

Annual Report 2013-2014

**Produced by Designs for Learning &
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Jennings Community Learning Center: Introduction

Jennings Community Learning Center Minnesota Independent School District #4031, has completed sixteen years as an independent charter school, and is pleased to present this annual report for the 2013-14 school year!

The Jennings Community Learning Centers vision statement is: *Global Experiences to Change Lives.*

The JCLC mission statement: *Jennings Community Learning Center students will work to become self-directed lifelong learners, productive workers, responsible citizens, and creative healthy individuals.*

At JCLC we strongly believe learning should take place within real-world, meaningful contexts, for students learn best through experience. This is accomplished at JCLC by providing students with rich project-based environments that allow them to explore their community first-hand; through extensive field learning experiences, community service projects, and investigation of real-world problems. Learning is exciting and critical to all students' lives and at JCLC we are committed to helping young people rediscover their innate passion for learning!

The balance of the report is organized around the ten required elements of charter school annual reports as specified by Minnesota statute (M.S. 124D.10, subd. 14), with additional information that will help readers understand this school.

School Enrollment and Student Attrition

Student Enrollment and Attrition Rates

This table identifies the number of students enrolled at the school during the 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14, and estimated 2014-15 enrollment. Data is based on October 1 enrollment.

The policy of Jennings Community Learning Center is to accept all students who request enrollment, as long as they are Minnesota residents and in grades 7-12. The Board has placed a cap on overall enrollment at 92. This has not yet been reached, but if it is reached students to be admitted will be selected by lottery, with the exception of sibling preference. Application/enrollment forms are available at the school or online at <http://www.jenningsclc.org/enroll.php>.

JCLC has a charter for grades 7-12 but until recently served only the high school grades. The school welcomes middle school students as well, and has begun to enroll them in small numbers. Middle-school students are integrated with high school students in the advisory settings. They

are also expected to propose and learn utilizing Project Based Learning methods, though with a concentration on the Minnesota standards in for 7th and 8th grade students. JCLC's 7th and 8th grade students are also eligible to attend all seminars and participate in trips and exhibitions.

School Year	8	9	10	11	12	Total	Growth Rate ¹
2011-12	3	2	9	7	39	60	-6%
2012-13	4	5	13	14	35	71	+18%
2013-14		2	7	18	47	74	+4%
Estimated 2013-14						70	-5%

It is worth noting that enrollment at JCLC typically climbs throughout the year, so that the October 1 figures included in the table above, will under-state the school's enrollment. Another notable characteristic of the JCLC student body is that seniors have been greatly over-represented during the past three years. As of October 1, 2014 JCLC had 81 students enrolled.

Governance, Management, and Director's PDP

Governance and Board Training

The Jennings Community Learning Center is governed by a six-member Board, with membership as noted in the table below.

2012-13 School Year Jennings CLC School Board

This table contains information for ALL board members.

2013-14 Election Date: October 2013

2014-15 Anticipated Election Date: October 2014

Jennings CLC's governing board has six members, as shown in the table below. In the fall of 2013 Board size was increased from five to six, with an additional teacher position added. Zack Fjelstad and Tony Simmons left the Board, and were replaced by Sam Eberhart and Greg Dodd.

Charter school board training was provided in March 2014 by Bryan Rossi of Education Consulting Services, Inc. All seated members attended this training which covered the three mandatory areas of governance, personnel, and finances.

¹ Calculated based on change from 10/1 of the previous school year to 10/1 of the reported school year, divided by the previous year's figure.

Name	Board Position, Group Affiliation	Date Seated	Term Expiration	Contact Information	Member Meeting Attendance Rate
Greg Dodd	Member; Community	Oct. 2013	Oct. 2015		5 / 7 meetings
Sam Eberhart	Member; Teacher (#473798)	Oct. 2013	Oct. 2015	sam@jenningsclc.org	8 / 8 meetings
Zach Fjelstad	Secretary; Teacher (#435722)	Oct. 2011	Oct. 2013	651 649-5403; zach@jenningsclc.org	1 / 1 meeting
Wayne Jennings	Chair; Teacher member (#093036)	Oct. 2012	Oct. 2014	651 644-2805; wayne@designlearn.net	9 / 9 meetings
Robert Nolan	Member; parent	Oct. 2012	Oct. 2014		7 / 9 meetings
Keara Scarver-Parker	Member; student	April 2013	June 2014		5 / 9 meetings
Sara Segar	Member; Teacher (443910)	April 2013	Oct. 2015	651 649-5403; sara@jenningsclc.org	8 / 9 meetings
Tony Simmons	Member; Community	Oct. 2011	Oct. 2013	651 287-0894; anthony@hsra.org	0 / 1 meeting

Management

Jennings Community Learning Center is managed by its director, in collaboration with the school's small staff.

2013-14 School Management and Faculty Information

The table below contains information for ALL members of the school management/administrative team and also includes faculty employed by the school that did not serve as a classroom teacher (e.g. curriculum coordinators, social workers, counselors, administrative assistance, paraprofessionals, custodial, technology, librarians, etc.)

Name	File Folder Number	Assignment	Years Employed by the School	Left During 2013/14	Not Returning 2014/15
Bill Zimniewicz	296323	Director	8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kenya Lopez	N/A	Administrative Assistant	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jessica Owen	N/A	Administrative Assistant	2	x	x

Director's Professional Development Plan

The JCLC Director is Bill Zimniewicz, who has a Masters degree in Teacher Leadership and has directed other programs previously, but does not have administrative licensure. He was enrolled in Hamline University's program for principals prior to suffering severe health issues in 2007, and has returned to these studies since.

Mr. Zimniewicz attends the Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs conference annually, and attends MDE trainings for charter school directors. He participates in the Pillsbury United Communities' Directors' Roundtable (monthly meetings of directors of charter schools authorized by Pillsbury), and has served on an advisory committee set up by Pillsbury to evaluate Pillsbury-authorized schools.

Staffing

2013-14 Teaching Faculty Information

The following table contains information for ALL teachers employed by the school or providing services contractually (e.g., special education teacher, reading specialist, speech therapist).

Name	File Folder Number	Assignment/ Subject	Left During 2013/14	Not Returning 2014/15
Sam Eberhart	473798	Advisor; Social Studies; multiple subjects with Innovative Program waiver	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Zachary Fjelstad	435722	Advisor; Special Education;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name	File Folder Number	Assignment/ Subject	Left During 2013/14	Not Returning 2014/15
		multiple subjects with Innovative Program waiver		
Val Honey	334763	Advisor; Mathematics; multiple subjects with Innovative Program waiver	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kristyn Martin	998591	Educational Assistant (Community Expert waiver)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sara Segar	443910	Advisor; Science; multiple subjects with Innovative Program waiver	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bill Zimniewicz	296323	Advisor; multiple subjects with Innovative Program waiver	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Jennings CLC's teaching staff remained stable throughout 2013-14. Sam Eberhart was new in the fall of 2013, while the other four were returning. All five advisors returned for the 2014-15 school year.

Finances

The below budget summary shows initial budget, approved by the Board in June 2013, and the actual final figures from audited Financial Statements. Final financial data shows the school completing Fiscal 2014 with a deficit of \$12,331. The small deficit for the year was due to expenses in a few areas being slightly higher than projected, and some revenue categories less than expected. However, JCLC retained a positive fund balance of \$167,683, which comes to 17.1% of expenditures.

Jennings Community Learning Center 2013-2014 Budget

	Original Budget 70 ADM	Final (actual) 78.65 ADM
FUND 01 - GENERAL FUND REVENUES		
State Sources	844,570	917,614
Federal Sources	59,0897	40,129
Local Sources	4,000	10,999

**Jennings Community Learning Center
2013-2014 Budget**

	Original Budget 70 ADM	Final (actual) 78.65 ADM
FUND 01 - Total Revenues	907,657	968,742
EXPENDITURES		
Current Expenditures		
Administration	112,247	124,341
District Support Services	112,303	124,396
Elementary and Secondary Regular Instruction	317,014	335,009
Special Education Instruction	81,936	99,792
Instructional Support Services	3,550	8,339
Pupil Support Services	30,995	38,988
Sites and Buildings	217,842	222,846
Fiscal and Other Fixed Cost Programs	11,415	15,546
Capital Outlay		
Capital Outlay	11,950	9,950
Debt Service		
Interest and Fiscal Charges	-	315
FUND 01 - Total Expenditures	899,252	979,522
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	8,405	(10,780)
Other Financing Uses		
Transfers Out	(8,405)	(1,551)
FUND 01 - GENERAL FUND Net Income	0	(12,331)
FUND 02 - FOOD SERVICE FUND		
REVENUES		
Federal Sources	11,150	25,914
State Sources	500	1,080
Local Sources: Other – Primarily Meal Sales	30	365
FUND 02 - Total Revenues	11,680	27,359
EXPENDITURES		
Current: Food Service	20,085	28,910

**Jennings Community Learning Center
2013-2014 Budget**

	Original Budget 70 ADM	Final (actual) 78.65 ADM
Deficiency of Revenues under Expenditures	(8,405)	(1,551)
OTHER FINANCING SOURCES		
Transfer in	8,405	1,551
FUND 02 - FOOD SERVICE FUND Net Income	0	0
Net Income - All Funds	0	(12,331)

Academic Performance

Program Summary

The Jennings Community Learning Center program is built around six key program features: Small School; Travel; Global Awareness; Focused Education; Reflection; and Academic Content and Credits.

JCLC’s educational program has been revised several times since the school’s inception in the fall of 1998. Since 2008-09 JCLC has utilized a project-based learning model supplemented by traditional instruction in core areas. JCLC seeks on an ongoing basis to revise the program so as to improve the school, ensuring powerful and effective learning experiences for all. To this end, school leadership seeks to assess every aspect of the school including personnel, facilities, operations, assessment data use, and technology.

The curriculum has been revised in a way that shows academic progress throughout the year consistent with the Minnesota State Standards. Goal setting and updating of student progress/credits earned are now done quarterly. To track student progress toward graduation, JCLC uses a credit system, in which one credit is generally equivalent to one semester’s work. Students can also earn fractions of credits. When teacher/advisors award students credit, much is contemplated. How comprehensive or complex was the project? How many hours did the student document? What was the quality level of the final product? What Minnesota Grad Standards were completed? For seminars, trips, and service learning activities, the same questions are addressed. Other learning requirements—viewed as essential for youth—have been added to the curriculum. JCLC students are now required to demonstrate how they have met four

Transformational Learning Outcomes² before graduation (this requirement was addressed by advisors during 2013-14, and added as a formal graduation requirement for 2014-15).

Another new requirement that has been in place since 2011-12 is for for seniors to complete a three-credit capstone project before graduating. The senior project requirement continued through 2013-14, and includes a special presentation night for senior projects only. Senior projects now include Transformational Learning Outcomes, and incorporate more of an emphasis on career/work and college readiness.

Beginning in 2012-13 JCLC has moved away from an exclusive emphasis on project-based learning. Education at JCLC includes traditional teaching, via courses referred to as seminars. The seminars are offered by each advisor and focus on specific learning outcomes linked to the state graduation standards. Seminars are typically inter-disciplinary, allowing students to meet standards and earn credits in multiple areas. This practice was implemented and found to be effective during 2012-13. For 2013-14, JCLC provided the seminars during the same hour each day, and required every student to be enrolled in a seminar. This approach will continue for 2014-15.

More details regarding successful elements of the academic program are provided below, in the Program Successes section.

Travel away from the school site remains an important part of the JCLC program! JCLC staff seek to ensure that all students have the opportunity to travel, encouraging students who have not yet taken trips through the school to do so when the next travel experience is being planned. Major trips are connected with a seminar, in which students do research in advance on topics connected with the place they will visit. There were trips off-campus for learning experiences in a wide variety of settings during 2013-14, including:

- Boundary Waters Canoe Area, northern Minnesota (seven students, four days). There were two trips to the Boundary Waters, fall and spring.
- Trip to New York City to learn about a large city and culture, in the fall (four students).
- Trip to New Orleans and the Louisiana bayou with a focus on learning about environment and culture including jazz music, in the spring (eight students)
- Small trips to several closer locations, for camping, visits to post-secondary schools, and learning about careers.
- JCLC students continued to participate in MAAP STARS (Success, Teamwork, Achievement, Recognition, and Self-esteem) events. The fall MAAP event focuses on

² Developed in the 1990s with New American Schools funding, the Community Learning Centers model calls for all students to meet Transformation Learning Outcomes by becoming a: Responsible Citizen; Productive Worker; Self-Directed Lifelong Learner; and Creative, Healthy Individual.

leadership, teamwork and how to participate in STARS. There is a Legislative Day in the winter, for which students write to and make appointments with their state legislators, then visit them at the state capitol. At the spring MAAP conference, students from across the state compete and participate in two days of activities showcasing their skills in the Minnesota Standards along with artistic, career and life skills. Many activities are career or work related (e.g. interviewing, public speaking, management decision making). Participants make individual and group presentations and compete for awards.

- JCLC continued its partnership with Northern Lights Community School, a project-based charter school in Warba, northern Minnesota. JCLC students and staff visited Northern Lights, and students and staff from their school visited JCLC.
- Service learning / leadership tour through Wisconsin, Illinois and Missouri – this was a tour with students from other schools which four JCLC students joined; they traveled by bus, staying in churches and dorms and undertaking service projects for various organizations.

Academic Goals and Indicators, 2013-14

Jennings CLC had three Academic Goals in 2012-13, in Reading, Mathematics, and Post-Secondary Assessments. There were also six non-academic goals, which are discussed in the Operational Performance section below. The Academic goals and targets were as follows:

Reading Goal

- **Target 1:** At least 50% of JCLC students who are continuously enrolled from October 1 will meet or exceed their Growth Targets on the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) test in Reading.
- **Target 2:** At least 80% of JCLC students who are continuously enrolled from October 1 will complete their Reading Plans as tracked in Project Foundry.

Math Goal

- **Target 1:** At least 50% of JCLC students who are continuously enrolled from October 1 will meet or exceed their Growth Targets on the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) test in Mathematics.
- **Target 2:** At least 80% of JCLC students who are continuously enrolled from October 1 will complete their Mathematics Plans as tracked in Project Foundry.

Post-Secondary Assessments Goal

- **Target 1:** At least 90% of JCLC juniors and seniors will have taken the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) or the Accuplacer by the end of the 2013-14 school year. The ASVAB and Accuplacer are alternative assessments that can now

qualify students to meet graduation requirements. JCLC will provide opportunities for students to take both assessments.

- **Target 2:** At least 25% of JCLC seniors will take the ACT or SAT by the end of the 2013-14 school year.

In the case of the Academic Goals, the second Targets were not completed as planned due to changes in JCLC's reading and math programs and lack of capacity in Project Foundry. The post-secondary assessments were administered as planned, but small numbers of students took them, such that the ambitious targets were not met.

Results on the Academic Goals are summarized below.

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Reading results

JCLC used the Northwest Evaluation Association's MAP test as a tool to track student learning in Reading and Math during 2013-14, for the fourth consecutive year. The MAP is a well-known norm-referenced test that measures student abilities in areas covered by the state academic standards. An amount of "projected growth," to the next test window, is identified based on a "pre" test score, in this case the Fall result, which was then compared with spring "post" test results. Growth norms for this test are created by NWEA, based on large samples of students who take the tests nationwide, such that every student has a 50% chance of meeting or exceeding the Growth Target. Thus, if more than 50% of students at a given school are meeting or exceeding their growth targets, the school as a whole has out-performed the national norming group for that subject.

Thirty-three students took the Reading MAP in the fall of 2013; 18 took the test in the spring, and only eight students took it both test seasons. Of the eight students who took the Reading MAP both times during 2013-14, just one met targeted growth, so JCLC did not meet this target. With this small a group of students, the result is not necessarily representative of student learning.

JCLC staff have observed severely test-adverse behavior by many students, especially in the spring, toward the end of the school year and after having taken tests such as the MCA's and college-placement tests. School leadership discussed this in the spring, and planned for changes in 2014-15 to encourage more-consistent participation and effort. The MAP will be the responsibility of Advisors during 2014-15, to ensure that their advisees take the test, and the spring MAP will be given in April rather than May.

Reading plans as tracked in Project Foundry

JCLC's initial plan for 2013-14 was for each student to have a Reading Plan for the year, to be tracked in Project Foundry; with the expectation that at least 80% of students who are continuously enrolled throughout the year will complete their Reading Plans. However, the program shifted in focus, from individual plans toward group reading, in which all students participated.

Beginning in the spring of 2013 and continuing throughout the 2013-14 school year, JCLC established reading groups, in which a group of students, with guidance from one of JCLC's advisors, read a book together and discuss. The reading groups are supported by purchasing sets of high-interest books. The sizes of the groups were from three to twelve students, and there are a variety of types of books, both fiction and nonfiction. The groups meet at staggered times so students are able to participate in more than one.

Reading continues to present challenges, as many students are far behind in their reading skills upon enrollment at JCLC and hence are unable to meet academic expectations in reading. In addition to the reading groups, JCLC students are able to earn credits through individual reading, reading across content areas, and reading in the course of projects.

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Mathematics results

Forty-five students took the Math MAP in the fall of 2013; 21 took the test in the spring, and only eight students took it both test seasons. Of the eight students who took the Math MAP both times during 2013-14, three met targeted growth, so JCLC did not meet this target.

The caveats noted in the section on MAP results in Reading apply here as well: data from this small a number of students are not necessarily representative of the whole student population, and many students may not have tried their best on this assessment.

Mathematics plans as tracked in Project Foundry

In Math as well as Reading, each student was to have an annual individualized Plan, tracked and updated by advisors, and including goals and instructional activities in math, individualized to meet students' needs. However, while students did have math plans in their PLP, the plans were not consistently implemented and tracked.

Creating an effective math program for our student population has been an ongoing challenge for JCLC. Assessment and observational data consistently shows that many students attended school sporadically before enrolling at JCLC, and are far behind in basic academic skills, especially

mathematics. Alternative means of communicating key math concepts, through inquiry-based and hands-on activities, are likely to help such students learn essential concepts in math.

To reach goals in math, students work with their advisors to identify specific steps they will take to improve their math knowledge. Students' math programming may include math courses, Khan Academy and APEX Math as online options, math work packets, or small instructional seminars. In addition to the labs and individualized projects there are upper level seminars, and a Final Project by which growth in math knowledge is to be demonstrated by the end of the school year. JCLC hired a full time math specialist for 2014-15, to continue building the program in this area.

Additional Data on Academic Progress

Alternative strategies for gauging student productivity are to analyze the proportion of time students spend on-task, and the number of credits they earn. Time-on-task is tracked by JCLC teacher-advisors in a time tracking app that has been customized for the school; each day, each advisor records proportion of time on-task, of the 6 hours in the school day, for their advisees who were present that day. Students may earn additional credit in terms of time-on-task if they complete projects in less time than projected or if they work additional hours outside the school day. For any given quarter, a handful of students will have over 100% time-on-task.

Credits are awarded on a quarterly basis; a student making the expected progress toward graduation will earn 2.5 credits per quarter. It is worth noting, however, that JCLC serves many students with multiple risk factors such as homelessness, involvement with the legal system, and a history of inconsistent school attendance prior to enrolling at JCLC. About one-fourth of the students have active IEPs.

The tables below show percentage of time-on-task and credits earned, by quarter, for students who were continuously enrolled throughout that quarter. The first table shows those who were in attendance at least 60% of the time³; the second limits the listing to those with at least 75% attendance. This data shows that both time-on-task and credits-earned figures are better when limited to students attending more consistently. Also, the number of students continuously enrolled for the quarter increased each quarter throughout the year, showing growth in the proportion of students attending.

³ Percent-of-attendance is calculated based on the whole time the student was enrolled, not separately calculated for each quarter.

JCLC 2013-14 Student Productivity and Credits Earned			
	Number of students continuously-enrolled and with at least 60% attendance	Average % time-on-task	Average credits earned
1 st Quarter	35	89%	2.35
2 nd Quarter	43	83%	2.15
3 rd Quarter	49	80%	1.59
4 th Quarter	57	54%	2.15

JCLC 2013-14 Student Productivity and Credits Earned			
	Number of students continuously-enrolled and with at least 75% attendance	Average % time-on-task	Average credits earned
1 st Quarter	22	90%	2.56
2 nd Quarter	29	85%	2.22
3 rd Quarter	34	89%	1.75
4 th Quarter	38	64%	2.3

Post-Secondary Assessments – ASVAB or Accuplacer

The first Post-Secondary Assessment target called for at least 90% of juniors and seniors to take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) or Accuplacer by the end of the school year. Review of JCLC attendance data showed there were 43 juniors and seniors who remained continuously enrolled throughout the school year. Nine of these students took the ASVAB, and four took the Accuplacer.

JCLC now expects all seniors who choose college as their career plan to take the Accuplacer; this is being administered at St. Paul College several times during the year (also, every junior is expected to take the ACT beginning the 2014-15 school year). JCLC is also scheduling the ASVAB, to be administered at the school during the spring of 2015. With these strategies in place, the school expects to meet the 90% target for post-secondary assessments in 2014-15.

Post-Secondary Assessments – ACT or SAT

The second Post-Secondary Assessment target called for at least 25% of seniors to take the ACT or SAT by the end of the 2013-14 school year. Only four JCLC students took the ACT during 2013-14 (none took the SAT); so this goal was not met. However, for 2014-15 every junior will be expected to take the ACT, which will be administered at the school in April. The school will also help seniors who wish to do so, to take the ACT.

Operational Performance

Non-Academic Goals and Indicators, 2013-14

In addition to its three Academic Goals, Jennings CLC had six non-academic goals, addressing the following areas: Financial, Operations, Governance, Family Engagement, the Hope Study, and Community Integration. The six non-academic goals and results were as follows:

- **Financial Goal:** During Fiscal Year 2014, JCLC will increase its fund balance by at least 5%.

JCLC's total unrestricted fund balance as of 6/30/13 was \$180,104; per Fiscal 2014's audited financial report, this declined by \$12,331 during FY14 so unrestricted fund balance as of 6/30/14 was \$167,683. With the Fund Balance declining during Fiscal 2014, JCLC did not meet this target. However, the remaining Fund Balance as of the end of the Fiscal year represents 17% of expenditures, so JCLC retained a healthy positive fund balance at the end of Fiscal 2014. As of winter 2015, JCLC's Fund Balance is projected to increase by approximately \$25,000 for Fiscal 2015.

- **Operations Goal:** Each Advisor at JCLC will develop and lead at least one seminar per quarter. The seminars focus on specific learning outcomes linked to the state graduation standards. Seminars are typically inter-disciplinary, allowing students to meet standards and earn credits in multiple areas. For 2013-14, JCLC is planning to offer the seminars during the same hour each day, and require every student to be enrolled in a seminar.

This goal was accomplished with Advisors developing and leading seminars each quarter. Seminars that were offered during 2013-14 included:

- Themed Photography
- Shakespeare's Othello
- Journalism
- Stars
- Driver's Education
- Psychology 101
- U.S. History Beyond the Textbook
- Harlem Renaissance
- Academy Awards Documentaries
- Independent Project-Based Learning

- Maps and Cartography
 - Cooking on a Budget
 - Debate
 - Pinterest Projects
 - Research Paper Writing
 - Physical Education
 - Cultures
 - Build a Circuit
 - Chess
 - Hero's Journey
 - Theater Performance
 - Build a stage
 - Money, Money, Money
- **Governance Goal:** The JCLC Board will schedule at least two planning meetings to review and update the school's Strategic Plan. The 2013-14 year is year 2 of JCLC's five-year Strategic Plan.

The Board did hold meetings to review and update the strategic plan as planned. This was done in conjunction with board training.

- **Family Engagement Goal:** At least 30% of JCLC students will plan and execute one student led parent-student-advisor conference during the 2013-14 school year.

This was a goal in 2012-13 but was not carried out. The plan for 2013-14 was to pilot student-led conferences in 2013-14, beginning with students who have been enrolled longer, however this was not done to any great extent. JCLC advisors did note that more parents than ever joined them for advisory conferences during 2013-14.

- **Hope Study Goal:** JCLC students who remain continuously enrolled will show positive differences in the Hope Study indicators; JCLC students will continue to show higher Hope Study ratings than students at traditional schools.

The EdVisions Hope Study is based on research into factors that determine students' overall outlook. It uses a combination of survey items to assess students' status on several variables which are factors important to success in school and in life. The survey variables are

Autonomy, Belongingness, Goal Orientation, Academic Press, Engagement, and Hope. The following are average Hope scores (the scale for which is 0-64) over the past three years:

	JCLC	All EdVisions Schools	Traditional Schools
2012	50.02	50.68	49.93
2013	50.26	50.77	49.53
2014	49.38	49.15	

- **Community Integration Goal:** JCLC will carry out outreach activities by participating in at least three major community events during 2013-14.

This goal was accomplished with JCLC staff and students participating in three Midway Chamber of Commerce luncheons. Also, two students served as interns at the St. Anthony Community Council, and JCLC community-representative board member helped a number of students get internships with St. Paul Parks and Recreation.

Program Successes

Some of the successes and best practices in place at Jennings CLC during 2013-14 included the following.

Establishment of reading groups, described above in the Academic Goals and Indicators section, continued to work well through 2013-14. The reading groups effectively promote reading and encourage more interest in reading on the part of most JCLC students.

Physical education and health continue to be a major priority at JCLC. Beginning during 2012-13 and continuing through 2013-14, JCLC provides weekly walking and other physical activities with students, sometimes at a St. Paul Parks and Recreation facility. JCLC also offers nutritional seminars, with the intent of combating diabetes and obesity in youth. Student projects may focus on health as well; e.g. smoking-cessation. A yoga class is held twice a week, and volleyball or basketball three times per week.

The school continued to press positive working relationships with students. Student retention is good overall; students who are succeeding in the program tend to remain for multiple years. One of the program’s successes in 2013-14 was in travel-based learning with several successful trips

carried out during the year. As described above in the “Program Summary” section, trips undertaken by JCLC students during 2013-14 included:

- Boundary Waters Canoe Area, northern Minnesota (fall and spring).
- New York City
- New Orleans and the Louisiana bayou
- Small trips to several closer locations, for camping, visits to post-secondary schools, and learning about careers
- MAAP STARS (Success, Teamwork, Achievement, Recognition, and Self-esteem) events, fall and spring.
- Northern Lights Community School, northern Minnesota
- Service learning / leadership tour through Wisconsin, Illinois and Missouri

Presentation nights, at which students presented to the community on their completed projects, also went well during 2013-14 with more parents and more community members attending.

Extensive renovations to JCLC’s facility were planned during the spring of 2014 and carried out in the summer, to physically divide out spaces for the advisories, with a central meeting and presentation area. This space is well-suited for student presentations and other all-school events. JCLC was able to renegotiate its lease, obtaining a ten-year lease for the building and spreading the cost of improvements over the course of the lease such that annual cost-per-square-foot declined.

Advisors noted there was more interest in higher education, among JCLC graduates and recent graduates. Trips during the year included travel to Gustavus Adolphus college. Career learning, including planning for post-secondary education, is included in the JCLC curriculum. JCLC had two students earning credits through Post-Secondary Enrollment Options, one at Minneapolis Community and Technical College and one at St. Paul College. To encourage students to build life skills for employability, JCLC offers assistance to its older students in creating resumes during 2012-13, and supports them in researching and applying for part time jobs

JCLC students continued to participate in MAAP STARS (Success, Teamwork, Achievement, Recognition, and Self-esteem). Five JCLC students attended the fall MAP STARS conference at Camp Ripley, central Minnesota. Nine JCLC students competed in the MAAP STARS Spring Conference in April, where they won six medals and three plaques. At this conference, students from across the state compete and participate in a number of activities, many of which are career or work related (e.g. interviewing, public speaking, management decision making).

About twelve JCLC students participated in Legislative Day at the State Capitol.

JCLC's connections with area business and organizations continued strong during 2013-14. The JCLC director continues to attend meetings of the Midway Chamber of Commerce and the local community council, bringing students along as well. In the fall of 2013, JCLC students attended the Midway Chamber's conference where they connected with community organizations; representatives of several local organizations were invited to visit the school. During 2013-14 JCLC also developed a connection with the St. Anthony Park Community Council, and with the Keystone Center Food Shelf.

JCLC students created another University Avenue-themed calendar in 2013-14, through a group project. The calendar focused on contemporary University Avenue (in contrast to the previous year's calendar which documented the history of the street, done in collaboration with the Ramsey County Historical Society). The students organized and designed the calendar, with assistance from a consultant in graphic design.

JCLC's core teaching staff was enhanced with the additional of a fifth teaching position, filled by an experienced math specialist. Teaching staff remained stable through the 2013-14 school year, and all five teachers returned for 2014-15.

JCLC continued to maintain a positive fund balance, though there was a small deficit for the fiscal year as noted above.

Senior capstone projects continued as an effective practice during 2013-14. Students are responsible for identifying and describing the project, which culminates in a research paper / write-up of results and public presentation. Project topics during 2013-14 included:

- Wind tunnel construction (this student is now a freshman enrolled in the Aeronautical Engineering program at University of Colorado)
- Radiation study of the local environment using a Geiger counter
- Two students trained for and participated in a US Army-designed obstacle course, requiring intensive exercise outdoors during winter
- Gardening project – gardening / landscaping behind the JCLC building, including maintaining the garden throughout the summer
- Study of lightning as an energy source including power plant design and video
- Nursing project – student shadowed working nurses at four different facilities and wrote up result
- College exploration including enrolling in post-secondary options
- Life skills / parenting project

A review of 2013-14 student data in February 2015 showed a total of 15 graduates; three students who were seniors in the spring of 2014 have graduated from JCLC since. Of the graduates, three are currently attending prestigious four-year universities; one is attending a

community college, and one has completed basic training in the US Army. Of the others whose current status is known, at least five are employed. Several seniors from 2013-14 remain enrolled at JCLC and are close to graduating.

Program Challenges

Jennings Community Learning Center faced a number of challenges during 2013-14, some of the most significant of which are noted below.

One challenge was that JCLC's school space was less than optimal during 2013-14, with increased student enrollment and noise levels leading to more disruptions. There were significant behavior issues during 2013-14, with a handful of students' negative behavior impacting the school. For the first time, JCLC made the decision to exclude a number of students from re-applying to attend in 2014-15.

A related challenge was that due to building construction during the summer of 2014, JCLC's phone lines were disconnected for much of the summer, specifically from June 12 through mid-August. This interfered with the school's ability to recruit students and to communicating with returning students; some were unable to contact JCLC by phone and believed the school may have closed.

It remains challenging to get students comfortable with the mode of learning employed at JCLC, in which students work in an office-like environment, and are expected to take responsibility for their learning. Many students are not used to project-based learning and taking responsibility for their own education; not all thrive in this environment. Obtaining participation and engagement of students can be challenging – students are expected to choose activities that interest them, but may choose not to take any of the options. To meet this challenge, JCLC continues to offer a range of learning modes including direct-instruction options such as small seminar-type classes, in addition to project-based learning.

Obtaining consistent and on-time student attendance continues to be a significant challenge at JCLC. JCLC serves a population of students with many challenges stemming from difficult home lives. At least one-third of JCLC students qualify as homeless and highly mobile, and a number have significant health issues that impact their ability to attend school. Many students lack personal identification necessary. This creates a significant barrier for many of our students in moving forward with their lives, since personal ID is required to obtain a drivers' license, open a bank account or apply for a job. To help address this, during 2013-14 JCLC was able to utilize a community supporter who spent a couple of hours per week working with students to

get birth certificates if needed, then obtain a social security card and/or state ID card. He also helped students set up bank or credit union accounts.

The scale of the program continues to present challenges; JCLC's small staff (instructional staff consist of five teacher/advisors plus the director) makes it hard to cover when anyone is absent. For instance, one of the advisors was gone on maternity leave in the spring. Another challenge was created by the departure of JCLC's administrative assistant in the spring.

Related to the above, student management of time in a project-based learning environment is a particular challenge. JCLC staff have realized they need to explicitly teach skills needed to complete a project and to do self-directed learning in general. Beginning in 2012-13, one of the advisors has offered a seminar on how to complete a project, focusing on gathering and organizing data and other skills needed for self-directed learning; JCLC continues to explore how best to support students in doing projects. Beginning this year, JCLC advisors have begun tracking student time, as described above in the section on Academic Goals and Indicators / Additional Data on Academic Progress.

As the culmination of student projects, presentation nights, at which students present their projects to the school community, are an important part of the program. Getting parents to come to presentation nights has been challenging; JCLC did see an increase in numbers of parents attending in 2013-14, as well as community members. As part of an effort to improve the quality of student presentations, a seminar on presenting was offered in 2013-14, utilizing feedback by videotape on practice presentations. Another challenge relating to students presentations was with the adequacy of the presentation space; this was addressed through the building renovations carried out during the summer of 2014.

The writing program continues to present challenges at JCLC; the advisors strive to get students to express themselves in writing but this remains a struggle. JCLC continues to offer multiple seminars focusing on writing, including writing projects to culminate in producing a desktop-published booklet organized around the student's life experiences (through Blurb Books). All seniors are required to include a writing component in their capstone project; seniors who are in a college-bound track each write a research paper. New in 2013-14, JCLC offered spoken word seminars with a professional guest artist, through which students were guided in creating original poetry expressing their experiences, using authentic voice.

Many JCLC students didn't make expected progress in reading or math. The school's responses to the challenge in these academic areas are described above, in the *Academic Goals and Indicators, 2013-14* section.

Promoting healthy foods and physical fitness is a challenge faced by JCLC, like many urban high schools. Students have easy access to junk-food. Staff have decided to take this challenge on, promoting healthy foods by removing vending machines from the school, seeking to reduce snacking and providing healthy snacks for students (soft drinks are no longer available at the school, but there is bottled water). One of the advisors is acting as the leader in this initiative, and a trainer from a program called “Learning to Live,” addressing team-building and life skills, is offered two days every other week. A health and fitness seminar educates students about food, effects of foods on the body, and health generally. A fitness area is now included in the school, and there is the expectation that students engage in one hour of physical activity per day.

Authorizer

Jennings Community Learning Center’s authorizer is Pillsbury United Communities. The 2013-14 school year was the third year of JCLC’s authorizer contract with Pillsbury; the contract was renewed in the spring of 2014 for another term, this time for four years.

Authorizer contact is Larry McKenzie (mckenziel@puc-mn.org; 612 302-3409).

Non-profit Status

Jennings Community Learning Center is a nonprofit corporation registered as a Charity with the Minnesota Attorney General’s office. Its current status is active; see <http://www.ag.state.mn.us/Charities/CharitySearch.asp>. JCLC also is a tax-exempt “501(c)3” organization recognized by the Internal Revenue Service.

Innovative Practices and Implementation

As a project-based urban school that facilitates student learning through frequent travel to remote sites, Jennings Community Learning Center is a highly innovative charter school! In addition to the project-based and field-learning focus, described elsewhere in this report, innovative practices JCLC had in place during 2013-14 included:

- JCLC students continued to participate in the MAAP STARS (Success, Teamwork, Achievement, Recognition, and Self-esteem) Spring Conference.
- All staff attended the Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs conference in the winter of 2013; non-staff members of the JCLC board were invited as well. JCLC’s participation in MAAP has continued strong since, with JCLC teachers filling the positions of MAAP Chair and Treasurer for the 2014-16 term.

- JCLC seeks to build partnerships with organizations serving the homeless, connecting with these organizations via the Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless. This effort was in response to staff's realization that many of our students are homeless, and that the school needs to more effectively serve these students. JCLC staff provide resources for homeless students, and continue to expand their knowledge base regarding what's available.
- JCLC helps students build job skills by supporting them in creating resumes and applying for entry-level positions. JCLC continues to work to provide internships for its students. During 2013-14 JCLC students had internships with St. Paul Parks and Recreation, the Humane Society and the Martin Luther King Center among others.
- Reading groups, described above in the Academic Goals and Indicators section, were another innovative feature, in place since the spring of 2013.
- JCLC is improving its utilization of technology. Every student has a computer, with Microsoft Office installed, to use at their personal work station (one-to-one student to computer ratio).
- Presentation nights continue to be an important feature of the program. At these events students give demonstrations and lectures to other students, parents, staff and community highlighting projects they have completed at JCLC.

Future Plans

Some of the plans put in place during 2013-14, for continuing and enhancing the program in 2014-15 and future years, are described elsewhere in this report. In general, most of the practices in place for 2013-14 have continued during the 2014-15 school year. Another new element that was put in place during 2014-15 was provision of a theater performance project, using an outside consultant who worked with students to create original short theater pieces. Also, JCLC planned a community garden during 2013-14, and has obtained a garden plot for the 2015 season.

As we complete this annual report it is March 2015; the 2014-15 school year in general has gone well. However, school leadership is planning a staff retreat for June 2015, to consider how to revise and improve the program moving into the future. The Community Learning Centers model, including the Transformational Outcomes, will be retained, as will the practice of learning through off-site travel, but other aspects of the program will be up for re-consideration. We anticipate building consensus among staff and other school stakeholders, for innovative strategies to guide and strengthen in the 2015-16 school year and beyond.