



## **Hiawatha Academies Replication of High-Achieving Charter School in Minneapolis, Minnesota**

U.S. Department of Education Charter School Program

Grants to Charter Management Organizations for the Replication and  
Expansion of High-Quality Charter Schools

February 2017



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## **Introduction**

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Hiawatha Academies is a network of high performing college-preparatory schools focused on closing the opportunity gap in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Hiawatha's college preparatory educational program is based on rigor, intellect, and character. Hiawatha nurtures students' character and leadership abilities so that all students will not only achieve academically, but also contribute to the social good.

Nearly all Hiawatha students (97%) are Black or Hispanic and eligible for the Federal Free or Reduced Price Lunch programs (90%), and a majority (65%) are English Language Learners. Hiawatha students outperform the state average proficiency rates in math, and they outperform the state averages in literacy by subgroup.

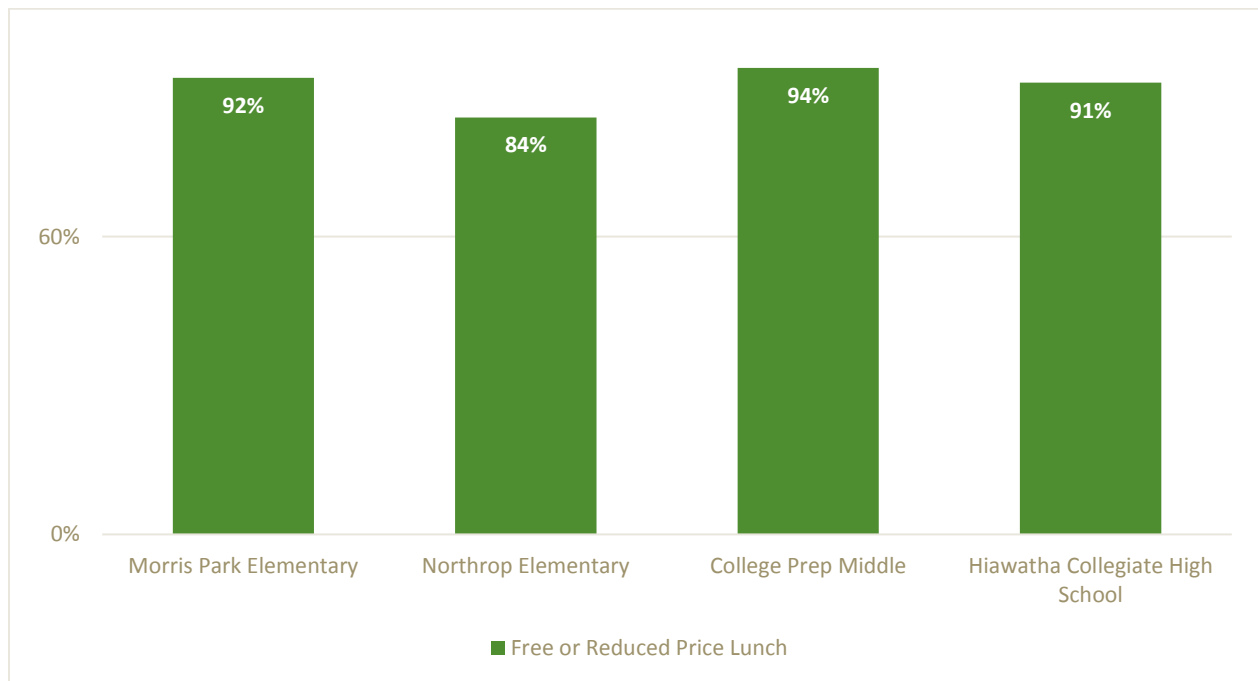
Hiawatha currently operates four charter schools: two elementary, one middle, and one high. The goal of Hiawatha's proposed CSP project is to scale the Hiawatha network of schools so that educationally disadvantaged students in Minneapolis have a seamless K-12 educational experience in schools that close historic achievement gaps. The project will include the replication to a second middle school, as well as the expansion of Hiawatha Northrop Leadership Academy to include grade 4 and of Hiawatha Collegiate High School to include grade 12 and to more than double its enrollment. Combined, the CSP project will create over 850 high-quality seats for disadvantaged students in Minneapolis.

## (I) Absolute Priority

### a. Absolute Priority 1 – Low-Income Demographic

Hiawatha Academies is committed to closing the opportunity gap for educationally disadvantaged students. Across Hiawatha schools, 90% of students are from low-income families that are eligible for the federal Free or Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL) program. *Figure 1* details the rates of low-income student enrollment at each Hiawatha school. Hiawatha is committed to enrolling similarly low-income student populations in the schools expanded or replicated with the support of a Charter Schools Program grant.

**Figure 1: Low-Income Student Enrollment at Hiawatha Academies**



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## **(II) Competitive Preference Priorities**

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### **Competitive Preference Priority 3 – Novice Applicant**

Hiawatha is a novice applicant to the Charter School Program competition. Hiawatha has never (1) received a Federal Charter School Program grant; (2) been a member of a group application that received a Federal Charter School Program grant; or (3) received a discretionary grant from the Federal government within the past five years before February 27, 2017.

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## **(III) Selection Criteria**

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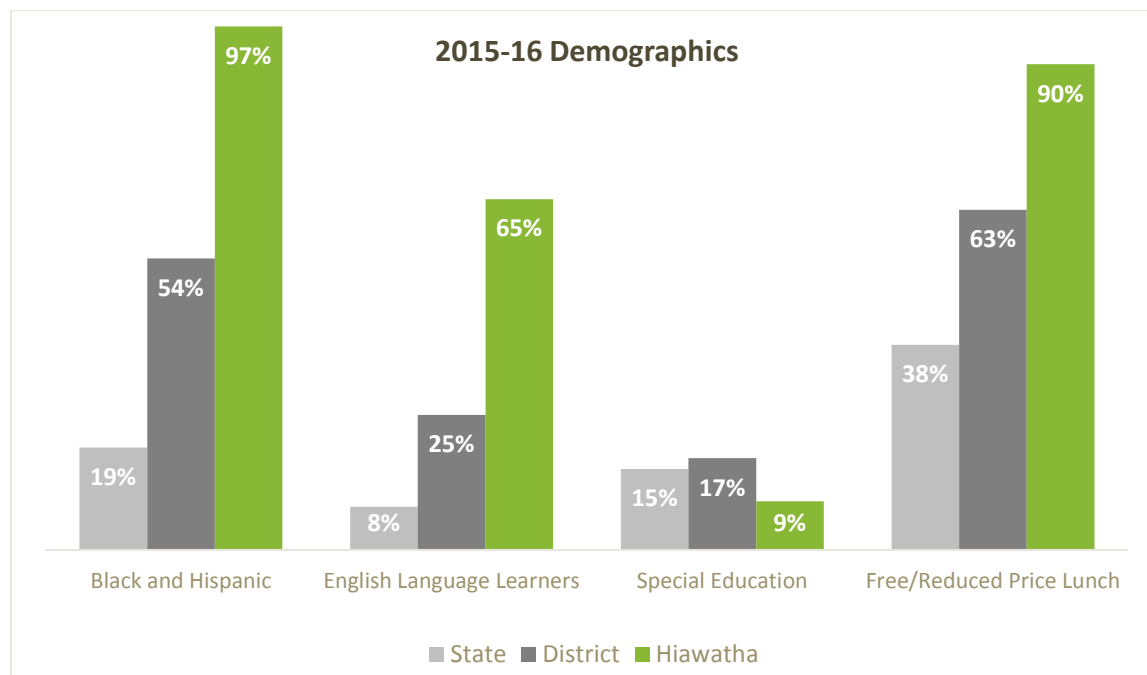
### **A. Quality of the Applicant**

#### **(1) Increasing Academic Achievement for All Students**

Hiawatha has demonstrated success in increasing academic achievement for all students and for each of the subgroups of students described in section 1111(c)(2) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

#### *Educationally Disadvantaged Student Population*

Hiawatha serves a student population that is far more educationally disadvantaged than the populations served by the local Minneapolis Public Schools district or the state of Minnesota, as shown in *Figure A.1*.

**Figure A.1: Educationally Disadvantaged Student Population at Hiawatha Academies**


Hiawatha’s commitment to serving educationally disadvantaged students stems both from a broader vision for educational equity and from the specific, unacceptable achievement gaps in the state of Minnesota. The proficiency gap between white students and students of color in Minnesota is among the widest of any state in the nation. Minnesota ranks last of all 50 states in Hispanic high school graduation rates; it ranks 48<sup>th</sup> for Black students. In this context, the academic results achieved by Hiawatha’s predominantly minority, predominantly low-income student population represent important progress toward closing historic academic achievement gaps.

### *All Students*

Overall, Hiawatha has increased students’ reading and mathematics proficiency in grades 4 and 8—the tested elementary and middle grades for which students have been with Hiawatha longest—over the past three years. Student proficiency on state mathematics exams has been

consistently high, ranging from 69-81% in grade 4 and 48-65% in grade 8. These scores compare favorably to state averages of 69-70% in grade 4 and 58-60% in grade 8. Since Hiawatha's student population is substantially more disadvantaged than the state overall (see *Figure A.1* above), these consistently high proficiency rates represent increases in academic achievement compared to the expected levels of performance for these students in other schools state-wide.

In reading, Hiawatha's educationally disadvantaged students in grade 4 are nearing the high levels of achievement by all Minnesota students. Proficiency rates over the past three years have ranged from 38-55%, compared to state averages of 55-58%. Though these rates are lower than the state average, all subgroups of Hiawatha students are outperforming the state and closing historic achievement gaps. English Language Learners make up 65% of the Hiawatha student body, but have consistently outperformed their peers statewide. Hiawatha students from low-income families, who make up 90% of the student body, are outperforming their peers state-wide in grade 4 and grade 8 reading by 6 and 8 percentage points, respectively.

Meanwhile, Hiawatha has substantially increased reading proficiency for students in tested grades (3 and 4) over the past three years, as detailed in *Figure A.2*.

**Figure A.2: Hiawatha Academies grades 3-4 reading achievement, 2014-16**

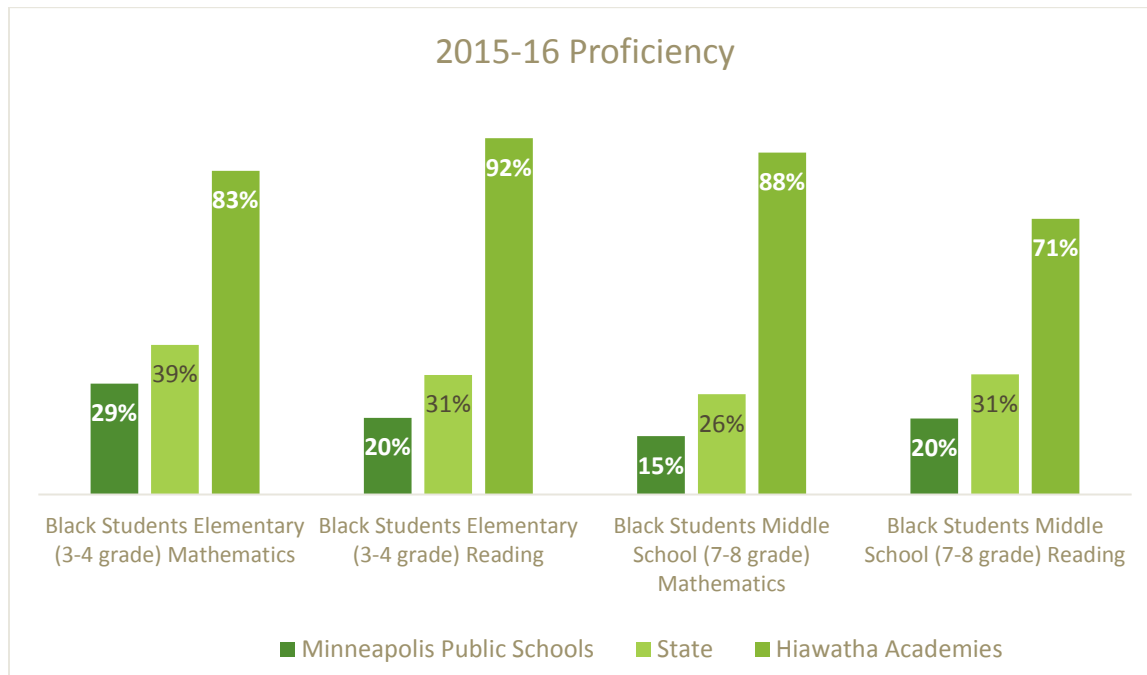
Hiawatha attributes this positive trend in literacy achievement largely to innovations in its elementary reading program, including introducing the STEP literacy program in elementary schools, reducing the student-to-teacher ratio in all elementary reading classes, and integrating co-curricular teachers into literacy instruction—making every Hiawatha teacher a literacy teacher. Accordingly, all Hiawatha teachers receive specialized professional development in literacy instruction, which is provided by the network’s two Literacy Coordinators. Hiawatha expects continued improvement in literacy achievement as the network more widely adopts the Close Reading methodology first implemented in the 2015-16 school year. Close Reading emphasizes deep comprehension of texts and has demonstrated success nationally at accelerating literacy growth. Combined literacy proficiency across the network of schools jumped by 6 percentage points after one year of Close Reading implementation. As a result of this success, the network continues to deepen its use of Close Reading in all classrooms.

In addition to consistently high performance on state exams, Hiawatha increases academic achievement for individual students. For each of the past three years, Hiawatha students in all grades have achieved growth rates on the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments that exceed the nationally referenced norm. This means that each year, Hiawatha students learn more and grow at faster rates than their peers nationwide, despite the fact that Hiawatha schools serve a predominantly educationally disadvantaged student population who face some of the nation's largest achievement gaps.

### *Black and Hispanic Students*

As shown in *Figure A.1*, the vast majority of students at Hiawatha are students of color. Achievement rates for Black and Hispanic students in Hiawatha schools represent improvements upon the levels of academic achievement they would be likely to reach if they attended their local traditional district schools. The proficiency rate comparisons in *Figures A.3-4* represent major improvements in learning outcomes for students from these subgroups. For example, in 2015-16, the proportion of grade 3-4 Hiawatha Black students who achieved proficiency on the state mathematics exams was more than four times higher than the proportion of grade 3-4 Black students at Minneapolis Public Schools. In reading, Hiawatha performance more than tripled that of the district. In grades 7-8, Hiawatha Black students achieved proficiency at triple and double the rate of their district peers in mathematics and reading, respectively.

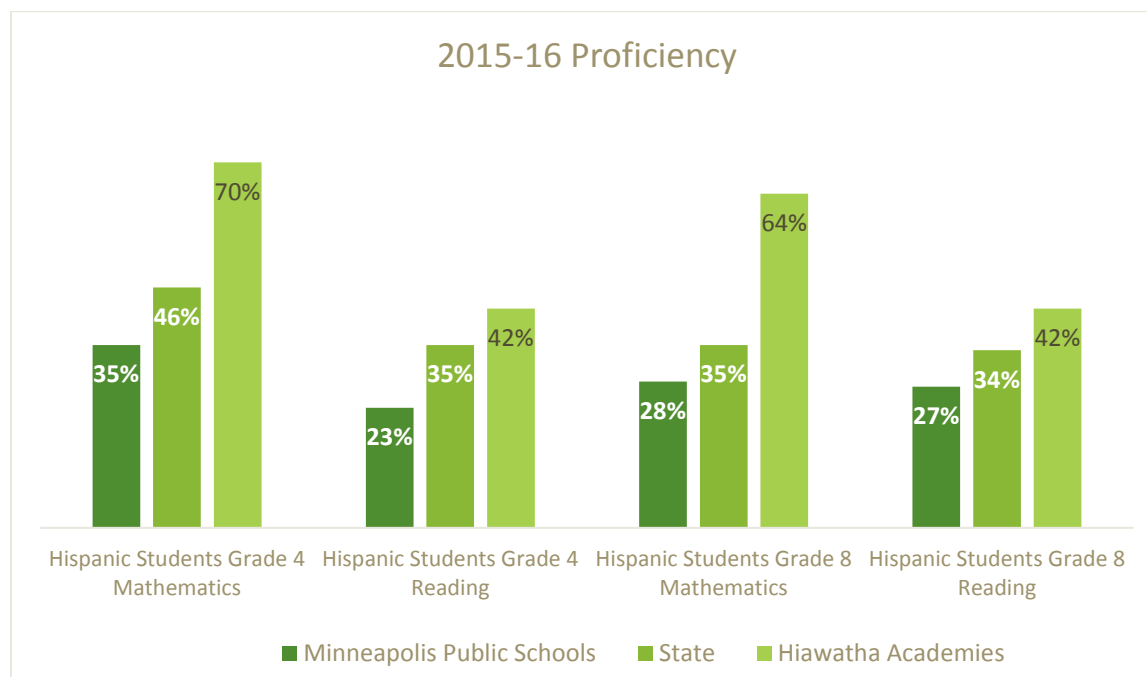
**Figure A.3: Black student performance at Hiawatha v. Minneapolis Public Schools<sup>1</sup>**  
**and the State of Minnesota**



Hispanic students at Hiawatha similarly outperformed their peers in Minneapolis Public Schools. In grade 4 mathematics, for example, twice as many Hispanic students were proficient in 2015-16, as shown in *Figure A.4*.

<sup>1</sup> Hiawatha's Black student counts are too low to report only grades 4 and 8. These data include grades 3-4 for elementary school and 7-8 for middle school and compare directly to MPS proficiency rates for grades 3-4 and 7-8.

**Figure A.4: Hispanic student performance at Hiawatha v. Minneapolis Public Schools and the State of Minnesota**



### *Special Education Students*

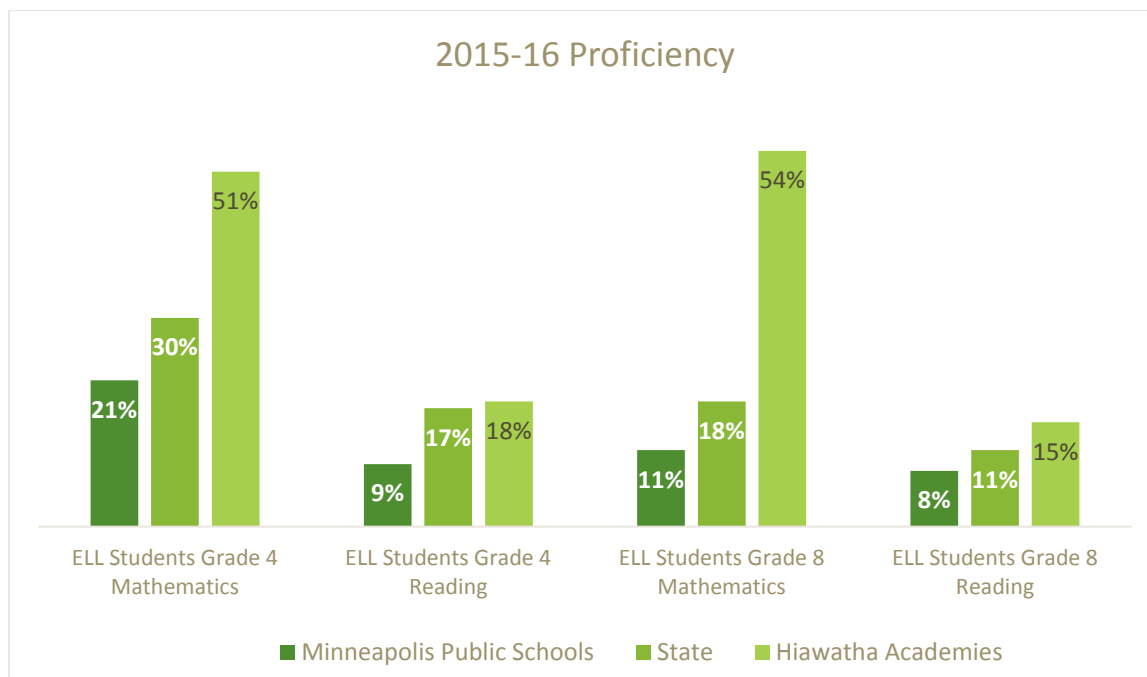
As a growing CMO, Hiawatha only has two schools currently testing in grades 4 and 8. Neither of these schools have sufficiently large populations of Special Education students to report data for this subgroup; however, Hiawatha is committed to recruiting students with disabilities and providing them with the same college-ready educational experience that all students receive in our schools. More information about special education student recruitment and services can be found on pages 28-30 and page 33.

### *English Language Learners*

Hiawatha serves a majority English learner student population (65%). Achievement rates for English Language Learners in Hiawatha schools represent improvements upon the levels of academic achievement they would be likely to reach if they attended their local traditional

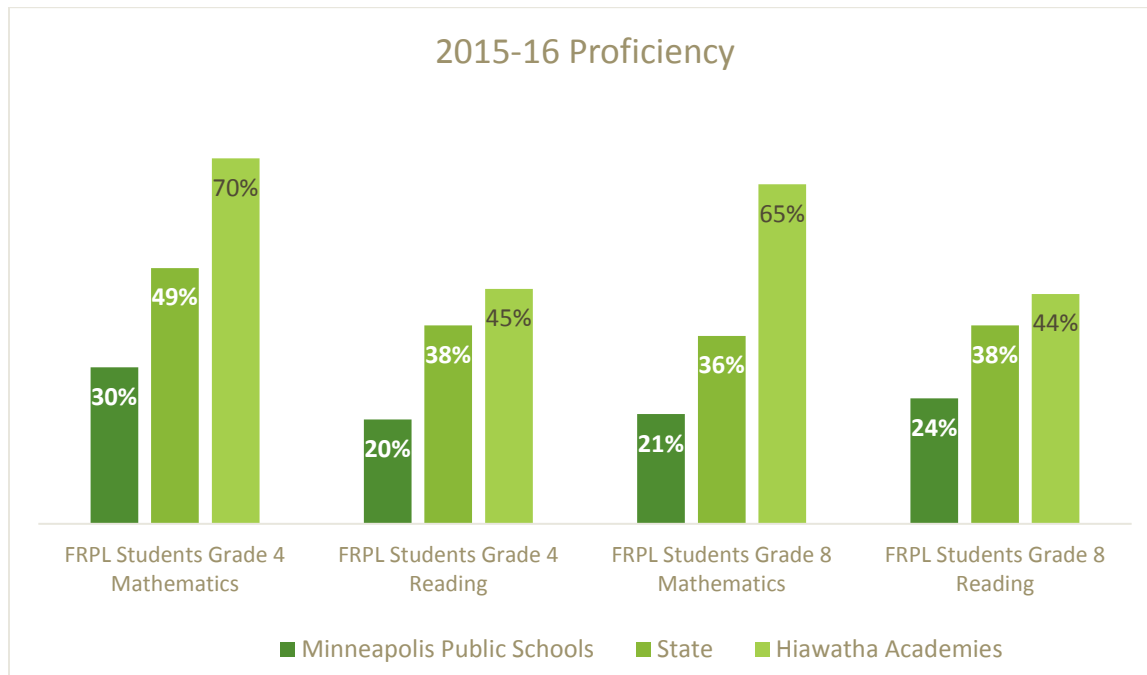
district schools. The proficiency rate comparisons in *Figure A.5* represent major improvements in learning outcomes for students from this subgroup.

**Figure A.5: English learner performance at Hiawatha v. Minneapolis Public Schools and the State of Minnesota**

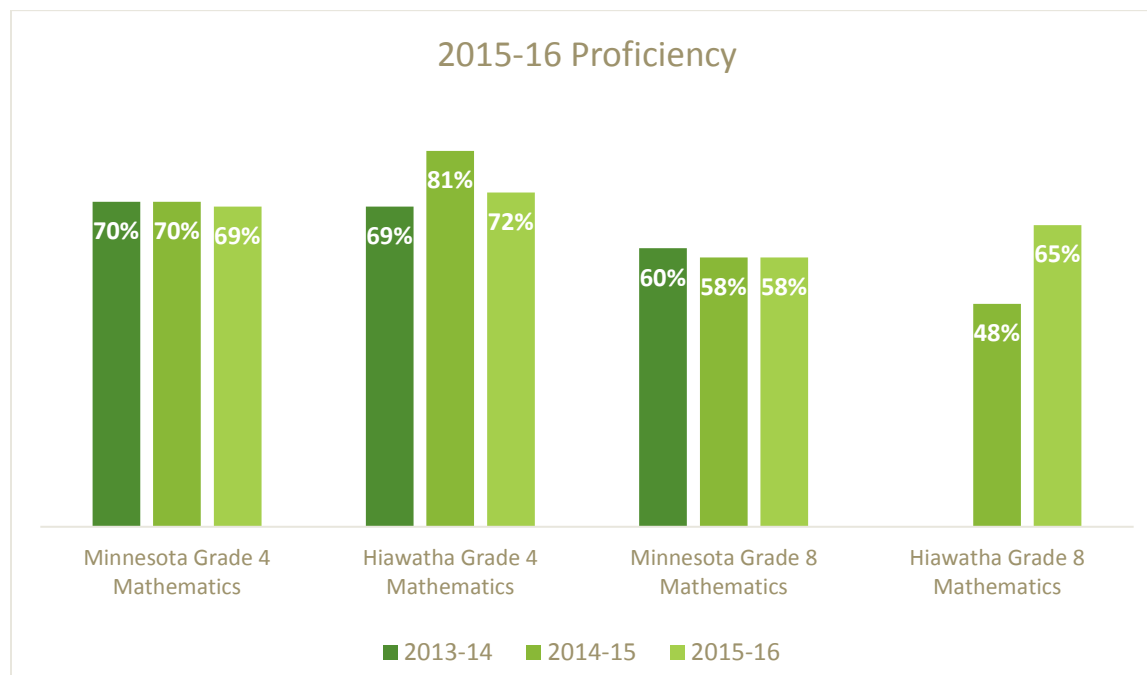


### *Students Eligible for Free and Reduced Price Lunch*

Nine in ten students at Hiawatha come from low-income families and are eligible for the federal Free or Reduced Price Lunch program, yet they are far outperforming their peers in nearby schools. In 2015-16, Hiawatha more than doubled the district's proficiency rates for low-income students in mathematics in both grades 4 and 8 and outperformed the district by 20+ percentage points in reading, as shown in *Figure A.6*.

**Figure A.6: Free/Reduced Lunch performance at Hiawatha v. Minneapolis Public**
**Schools and the State of Minnesota**

**(2) State Outperformance**

As demonstrated by *Figure A.2*, Hiawatha students are significantly more educationally disadvantaged than the Minnesota state average. Compared to the state, the proportion of Hiawatha students who are Black or Hispanic is five times higher, the proportion of English Language Learners is eight times higher, and the proportion of low-income students is nearly two-and-a-half times higher. Yet for each of the past three years, Hiawatha's predominantly disadvantaged student population has exceeded or neared the state average proficiency rates in grades 4 and 8 mathematics, as shown in *Figure A.7*.

**Figure A.7: Overall math proficiency, Hiawatha v. State of Minnesota<sup>2</sup>**


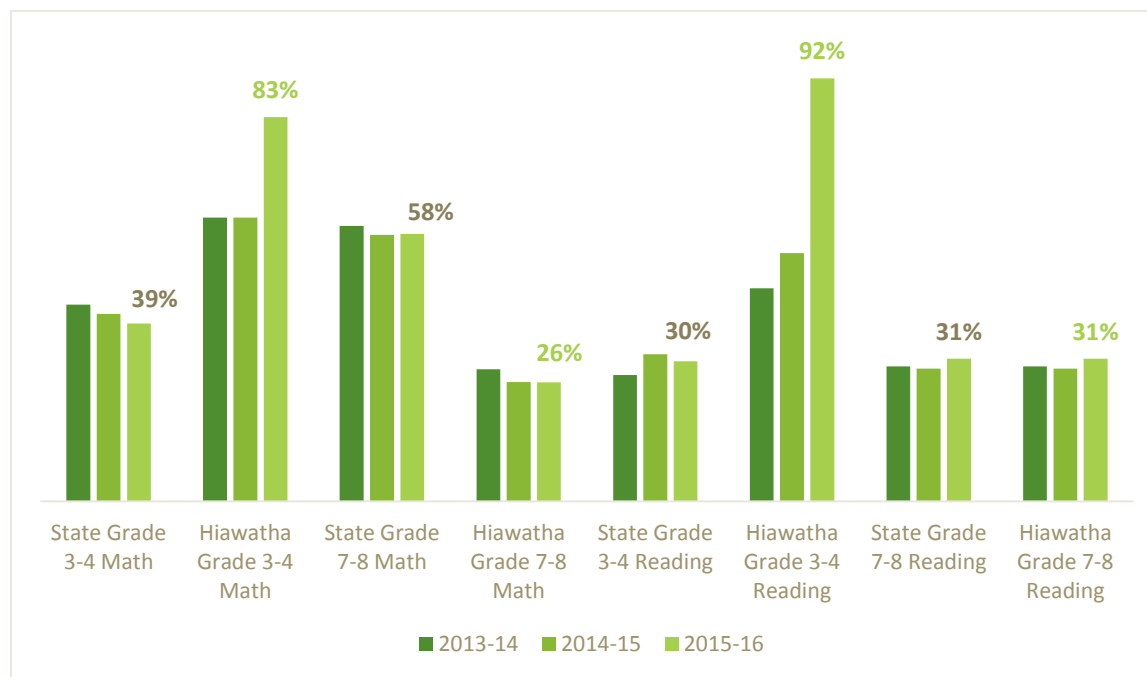
As a whole, Hiawatha students have yet to fully close the achievement gap with the overall state average in grades 4 and 8 literacy. This is partly attributable to the relative educational disadvantage of the Hiawatha student population to the state average as well as to the overall strong performance of Minnesota students relative to the nation. Minnesota students consistently score among the highest in the country on the National Assessment of Educational Progress. While Hiawatha students have not yet surpassed the high bar set by the overall state average, each subgroup of Hiawatha students has outperformed their demographically similar peers. *Figures A.8-11* show clear progress toward closing historic achievement gaps for each of subgroup of Hiawatha’s educationally disadvantaged students.

<sup>2</sup> Hiawatha added grade 8 to its current middle school in 2014-15, so only two years of data are available.

### *Black and Hispanic outperformance*

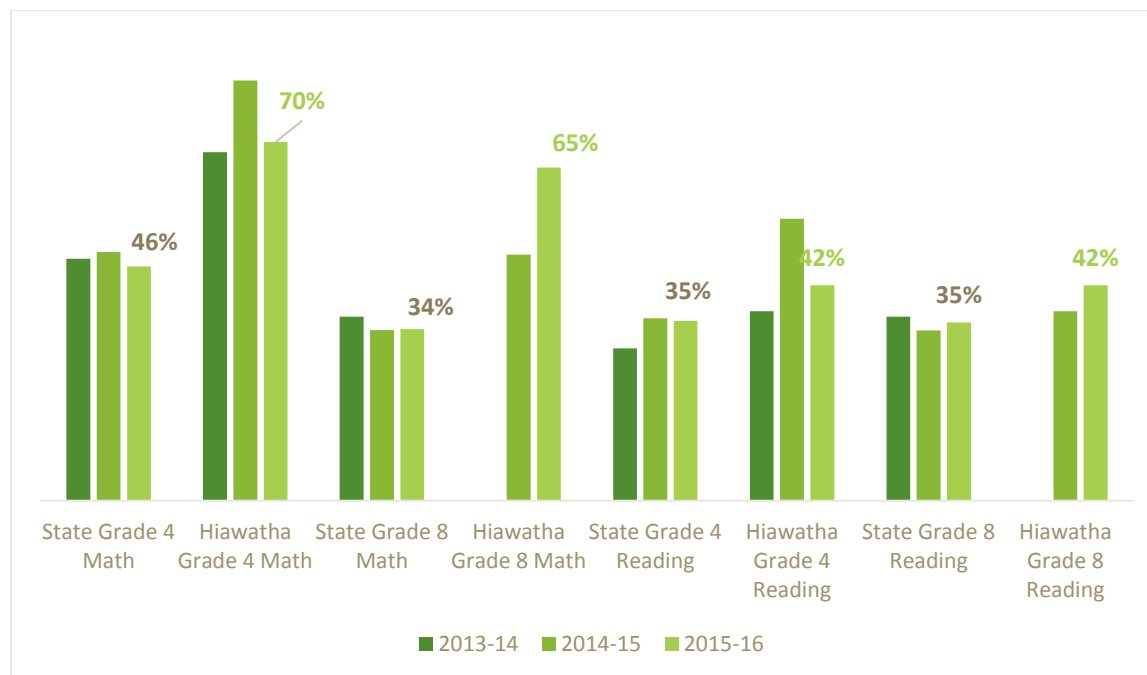
For each of the past three years, Black and Hispanic students have outperformed the Minnesota state average proficiency rates for their demographic subgroups. Performance for Black students in 2015-16 was particularly strong: In grade 4, Black students at Hiawatha more than doubled the state average proficiency rate in math and more than tripled it in reading, as shown in *Figure A.8*.

**Figure A.8: Black student proficiency, State v. Hiawatha<sup>3</sup>**



Hiawatha's Hispanic students in 2015-16 outperformed the state average by approximately 25-30 percentage points in math and 7 percentage points in reading, as shown in *Figure A.9*.

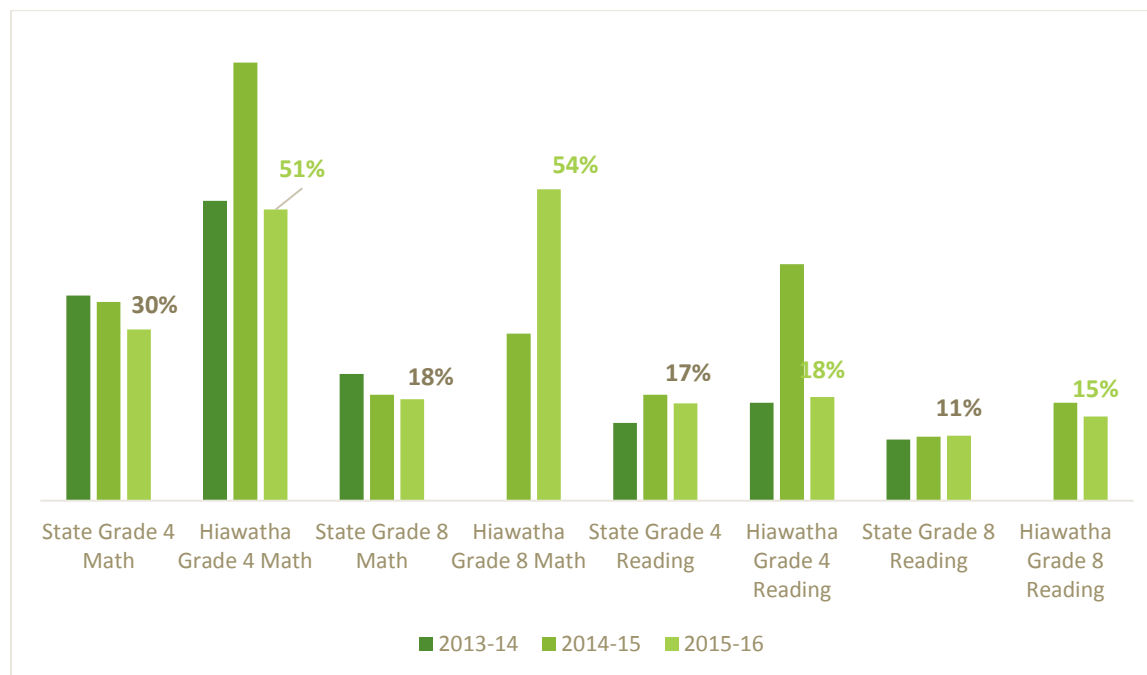
<sup>3</sup> Hiawatha's Black student counts are too low to report only grades 4 and 8. These data include grades 3-4 for elementary school and 7-8 for middle school and compare directly to MPS proficiency rates for grades 3-4 and 7-8.

**Figure A.9: Hispanic student proficiency, state v. Hiawatha<sup>4</sup>**


### *English language learner outperformance*

For each of the past three years, English Language Learners at Hiawatha have outperformed the Minnesota state average proficiency rates for their demographic subgroup, as shown in *Figure A.10*. In mathematics, Hiawatha's English learner proficiency rates were approximately 20-30 percentage points higher than the state. In reading, Hiawatha's English learners consistently outperformed the state in both grades 4 and 8.

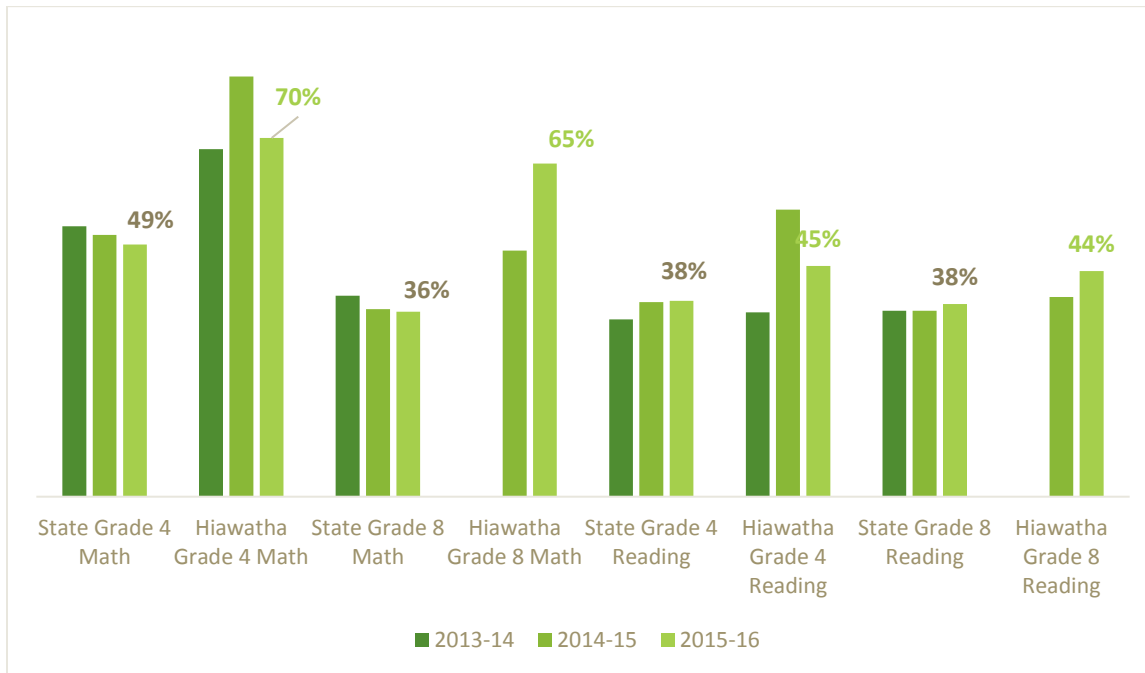
<sup>4</sup> Hiawatha added grade 8 to its current middle school in 2014-15, so only two years of data are available.

**Figure A.10: English Language Learner student proficiency, State v. Hiawatha<sup>5</sup>**


### *Students Eligible for Free and Reduced Price Lunch*

Finally, for each of the past three years, Hiawatha students who are eligible for the federal Free and Reduced Price Lunch programs outperformed the state average proficiency rates compared to other students from low-income families state-wide. Math scores in grades 4 and 8 have typically exceeded the state average by at least 20 percentage points, as shown in *Figure A.11*. Reading scores were consistently higher than the state in grades 4 and 8 as well.

<sup>5</sup> Hiawatha added grade 8 to its current middle school in 2014-15, so only two years of data are available.

**Figure A.11: Low-Income student proficiency, state v. Hiawatha**


### (3) Effective Compliance

No school operated by Hiawatha has ever faced a significant compliance issue. No school has had a charter revoked due to noncompliance or regulatory requirements; had its affiliation with the applicant revoked or terminated, including through voluntary disaffiliation; had a significant issue in the areas of financial or operational management; had significant problems with statutory or regulatory compliance that could lead to revocation of the school’s charter; or had significant issues with respect to student safety. On the contrary, Hiawatha has established a robust set of management systems to ensure that no such issues will arise.

#### *Charter compliance and regulatory safeguards*

Hiawatha’s central office team ensures that all schools and the network comply with the requirements of Hiawatha’s charter and all applicable regulations. Responsibility for charter and regulatory compliance is spread among relevant staff, including the following: the Director of

Data & Analytics collects and reports all necessary data to maintain compliance with charter authorizer and state reporting mandates; the Senior Director of Programs ensures compliance with all state and federal requirements for services to English Language Learners and students with disabilities (e.g., IDEA Part B); the Director of Human Resources ensures compliance with applicable hiring and employment laws; and the Director of Enrollment and Admissions ensures that all student admissions policies are designed and executed in compliance with state law and that Hiawatha's growth does not exceed its approved charter.

Hiawatha's charter authorizer, the University of Saint Thomas, conducts a statutory compliance review on an annual basis. Throughout its history, Hiawatha has met all review requirements and has thus had its charter continually renewed. The most recent letter of good standing is available in *Appendix E-page26*.

### *Financial management*

Hiawatha has a history of strong financial management and financial health. Hiawatha has received a clean financial audit in each year of operation. Hiawatha's most recent audit is available in *Appendix G-page9*. Additionally, in 2010, Cambridge Education Associates, a United Kingdom based school review team, came to Hiawatha and conducted an audit of the school's educational practices, academic results, financial management, board oversight, and parent satisfaction. Hiawatha received a score of 5 out of 5 and was named as an Exemplary School in North America.

Hiawatha utilizes CliftonLarsonAllen (CLA), a contracted financial services firm. CLA provides business services to Hiawatha and its schools in the form of payroll, AP/AR services,

management of state funding systems, Title funds management, monthly financial statements, and audit preparation. CLA also regularly interacts with the state funding systems.

Internally, Hiawatha schools set their annual budgets in close partnership with CMO leadership. Hiawatha uses a student-based budget model. Schools are allocated funds based on their projected enrollment for that year. Hiawatha's financial model requires all schools to be fully sustainable on public funds in their first year of full enrollment, and each of Hiawatha's fully enrolled schools has met this benchmark. During growth years, schools run operating deficits that are filled by philanthropy, as discussed on pages 50-52. Fundraising for these operating gaps is one of many services provided by the Hiawatha home office. Each Hiawatha school contributes about 12% of their revenue annually to the central office to pay for these shared services. Schools have autonomy in determining the remainder of their annual budgets, and they submit their budgets to the CMO for review and approval by the Chief Operating Officer and the Board of Directors.

Hiawatha's Board of Directors reviews and approves all school-based and CMO-wide budgets for the upcoming fiscal year each June. Hiawatha operates on a July 1-June 30 fiscal year. On a monthly basis, the Board reviews Hiawatha's balance sheet, income statement, and statement of cash flows as well as the monthly check run and credit card statements. School Principals also review site-based income statements with budget to actuals with Hiawatha's Executive Director monthly.

### *Operational management*

Hiawatha employs a dual-leadership model to ensure that all schools receive sufficient oversight of both their instructional program and operations. Hiawatha's Executive Director

manages school principals, while the Senior Director of Operations manages school-level

Directors of Operations, who also benefit from matrixed management by the principals of their unique school sites. All managers meet with their direct reports at least weekly to provide supervision and coaching.

On a quarterly basis, leaders from all Hiawatha schools and the CMO conduct joint site visits to evaluate organizational and instructional practices at a given school site. These leaders observe schools and classrooms and interview staff and families to identify areas of strength and improvement. The Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer, Senior Director of Operations, Senior Director of Program, and Chief Talent Officer work collaboratively with school leaders to address areas for continuous improvement.

Hiawatha's CMO structure supports common Hiawatha systems, beliefs, and outcome expectations. The CMO sets organizational-wide strategies and approves campus strategies. While individual school leaders have significant decision rights over curricular, instructional, and human capital inputs, the CMO does establish minimum standards and adoption of best practices. A detailed guide to decision rights called the Tight / Loose Framework is provided in *Appendix H-page14*. The Framework ensures clarity of responsibilities and establishes expectations for autonomy and accountability.

All schools receive central office services, which include: finance and budget; operations; facilities; technology; data analytics and student data tracking; student recruitment; family engagement; marketing; fundraising; human resources; talent recruitment; student support services; and expert academic support services including literacy, special education, English language development, and cultural relevance training. Hiawatha schools pay an annual service

fee of 12% of the school's revenue in exchange for these services. The centralization of these functions improves the economies of scale, which increases quality and decreases costs to the schools. Furthermore, the central office supports cross-school collaboration and best practice sharing, which improves school-level operations and outcomes and curricular alignment K-12.

Hiawatha has significantly expanded its central office to provide ongoing services to school sites. Currently a team of 25, at full capacity the central office will be made up of 30 staff members providing shared services and strategic direction for five campuses with over 2,000 scholars. An organizational chart for the fully staffed central office is available in *Appendix H-pages 21-22*. When complete, the office will not only serve the needs of the Hiawatha Academies Network at scale, but will be comparable to similarly sized charter management organizations in national benchmark comparisons.

### *Student safety*

At Hiawatha, student safety is paramount. All Hiawatha buildings are inspected annually to ensure that they remain safe spaces for students to learn. Every Hiawatha school has clear procedures and systems designed to protect students in the event of any emergency, including evacuation procedures, tornado and other severe weather procedures, lockdown procedures, school response team command structures, and emergency communication systems. These procedures and systems are updated annually based on recommendations from the local fire department, National Incident Management System, and the Homeland Security and Emergency Management guide to school safety. All school staff are trained on the procedures and systems relevant to their roles, and students and staff participate in regular drills to ensure that they know what to do should an incident ever occur. Hiawatha complies with Minnesota Statutes 121A.037

and 123B.90, which require schools to conduct at least the following drills annually: five lockdown drills, five fire drills, and one tornado drill.

On a day-to-day basis, Hiawatha ensures that all students are safe in their interactions with each other by actively fostering a culture of optimism, collaboration, mutual respect and joy. Hiawatha classrooms are managed through high-touch instructional practices that keep students on task, and teachers support students to move through common spaces in ways that maximize instructional time and minimize opportunities for conflict. In the rare instance that students engage with each other physically, clear discipline policies at each school are applied, and parents are engaged as partners in the conflict resolution process. No Hiawatha students have been expelled for violent behavior or any other reason for at least the past three years. On biannual surveys, Hiawatha parents “agree” or “strongly agree” that they feel their children are safe at school at rates exceeding 83-90%.

### *School opening and closure plans*

Hiawatha uses a New School Greenlighting Framework (*Appendix H-page19*) to assess progress to goals for opening new schools. During a 24-month planning period, the Board of Directors reviews the nine indicators of health and readiness on four separate occasions: at 24-month pre-launch, 18-month pre-launch, 12-month pre-launch, and one-month pre-launch. The nine indicators evaluate the CMO’s and school’s appropriate readiness to proceed based on where planning should be. They include indicators of the school’s leadership, facilities, talent and student recruitment, financial health, and authorizer approval. The health of the network of Hiawatha schools must also be strong, which is measured by current schools’ academic performance, CMO health, and the strength of the organization’s culture.

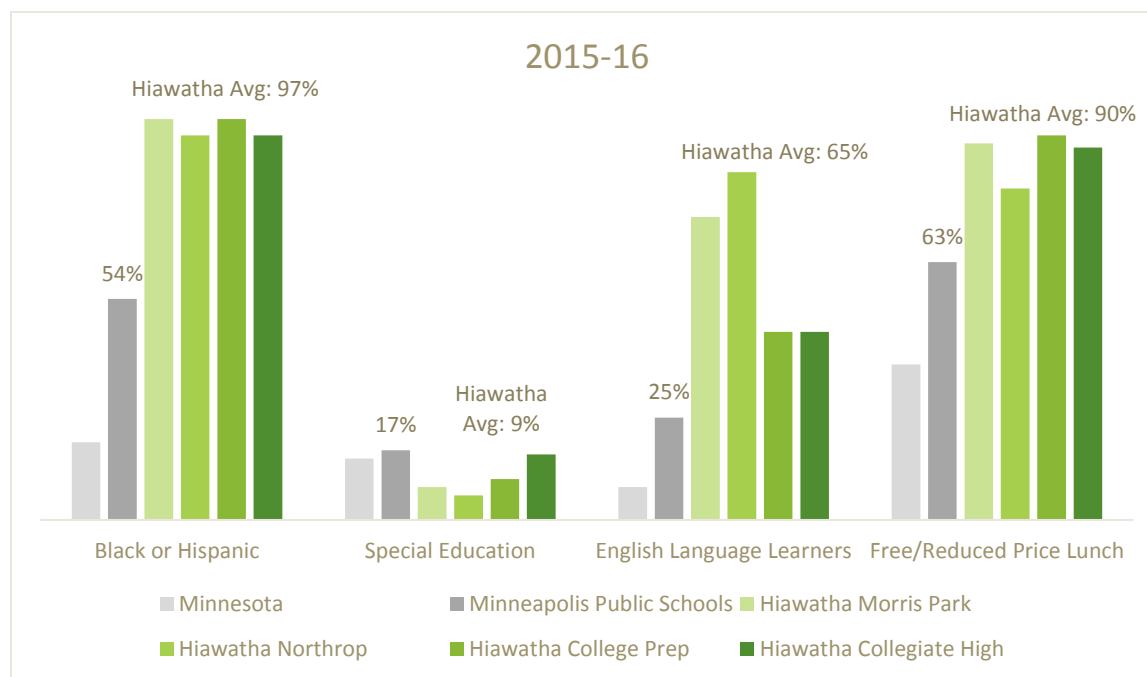
Once open, Hiawatha schools receive high levels of support and oversight provided by the Hiawatha CMO, its Board of Directors, its authorizer, and auditors. It is therefore highly unlikely that a Hiawatha school would ever be found underperforming or noncompliant enough to merit disaffiliation or closure. Nonetheless, Hiawatha maintains a detailed school closure plan which can be implemented if necessary (*Appendix E.-pages 124-136*). The closure plan establishes clear responsibilities for the Board of Directors and Hiawatha's authorizer. It includes notification to the Minnesota Education Commissioner, Hiawatha's authorizer, the Minneapolis Public Schools district, and parents of enrolled students about the closure. The plan details how information and assistance will be provided to parents about re-enrolling their children in another school and transfers of student records. The plan also includes procedures for closing financial operations.

## B. Assisting educationally disadvantaged students

### (1) Serving educationally disadvantaged students

Hiawatha Academies serves educationally disadvantaged students at rates exceeding or comparable to the surrounding public schools, as detailed in *Figure B.1*.

**Figure B.1: Educationally disadvantaged student state and district comparisons to Hiawatha**



### *Students of Color*

Overall, 97% of Hiawatha students are Black or Hispanic/Latino, compared to 54% of students at Minneapolis Public Schools. The neighborhoods in which Hiawatha schools are located are predominantly Hispanic or Latino. Hiawatha serves students of color effectively by setting high expectations and by developing coursework and school cultures that are culturally



relevant, compelling, and connected to the future demands of the workforce and society.

Hiawatha's learning environment honors each child, makes learning applicable to their lived experiences, and prepares them for the social and economic realities they will face in their lives.

Hiawatha invests in continuous improvement to strengthen responsive, rigorous, and relevant school environments.

The foundation of strong programmatic relevance begins with a responsive staff that creates safe spaces for scholars, their families, and the community. Hiawatha's current equity work emphasizes the following 5 strategic focus areas:

- 1) Professional Development: All Hiawatha Academies employees participate in professional development in diversity, inclusion and cultural competence. Some examples are:
  - Friday afternoon professional development at every campus dedicated to training on topics including: courageous conversations, SEED, privilege, and entry points for talking about culture and identity.
  - Network-wide professional development from external providers or CMO-developed sessions focused on relevance.
  - Network-wide affinity groups including groups for staff of color, white staff seeking to learn, and LGBTQ staff.
- 2) Recruitment and Hiring: Hiawatha continues to intentionally recruit leaders and staff who reflect the Hiawatha student population. Currently Hiawatha's *Board of Directors is made up of 55% people of color*, and its *key leadership represents 33% people of color*. In the Twin Cities metro area, 22% of the population identify as people of color, and yet Hiawatha's

concerted effort to recruit and retain staff who reflect the diversity in our student-body has helped us hire a staff that is 33% people of color.

- 3) Hiawatha strives to continue increasing representative diversity at all staff, leadership, and Board levels with emphasis on individuals who have both the experiences and mindset to work toward Hiawatha's equity vision.
- 4) Campus Relevance Teams: Each campus has teams of teachers that focus on action steps needed to elevate relevance in the classroom. Actions include conducting needs assessments; surveying students, teachers, and families; hosting training and dialogue sessions; connecting staff with resources necessary to implement needs-based action plans.
- 5) Family Engagement: It is mission critical to create open dialogues for and with scholars' families. Each Hiawatha campus has formed Academic Parent-Teacher Teams that elevate the voices of families and help schools identify where they can improve and how to best engage families in that work. Hiawatha also engages parents through parent-teacher conference and its Family Academy. Additional details about family engagement at Hiawatha are available on page 31.

### *English Language Learners*

English Language Learners comprise 65% of Hiawatha's student body, compared to just 17% in Minneapolis Public Schools. Hiawatha has developed a robust educational program to identify and effectively serve English learners. It begins with the administration of a home language survey upon enrollment and, if relevant, the WIDA MODEL (Measure of Developing English Language) assessment. Parents of students identified as not yet proficient in English are notified before the student is classified and begins receiving special services from an English

Language Development (ELD) teacher. These teachers primarily employ a co-teaching model in which they collaborate with regular classroom teachers to integrate language objectives into lesson plans, lead small group workshops differentiated by students' proficiency levels, and provide other "push in" supports to English learners. Students who require more intensive language development may receive instruction dedicated "pull out" classrooms.

### *Students with disabilities*

At 16%, Hiawatha's high school serves a comparable percentage of students with disabilities to Minneapolis Public Schools. In Hiawatha's elementary schools and its middle school, the rates of students receiving special education services are lower for a variety of reasons. First, traditional district schools often use discrepancy models to evaluate their students for special education services. These models often over-identify students of color and those who are also English Language Learners. Hiawatha, by contrast, overwhelmingly serves students who fall into these categories, and the network's teachers and specialists have developed expertise in the Response Intervention Model, which is less likely to over-identify. Second, students with moderate to severe disabilities often require services only available in highly specialized programs in district schools. Third and finally, parents of students with disabilities may be less likely to apply for charter lotteries due to regular accusations of student "creaming" in the press. Hiawatha categorically rejects this practice. On the contrary, Hiawatha actively recruits students with disabilities and provides a robust instructional and support program for all the students it serves, as described further on page 33.

Hiawatha conducts full and individual evaluations before special education and related services begin. This helps determine whether a child has a disability that adversely affects their

educational performance. Hiawatha asks parents/guardians for their permission before evaluating scholars. This permission is for the evaluation *only*, and is not the same as giving us permission to provide special education services. Parents have the right to refuse this evaluation and any possible re-evaluations.

Based on the results of the evaluations, Hiawatha students may receive individualized education programs (IEPs). Hiawatha offers a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment that makes sense for each child's needs according to a comprehensive child find and IEP process. For scholars with documented medical or mental health disabilities may receive a 504 Plan in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. A 504 Plan ensures that the school makes any necessary program changes to ensure that scholars who need it can access educational opportunities that are similar to their peers. Scholars with a 504 plan may receive additional accommodations, modifications, or services. Scholars, families, staff, and the community can all access their 504 rights in English or Spanish on Hiawatha Academies' website.

Each Hiawatha school has an on-site Child Study Team composed of teachers, student support personnel, and school administrators. This team meets regularly to help create academic and behavioral interventions for scholars who need extra support.

In order to increase the involvement of parents of children with disabilities in CMO policy making and decision making, Hiawatha Academies has a Special Education Advisory Council. The Council's annual meeting occurs each spring.

Hiawatha complies with Minnesota Statutes §125A and §124D and applicable rules and Federal law relating to the education of pupils with a disability in public schools. Consistent with

the provisions of Minnesota Statutes §124E.21, Hiawatha Academies budgets to provide sufficient financial resources to meet our ethical and legal obligations to special education students. The school's obligation to students is defined by evaluation results and by the instruction and related services identified in the student's individualized education program (IEP).

Hiawatha Academies employs licensed special education teachers, other related support staff, and a Director of Student Support Services to ensure that our educational offerings comply with all state and federal law. Hiawatha takes care to ensure compliance with all due process laws and is hiring a Due Process Coordinator for special education services in the 2017-18 school year. Hiawatha's Director of Special Education and school Business Managers regularly review Special Education finances to ensure compliance with all state and federal programs, to check for appropriate internal controls and systems, and to benchmark spending on the provision of Special Education services to ensure that it is in line with local districts.

### *Students from low-income families*

Hiawatha serves a predominantly low-income student population: 90%, compared to just 63% in Minneapolis Public Schools. Hiawatha's Director of Student Support Services and Network Psychologist work alongside each school's Dean of Students, Social Worker, and Child Study Teams to provide a robust set of supports for students from low-income families. However, Hiawatha believes that its success in closing historic gaps for students from low-income families stems from the broader systems that support students from all educationally disadvantaged subgroups to achieve success.

*Supports for all educationally disadvantaged students*

At their core, Hiawatha schools are designed around six pillars that support students from all educationally disadvantaged subgroups to make the academic progress that is required for them to close historic achievement gaps. First, Hiawatha sets and consistently reinforces high expectations for students, regardless of their background. Second, Hiawatha expands learning time for all students by 35% compared to traditional district schools. Third, Hiawatha supports effective teaching to close historic achievement gaps. Fourth, Hiawatha employs a consistent focus on results and accountability to track progress and drive improvement for students from all backgrounds. Fifth, Hiawatha builds character and leadership skills, which are essential for developing the persistence necessary to succeed academically despite the challenges that students of color, English Language Learners, students with disabilities, and students from low-income families may face at school or in the wider world.

Finally, Hiawatha engages parents as partners. This extends beyond parental attendance at teacher conferences, though more than 98% of Hiawatha parents do. It also means that they participate actively in their children's educations through a six-week Family Academy, which empowers parents with the skills to advocate effectively for their children, and through Academic Parent Teacher Teams (APPTs), during which teachers share data and model grade-level skills and practice activities for parents so that they can build upon classroom instruction within the home.

**(2) Plan to Recruit and Enroll Educationally Disadvantaged Students**

Hiawatha actively recruits students from all educationally disadvantaged backgrounds and will continue to do so for the proposed replication and expansion schools. Hiawatha's

recruitment strategies include hosting booths at community-based and student enrollment events, leveraging web and social media communications, neighborhood postcard mailings, targeted advertising, and door-to-door communication.

### *Students of color*

Hiawatha Academies are located in predominantly Hispanic and Latino neighborhoods, where recruitment often occurs informally through word-of-mouth and parent-to-parent referrals. Hiawatha is actively working to diversify its student body by conducting targeted outreach to other underserved ethnic and racial groups. These efforts include: translating recruitment materials into not just English and Spanish but also Somali and other languages as needed; contracting with a public relations and strategic communications firm to increase visibility among African America, East African, Native American, and Asian communities; partnering with organizations and schools that serve predominantly African American and Black communities; and tabling at events such as the Urban League school choice fair, Juneteenth celebrations, the Somali festival, and the Native American festival. Due to the rising number of Somali families in neighborhoods near Hiawatha schools, Hiawatha also hired two Somali recruiters this year.

### *English language learners*

Hiawatha's strategies to recruit students of color, particularly those focused on the Hispanic/Latino and Somali communities, also support efforts to recruit English language learners. Nine in ten Hiawatha students come from families who speak languages other than English at home. To attract these families, Hiawatha employs a diverse, multilingual recruitment staff, many of whom are current Hiawatha parents; produces multilingual recruitment materials;

tables at church and community events such as the Mexican Independence Day celebration; and maintains deep ties within the communities it serves that lead to a significant number of parent-to-parent referrals.

### *Students with disabilities*

Hiawatha is dedicated to recruiting and serving as many students with disabilities as possible. The network faces challenges in special education student recruitment, as discussed on page 28. Primary among these challenges is a small scale that does not allow Hiawatha to provide the full breadth of services that are offered in large districts. Still, Hiawatha takes care to create student recruitment advertising and messaging that is inclusive of all students and emphasizes the policy of accepting all students without regard to disability. Hiawatha partners with several community organizations to recruit and provide services to students with disabilities, including two of the metro area's largest early childhood education programs for students with special needs.

### *Students from low-income families*

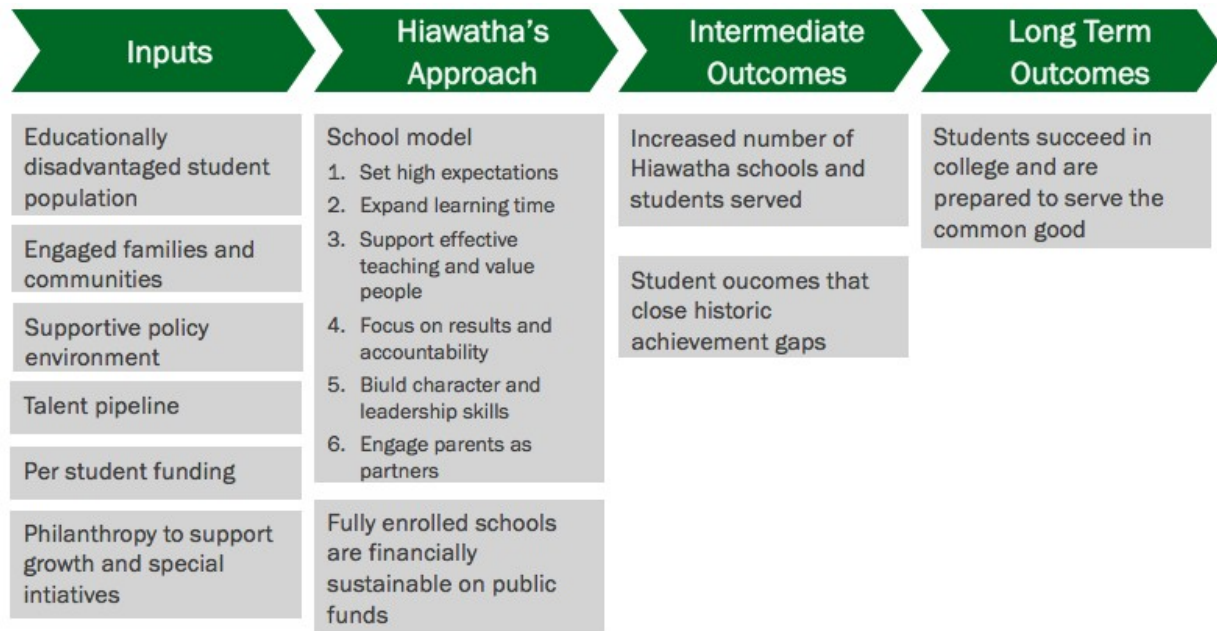
Hiawatha has and will continue to appeal to low-income families with marketing messages that focus primarily on our vision for educational equity and closing the opportunity gap. Hiawatha's recruitment materials also highlight services to low-income families such as universal free breakfast and lunch, school uniforms, and free busing in south Minneapolis. Finally, Hiawatha actively partners with early childhood education schools and supporting institutions including Head Start, Way to Grow, and local language-immersion preschools, all of which serve predominantly low-income families.

## C. Evaluation Plan

### *Project goals, objectives, and logic model*

Hiawatha's proposed project under the Charter Schools Program has one overarching goal: to scale the Hiawatha network of schools so that educationally disadvantaged students in Minneapolis have a seamless K-12 educational experience in schools that close historic achievement gaps. The project has five specific, measurable, and ultimately attainable objectives which are supported by the logic model in *Figure C.1*:

- 1) Create 360 high-quality seats for students from educationally disadvantaged communities by replicating to a new middle school.
- 2) Create 78 high-quality seats for students from educationally disadvantaged communities by expanding Hiawatha Leadership Academy Northrop to serve grades K-4.
- 3) Create at least 400 high-quality seats for students from educationally disadvantaged communities by expanding Hiawatha Collegiate High School serving grades 9-12.
- 4) Build upon Hiawatha's record of closing historic achievement gaps for educationally disadvantaged students by evaluating the program and using ongoing performance feedback to drive improvements.
- 5) Achieve financial sustainability on public funds in all Hiawatha schools receiving CSP.

**Figure C.1: Hiawatha Logic Model**


### *Project performance measures*

Hiawatha will measure its success in achieving its project goal, the four objectives, and the key elements of the logic model on an annual basis according to the performance measures in *Figure C.2*. Targets for student demographics and student outcomes (Performance Measures 5-8) are designed to be both ambitious and achievable and are grounded in Hiawatha's core values; therefore, Hiawatha will hold itself to these standards network-wide, even in schools that do not receive grant funds.

**Figure C.2: Performance Measures, Project Measures, and Benchmark Data**

(1) Performance Measures	(2) Baseline and Rationale	(3) Ambitious and Achievable Performance Targets	port				
			6/18	6/19	6/20	6/21	9/22 <sup>6</sup>
<i>Objective 1: Create 360 high-quality seats for students from educationally disadvantaged communities by replicating to a new middle school.</i>							
<b>Performance Measure 1:</b> Replicate Hiawatha’s model to one new middle school by fall 2018.	Hiawatha has managed growth from one to four schools over the past ten years and has a clear plan for replicating to a second middle school.	Hiawatha has secured the staff, funding, and facility necessary to replicate to a second middle school.	✓				
<b>Performance Measure 2:</b> Expand the new middle school to serve 360 students in grades 5-8 by the end of the grant period.			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Objective 2: Create 78 high-quality seats for students from educationally disadvantaged communities by expanding Hiawatha Leadership Academy Northrop to serve grades K-4.</i>							
<b>Performance Measure 3:</b> Expand Hiawatha Leadership Academy Northrop to grade 4 in fall 2017.	Hiawatha has already launched Northrop and added one grade at a time over the past four years.	Hiawatha has historically met its expansion targets for all of the schools within the network through grade promotion and	✓				

<sup>6</sup> Assumes that the final CSP performance report will be delivered 90 days after the project period ends on 6/30/2022.



(1) Performance Measures	(2) Baseline and Rationale	(3) Ambitious and Achievable Performance Targets					
			6/18	6/19	6/20	6/21	6
<b>Performance Measure 4:</b> Create 78 new high-quality seats at Hiawatha Leadership Academy Northrop by fall 2017.		robust student recruitment and community engagement functions.	✓				
<i>Objective 3: Create at least 300 high-quality seats for students from educationally disadvantaged communities by expanding Hiawatha Collegiate High School to serve grades 9-12.</i>							
<b>Performance Measure 5:</b> Expand Hiawatha Collegiate High School to grade 11 in fall 2017 and to grade 12 in fall 2018.	Hiawatha launched the High School in 2016 and currently serves over 200 students. Hiawatha expects to add at least 100 students per year or more.	Hiawatha will accomplish this growth by adding grades 11-12 and by replicating to the second middle school, which will also feed into the high school. Hiawatha will also rely on its student recruitment and community engagement functions to attract new students to enroll in grade 9 and backfill any spots through grade 10.	✓	✓	✓		
<b>Performance Measure 6:</b> Expand enrollment at Hiawatha Collegiate High School by at least 300 students over the course of the five-year project period.			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Objective 4: Build upon Hiawatha’s record of closing historic achievement gaps for educationally disadvantaged students by evaluating the program and using ongoing performance feedback to drive improvements.</i>							
<b>Performance Measure 7:</b> During the grant period, Hiawatha will continue to serve	Hiawatha’s student population is currently 90% Free/Reduced Lunch, 97%	Hiawatha has maintained its commitment to serving educationally disadvantaged	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

(1) Performance Measures	(2) Baseline and Rationale	(3) Ambitious and Achievable Performance Targets	Data for CSP annual report				
			6/18	6/19	6/20	6/21	9/22 <sup>6</sup>
an educationally disadvantaged student population that is at least 80% Free/Reduced Lunch, 90% Black or Hispanic, and 50% English Language Learners.	Black or Hispanic, and 65% English Language Learners.	students as the network grew from one to four schools and will continue to do so through the CSP project period.					
<b>Performance Measure 8:</b> During the grant period, Hiawatha will continue to achieve an overall annual student retention rate of 85% or higher.	Over the past three years, Hiawatha's student retention rate has ranged from 86-88%.	This level of retention is high in a school of choice and will be difficult to reduce further due to external factors, primarily student mobility.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Performance Measure 9:</b> During the grant period, all subgroups of educationally disadvantaged students will outperform the state average proficiency rate in grades 4 and 8.	In 2015-16, all subgroups of educationally disadvantaged students with available data outperformed the state average proficiency rates in grades 4 and 8.	Maintaining this level of performance as the network scales is ambitious but achievable.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Performance Measure 10:</b> During the grant period, Hiawatha's K-8 students will outperform the national average growth rate on the MAP reading	For the past three years, Hiawatha's K-8 students outperformed the national average growth rate on the MAP reading and math	Maintaining high levels of growth over time is an ambitious goal when students are with a high-performing charter network for longer periods of time.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



(1) Performance Measures	(2) Baseline and Rationale	(3) Ambitious and Achievable Performance Targets	Data for CSP annual report				
			6/18	6/19	6/20	6/21	9/22 <sup>6</sup>
and math assessments.	assessments.						
<i>Objective 5: Achieve financial sustainability on public funds in all Hiawatha schools receiving CSP.</i>							
<b>Performance Measure 11:</b> Throughout the grant period, Hiawatha will maintain CSP cost efficiency by spending ≤\$3,400 of grant funds per student in its new middle school and ≤\$1,700 of grant funds in its expanding elementary school.	Hiawatha will allocate no more than the CSP maximum per student and school throughout the grant period.	Through effective budgeting and financial management, Hiawatha has maximized the cost efficiency of public and private funds and will continue to do so throughout the CSP project period.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Performance Measure 12:</b> Hiawatha Leadership Academy Northrop elementary school will achieve financial sustainability on public funds in school year 2018-19.	To date, all Hiawatha schools that have achieved full student enrollment have operated exclusively on public funds.	As Hiawatha scales, this financial model will continue to be a challenge to budget managers, but it is a path to long-term organizational sustainability to which the organization is fully committed and with which the organization has had substantial success to-date.		✓	✓		
<b>Performance Measure 13:</b> By the end of the grant period, Hiawatha's new middle school will be on track to achieve financial sustainability on public funds in school year 2022-23.							✓

### *Ongoing performance feedback*

Hiawatha applies the same focus on results and accountability to the network CMO as it does to each of its schools. Hiawatha is committed to constantly evaluating its CMO's work and learning from the results to improve.

The annual performance measures detailed above may be considered “summative” evaluations of the Charter Schools Program replication and expansion project. Hiawatha will also pursue an internal “formative” evaluation strategy to ensure that the network is maximizing its learning from ongoing performance feedback data and remains on track to accomplish the project objectives. These data are summarized in *Figure C.3*.

### **C.3: Data for ongoing performance feedback**

<b>Performance Data</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>‘18</b>	<b>‘19</b>	<b>‘20</b>	<b>‘21</b>	<b>‘22</b>
Criterion-referenced interim assessments in applicable grade levels	Oct, Dec, Mar	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Annual criterion-referenced state exams	Feb–May	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Daily average attendance rates	Aug–Jun	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Suspension and expulsion discipline data	Aug–Jun	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Annual student attrition/retention data	Jun	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Interim recruitment data and application statistics	Oct–Mar	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lottery and waitlist data	Apr	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
360 performance reviews for all staff	Nov, May	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Teacher observation and feedback data	Continuous	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Executive Director observations with principals	Quarterly	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bi-annual leadership visits to each school	Nov, Feb	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Annual independent auditor reports	Nov–Dec	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Annual authorizer evaluation	Jun	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Hiawatha Survey Data</b>						
<b>Built to Last:</b> Staff sustainability (workload, trust, autonomy, cultural competence and responsiveness)	Oct, Jan, May	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>State of Hiawatha:</b> Organization quality (state of self, team, and school)	Oct, Jan, May	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



## Replication and Expansion of High-Quality Charter Schools

February 2017

<b>Family Survey:</b> Family satisfaction (academics, college preparedness, safety, staff responsiveness, willingness to make referrals to Hiawatha)	Jan, May	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Student Survey:</b> Student satisfaction (academics, safety, trust, relationships with adults, student culture, character development)	Jan, May	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

A team led by Hiawatha’s Director of Data and Analytics oversees the collection and distribution of all of the “formative” data detailed in *Figure C.3*. The data are reviewed by schools and Hiawatha leadership, and they are summarized in a Key Performance Indicators Framework, which is reviewed monthly with Hiawatha’s governing Board of Directors. The Framework tracks measures in the following categories: organization viability and financial benchmarks; student culture; staff culture; parent engagement; student discipline; and academic achievement. The full Framework is available in *Appendix H-page23*.

### *Disseminating evaluation results*

Over the course of the grant period, Hiawatha will actively seek opportunities to share what it is learning from the Charter Schools Program grant evaluation with other charter operators and the broader public. As an example of this commitment to collaboration and sharing Hiawatha and Minneapolis Public Schools entered the first district-charter collaboration compact in the state of Minnesota in 2014. As part of the compact, Hiawatha trained district teachers on effective uses of the STEP literacy assessments. Hiawatha currently partners with high-performing schools serving disadvantaged student populations across Minneapolis to share information and facilitate student recruitment. Hiawatha leaders also participate in knowledge sharing partnerships such as the Achievement First Charter Network Accelerator program and annually host the Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce’s “Leadership Twin Cities” program.

Hiawatha has presented at panels such as the Teach to Lead Leadership Summit and a Summit Learning seminar.

## **D. Management Plan and Personnel**

### **(1) Responsibilities, timelines, and milestones**

Hiawatha has a historic record of replicating and expanding its schools over the past ten years. *Figure D.1* demonstrates a clear plan for achieving the proposed project objectives on time and within budget and includes clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

(Remainder of page intentionally left blank to accommodate Figure D.1. below)

**Figure D.1: Management plan responsibilities, timelines, and milestones**

Major Milestones & Project Tasks	Responsible <sup>7</sup>	Timing	GY1	GY2	GY3	GY4	GY5
<b>Launch a replication middle school</b>							
Secure facility for replication school site (complete)	HA	2016	N/A				
Recruit and hire replication school leadership	HA	By Jun 2017	N/A				
Recruit and hire replication school teaching and operations staff	HA, P, DO	Jan-Jun	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prepare replication school facility for launch	DO, HA	Jun-Aug	✓				
Open replication middle school facility	HA, P, DO	Jul	✓				
Plan replication middle school culture, curriculum, assessments	P, DO	Sep-Jul	✓				
Recruit and enroll replication middle school students	HA, P	Oct-Feb	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Raise funds to support replication school operating gap	HA	By Jun.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Create annual replication middle school budget	DO, HA	Jan-Apr	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Grow replication school by one grade each year	S, HA	By Aug.		✓	✓	✓	
<b>Expand Hiawatha Leadership Academy Northrop to serve grades K-4</b>							
Recruit and hire grade 4 teaching staff	HA, P, DO	By Jul 2017	N/A				

<sup>7</sup> Hiawatha network staff (HA); School (S); School Principal (P); School Director of Operations (DO).



## Replication and Expansion of High-Quality Charter Schools

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Major Milestones & Project Tasks	Responsible <sup>7</sup>	Timing	GY1	GY2	GY3	GY4	GY5
Launch grade 4	DO, HA	Aug 2017	N/A				
Plan expansion grade curriculum and assessments	P, HA	Jan-Jul 2017	N/A				
Create annual expansion school budget	DO, HA	Apr-Jun	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Raise funds to support expansion school operating gap	HA	By Jun.	✓				
Achieve financial sustainability at full school enrollment	DO, HA	Start Jun		✓			
<b>Hiawatha Network Services to Ensure School Quality and Sustainability</b>							
Manage and coach school leaders	HA	Weekly	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Monitor school data	HA	Ongoing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Conduct Hiawatha leader observations at each school and develop plans for ongoing improvement	HA, S	Quarterly	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Implement annual PD for all instructional staff	HA	Aug	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Recruit and hire network staff and school leaders	HA	Ongoing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Onboard and develop new hires	P, DO, HA	Jun-Aug	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Recruit students	HA, S	Oct-Mar	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Monitor and adjust school financial plans under supervision of Board of Trustees	HA, DO	Quarterly	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sustain, improve, expand network infrastructure (Facilities, IT, etc.)	HA	Ongoing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



## Replication and Expansion of High-Quality Charter Schools

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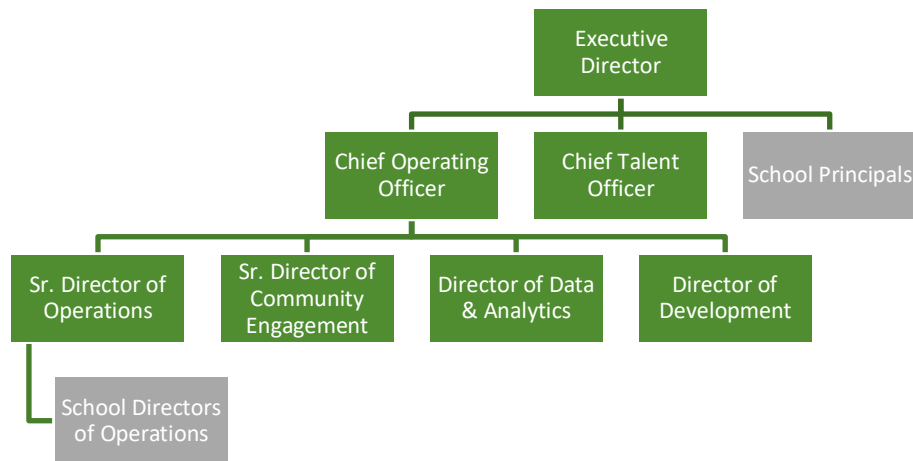
Major Milestones & Project Tasks	Responsible <sup>7</sup>	Timing	GY1	GY2	GY3	GY4	GY5
Develop Boards of Trustees as community liaisons and fundraising advocates	HA	Aug, Feb	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Evaluation Plan</b>							
Set strategic plans and goals for all teams and central staff	HA	Jul-Sep	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Administer state tests	S, HA	Feb-May	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Administer interim assessments	S	Oct-May	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Collect attainment and achievement data	HA	Jun-Oct	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Administer staff, organization, family, and student surveys	HA	Nov, April	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Maintain Key Performance Indicators Framework and review it with the governing Board of Trustees	HA	Monthly	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Facilitate independent auditor reports	HA	Nov-Dec	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Participate in authorizer network evaluation reports	HA	Jan-Mar	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Disseminate evaluation learnings at conferences, collaborations	HA	Ongoing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Oversight and Management of the CSP Grant</b>							
Project director and management team meet to monitor progress toward grant goals	HA	Monthly	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Train network and school staff in grant and financial administration	HA, DO	Oct-Dec	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Submit annual reports to U.S. Department of Education	HA	Jun	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



## (2) Qualifications of key personnel

Hiawatha's Charter Schools Program replication and expansion project will be led by a management team of highly qualified personnel. The project director will be Libby Stegger, Hiawatha's Director of Development. She will coordinate the members of Hiawatha's executive team and other key personnel listed in the organizational chart in *Figure D.3*.

**Figure D.3: Project management team organizational chart**



### **Elias Kramer – Executive Director**

Project Responsibilities – Mr. Kramer is responsible for the school and curriculum design and coaching school leaders to have strong academic practices, a rigorous curriculum, and strong student and adult culture.

Qualifications – Mr. Kramer has been the Executive Director of Hiawatha Academies since 2012. Before joining Hiawatha, Mr. Kramer was a founding Dean of Curriculum and Instruction with Uncommon Schools in New York. Prior to that, he taught for six years in New York City at the elementary and middle school level. Mr. Kramer was a 2003 Teach for America corps member in the Bronx, NY. He holds a B.A. in government from Harvard, a Master's in



Education from Bank Street College, and a Master's in Educational Leadership from Brooklyn College.

### **Sean Elder – Chief Operating Officer**

Project Responsibilities – Mr. Elder is responsible for all non-curricular functions of the project, including: facility acquisition and construction, financial management and annual budgeting, data reporting & analytics, external and community relationships, and student recruitment. He manages the Senior Director of Operations, the Senior Director of Community Engagement, and the Director of Data & Analytics and the Director of Development.

Qualifications - Mr. Elder joined Hiawatha in May 2011 and leads the non-academic operations of the Academies. Before joining Hiawatha, Sean was an Area Manager for Skyhawks Sports Academy, the nation's largest provider of youth sports programs and served several years as an Undergraduate Admissions Counselor at the University of Minnesota. Mr. Elder was a 2010 Fellow with Education Pioneers. An active community member, Mr. Elder currently sits on the Education Committee for the Greater Twin Cities United Way. He holds a B.A. in Sociology - Law, Criminology, and Deviance from the University of Minnesota and an M.B.A. from the University of St. Thomas.

### **Stephen Courchane – Senior Director of Operations**

Project Responsibilities – Mr. Courchane manages all school-based Directors of Operations, who oversee all non-instructional functions in Hiawatha schools, including budgeting, facilities, scheduling, and elements of student culture.

Qualifications – Prior to joining the Executive Team in this capacity in 2015, Stephen served for 3 years as Director of Operations at Hiawatha's flagship elementary school, Hiawatha



Leadership Academy-Morris Park. Before joining the Hiawatha Academies team in 2012, Stephen taught third grade in Jacksonville, FL, and worked as a School Operations Manager at Teach For America's 2011 Summer Institute. Stephen earned his B.A. in English at the University of Minnesota and is currently completing his M.B.A. at the University of St. Thomas.

### **Ambar Cristina Hanson – Senior Director of Community Engagement**

Project Responsibilities – Ms. Hanson oversees student recruitment, marketing, parent engagement and community collaborations.

Qualifications – Since moving to the U.S. from the Dominican Republic 18 years ago, Ms. Hanson has been dedicated to advocating for immigrant communities and communities of color to have equal opportunity and access to higher education, jobs that provide livable wages, health, housing and safety. Over the past ten years, Ms. Hanson advocated for domestic violence and sexual assault survivors through several roles at Casa de Esperanza and National Latino Network for Healthy Families and Communities. Ms. Hanson received the Mano Amiga Award from the Minnesota Latino Economic Development Center for her commitment and generous contribution of time and work in behalf of the Latino community. Ms. Hanson currently serves on the Board of the F.R. Bigelow Foundation. Ms. Hanson has a Master's degree in Public Administration from the University of Colorado and a B.A. in Spanish and Latin American Studies from the University of Wisconsin.

### **Vanessa Palmer – Director of Data & Analytics**

Project Responsibilities – Ms. Palmer leads a team of three staff who help Hiawatha to gather, analyze, and use data effectively. She is responsible for key elements of the evaluation plan such as the implementation of surveys and the analysis of assessment data.



**Qualifications** – Prior to joining Hiawatha, Ms. Palmer was the Research & Evaluation Manager in the Department of Organizational Learning at BPE, an urban teacher residency program. She previously taught high school chemistry and health in Baltimore and middle school science in Houston. Before and since her time in the classroom, she has worked as a researcher in education, bioanalytical chemistry, epidemiology, and Antarctic glaciology. Vanessa earned a B.S. in Chemistry from the University of Washington and an ScM from the Harvard School of Public Health.

**Dawn Gunderson Taylor – Chief Talent Officer**

**Project Responsibilities** – Develop and oversee implementation of talent recruitment, retention, and professional development strategies to support school leaders, train teachers, and support strong adult culture to ensure that every classroom and administrative position has high performing staff with high satisfaction and retention.

**Qualifications** – Ms. Gunderson Taylor was a Peace Corps volunteer in Ethiopia where she taught ESOL to grade ten students and a 2001 Teach For America corps member. She taught high school English for six years in Baltimore, Maryland, and returned overseas to continue teaching in Istanbul, Turkey. In 2008, Ms. Gunderson Taylor joined the staff of Teach For America where her work focused on alumni affairs for over seven years. Ms. Gunderson Taylor returned to the Midwest in the summer of 2015 and joined Hiawatha as Chief Talent Officer. Ms. Gunderson Taylor holds a Bachelor of Arts in English and a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing from Minnesota State University Moorhead.

**Libby Stegger – Director of Development and Project Director**



Project Responsibilities – Ms. Stegger will report to the U.S. Department of Education regularly and in a timely manner based on project reporting requirements. She will manage use-of-funds tracking processes and reporting progress to goals. Ms. Stegger is also responsible for securing the private charitable contributions necessary to complete the middle school replication project.

Qualifications – Ms. Stegger has seven years of nonprofit project management experience and has led Hiawatha Academies development work for two years, during which time she secured and managed a record-breaking amount of charitable and government funds, surpassing Hiawatha’s historical annual giving record by more than 50 percent. Ms. Stegger currently manages the MN Department of Education Charter School Expansion Sub-Grant for the expansion of Hiawatha’s high school program. She has a Master of Business Administration from Yale University and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Davidson College.

### **(3) Ability to sustain the replicated or expanded schools**

Replicating Hiawatha’s middle school model, expanding Hiawatha Leadership Academy-Northrop to serve grades K-4, and expanding Hiawatha Collegiate High School to serve grades 9-12 are part of a larger expansion plan that also included the initial replication to Northrop (now serving grades K-3) and the opening of the high school program (now open and serving grades 9-10).

At full enrollment, Hiawatha schools operate on the same public funds available to all other schools. While they are growing – i.e. opened in the last four years and are still adding one grade per year – Hiawatha schools run an intentional operating deficit. New schools are also allocated a Start-Up Budget that they manage with guidance from the CMO. Their Start-Up Budgets are intended to support costs associated with outfitting new classrooms and purchasing new



curriculum for the grade levels they add each year. The year after schools are fully enrolled, they no longer operate on Start-Up Budgets and are budgeted to be fully sustainable on public funds.

During the period when Hiawatha schools operate on Start-Up budgets, their public funds are supplemented with private philanthropy. In 2014, Hiawatha Academies conducted an Expansion Campaign feasibility study to determine the financial implications of pursuing its bold growth plan. Hiawatha engaged an outside consultant to conduct the study. The consultant interviewed 17 existing supporters and analyzed Hiawatha's giving history and gave a strong recommendation to move forward with the plan.

Hiawatha Academies kicked off its Expansion campaign in FY15. Hiawatha seeks to raise \$7.3 million to support scaling the network to 5 schools with over 2,000 scholars. Two and a half years into the campaign, Hiawatha has **received gifts totaling \$4.1 million (56% of goal)** and is on track to meet our fundraising needs. **An additional \$1 million in pledges** have been made contingent on continued academic strength and financial health. In the last fiscal year alone, Hiawatha received **gifts over \$5,000 from 31 family- and community-based foundations corporate foundations, and individual supporters.** The following major funders have a lasting relationship with Hiawatha Academies:

<b>Donor Name</b>	<b>Length of Relationship</b>
The Minneapolis Foundation	8 years
Frey Foundation	7 years
Walton Family Foundation	6 years
Piper Family Fund	6 years
RKMC Foundation	5 years
Dick and Joyce H. McFarland Family Fund	5 years
Albright Foundation	5 years
Target Corporation	3 years
Cargill Foundation	3 years
Great Minnesota Schools*	1 year



*\*Great Minnesota Schools is in its first year of operation. It is a collaboration of community funders seeking to close the achievement gap in Minneapolis by investing in growing high quality schools. Hiawatha was among its first major investments, and Great Minnesota Schools has made a four-year commitment to continuing to fund Hiawatha's growth contingent on continued strong performance.*

Hiawatha is grateful for its broad community and philanthropic support. Still, the network maintains its commitment to operating schools and the CMO home office on public funds once schools reach their full enrollment. A portion of the public funds each school receives (12% of the school's total budget) are paid to the Hiawatha CMO as management fees. Hiawatha has benchmarked this rate, as well as the size of its central office, with comparable networks nationally. For an accurate and aggregate benchmark, Hiawatha referred to Charter School Growth Fund's national portfolio. The average central office cost per student in CSGF's portfolio is \$2,000. Hiawatha's annual central office cost is \$1,400 per student.

By operating schools on public funds, operating a lean central office, and sustaining long-term relationships with dedicated funders, the Hiawatha replication and expansion project will be fully sustainable after the Charter Schools Program grant period.

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## **(V) Application Requirements**

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**(A)** Hiawatha currently operates four charter schools: two elementary, one middle, and one high.

**(B)(1-3)** Student assessment, attendance, retention, suspension and expulsion rates overall and by subgroup at each Hiawatha school are available in *Appendix F*.

**(B)(4)** Neither Hiawatha nor any of its schools has had any significant compliance or management issues in the last three years, including in the areas of student safety or compliance.

**(C)** No Hiawatha school has ever been closed, had its charter revoked, been disaffiliated, or experienced any significant problems with statutory or regulatory compliance that could lead to the revocation of a charter. Hiawatha has planned for such contingencies, as evidenced by the School Closure Plan in *Appendix E.-pages 124-136*.

**(D)** Hiawatha's proposed CSP project includes the replication to one new middle school and the expansion of two existing schools (one elementary and one high). The logic model for the project is available on page 34-35.

**(E)(1)** A description of the six pillars that constitute the Hiawatha educational program and how they will help all student to meet challenging academic and performance standards are described on page 31.

**(E)(2)** Hiawatha serves students in all grades K-12. The proposed CSP replication and expansion schools will serve students in grades 4-12.

**(E)(3)** Hiawatha does not currently operate and is not proposing to replicate or expand a single-sex charter school or coeducational charter school with a single-sex educational program. All Hiawatha students participate in the educational program defined by the six pillars described on



page 31. All students also benefit from the focus on literacy (page 8) within the Hiawatha educational program and an “AP for all,” college preparatory curriculum at the high school level.

**(F)** The replicated and expanded Hiawatha schools will be managed by the same operational, financial, personnel, and governance systems that support all existing Hiawatha schools. These functions are described on pages 46-50 and in the Decision Rights Framework in *Appendix H-page14*. Roles and responsibilities for project management and oversight are described in Section D (pages 42-51).

**(G)** All Hiawatha schools operate on public funds after reaching full enrollment and are therefore sustainable after the grant period ends. The Hiawatha home office is also sustainable after the grant period due to the 12% management fees paid by each school in the network. The Hiawatha sustainability model is detailed on pages 50-52, and a sample multi-year financial model is provided in *Appendix G*.

**(H)** Hiawatha solicits, considers, and includes in governance input from parents and other members of the community. Hiawatha’s Board of Directors has two permanent seats for parents, and a description of other parent engagement efforts is provided on pages 27 and 31. Letters of support from parents and community organizations are available in *Appendix C-pages1-3*.

**(I)** Hiawatha has an open enrollment process. In the event that there are more applicants than spots available, Hiawatha operates in accordance with the laws for conducting a lottery, and its policies are publically available on its website. Enrollment is determined based on the order selected from the lottery, and all new applications received during the October-February enrollment window are included in the lottery. Prior to accepting students by lottery, Hiawatha Academies provides enrollment preferences in the following situations:



- Siblings of currently enrolled students: Siblings of currently enrolled students have preference before children of staff, prior year waiting list students, and general lottery applicants. In the event of more siblings than spots available, a sibling lottery is held and establishes a sibling waiting list.
- Children of staff: Children of staff receive preference before prior year waiting list students and general lottery applicants. In the event of more children of staff applicants than spots available, a staff-children lottery is held and establishes a staff-children waiting list.

The lottery is conducted from highest grade to lowest grade to fill all available enrollment spots. The lottery is also continued in order to assign waitlist positions based on the order selected.

In the event that a family has multiple siblings applying for more than one grade, sibling preference will apply as soon as enrollment is determined in the lottery grade. In the event a sibling waiting list exists, the sibling of the general lottery enrolled student will be added to the sibling waitlist based on the order selected.

Returning students requesting transfer to another Hiawatha Academies network school will have preference before siblings, children of staff, prior year waiting list students, and general lottery applicants only for the purpose of keeping siblings together at the same school location. To be eligible for the advanced preference, a transfer request form must be completed by February 12. Transfer requests for all other purposes will receive the same preference as general lottery applications.

Applications received after the February enrollment deadline will be placed on the general waitlist on a first come first serve basis following the lottery process.



If enrolled in a first choice school, students will be taken off the waitlist of any other Hiawatha Academies school. If enrolled in a second choice school, students will remain on the waitlist for the first choice school selection. In the event that a spot becomes available in the first choice school, rolling enrollment will always be on a “top of the waiting list first” basis. All families are notified of their enrollment status in March.

In the event that a spot is open after the first day of school but before the last day of school, and there is a child on a waitlist waiting to fill that spot, rolling enrollment will be limited to the following windows, and during those windows will always be on a “top of the waiting list first” basis. Those windows are:

- From first day of school to September 15
- From January 1 – 15

**(J)** Hiawatha ensures that all eligible students with disabilities receive a free and appropriate public education in accordance with Part B of the IDEA using the procedures and academic program described on pages 28-30. Hiawatha actively recruits students with disabilities, as described on page 33.

**(K)** Educationally disadvantaged students will master State academic content and achievement standards through exposure to an academic program grounded in Hiawatha’s six pillars, described on page 31. These include: high expectations, expanded learning time, effective teaching, a focus on results and accountability, building character and leadership skills, and engaging parents as partners.

**(L)** Hiawatha’s planned activities are detailed in the project goals, objectives, and performance measures on pages 34-41, and its plan for expending Federal funds is available in the attached Budget Narrative.

**(M)** Hiawatha declines to request any waivers of Federal statutory or regulatory requirements.