



# **2013-2014 Annual Report**

## **District 4152-07**

Respectfully submitted by the Board of Directors  
to the Minnesota Department of Education and  
the Twin Cities German Immersion School Community

# **Draft Annual Report**

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## 1. Background and Overview

Twin Cities German Immersion School (TCGIS) continues to develop into a flourishing, tuition-free public charter school located in Saint Paul, Minnesota. We opened in 2005 with two grades and in the 2013-2014 school year completed our second year as a fully articulated K-8 school. The most recent exciting development for the school is the completion of a 24,000 square foot addition connecting the two buildings of our permanent home located in the South Como Park neighborhood. Amidst the stress and demands of a move and construction project in the 2013-2014 school year, ***Twin Cities German Immersion School achieved its highest ever academic scores on the statewide Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments, achieving highest in the state as a district.*** The community, School Board and administration are excited about the future of TCGIS as it solidifies its place as a premier public German immersion school in the state of Minnesota, the only one of its kind.

According to representatives of the German government responsible for interacting with German language schools worldwide, TCGIS continues to be the fastest growing German language primary school, outside of Germany. At the close of the 2013-2014 school year, TCGIS enrolled 371 students in grades K-8 and graduated 11 students in the grade 8 class.

Our full immersion program utilizes German as the language of instruction beginning in kindergarten and Spanish is offered as a third language elective in the middle school, continuing as one of the few public schools in the nation to provide this level of language instruction in the early instructional years.

New in the 2013-2014 school year, TCGIS accepted federal money to implement a Title I program. With this program, TCGIS identified students who did not meet or only partially met the Minnesota state standards in reading and math. The program then provides additional instructional support with the goal of having all students make grade level proficiency on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments in reading and math. While not all students reached proficiency in the 2014 tests, great advances were made and the school finished with the highest test scores in the state for districts on the MCA tests.

The 2013-2014 school year was one of new beginnings. We left behind our second rental space on University Avenue and made a permanent move into the South Como Park community. Moreover, it was a year of sacrifice as our construction project was delayed and teachers adopted a practice of moving from classroom to classroom, portably teaching from carts. Administration continued to work diligently with the project manager and construction team to flexibly alter construction timelines and value engineer the budget as unforeseen costs arose. In particular, contaminated soil had to be removed from the site and construction was delayed into the spring to avoid winter construction costs. These demands created difficulties in communication and program implementation that the entire TCGIS team overcame with collaboration and effort.

### TCGIS Vision

The vision of TCGIS is to educate children for informed and active world citizenship. *Andere hören, andere sehen, weltoffen denken und handeln.*

### **TCGIS Mission**

TCGIS is a K-8 charter school that values high academic achievement and engages each individual child through an enriched German language curriculum. With the strong support of parents and community members, our school creates an environment that nurtures a child's natural curiosity and fosters international awareness.

### **TCGIS Goals**

It is our goal that students who complete our program through grade 8 possess a high level of language proficiency in German, enabling them to communicate with native speakers comfortably and effectively. Also, grade 8 students will experience German culture and use their German language skills in the Capstone trip to Germany. In addition, they will be academically challenged to demonstrate high levels of proficiency in core subject areas as measured by the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments and develop the knowledge and skills to succeed in secondary school opportunities, including International Baccalaureate programs, Advanced Placement classes, College in the Schools programs and the Post-Secondary Educational Option.

### **TCGIS History & Culture of Commitment**

A team of dedicated teachers, parents and community members committed countless hours of their time and talent to ensure the gift of German language immersion would be available to children of the greater Twin Cities. TCGIS owes a huge debt of thanks to the pioneer staff and parents who were willing to dedicate themselves to the success of the school. In particular, a huge debt of gratitude is owed all of the staff and family members who worked so hard to bring the final permanent home of TCGIS to full completion.

### **Parent Feedback**

Building transition shifted the timelines regarding our annual parent survey. A limited survey of parents, School Board and staff was completed in October 2013 to measure the community impact of the move to the new site. A second comprehensive community survey was conducted in early spring, but did not contain the identical survey questions of the annual survey. To avoid "survey fatigue", the School Board elected to forego the end of year annual survey. However, the results gathered in early spring from 59% of the community (up from 34% in 2012) showed strong trends in parent satisfaction. Highlights from the survey include:

- 89% of survey participants are satisfied with their child(ren)'s educational experience at TCGIS.
- 87% of survey participants indicated their child(ren) will return to TCGIS.
- Communication effectiveness remained very high for the Teaching Staff and remained consistent for the Administration and Office Staff.
- The majority of respondents saw an improvement in the Director's ability to manage change while communicating and allowing for parent input over the course of 2013-2014.

## **2. Notable Accomplishments**

The following highlights some of the important accomplishments and new directions for TCGIS.

## Academic Program

- TCGIS finished highest in math for the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment tests in the spring of 2014 at 94%, in the top echelon for MCA reading at 89% and very high in science at 94%.
- 7 students in grade 8 passed all areas of the DSD I exam at the B1 level. 3 students passed all but the DSD I written portion at the B1 level and one student passed the exams at the A2 level.
- TCGIS enrolled a third first grade class of 24 students bringing the total grade 1 enrollment to 72 students.
- Spanish was extended into its fourth year as a 3rd language program.
- In grade 5, students participated in the German A2 exam and all but two students passed. 5-8 grade students also participated in different contests and projects offered by the ZfA.
- In September of 2013, TCGIS hosted our first exchange students from Borghorst, Germany as part of the German-American Partnership Program. This is to become an annual exchange for the two schools to foster partnership and cultural exchange in education.
- TCGIS received a GAPP grant to support a second chaperone and the cost of one student on the Capstone trip to Germany.
- TCGIS celebrated our second International Peace Day at the new site, creating pinwheels for peace and distributing them in the neighborhood.
- TCCIS welcomed 36 native-speaking Germans as classroom assistants through the Amity Intern Program. These young people keep native German language instruction at a very high level in every teacher classroom.
- For the math program, TCGIS used the Baden-Württemberg curriculum for grades K-2 and implemented a “flex” curriculum in German for grades 3-4 to prepare for the American National Math Foundation curriculum for grades 5-8, called the Connected Math Program. The elementary program gives students a grasp of operations. Logic puzzles enhance student fluency in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. In grades 5-8, the math program centers on problem-based learning using manipulatives to build student understanding. Students learn to apply new concepts with rich applications rather than perform non-contextual problems alone.
- The German humanities teacher continued the DSD I presentation program “Deutschland Macht Spaß” in December of 2013.
- A one-to-one Chromebook program continued in grades 7-8 developing students’ career and college readiness skills and increasing online learning activities to expand the school learning environment to 24/7 access.
- In accordance with MN Statute 120B.12 TCGIS continued a local literacy plan designed to have students read at or above grade level by the end of third grade. Literacy is the ability to read, write, speak, listen, view, visually represent, and think in order to communicate and contribute to society. Students in grades K-3 were assessed at least three times per academic year to determine literacy proficiency. Our assessments focused on key literacy indicators with instruction concentrated in: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary development, and reading comprehension. Proficiency was determined by percentage levels of 80% or greater on assessment measures created and implemented by the German and English classroom teachers. Information gathered from these assessments were used in

planning targeted group instruction. The German reading assessments were developed by TCGIS teachers and are administered annually in May of each school year.

- TCGIS continued a formalized fee-based after school enrichment activities program administered by the front office for wider, richer offerings. Classes include woodworking, yoga, computers, piano lessons, Blumenkranz, yearbook and more. Band lessons continued with an integrated band lessons during the day in 2013-2014.
- Grade 3 participated in community service by going to Feed My Starving Children in the fall. The Middle School Day of Service focused on the First Harvest food program to feed families in need in the Twin Cities.

### **Curriculum, Assessment and Staff Development**

- TCGIS launched a Title I program to support students academically based on MCA test scores. TCGIS saw students not meeting or partially state standards in 2013 make significant improvements in the 2014 MCA tests.
- TCGIS implemented its first ever “Quality Compensation” or “Q Comp” program. Through implementation of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), teacher coach evaluations, and the development of teacher professional learning plans, TCGIS reached its building goal to improve math school wide.
- Teacher leadership roles continued in the 2013-2014 school year. This included leadership for all curricular areas as well as coordination leadership roles for the elementary program, middle school program, amity intern program, kindergarten admissions and Q Comp program.
- PowerSchool Parent Portal was opened to all parents grades K-8 for real time grade reporting to parents.
- Staff continued work on aligning academic expectations at each grade level using Atlas Rubicon. The middle school produced a Middle School Program Brochure outlining the scope and sequence of the middle school academic program.

### **Inclusivity Awareness**

With grant funding from the St. Paul Foundation, two TCGIS teachers attended the Equity Summit in California in the fall of 2013. Work continues to develop a more culturally inclusive curriculum and attract more students from diverse populations to the school.

### **Financial**

- Teachers were granted increases the 2013-2014 school year and adjustments were made for those teachers who expanded their professional skills and gained additional credits of educational experience.
- TCGIS finished the 2013 – 2014 school year with a fund balance of 32%. This is 6% higher than the previous year.

- The German Government continued to fund one full teaching position and half of another. They also continued funding almost \$5,000 worth of German textbooks and learning materials.
- Recruitment efforts successfully filled three kindergarten sections for the 2013-2014 school year with the highest wait list to date for the school.

## **Operational**

- A Facilities Committee managed the unforeseen obstacles accompanying the renovation and new addition project. Numerous hours were spent addressing delays in the new construction and value engineering the project to ensure timely completion for fall 2014.
- A full time Assistant Director and Special Education Coordinator was added to the office staff to lead the Playground Committee, manage Como community relations and maintain strong implementation of student behavior management, including discipline, stronger attention to special education programming, and stronger parent-administration communication.
- All teachers continued to be evaluated using Charlotte Danielson's teacher evaluation model to give teachers feedback and offer ongoing employment in a timely fashion.
- Smartboards and HDTVs were installed in the new facility to begin a 3-year plan to increase student engagement and ensure 21<sup>st</sup> century skill development.
- A library coordination position was expanded to continue implementing an online database system and oversee library development.
- The school website offered continuous school updates and marketed the school to prospective parents with online sign up for school tours and information sessions. Sections were added to make legally required School Board documents accessible to the public.
- All teachers continued the practice of communicating with parents and guardians using online tools, including websites, calendars and weekly emails. 88% of parents are satisfied with teacher communications.
- TCGIS teachers voted to unionize. Negotiations are expected in the 2014-2015 school year.
- Marketing strategies were expanding to include radio advertisement on MPR during recruitment season and advertisements in local newspapers. In addition, TCGIS staff attended Como Park, Minneapolis and St. Paul recruitment fairs. TCGIS achieved its highest wait list in since the school started.

## **Collaboration with and recognition from other organizations**

- German Deputy Consul General Mario-Ingo Soos visited TCGIS to learn about the school's programming for consideration of future funding by the German state.
- Twin Cities German Immersion School continues to be recognized as a Center of Excellence by the American Association of Teachers of German.
- The boards of the German American Chamber of Commerce, German American Institute and Twin Cities German Immersion School continued meeting with General

Counsel, Christa Tiefenbacher-Hudson to strengthen our collaboration and promotion of German language and culture.

- TCGIS students in the Blumenkranz Dance group performed multiple public venues including the Mall of America, Festival of Nations, Deutsche Tage and German Fest.
- Germany's Bundesprogramm Lehrkraft Program (BPLK) maintained its support of a full-time paid teacher from Germany at TCGIS in 2013-2014. Thomas Wegener expanded the Deutschsprachig Diplom program at TCGIS with the "Deutschland Macht Spaß" presentations in December 2013 and implemented the DSD I exams at TCGIS. 2013-2014 marks the first year TCGIS tested grade 3 students at the A1 level.

### 3. School Retention, Enrollment and Attrition

In the 2013-2014 TCGIS enrolled 378 students at the start of the school year and ended the year at 371 students, resulting in an overall 98% retention rate. TCGIS planned for and staffed for three sections K-2 for the 2014-2015 school year due to successful expansion in fiscal 2013 and 2014 (see Table 1).

**Table 1: TCGIS 2013-2014 Student Retention**

Grade Level	Beginning Enrollment	New Students Added	Attrition	Year End Enrollment	Retention %
<b>Kindergarten</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>97%</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>92%</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>91%</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>95%</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>92%</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>97%</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>95%</b>

### 4. School Governance

The Twin Cities German Immersion School is governed by a Board of Directors and managed by a School Director. The School Director for 2013-2014 was Ann Jurewicz. Matt Schneider chaired the Board of Directors until June 2014 when Denny Morrow became the Chair. The board structure in 2013-2014 consisted of a nine-member board elected by the parents, teachers and staff at the school. Board member Carley Stuber resigned in December of 2013 due to work commitments and Kelly Laudon was appointed to complete her term. Board member Renee Moelders resigned in April of 2014 due to an out-of-state move and Denny Morrow was appointed to complete her term. Board members serve on a



three-year rotation, with one third of the members rotating off of the board each year. Table 2 summarizes the board composition for the 2013-2014 school year. Table 3 summarizes the board training that was completed in the 2013-2014 school year.

**Table 2: 2013-2014 TCGIS Board Members**

Member Name	Board Position	Election Date/Date Seated/Term Exp.	E-mail
Matt Schneider (interested community member)	Board Chair until June 2014	Elected 5/20/2010 Seated 6/15/2010 Term exp. 6/2014	mschneider@tcgis.org
Denny Morrow (interested community member)	Board Chair beginning June 2014	Appointed and Seated 6/26/2014 Term expired 6/2015	dmorrow@tcgis.org
Marcus Sheire (parent community member)	Vice Chair	Elected 5/20/2011 Seated 6/20/2011 Term Exp 6/2014	msheire@tcgis.org
Renee Moelders (parent community member)	Treasurer Resigned 4/2014	Appointed and Seated 6/15/2010 Term exp. 6/2012 Re-elected and Seated 6/15/2012 Term exp. 6/2015	rmoelders@tcgis.org
Barb Spangle (interested community member)	Secretary	Elected 5/17/2013 Seated 6/27/2013 Term exp. 6/2016	bspangle@tcgis.org
Hunter Goetzman (TCGIS teacher)	Board member	Elected 10/2012 Seated 11/20/2012 Term Exp. 6/2015	hgoetzman@tcgis.org
Michelle Wallace (TCGIS teacher)	Board Member	Elected 10/2012 Seated 11/20/2012 Term exp. 6/2015	mwallace@tcgis.org
Carley Stuber (parent community member)	Board Member Resigned 12/2014	Appointed and Seated 6/20/2012 Term Exp 6/2013 Elected and Seated 6/15/2013 Term Exp. 6/2016	cstuber@tcgis.org
Jennifer Buck	Vice Chair starting 06/2014	Elected 5/17/2013 Seated 6/27/2013 Term Exp 6/2016	jbuck@tcgis.org

Kelly Laudon	Board Member	Appointed and Seated 2/2014 Term exp. 6/2016	klaudon@tcgis.org
Gregor Adriany	Parent Liaison	Elected 5/20/2011 Seated 6/20/2011 Term Exp 6/2014 on sabbatical for the 2012-2013 school year	gadriany@tcgis.org
Ted Johnson	Treasurer	Elected 5/2014 Seated 6/2014 Term Exp 6/2017	tjohnson@tcgis.org
Burkhard Tiessen	Board Member	Elected 5/2014 Seated 6/2014 Term Exp 6/2017	btiessen@tcgis.org
Natalie Yaeger	Parent Liaison	Elected 5/2014 Seated 6/2014 Term Exp 6/2017	nyaeger@tcgis.org

**Table 3: 2012-2013 TCGIS Board Member Training**

Training	Participating Board Members
Board members rolling off or resigning	Matt Schneider, Gregor Adriany, Marcus Sheire, Renee Moelders, Carley Stuber
MACS Oct 2013 Course I and III – Governance: Board Roles and Responsibilities; Employment: Policies, Practices, and Common Sense	Michelle Wallace (both courses) Hunter Goetzman Course I
Legally required new Board Training (all three sections)	Jennifer Buck, Barb Spangle University of St Thomas Charter School Board Training December 2013 8:00-4:00

## 5. School Management and Administration

In 2013-2014 the school maintained one director administrative position held by Ann Jurewicz (File Folder #340432- K-12 Administration, 5-12 Language Arts teacher and 7-12 Social Studies teacher). The school also had a full time Assistant Director and Special Education Coordinator position filled by Jeff Horton ((File Folder #415581), 1 FTE Office Coordinator position filled by Molly Kalda, 1 FTE Lunch/Office/Tech coordinator filled by Blaine Strobe, and a .8 FTE Information Systems Administrator filled by Stefanie Berres. Tech support of 25 hours a week was filled by Paul Carlson until October 1 and then by Carter Kindley. A .8 Office Coordination position was filled by Heidi Lauer starting in October

2013 and a Communications Relations position was added in January 2014. Both of these positions were on contracted services.

## 6. Staffing

Successful immersion education depends on recruiting highly qualified teachers who also possess native or near-native ability in the German language. In addition, maintaining a German language presence on a school wide-basis requires that most, if not all, staff have some proficiency in German, so that bilingual communication with the children continues outside of the classrooms. It remains an ongoing challenge to find teachers and staff who are proficient in German, are trained in their areas of specialty, are fully licensed or able to be licensed in Minnesota, and who are eligible to work in the United States.

TCGIS has successfully hired teachers both locally and through a partnership with the Student Teacher Exchange program at the Checkpoint Charlie Foundation, a program which provides guest teachers for up to three years. However, it is a trend that non-MN licensed German teachers from overseas (designated as Community Expert) tend to stay two (2) years or less due to their tenure benefits in Germany. Furthermore, retaining teachers with more than three (3) years of teaching experience in the charter environment can also be challenging. Leadership opportunities in larger districts, along with increased salaries for leadership cause some unavoidable turnover. While counter offers have retained seasoned teachers in the short term, administration understands the natural changes in education that come with such leadership pursuits. Table 3 summarizes the composition of staff members at TCGIS for the 2013-2014 school year and includes reasons for staff turnover due to a number of personal and professional factors.

**Table 3: TCGIS Staff Composition**

Staff Name	File Folder Number (if Teacher)	Assignment	Years Employed by the School	Not Returning 2013-2014	Reason for change
Berres, Stefanie	N/A	.8 Information Systems Administrator	7	X	Office realignment
Bindert, Carolin	456303	Grade 3 teacher	3		
Carlson, Paul	N/A	Paraprofessional/Tech	3	X	Job with Apple Computers
Cotroneo, Emily	N/A	Paraprofessional	1		
Goetzman, Hunter	445334	Grade 4 teacher	6		
Grimm, Susanne	296968	Grade 2 teacher	8	X	Moving to California to be with family
Hall-Dayle, Jane	430314	Assistant Director	1	X	Position in SPPS
Heindl, Elena	443274	Kindergarten teacher	7		
Horton, Jeff	415581	Assistant Director	1		
Johnson, Susan	318226	.6 Spanish teacher	2		

Jurewicz, Ann	340432	Director	2		
Kaari, Katie	404724	Speech Language	7		Brought on staff from contracted
Kalda, Molly	N/A	Office Coordinator	3		
Kazek, Cagla	997443	Grade 3 teacher	1		
Kile, Anne	411821	Special Education	8		
Kinney, Hannah	N/A	Paraprofessional	4	X	Accepted to a graduate program
Koch, Wolfgang	997724	Grade 4 teacher	2		
Kocher, Susan	440826	German language (tech and science)	2	X	Non-renewed
Krug, Anke	997882	Grade 1 teacher	3		
Kulhanek, Kim	473465	Grade 1 teacher	2		
Lauenstein, Stephanie	446396	5-8 Science	2		
Lauer, Heidi	N/A	Office Coordinator	1		Contracted became staffed
Lenburg, Amy	399046	Art	8		
Matuszak, Hannah	474769	Grade 1 teacher	1	X	Offered a full time position in license area in another district
Mecklenburg, Carol	254940	School Psychology	5		Contracted became staffed
Michals, Stephanie	455718	Kindergarten teacher	1	X	Maternity leave led to resignation for full time motherhood
Morrissey, Melissa	444717	Middle School Math	3	X	Math leadership in MPS
Mullan, Jeri	103401	Occupational Therapy	4		Contracted services
Munoz, Tom	471940	Math 5-8	1	X	Position in a Catholic school
Rosenthal, Mandi	396146	Physical Education	4		
Roth, Alexander	N/A	Business Manager	1	X	Resigned
Schmitt, Tanja	997441	Business Manager (March 2013)	1		
Schneider-Baumeister, Eva	N/A	Paraprofessional	1		
Scholtz, Heidi	341798	English Language Learners/Science	8		
Sims, Margaret	N/A	Paraprofessional	6		
Solakhau, Valentin	447463	Performing Arts	5		
Stegmann, Denise	448759	Special Education	5	X	Maternity leave; may return part time in 2014-2015

Stephens, Katie	431693	Middle School English	5	X	Leadership position in MPS
Stephenson, Scot	397485	Grade 2 teacher	9		
Strobe, Blaine	N/A	Office/Lunch/Tech Coordinator	2	X	Office realignment
Suter, Leah Steiner	470992	Kindergarten	2		
Vollenweider, Isabel	N/A	Communications/ Relations	1		Contracted became staffed
Wallace, Michelle	357442	English	6		
Wegener, Thomas	997442	German language 5-8	1		
Wisniewski, Kirsten	N/A	Paraprofessional	1	X	Fullbright position in Austria

### Successful Partnership with Amity Institute

Additional staffing comes in the form of teaching interns from Germany, Austria or Switzerland. Through a partnership with the Amity Institute, TCGIS contracts with university students who are studying to be teachers and are able to spend five months to a year in an overseas internship. As native German speakers, they also add significantly to the presence of adult native speakers in the school.

In 2013-2014, TCGIS was fortunate to have 36 different interns add their talents to the school as teachers' aids. Of these, eight interns were able to stay for the entire year, adding additional stability for both students and supervising teachers. Interns are hosted by school families and contribute 28 hours weekly to the classrooms.

## 7. Student Achievement Goals for Meeting State Academic Standards

As per TCGIS's literacy plan, students in grades K-3 are assessed at least three times per academic year to determine literacy proficiency. Assessments focus on key literacy indicators determined by our grade-specific achievement goals with instruction concentrated in: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary development, and reading comprehension. The achievement goals are based on grade level MN ELA Academic Standards. Proficiency is determined by percentage levels of 80% or greater on assessment measures created/implemented by the German/English classroom teachers. Information gathered from these assessments is used in planning targeted group instruction.

TCGIS made a change from previous years regarding our use of standardized testing in German. TCGIS continues to use the SOPA in grade 2, but has changed in grade 3 to the A1 European Reference tests for the Deutsches Sprachdiplom or DSD. The A2 and B1 levels continue to be implemented in grade 5 and 8 respectively. TCGIS has dropped the Stolperwörter-Lesetest as it is a relatively normed test, in favor of the A1.

### **Student Oral Proficiency Assessment**

The student oral proficiency assessment (SOPA) measures oral language proficiency for foreign language learners in listening, speaking, grammar and vocabulary. This standardized test is done by trained professionals. There are three levels of proficiency: "novice, intermediate or advanced". The rating scale, developed by the Center of Applied Linguistics, was adapted from the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages proficiency guidelines for listening and speaking.

Historically, TCGIS has recorded scores for listening and speaking skills only. In alignment with the TCGIS assessment philosophy, the SOPA is administered only in grade 2. The benchmark the school strives for is 95% of all students in second grade at an intermediate level or higher in both listening and speaking.

### **Stolperwörter Lesetest**

Prior to the 2013-2014 school year, TCGIS set a benchmark goal that 75% of students in both grades 3 and 4 would achieve an average rating or better (25th percentile and higher) when compared to all German test takers.

The difficulty with the Stolperwörter-Lesetest is that it is relatively normed based on the online reports of German teachers. Furthermore, it is normed against native speaking German students. In 2013-2014, TCGIS dropped the Stolperwörter-Lesetest in favor of administering the A1 European Reference Deutsches Sprachdiplom tests for German fluency of non-native German speakers. One lead teacher from grade 3 received training from the Zentralstelle für Auslandschulwesen, or ZfA. Results are reported later in this section.

### **Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs)**

MCAs are state required tests. Math and reading tests are given each year in English from grades 3 through 8. So far the reading tests have been administered as paper based tests. The math tests were administered online for the third time in the 2013-2014 school year. The science exam is given online in grades 5 and 8. The state requires a computer-based version of this test. The math and reading MCA's are administered in April of each year. The science MCAs are administered in early May.

### **Deutsches Sprachdiplom A1, A2 and B1 levels**

The Sprachdiplom A1, A2 and B1 level tests are created by the Zentralstelle für Auslandschulwesen (ZfA). These tests, designed for German Language Learners, are required of all schools that work in partnership with, and eligible to receive financial support from, Germany. Reading, writing, listening and speaking skills are tested. The highest total score possible is 80 and a passing score as of 2014 is 48 or better. The A1 and A2 are basic skills tests, assuming mastery of elementary German. The A1 is given in grade 3 and the A2 in grade 5. In grade 8, students sit for the oral and written Deutsches Sprachdiplom B1 test, also called the DSD I. This test measures the fluency of German language learners 13-14 years old as they progress toward language fluency for high school studies.

**Table 4: TCGIS Summary of Testing Results**

**Narrative Summaries of Assessment Data**

Blue shaded boxes show TCGIS goal met or exceeded

Student Oral Proficiency Assessment	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Grade 2 listening	91%	97%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Grade 2 speaking	91%	93%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<b>Stolperwoerter-Lesetest</b>	Expected achievement level: 75% average (25th percentile +) compared to all German students						
Grade 3	N/A	N/A	71%	58%	N/A	96%	N/A
Grade 4	N/A	N/A	76%	79%	84%	93.5%	N/A
<b>Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs)</b>	Expected achievement level: 85% meet or exceed in reading, 80% in math and 65% in science. In 2013, Minnesota introduced a more rigorous reading and math test from previous years.						
	200,800%	200,900%	201,000%	201,100%	201,200%	201,300%	201,400%
Grade 3 Reading	86%	82%	84%	80%	97%	72%	81%
Grade 3 Math	75%	100%	94%	56%	91%	88%	91%
Grade 4 Reading	N/A	81%	80%	96%	84%	84%	86%
Grade 4 Math	N/A	86%	95%	90%	78%	88%	95%
Grade 5 Reading	N/A	N/A	88%	95%	96%	74%	94%
Grade 5 Math	N/A	N/A	65%	55%	91%	52%	94%
Grade 5 Science	N/A	N/A	59%	59%	92%	81%	100%
Grade 6 Reading	N/A	N/A	N/A	94%	85%	88%	93%
Grade 6 Math	N/A	N/A	N/A	56%	85%	92%	82%
Grade 7 Reading	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	100%	73%	96%
Grade 7 Math	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	62%	91%	100%
Grade 8 Reading	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	*89%	91%
Grade 8 Math	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	*50%	100%
Grade 8 Science	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	*56%	73%

\*Pink shaded is not reported by MDE as sample size is too small.

**Student Oral Proficiency Tests (SOPA)**

**Goals**

100% of 2nd graders will demonstrate intermediate level proficiency in listening and speaking.

## **Results**

In 2014, TCGIS met 100% proficiency on the SOPA test for students testing in the 2nd grade.

## **Stolperwörter-Lesetest**

### **Goals**

This test is being phased out in favor of the A1 assessments in grade 3.

### **Results**

N/A in 2013-2014.

## **Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment Tests**

### **Goals**

85% of our students should meet or exceed state requirements at all grade levels in reading, 80% in all grade levels in math and 65% in grades 5 and 8 in science.

### **Results**

- Two years ago in reading for the 2012-2013 school year, the Minnesota Department of Education administered a new MCA test for reading based on the common core standards. Due to the change in the MCA reading test, it was recommended that reading scores not be compared to scores from previous years. In 2012-2013, throughout the state of Minnesota, test score averages dropped by 18% statewide. In contrast, TCGIS dropped overall by only 12%. Nonetheless, in 2013-2014, TCGIS met the authorizer goal in reading in every grade level except grade 3 (and missed that by only 4%). This shows a significant increase in performance on a more difficult test.
- In 2013-2014, in every other grade level, in every tested subject (reading, math and science), TCGIS met the authorizer goal for performance. \*\*\***TCGIS was the highest scoring district in the state of Minnesota.**
- Grade 3 exceeded the math goal by 11%, but fell short of the reading goal by 4%.
- The 4th grade exceeded the reading goal by 1% and exceeded the math goal by 15%.
- The 5th grade had all students pass science at 100%, exceeded the reading goal by 9% and exceeded the math goal by 14%.
- With Title I interventions, the grade 6 students **increased math scores by 36%, and unheard of gain with strategically targeted efforts.** The grade 6 students exceeded the reading goal by 8% and the math goal by 1%.
- The 7th grade exceeded the math goal by 11%, and had 100% of students pass the reading.
- The 8th grade exceeded the reading goal by 6%, had 100% pass the math and exceeded the science goal by 8%.

## **Deutsches Sprachdiplom A1, A2 and B1**

### **Goal**

Because it was the first year for administering the A1 test for grade 3, TCGIS did not set a goal for passing. TCGIS did set a goal of 85% passing in grade 5 in the A2 tests and 85%



passing in the grade 8 in the DSD I (B1 level) tests.

### Results

In 2014, in grade 3, 98% of students passed listening comprehension in German, but only 61% passed in reading. 94% of the 5th grade passed the Deutsches Sprachdiplom A2 test, but only 64% of the grade 8 passed all components of the Deutsches Sprachdiplom B1 test. TCGIS students were tested for standards in German reading, writing, listening and speaking.

<b>Das Deutsches Sprachdiplom A1</b>	<b>2014</b>
<b>Expected achievement level: 95% passing rate overall</b>	
Grade 3 reading - % points achieved by cohort	72%
Grade 3 writing - % points achieved by cohort	61%
Grade 3 listening - % points achieved by cohort	98%
Grade 3 speaking - % points achieved by cohort	70%

<b>Das Deutsches Sprachdiplom A2</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
<b>Expected achievement level: 95% passing rate overall</b>							
5th Grade reading - % points achieved by cohort	N/A	N/A	83%	97%	97%	100%	97%
5th Grade writing - % points achieved by cohort	N/A	N/A	67%	76%	97%	97%	97%
5th Grade listening - % points achieved by cohort	N/A	N/A	81%	88%	100%	100%	100%
5th Grade speaking - % points achieved by cohort	N/A	N/A	91%	91%	100%	97%	97%
5th Grade overall - % of students passing	N/A	N/A	94%	100%	100%	97%	94%

<b>Das Deutsches Sprachdiplom DSD I</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	
<b>Expected achievement level: 95% passing rate overall</b>							
8th Grade reading - % points achieved by cohort	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	100%	91%
8th Grade writing - % points achieved by cohort	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	89%	64%

8th Grade listening - % points achieved by cohort	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	100%	100%
8th Grade speaking - % points achieved by cohort	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	100%	91%
8th Grade overall - % of students passing	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	89%	64%

From the DSD I exam, it is clear TCGIS students have a deficit in German writing. Thus, for the 2014-2015 school year, German language writing proficiency is a goal for all teachers in grades K-8. TCGIS is working with the ZfA in Chicago to gather data of other German immersion schools in the U.S. to determine appropriate benchmarks for TCGIS student performance. For example, the Milwaukee German Immersion School tests students at the B1 level in grade 10. 22 students took the exam, 4 were retaking the exam and only 6 passed at the B1 level.

As TCGIS develops as a school, we hope to work with the ZfA and our authorizer to set challenging and realistic goals for the DSD exams at grade 3, 5 and 8.

## 8. Finance

In September 2014, TCGIS achieved an unmodified opinion of our 2013 -2014 financials. The Twin Cities German Immersion School continued its history of financial strength based on conservative budgeting and cautious spending. The table below includes a summary of net assets for 2013 and 2014, the most recent complete financial statement available.

	6/30/2013	6/30/2014
<b><u>Assets</u></b>		
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash and Investments	\$ 524,950	\$ 1,007,011
Accounts Receivable	11,101	16,067
State Aids Receivable	393,021	249,946
Federal Aids Receivable	8,802	28,054
Prepaid Expense	22,149	5,961
<b>Total All Assets</b>	<b>960,023</b>	<b>1,307,038</b>
<b><u>Liabilities and Fund Balance</u></b>		
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Salaries and Wages Payable	\$ 95,013	\$ 132,518
Accounts Payable	5,522	105,769
Payroll Deductions and Benefits	24,114	31,929
Deferred Revenue	17,867	510
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>142,516</b>	<b>270,726</b>
<b>Fund Balance</b>		
"Preliminary" Fund Balance	\$ 735,499	\$ 735,499
"Assigned" Funds	82,008	31,854
Increase (Decrease) for YTD (including assigned change)	-	268,959
<b>Total Fund Balance</b>	<b>817,507</b>	<b>1,036,312</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Fund Balance</b>	<b>960,023</b>	<b>1,307,038</b>

Unlike previous years, the holdback of State funds during the 2013-2014 school year decreased. As a result of the holdback changes, the school ended the 2013-2014 school year in a strong cash position.

The TCGIS board instituted a fund balance policy designed to maintain or grow our fund balance to 20 - 30% of annual expenses. The fund balance is made up of cash and other assets that serve as a cushion to weather unexpected events, such as not being repaid a state holdback in the normal time allotted, or large shifts in student enrollment. The organization did reach a 32% fund balance at the end of FY14, but it is still necessary to budget for a surplus since expenses increase every year, increasing the amount necessary to have 32% of that year's expenses in reserve. Additionally, at the end of the 2013-2014 school year, the Board chose to assign forward an amount of funds to support the planned transition to a 24,000 sq. ft. addition and the deferred maintenance on an acquired property more than 80+ years old.

Looking forward to the 2014 – 2015 school year, we will continue to benefit from the two teaching positions paid by a program in the German government called Bundesprogramm Lehrkraft (BPLK). This is in addition to the funding provided annually by the German government for half of a teaching position. The second BPLK position was secured for us in April of 2014 for the 2014-2015 school year through the hard work of the Communications and Development Committee. We are grateful for all the support our school receives from its community.

In the summer of 2014 the school nearly completed the 24,000 sq. ft. addition. As well, in September 2014, TCGIS was approved to establish its own Affiliated Building Corporation or ABC. The School Board, Executive Director and staff are actively involved in transitioning from a tenant relationship to building ownership, learning how to successfully manage the property on our own.

The 2014 – 2015 school year begins with three grade 2 class sections, an exciting new development in the school's organizational growth. We anticipate that this change will alleviate the natural attrition TCGIS faces, as it is difficult to replace students in grades 3 – 8. Over time we plan growth to three sections in Kindergarten through grade 4, and then if necessary funnel down into two sections each in the 5-8 middle school program.

## **9. Innovative Practices and Implementation**

### **Title I and Q Comp; Articulated grades 5-8 Middle School Program; Grade 8 Capstone Experience with GAPP Exchange**

For the first time in the history of the Twin Cities German Immersion School, federal Title I monies were accessed to target students not meeting or partially meeting standards in reading and math. The program enabled TCGIS to expand the teaching staff to support students needing extra instruction and the results were clearly evident. \*\*\***TCGIS was the highest scoring district in the state of Minnesota.**

TCGIS also accessed over \$85,000 in state money through the Minnesota "Quality Compensation" Program or Q Comp. Teachers wrote the program for additional performance pay determining a school wide goal around math and implementing additional teacher professional training to set and meet goals for additional performance pay. In its first year of implementation, TCGIS met its school wide goal and all teachers choosing to participate met their personal professional goals for student achievement targets.

Regarding the middle school program overall, TCGIS solidified a middle school in which specialty subject area teachers instructed all subjects grades 5-8. A transition year for grade 5 had homeroom teachers instructing 2-3 subjects of specialty emphasis, thus blending the elementary with middle school model. TCGIS is very pleased to have come up with a staffing plan that allowed grade 5 students a gentle entry into having multiple teachers with subject area specialists.

In the spring of 2013-2014 the TCGIS School Board spent significant time reviewing the Middle School philosophy statement outlining 70% German language immersion and elective choices for students. As a result, extensive research was gathered and a reconfiguration of the Middle School occurred providing additional German language instruction in grade 5-6 German social studies and opting for every day Spanish in grades 7-8. To accommodate adjustments to the curriculum change, grade 6 continued with every other day Spanish in 2014-2015. With the intent to phase out Spanish in grade 6 thereafter.

Twin Cities German Immersion School was very proud to not only complete its second year of a fully articulated K-8 educational program in 2013-2014, including a Capstone trip to Germany, but TCGIS also welcomed students from Borghorst, Germany to the Twin Cities for a true partnership exchange. TCGIS qualified for a GAPP exchange grant to send a second TCGIS chaperone on the grade 8 Capstone trip.

### **Responsive Classroom/Development Designs**

The school is united through a commitment to applying the principles of the social program of Origins. Responsive Classroom is the socio-economic program for elementary students and Developmental Designs is the equivalent program for middle school students. New teachers experience a full-week training in positive, learner-centered management techniques that build community and responsibility as the foundations for positive and effective academic learning. The importance of using Responsive Classroom as a technique to help kids talk and share plays an especially important role in an immersion program where oral fluency remains one of our academic goals. [The New York Times](#) reported a 20-point gain in standardized test scores when this program is faithfully implemented. New teachers hired to TCGIS are offered this training.

## **10. Program Challenges, Updated Goals and Future Plans**

TCGIS has proven to be a remarkably successful and resilient language immersion school, attracting the attention and support of local families as well as the German government. Throughout the 2013-2014 school year, the teachers managed to work in closed, cramped quarters to nevertheless meet the needs of TCGIS students. The school made it through the difficult circumstances of a major move from one site to another and overcome an instructional environment challenged by limited space and ongoing construction. Their commitment to students is evident from the high test scores amidst a construction project. With the completed larger building, the school plans to continue expanding from two sections to three sections each subsequent year until we reach three complete K-4 classes and 2 complete 5-8 classes. Furthermore, as TCGIS has matured, TCGIS teachers voted to unionize to collectively bargain for pay and working conditions. Negotiations are planned for

the 2014-2015 school year. Additionally, TCGIS continues to face challenges attracting a more diverse enrollment population. Plans to recruit and support new families from diverse backgrounds will be supported with inclusivity funds for the 2014-2015 school year.

The following summarizes a number of goals and future plans outlined by TCGIS leadership for the 2014-2015 school year and beyond:

### **Academic**

- Implement a second year of a Title I program to target student “not meeting” or “partially meeting” the Minnesota state standards in reading and math.
- Implement a second year of teacher professional learning plans using the Minnesota Q Comp program focusing on German immersion language acquisition, especially in the area of writing.
- Add a second science specialist in the middle school and maintain an elementary science specialist to increase inquiry-based science programming in the K-3 program.
- Continue curricular teacher leaders in the areas of German, English, math, science, social studies, the arts, physical education, health, and Spanish for K-4 and 5-8 levels. These curriculum leaders are responsible for expanding the implementation of the school’s scope and sequence using Atlas Rubicon, focusing on:
  - a. weekly and unit topics
  - b. US and German standards
  - c. assessments
- Implement Schoology, an online Learning Management System or LMS to provide a platform for curriculum development and replace the former system, Atlas Rubicon.
- Hire a native German technology teacher to train teachers in integrating technology into the curriculum and build a K-8 technology curriculum. Launch a robotics program in grades 7-8 to promote hands on learning in coding and technology skills.
- Create a comprehensive Family Handbook and Staff Handbook to standardize school procedures, including discipline, absence and tardy policies to maximize learning opportunities for students.
- Continue expanding teacher competency in using Web 2.0 tools for increased student engagement and academic achievement; this includes training on web-based apps, newly installed Smartboards and updated features of PowerTeacher gradebook.
- Implement the second year of Minnesota’s Quality Compensation program (Q Comp) for the 2014-2015 school year. Apply career ladder opportunities for teachers and provide transparent professional observation feedback loops, both in teacher-to-teacher mentorships, and in administrative feedback for professional growth as part of the Q Comp program and to meet state mandates on teacher evaluation.
- Provide mentorship and training to the number of new teachers at TCGIS given natural growth and turnover.
- Maintain and expand the redesign of TCGIS’s Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to develop data-driven practice for measurable student achievement improvements. The Professional Learning (PL) Committee will guide PLC improvement and determine use of time for Early Release and Teacher Professional

Development days. All teacher leaders receiving school stipends participate on the PL committee.

- Expand the effectiveness and utilization of PowerSchool and PowerTeacher gradebook for both teachers and parents as a school management and communication tool on student progress and achievement.

## **Financial**

- Establish an affiliated building corporation (ABC) to take over the bonding from TheTenSquare Group, LLC. Create future capital investment opportunities with this ABC for expanded growth of the school.
- Monitor and adjust the FY15 operating budget as needs associated with the new building and addition arise and change throughout the school year.
- Demonstrate fiscal responsibility in costing out the expected revenues from future growth with the expenses associated with acquiring a permanent home in order to ensure a healthy fund balance.
- Reconsider salary schedules and benefits to increase compensation for a quality teacher pay system in a year of teacher unionization.
- Plan budgeting for bussing as the school grows larger to comply with state expectations for transportation of students.

## **Operational**

- Expand into the 24,000 sq. ft. addition and maximize use of the facility to meet programming needs, including proper outfitting of spaces with furniture and materials.
- Work with the School Board to complete a new strategic plan.
- Monitor new program initiatives, including middle school electives, Title I, Q Comp and expanded PLC practices. Maintain quality programming to ensure high test score results.
- Provide training on new and current technologies, including Smartboards, an expanded PowerSchool system and web-based apps; continue developing technical support and tech integration for tech tools; develop standardization for teacher laptop machines, including back up options for staff.
- Expand library resources and tools, including online catalog/database system. Continue building out staffing for library oversight.
- Monitor the GAI's progress regarding the face-to-face and online German options for high school; connect to area high schools to provide robust German and academic programs for TCGIS alumni as our numbers grow.
- Systematize the master schedule through the use of PowerSchool Scheduler.
- Integrate the various online systems for parent communication, parent volunteer, online purchasing and after school activities sign-up and payment.
- Expand the Communications and Relations component for internal community satisfaction and external grant writing and recruitment.
- Expand marketing strategies to include greater press through public relations efforts with local media and radio stations. Improve public branding and outreach using community events. Target potential students specifically in the neighborhood of the new facility.

## **11. Authorizer**

The Authorizer Council of the GAI has an active presence at the school. They regularly send a representative to Board Meetings and Finance Committee meetings. In addition, the Authorizer Council conducts three site visits per academic year. Twin Cities German Immersion School expresses deep gratitude to the staff, volunteers and board of the GAI for their generosity of time and persistence in working to maintain this effective collaboration between institutions.

Authorizer Liaison - Colleen Monahan

Contact Information – cmeducationconsulting@comcast.net

Contract expiration date – June 30, 2017

## **12. School's State Report Card**

Please visit the Minnesota Department of Education's Data Center on their website and follow the prompts to select reports for the Twin Cities German Immersion School. <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Data/>

## **13. Non-Profit Status**

Confirmation information available at: <http://www.ag.state.mn.us/Charity/SearchResults.asp?FederalID=562443462>