it is submitted to MPS for review and approval. It does not have separate committees. All decisions are made by the full body. M.L.L.I. 'Partnership' gives parents of M.L.L.I. students a strong voice in planning and governance, the feeling of being valued and accepted, and opportunities to increase participation in their children's education.

The original planning team selected a lead teacher who, when it comes to the day-to-day administrative duties, acts as a principal in a traditional school. The lead teacher has a master's degree in educational leadership and holds the "appropriate" administrator license.

**'Partnership' mission, vision, values:** M.L.L.I. 'Partnership's' mission is to provide a safe, supportive,

### **M.L.L.I. 'Partnership' Site Profile: Milwaukee Learning Laboratory & Institute**

**CONTACT:** David Coyle  
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6506 West Warnimont Avenue  
Milwaukee, WI 53220  
Phone: 414-604-7940

**DISTRICT:** Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS)  
**SCHOOL OPENED:** 2005  
**GRADE LEVELS SERVED:** 9 (will add 10-12)  
**ENROLLMENT:** 88  
**CLASS SIZE:** 20  
**NUMBER OF SCHOOL DAYS:** 191  
**YEAR OF LAST FINANCIAL AUDIT:** N/A

**BOARD MAKE-UP:** 3 teachers, 4 students, and 4 parents  
**# OF LICENSED SPECIALISTS:** 5  
**# OF NON-LICENSED STAFF:** 2

**STUDENTS:**  
Male: 52% Female: 48%

Asian: 1%  
Hispanic: 30%  
African American: 38%  
Caucasian: 27%  
American Indian: 1%  
Other: 3%

Limited English Proficiency: 0%  
Free and Reduced Price Lunch: 84%  
Mobility: N/A

**ATTENDANCE RATE:** 84%  
**GRADUATION RATE:** N/A  
**TESTS:** WKCE, Terra Nova

and democratic community. M.L.L.I. 'Partnership' focuses on embodying the characteristics of social justice, leadership, and service by being an effective participant in the community. The 'partnership' involves parents/guardians as critical allies in the life of the school community.

**Start-up funding:** M.L.L.I. received both planning and implementation funds for the 'partnership' and school development from The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The school also received planning and

implementation funding from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. M.L.L.I. 'Partnership' continues to seek funding from both public and private entities, mainly for the benefit of the school.

**Financial management at the site level:** The lead teacher presents a budget to the M.L.L.I. decision-making body for approval. The decision-making body has final authority over the entire budget at the school level with the exception of the salaries, which must be as specified under the master contract. Purchasing decisions are made through a consensus of the M.L.L.I. 'Partnership' members. Any purchase over \$5000 is brought to the decision-making body for approval.

**Administration (payroll, records, benefits, purchasing, legal services, etc.):** Each teacher-member of the 'partnership' holds a variety of administrative duties.

The lead teacher is the direct liaison between M.L.L.I. 'Partnership' and MPS and is ultimately held responsible for seeing that the school is meeting the provisions for the charter set forth in the contract with MPS.

Payroll records are kept by M.L.L.I. school's secretary and authorized online by the lead teacher.

Either a committee of teacher-members or the entire membership assigns teachers to duties (the latter taking place when the decision will affect most of the school). One teacher takes care of special education compliance. Another facilitates and reports on meetings of the membership. Another manages bookkeeping and the checking account. Another manages major breaches of discipline, Title I (including standardized testing), and the state-required "at-risk" reports.

**Long-term goals:** Every year, the entire membership and the governing body of M.L.L.I. school develop an Education Plan that identifies specific goals (including those required by the No Child Left Behind Act). As part of the plan, M.L.L.I. 'Partnership' identifies base line data, sets measurable goals, identifies

resources, and sets timelines for completion or evaluation of results.

**Learning program:** M.L.L.I. 'Partnership' uses curriculum that engages students and encourages them to understand concepts deeply, find and interpret information, assemble evidence, weigh ideas, develop skills of analysis and expression from multiple perspectives, and communicate for different audiences and purposes. Students gain confidence and courage in solving problems, effectively contribute to their community, and explore their creativity and talents through a variety of service, work, and learning opportunities. Whether it is academics, art, music, drama, or physical education, students learn about what interests them and how to use what they have learned. M.L.L.I. graduates have skills that allow them to get what they want out of life; whether it is college, technical schools, armed services, self employment, jobs, family life, or independence.

## **Operational teacher professional practices serving private and independent schools**

The following three TPPs serve private and independent schools. All are in California. Education/Evolving learned about these efforts while doing research on TPPs serving K-12 public schools. The British Columbia (BC) Institute for Co-Operative Studies Web site lists these TPPs, which were established in the late 1950s and early 1970s, at: <http://web.uvic.ca/bcics/research/education/index.htm> (accessed May 16, 2006).

Education/Evolving did not contact representatives from these TPPs to assemble information as it did with other sections. All information for this section is copied from the school Web sites or the BC Institute Web site, so this inventory presents a limited

level of detail. This may not be an exhaustive list of TPPs serving private schools.

## **California**

### **Maybeck High School, 9-12**

**CONTACTS:** Stan Cardinet, President and Founder  
Sarah Herr, Lead Teacher  
2362 Bancroft Way  
Berkeley, California 94704-1604  
Phone: (510) 841-8489  
Web site: <http://www.maybeckhs.org/>

Maybeck is a co-educational, teacher-run, independent college preparatory high school. About 100 students are enrolled in grades 9-12. Of the 13 staff, seven hold advanced degrees; the average tenure is 16 years. Teachers formed a workers' cooperative to run the school, and have elected to use democratic decision-making that involves students in aspects of the school's program.

Established in 1972, Maybeck is a small community dedicated to learning, where all forms of diversity can flourish amid mutual support, respect, and responsibility. Through small classes, high expectations, academic excellence, and programs outside the school, students prepare for college and acquire the tools to engage actively and creatively in the wider world. The school works to achieve a similar union between the traditional study of academic subject matter and the exploration and appreciation of nature.

### **Synergy School, K-7**

1387 Valencia Street  
San Francisco, California 94110  
Email: [admissions@synergyschool.org](mailto:admissions@synergyschool.org)  
Web site: [www.synergyschool.org](http://www.synergyschool.org)

Synergy School, founded in 1973, is a vibrant community of 185 students, their families, and over 20

teachers and staff. Synergy's founders were committed to creating a school that thoroughly empowered teachers in every way. Synergy is a true cooperative. All Synergy teachers are co-directors of the school.

All administrators teach part-time and are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the school. They support the growth and development of the teachers and provide important coordination and communication links within the Synergy community. All staff members are responsible for the implementation and development of curriculum, and for long-range planning and direction. The combining and sharing of staff-member energies, skills, and resources enhance the strengths and cooperative nature of Synergy.

The mission of Synergy School is to provide a quality education by empowering children to flourish academically, to blossom as individuals, and to become self-confident, creative learners. Evaluation of student progress occurs regularly through discussion, observation, portfolios, and testing. Standard grading becomes part of evaluation in the middle school program.

### **Walden Center and School, K-6**

2446 McKinley Avenue  
Berkeley, California 94703  
Phone: 510-841-7248  
Web site: <http://www.walden-school.net>

Walden School is a small school run by a teacher cooperative that was established in 1958 by parents and teachers interested in pacifism and social change. Teachers value students' personal and social growth and artistic expression as much as their academic achievement, and do not use grades for evaluation. The school has a maximum enrollment of 96. The teacher-student ratio varies from 7:1 to 16:1. Teachers, who meet weekly, run the cooperative with help from a business manager. They work together with staff on four

committees: Fundraising, Outreach, Community Events, and Earthquake Preparedness.

## Teacher professional partnerships in the planning phase

The following efforts are very likely to result in formal teacher professional partnerships in fall 2006 and later. Education/Evolving learned about these efforts while doing research on existing TPPs starting up before the 2006-2007 school year. This list may not be exhaustive.

## Efforts spanning multiple states

### EdVisions Schools Project<sup>8</sup> grant recipients

**CONTACTS:** James Lewicki, Co-Director  
E-mail: james@edvisions.coop  
EdVisions Schools Project  
501 Main - Box 518  
Henderson, MN 56044  
Phone: 507-248-3738

<sup>8</sup> EdVisions, Inc. is a nonprofit that operates the Gates-EdVisions Project and the EdVisions Schools Project. EdVisions, Inc. was established as a “spin off” of EdVisions Cooperative when grant makers showed interest in replicating the model. Members of both organizations sometimes use language that makes it seem as if the two are one and the same, but they are not. Grantees of the two projects are not necessarily members of the cooperative. When the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation awarded EdVisions, Inc. two major grants to create a total of 35 schools demonstrating a commitment to development of the personalized, technology infused, project-based learning model and a teacher-owner model of governance, the effort was named the Gates-EdVisions Project. EdVisions, Inc. selected the 35 initial grant sites and EdVisions, Inc. is now working on a national scale-up of similar schools. The new work is known as the EdVisions Schools Project. This paper distinguishes grantees of the Gates-EdVisions Project from grantees of the EdVisions Schools Project. Information on both is available at: [www.edvisions.coop](http://www.edvisions.coop).

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EdVisions Schools Project, West Coast Office  
75 South Grand Avenue, Suite 216  
Pasadena, CA 91105-1602  
Phone: 626-744-7756  
Mobile: 323-697-1166

Web site: [www.edvisions.coop](http://www.edvisions.coop)

The EdVisions Schools Project, charged with developing and scaling-up twenty innovative secondary schools, awards grants of up to \$150,000 (over three years) per school to groups of teachers, community organizers and business leaders who desire to create new small secondary schools. The project selects sites on the basis of their commitment to the EdVisions Schools design essentials, which include: (A) development of self-directed, project based learning program (personalized, technology-infused); (B) development of a student-centered learning environment (150 student maximum; positive relationships; democratic student government; active engagement of parents and community); (C) **teacher ownership/democratic governance (teachers have autonomy to manage the school; teachers are evaluated by peers, students, and parents);** and (D) assessment ((publicly demonstrated achievement; graduation by project credits, standards met, life skills gained, and senior project performance).

According to James Lewicki and Kathleen O’Sullivan, Co-Directors, Aveson Center (profiled below) has the strongest commitment to form a formal (what EdVisions Schools Project calls “fully functional”) TPP which they will call Aveson Educational Partnership. Fall River Maritime Public Charter School, also a grantee, created a formal TPP—Witham Fjord, LLC (profiled above) in 2006.

The EdVisions Schools Project views a number of other grantees to be in “stage one” on a developmental continuum that may end with them becoming formal TPPs. The grantees will determine how far they wish to proceed on the continuum. Teachers at some of these

sites have informally been delegated the authority to run the schools. The sites include:

- Golden Eagle Charter School  
Weed, California
- Crosswalk Learning Community  
Keystone Heights, Florida
- New Heights Academy  
Goffstown, New Hampshire
- Explore Knowledge Academy  
Las Vegas, Nevada
- Sierra Crest Academy  
Minden, Nevada
- High Desert Academy  
Reno, Nevada
- Resource Link Charter School  
Coos Bay, Oregon
- Cities Project High School  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- Preparatory School for Global Leadership  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- Northwood Community Secondary School  
Rhineland, Wisconsin
- Rivercity Leadership Academy  
West Valley, Washington

### **Pasadena, California**

Aveson Educational Cooperative  
CONTACT: Kate Bean  
E-mail: [katebean@aveson.org](mailto:katebean@aveson.org)  
Phone: 323-371-1772  
Web site: [www.aveson.org](http://www.aveson.org)

A group of teachers in Pasadena, California are forming Aveson Educational Cooperative. In late 2005, the Aveson Center received three grants—one from EdVisions, Inc. and two from the state of California to establish the Aveson School of Leaders (K-5) and the Global Leadership Academy (6-12) within three years. The EdVisions Schools Project grant includes a stipulation that the founders of Aveson Center will

arrange some model of teacher-governance at the school. The founders are very motivated to set-up and operate a formal educational professional partnership organization (EPP) called Aveson Educational Cooperative. Founders chose to use the term EPP in order to explicitly show that all educators may be partners, not just teachers.

The board(s) of both schools (scheduled to open in September 2007) will contract with the EPP to operate the learning program and various administrative aspects of each school. As part of the contract, the EPP will be responsible and accountable for producing high-performing learning communities. Additionally, the EPP will operate a professional-development center to provide consulting services that will serve as a revenue source for the EPP (and ultimately the schools). The partners view forming and operating an EPP as an exceptional method to professionalize teaching. They intend to expand in the future after they successfully establish their EPP and the schools.

### **Education/Evolving's Teacher Professional Partnership Project**

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Phone: 414-270-7587  
Mobile phone: 414-550-1156  
Fax: 414-270-7584  
Web site: [www.educationevolving.org](http://www.educationevolving.org)<sup>9</sup>

John Parr, a former consultant who worked with labor unions, directs Education/Evolving's initiative to organize TPPs throughout the nation. He and his daughter Cris Parr (a teacher and union rep in Milwaukee) were among the founders of the first teacher cooperative in Milwaukee (which continues to serve I.D.E.A.L. Charter School profiled earlier in this report).

<sup>9</sup> Education/Evolving plans to launch a new Web site specifically for the Teacher Professional Partnership Project in late 2006. Interested users will be able to access it from the site at [www.educationevolving.org](http://www.educationevolving.org).

Today John Parr is involved in discussions and efforts to advance the idea throughout the nation.

In Minneapolis, Minnesota, Parr helped advance a new arrangement with Minneapolis Public Schools that is not a TPP but does put teachers in charge of running schools. In 2006, several new schools in Minneapolis will be district-owned with decision making school-based. The schools will be teacher-run. Teachers will be employed by the district and members of its union local.

While Parr is involved in many efforts nationally to advance TPPs, the following initiatives in California and Milwaukee are most likely to result in new TPPs:

### **California**

The California Teachers Association (CTA) is forming schools and, with John Parr, organizing teachers to form TPPs that will run the schools. The schools will likely be chartered. Teachers will be employed by the district, leased to the school, and will remain in the district's union local. In April 2006, John Parr met with about 30 teachers interested in starting TPPs affiliated with CTA.

### **Milwaukee, Wisconsin**

In addition to his continuing work with existing TPPs in Milwaukee, Parr is actively recruiting groups of Milwaukee Public School (MPS) teachers who are serious about starting formal teacher cooperatives to run small instrumentality charter schools. He and his daughter, Cris Parr, will help the groups to organize and form relationships with MPS and the union local, MTEA.

The teacher cooperative-run schools would foster many different educational programs for educating students. New cooperatives will most likely be similar to existing cooperatives in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

John Parr is currently organizing four new schools of this nature to open in fall 2007. Two already have their charters approved by the MPS school board. They are the Health Sciences Career Institute (grades 8-12) and WORK Institute Leadership Council (grades 9-12). Still planning to seek approval are the Milwaukee Academy of Environmental Sciences (grades 9-12) and a pre-professional school started-up by the School of Architecture and Urban Planning at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (grades 9-12)

### **California**

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Kennedy Rocker, who developed the CTO, 'LLC' model (described in "Unrealized teacher professional practice efforts", below) is in the very early stages of developing a TPP and a private K-12 school with a strong independent-study component. The school will be very new and different in order to accommodate students with Asperger's Syndrome (a form of autism).

Rocker's son, age 15, has Asperger's and Rocker has elected to home school him. Through her efforts, Rocker has formed relationships with other parents who are home schooling their children and has found that many are electing home school because they are not satisfied with current public and private school options. The parents view many of the existing private schools as just smaller versions of the same, traditional-school environments that are not working for their kids.

Rocker and other parents agree that a TPP-run school could create and maintain the environment they desire for their kids. From her previous experience (outlined later in this report) in California, Rocker is concerned that founding a TPP-run model in the public school sector may be too tough at this time. The model

she will develop will be based on the CTO, 'LLC' model.

## **Georgia**

### **Kindezi 'Coop'**

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The Kindezi 'Coop' is an educational service provider in Atlanta, Georgia with a growing membership of high quality teachers, specialists, and administrators. "Kindezi Coop" is the organization's name, although Kindezi has not yet applied for formal status as a cooperative with 501(c)3 status. Five teachers are currently involved in developing the TPP, which is based on the EdVisions Cooperative model. They will visit EdVisions Cooperative and at least one of its school sites in 2006.

Kindezi 'Coop' is interested in serving small K-5 elementary schools or K-8 elementary through middle schools. The 'partnership' believes in starting to teach students as young as possible to create a healthy school culture. They also believe in keeping total school size smaller than 300 students to generate a strong sense of community.

Kindezi 'Coop' plans to structure the schools it will manage in the following ways: (1) The 'partnership' will limit class size to a natural family-sized group of six students; (2) The 'partnership' will substantially empower parents to control the individual learning experience of their child(ren); (3) The 'partnership' will offer instructional strategies that are project-based learning balanced with direct instruction. The instructional environment will be differentiated, tutorial-based, "looped", and safe. Students will meet Georgia Performance Standards, which will be supplemented to include more holistic standards.

Kindezi is seeking parent communities in Atlanta that want to start a charter school and also like Kindezi's approach. Kindezi will help the parents start their chartered school and provide an educational program for them by contract. They hope parents will submit their application in April 2007.

When educators and policymakers first learn about TPPs they often ask how teachers will have time to do administrative tasks *and* teach without suffering burnout. Kindezi 'Partnership' has addressed this question in its planning. Kindezi plans to hire two to three full-time administrators, but does not believe that the administrators will have enough time to make sure that all of the needs of the chartered school are met. Kindezi also believes full-time teachers should not have to dedicate hours and hours of after-school time to fulfilling administrative and school-functioning duties. So Kindezi decided to create "Community Days" that will provide time within regular school hours for teachers to attend to non-teaching needs of the school.

Community Days will be held once per week or as needed. On this day, class sizes will not be limited to six. One teacher will teach up to thirty children at once. This single teacher thereby relieves four other teachers from teaching at that time. The community days will still be structured learning days including project work, cooperative learning, peer tutorial, group discussions, lecture, and other effective large-group teaching methods. There are three primary reasons for including community days in the Kindezi School business model.

- *Extra time for other duties*

Teachers who teach a class of thirty will relieve four other teachers of teaching. If the whole school does this, it will relieve a large team of teachers to address other school needs—i.e. grant-writing, student counseling, member development, special education paperwork, planning, and more.

- *Community building*

During Community Days, students will get a chance

to work with students and teachers they do not usually study with.

- *Practice with big groups*

Adults spend time meeting and learning in larger groups. Community Days will be a time for students to practice the big group skills required for large group harmony.

## Unrealized teacher professional partnership efforts

Two groups of teachers have developed TPP models that are now on the back burner—one in Indio, California (planned to be an LLC) and one in Camden, New Jersey (planned to be a cooperative). The proposed California TPP tabled its plans because the public school district that chartered the two schools it was to work with revoked the charters. The district, according to Kennedy Rocker, a California teacher who led the planning of CTO, ‘LLC’, was unwilling to work with chartered schools in general. The two schools CTO, ‘LLC’ was to work with were the last to have their charters revoked in that particular district. In other words, the notion of a TPP may have had little to do with the charters being revoked although it may have been part of a list of reasons why the district chose to close the schools.

In California, a district is the sole legal authorizing entity for chartered schools inside its geographic boundaries. Groups seeking to start a school can appeal to county boards and, in some cases, the state. But CTO, ‘LLC’ did not believe that pursuing authorization of new schools through these alternate routes would have a positive outcome (at least in Indio).

According to Eric Taylor of Camden, New Jersey, Camden Public Schools was unwilling to work with his proposed TPP, which would have applied to be a formal cooperative. Taylor says that New Jersey chartering law allows chartered schools to hire teachers

from a school district, but the teachers need to return to the district after a specific period of time and the chartered school must meet the terms of their union contract. New Jersey chartered schools also have no choice about who makes up their student body. All students are assigned to chartered schools via a lottery system.

Taylor’s proposed TPP wanted to retain district teachers indefinitely and wanted to serve a specific section of disadvantaged youth. So the teachers forming the TPP decided they would aim to create and contract with a private school to serve the youth. The group still hoped to retain district teachers as its cooperative members. Taylor said that the district indicated it did not want to engage in such a relationship. Among Taylor’s guesses as to why are: (1) His TPP was perhaps too closely associated with a pro-choice advocacy group that had a very contentious relationship with the school district; (2) The district keeps its relationships with private schools extremely limited and under quasi-district control; and (3) A TPP with “no administration” was not likely to be looked-upon favorably by lifetime administrators.

More information on the California and New Jersey models follows:

### California

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A group of teachers from Indio, California, who were employees of two California chartered schools that closed in 2004<sup>10</sup>, were interested in establishing a

<sup>10</sup> Rocker says that the schools’ sponsor, the West Park School District, which over a period of time developed a “hostile” relationship with chartered schools in general, closed Indio and Rosalyn Charter Schools. These two, governed by the same nonprofit board, were the last of all

teacher-owned Limited-Liability Corporation called California Teachers Ownership (CTO, LLC). The teacher professional practice had planned to be a formal LLC, but had not yet applied to receive the organizational status. The teachers had originally planned to contract with Indio and Rosalyn Charter Schools to provide educational services.

The planning process began in 2001 when Kennedy Rocker acted on what she learned from a presentation made by EdVisions Cooperative and Education/Evolving while attending a national chartered schools conference in Washington D.C. After the conference, Rocker went to Minnesota to set-up a blueprint for the legal structure. She later led teachers in Indio, California to “take full responsibility and accountability for operating chartered schools” via a TPP. The following were their plans:

**Legal Structure:** Limited-Liability Corporation, under California’s Beverly-Killea Limited-Liability Company Act. The teachers were interested in having all of the attributes of a cooperative, but believed that under California law they would be able to best achieve their objectives by establishing an LLC.

**Governing Board:** The governing board of CTO, ‘LLC’ would have made decisions via a member-committee system. Teachers had not yet determined the committee roles and responsibilities, but thought there would likely be about five member committees in total. The teachers intended to foster a community where all members had the same rights and privileges for ‘LLC’ decision-making. Nevertheless, there would have been a distinction between the rights and privileges of “managing” and “participating” members (see “membership structure,” below).

**Sites served:** CTO, ‘LLC’ would have contracted with the board that governed the school(s) it

would have served to implement the educational programs and manage the learning sites.

**TPP mission, vision, values:** The mission of CTO, ‘LLC’ would have been to empower teachers and provide them with the authority and responsibility over the school’s business endeavors, and, ultimately, their professional destiny. CTO, ‘LLC’ valued democratic decision making, as a whole group, on issues involving the school and membership. Sub-groups of members managing the grade levels would engage in democratic decision making as well.

**Membership structure:** CTO, ‘LLC’ planned to have a two-tiered membership structure—managing members and participating members. Managing members were to be responsible and accountable for all decisions of the LLC. They were to hire and fire, make program changes, and allocate funds.

Participating members were to be involved in conversations for all decision-making, having the ability to influence managing members, but they were not to have the authority to contribute to decision making. This would have been the formal policy. More informally, it was the ‘LLC’s’ intention that the full community of teachers would make the decisions.

Still, to protect themselves from participating members who would have had less experience with working in a partnership setting and/or in a charter school setting, the managing members wanted to reserve final authority in case it was necessary due to irresolvable disagreements.

Participating members would have worked for one year before being considered for managing membership, mainly because of their probable inexperience in charter school and/or partnership settings. Founding teachers believed incoming teachers should have a chance to adjust to financial, social and political risks involved before having full responsibility and accountability within CTO, ‘LLC’.

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schools sponsored by the West Park School District to have their charters revoked.

Participating members would have needed to work themselves into managing membership within three years so everyone worked toward full responsibility. The intent of this requirement was to avoid the “blame game” that can happen when some are in charge of others who have no real authority.

CTO, ‘LLC’ planned to offer an option to reduce status from managing to participating member, in the case that there were a period during which a member would like to assume less risk (when needing to take a leave, for example).

In the first year, the plan was for Kennedy Rucker would appoint managing members. After one year, managing members would have elected new managing members from the participating-member pool. Managing members of the CTO, ‘LLC’ would have made a final decision on the membership process when they established their partnership.

California law requires capitalization—so all members of CTO, ‘LLC’ were to contribute to the business to provide a “safe cushion”. Initially, managing members were to contribute \$1000 and receive 2/3 of the profits, split. Participating members were to contribute \$500 and receive 1/3 of the profits, split. All members were to earn 10 percent interest on their capital investment. Like any investment, theirs would have been at risk; so members could have potentially lost their investment. Members would have had the right to withdraw upon their retirement or if they left CTO, ‘LLC’.

The issue of whether all members would have had equal shares in the ‘LLC’ was debated. Most of the people who would have been managing members upon establishment were very interested in being able to purchase a larger stake in the ‘LLC’—increasing their share of the returns. Before deciding not to move forward with creation of their TPP, the founding group was consulting with a financial expert to determine the

issues surrounding this matter and to decide how and if this would work out.

**Performance measurement and improvement:**

The potential members of CTO, ‘LLC’ borrowed a rubric from EdVisions Cooperative to assist them with their development of performance measurement. The teachers did a “trial run” in 2003, using the rubric. They planned to refine the rubric to make it more descriptive, using a gradients-of-words method developed by John Wooden at The University of California at Los Angeles.

Gradient examples include: cooperative vs. team member; self-control vs. poised. Potential members intended to evaluate one another as participants in team teaching groups (see “Learning Program,” below), which were to be responsible for the learning program for specific grade levels, and as administrators responsible for overall management of the education program for the school sites.

CTO, ‘LLC’ developers said that this method would have allowed members to acknowledge development while still leaving room for growth. The method also acknowledged that there is a lot of growth between a first-year teacher who can “barely find the role sheet” and a third-year teacher who is redirecting student behavior in the hall and connecting it to learning.

**Compensation:** Managing members within each teaching group would have led participating members in their groups to determine how funds would be allocated for their learning program, salaries, and compensation packages. The idea was that the managing member who would have been most familiar with a participating member’s background, performance, and goals would work with the participating member as s/he determined all of the budget allocations for serving her or his students, including what s/he thought her or his own salary should be amid the rest of the budget allocations. Managing members would suggest their own salaries using the same considerations, but without supervision. After all members submitted their suggested salaries,

managing members would take them into consideration as part of the process for approving the overall budget and make final decisions if necessary.

CTO, 'LLC' planned to offer a spectrum of benefits to all members. Members would have received a specific amount of money for benefits with the option to dedicate more of their salary to deductible benefits. Members would also have been compensated for taking on additional work within their team teaching group or for the 'LLC' in general.

**Start-up funding:** The nonprofit board that governed the two chartered schools that CTO, 'LLC' was to contract with put aside "general fund" money for the 'LLC's' start-up. It was the board's intent to hire CTO, 'LLC' to implement the educational programs and manage the learning sites.

Rocker contributed some additional start-up funding from her own pocket. The teachers also received a \$100,000 planning grant from the Gates-EdVisions Project. About 40 percent of the Gates-EdVisions grant went to in-service training for what would have been the now closed chartered schools' project-based learning initiative.

The remaining 60 percent went to TPP development (\$5,000 toward legal work for the establishment of the 'LLC' and \$60,000 toward member development and training for the 'LLC').

**Sources of revenue:** The ongoing source of revenue for CTO, 'LLC' would have been the contract it had with the board governing the schools it would have served.

**Determining fees to charge the schools served (teaching, administration):** CTO, 'LLC' had not yet decided how it would have determined fees.

**Financial management and other administration:** CTO, 'LLC' planned to use zero-budgeting, meaning that for any given school year, the teachers would have started with zero pre-determined budget allocations. Each item added to the budget would

have needed to be justified—apart from previous year's budgets (no assumptions will be made about "carryovers").

CTO, 'LLC' members planned to break themselves into team-teaching groups (see "learning program", below) that would be responsible and accountable for management of the learning program for specific grade levels within the school(s) it served.

Each teaching group would have had its own budget, which would have been determined by the number of students served by their teaching group multiplied by the state per-pupil funding amount. Managing members within each teaching group would have led participating members in their groups to determine how funds would be allocated for their learning program, salaries, and compensation packages.

CTO, 'LLC' planned to hire Team CFO, an organization specializing in financial management for nonprofits, to provide CPA services. All other administrative tasks, including overseeing the budget, would have been distributed among members.

**Liability and business insurance:** CTO, 'LLC' had not determined how it would manage liability and business insurance.

**Long-term goals:** The 'LLC' planned to adhere to the goals outlined by the chartered schools they served.

**Learning program:** All CTO, 'LLC' members (who would have been called "academic coaches" by students and families at the chartered schools) would have been broken into subgroups (called "team teaching groups") that would be responsible for managing the learning program for a set of grade-levels (K-2; 2-4; and so on). Teaching groups would determine and manage the learning program for their grade levels served.

The teaching groups of CTO, 'LLC' planned to use EdVisions' project-based learning program, but mesh it with Gardner's multiple intelligences. Core Knowledge

curriculum would have been used in some grades. Some other learning programs were to be mixed in as well.

## **New Jersey**

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The Camden Teachers 'Cooperative' (was to contract with a private school they were also starting—Spirit Academy—to implement the learning program and manage the site. The planning group desired to retain district teachers indefinitely (as cooperative members) and wanted to serve a specific section of disadvantaged youth. Of the four teachers involved, two were from the Juvenile Resource Center (now called the Camden Center for Youth Development) and two taught in the Camden Public School system.

The teachers and attorneys involved had developed a strategic plan, Articles of Incorporation, and bylaws. They were very interested in using project-based learning model at the school.

## **Teacher professional practice no longer in operation**

### **Phoenix 'Partnership'**

Phoenix 'Partnership' was one of the first two TPPs ever to open in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. It had a relationship with Milwaukee Public Schools and the union local that was very similar to the Milwaukee TPPs profiled earlier in this inventory. Phoenix functioned as a cooperative though it never formally applied to be a cooperative organization.

John Parr, a leader in forming teacher cooperatives in Milwaukee, says that Phoenix had

trouble preserving a cooperative culture from the very start. Six teachers originally organized the school based on cooperative principals. After the school formed, however, one to three of the original founders decided to pursue other opportunities and did not stay-on to open the school. The school also changed locations and lost some of the students who had already bought-into the learning program and culture offered by the teacher cooperative. The new teachers and students never quite bought-in. After a period of time another strong leader retired. After that the school struggled for another two years to preserve its culture, but eventually closed after the 2005-2006 school year.

Parr advises teacher professional partnerships and practices that deal with turnover of students and teachers to assign mentoring relationships between the new people and those who have been involved for some time. The concept of TPPs, and the types of schools created by TPPs, are so new and different that some people who want to be involved need guidance and leadership as they learn how to function in their new environments. Some TPPs (like Witham Fjord, LLC, profiled above) create levels of membership to accommodate this. New teachers are "associate members" until they are familiar with the TPP and the new responsibilities that come with being a partner. After one year, the TPP partners review associates to determine if they should become partner/owner of the TPP.

## **Learn more about TPPs: books and media sources**

To learn more about the teacher professional partnership idea, check out the following sources. The Education/Evolving Web site also contains numerous sources on “Teacher Professional Partnerships”: [www.educationevolving.org](http://www.educationevolving.org). Click on “New organizational arrangements...” and then on “Teacher professional partnerships...”

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Souder, William. 2000. *A Plague of Frogs*. Hyperion Press, 2000. *\*\*Note: The discovery, by students in an environmental project, of the deformed frogs became a matter of serious interest in the adult scientific community.*

Thomas, Doug, Walter Enloe, Ron Newell (eds). *The Coolest School in America: How small learning communities are changing everything*. Lanham Maryland: Scarecrow Press, January 2005.

### **The first teacher professional practice model: EdVisions Cooperative**

Blair, Julie. 2002 (March 27). "Doing it Their Way: Teachers Make All Decisions at Cooperative Venture." *Education Week*, 21: 1, 14-15.

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## ABOUT EDUCATION|EVOLVING

Millions of America's students head off to school each morning sporting brightly colored backpacks and determined to make this their "best school year yet." At the same time, federal and state policymakers are making tough new demands that our schools change and improve – so that "All students learn at high levels." New standards, tests, timelines and consequences are all being put in place to make sure that "No child is left behind."

Yet, all across the country, many policymakers, journalists, teachers, parents and students themselves are troubled by a haunting feeling that all this effort may not really produce the degree of change and improvement that we need. At a minimum, we are now taking a series of risks that are neither wise nor necessary to be making with other people's children. These are, after all, demands and results well-beyond what we've ever expected of American public education – all at a time of severe budgetary pressures on states, districts and individual public schools.

That, at least is the serious concern of a small group of Minnesota-based public policy veterans who have come together as Education|Evolving... a joint venture of the Center for Policy Studies and Hamline University. The individuals behind this initiative believe...

... it's an unwise and unnecessary risk for the state and nation to be trying to get the results we need solely by changing the schools we now have...

... the issues about teachers and teaching should not be debated only in the old employer/worker framework...

... the solution to maintaining financially viable public education in rural areas may not lie in the three old 'solutions' of excess levies, consolidation and state aid...

... today's schools should not go on largely failing to take advantage of new electronic technologies and other substantially different ways of teaching and learning...

... and the critical discussion about the future of K-12 education in Minnesota and nationally must not proceed solely as a discussion among adults, with students largely left on the outside looking in.

Education|Evolving is undertaking a number of initiatives during the current year. They include a national initiative to convince policy makers, education reform leaders, journalists and others that *creating new schools* should be an essential element in achieving needed changes and improvements in teaching and learning – at least equal in importance to *changing the schools we now have*.

One focus of this initiative is to introduce the concept of an "Open Sector" – to help create the kind of legal and political environments in which new schools can be created and succeed. Another – explored in this report -- is designed to challenge the fundamental premise that teachers in schools must always be "employees." Another initiative is looking at the premises used in asking the critical question, "How are chartered schools doing?" Other ongoing Education|Evolving projects focus on strengthening and enhancing the role of the agencies and organizations that sponsor chartered schools – and on how policymakers, journalists and others can more routinely and substantively tap into the experiences and perspectives of students and of young people not now attending school.

Education|Evolving's leadership is provided by two Minnesota public policy veterans: **Ted Kolderie**, senior associate at the Center for Policy Studies, and **Joe Graba**, a senior policy fellow at Hamline University. Its coordinator is **Jon Schroeder**, former director of Charter Friends National Network. Education|Evolving's activities are regularly updated on the initiative's unique and continually refreshed web site [www.educationevolving.org](http://www.educationevolving.org). To receive print and electronic updates of Education|Evolving initiatives, contact [info@educationevolving.org](mailto:info@educationevolving.org).



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