

Venture Academy 2016-17 Annual Report to Innovative Quality Schools

School Information

School name:	Venture Academy
Address:	315 27 th Avenue SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414
Name of contact person:	Jon Bacal
Phone number:	(612) 345-9040
Website:	www.ventureacademies.org
Grades served:	6-10
Number of Students over the past three years: (Oct. 1, 2017)	2013-2014: 118 2014-2015: 185 2015-2016: 185 2016-2017: 257 10/1/2017: 301
School demographics (10/1/17):	94% Eligible for Free/Reduced Price meals; Ethnicity: 51% Hispanic, 31% Black, 9% American Indian, 9% White; 25% receiving Special Education services; 25% receiving English Learner services

Authorizer Information

Year school charter was granted:	2013
Authorizer:	Innovative Quality Schools
Authorizer contact information:	P.O. Box 40219 St. Paul, MN 55104 www.igsmn.org

Board of Directors

Name	Group Represented	Role on Board	Years of Term
Brian Peterson	Community	Chair	3 (2019)
Brad Pogalz	Community	Treasurer	3 (2019)
Betsy Ohrn	Community	Secretary	2 (2018)
Jason Davis	Community	Member	3 (2019)
Rajiv Tandon	Community	Member	3 (2020)
Charles Ellsworth	Teachers	Member	3 (2020)
Beth Hawkins	Parents	Member	1 (2018)
Jeffrey Robbins	Community	Member	2 (2018)
Bob Wedl	Community	Member	1 (2018)
Troy Strand	Community	Member	3 (2020)

Staff

Name	Position
Jon Bacal	Chief Entrepreneurship Officer/Founder
Kerry Muse	Director of Learning
Elise Wehrman	Director of Operations
Bre Vollrath	Middle School Leader
Derek Davidson	High School Leader
Mike Warner	Director of Student Services

Anne Molitor	Special Education Coordinator
Margaret Holland	Partnership Coordinator
Travis Heidelberg	Dean of Students
Clara Catalan	Family Liaison
Brittany Boegel	STEM Teacher/6 th Grade Lead
Mike Buttgerreit	STEM Teacher/7 th Grade Lead
Brian Shephard	Humanities Teacher/8 th Grade Lead
Ti-Esha Williams-Vaughn	H.S. English Teacher
Katie Green	H.S. English Teacher
Charles Ellsworth	H.S. Math Teacher/Athletic Director
Heidi Smith	H.S. Social Students Educator
Jace Carlson	H.S. Science Teacher
Jessica Loper	STEM Teacher
Kristen Rodriguez	Humanities Teacher
Lizzy Higgins	Humanities Teacher
Alicia Waters	English Learning Teacher
Jacob Smith	English Learning Teacher
Andrew Lawton	Art Teacher
Troy Trimble	Physical Education Teacher
J.D. Henriksen	Theater Teacher
John Dietzen	Lead Social Worker
Stephanie Tofte	Social Worker
Laura Sanchez	Social Worker
Marlee Dorsey	Counselor
Alex Mingus	Student Advocate
Danesa Bender	Special Education Teacher
Carlos Rivera	Special Education Teacher
Desmond Brooks	Special Education Teacher
Bridget Serig	Special Education Teacher
Dawna Diamon	Special Education Teacher
Riva Berman	Special Education Teacher
Billy Brooks	Special Education Teacher
Luis Rodriguez	Special Education Teacher
Levi Kotas	Special Education Teacher
Michelle Harris	Special Education Team
Peter Pisano	Special Education Team
Cory George	Special Education Team
Marcus Heidelberg	Special Education Team
Yesenia Cuadra-Chicas	Special Education Team
Erik Erickson	Special Education Team
Jennifer Garner	Special Education Team
Charles Evans	Special Education Team
Jamaal Jarmon	Special Education Team
Brighid Lannon	Special Education Team
Amanda Odden	Special Education Team
Jude Stanek	Special Education Team
Jaime Wright	Special Education Team
Jataun Austin	Special Education Team

Ilce Guitierrez	Special Education Team
Chris Keller	Special Education Team
Jason Regan	Special Education Team
Deris Morgan	Special Education Team
Noemi Angel	Office Assistant

Charter School Purposes

Purpose	How the purpose is being carried out
Improving student learning and achievement	Venture is focused on accelerating student learning growth through effective, rigorous and personalized teaching and learning. The percentages of Venture students proficient in reading and math as measured by the MCA both grew from 2016 to 2017, and Venture students continued to demonstrate Fall-Spring reading and math growth above the national average as measured by the NWEA-MAP assessments.
Increasing student learning opportunities	Venture is the first middle-high school in the Twin Cities with a daily emphasis on self-paced, personalized learning, and the first with a focus on building entrepreneurship and career-readiness skills.
Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods	As indicated above, Venture is offering a program that features innovative teaching methods to address student learning needs. Venture utilizes Summit Learning's high quality content platform that provide students with immediate feedback, provide teachers with easy to use data regarding student performance and create the opportunity for self-direction and responsive teaching.
Measuring learning outcomes and create different and innovative forms of measuring outcomes	Venture utilizes multiple forms of standard and authentic assessments to gauge student academic mastery and understanding.
Establishing new forms of accountability for schools	See row immediately above.
Creating new professional opportunities for teachers	Venture teachers serve in key leadership roles, including Venture's management Leadership Team and grade level and professional learning community leadership roles.

School Description

Mission	The mission of Venture Academy is to build entrepreneurs by developing the
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	independence, scholarship and leadership of young people.
Vision	The vision of Venture Academy is for every young person becomes an entrepreneurial leader who improves the world around them.
Description of the school including extra and co-curricular activities:	Venture Academy provides a rigorous middle and high school academic program that blends teacher-guided project-based learning developing high-level career and college readiness skills, self-paced personalized learning developing core academic skills, and hands-on enrichment experiences in art, theater, entrepreneurship and leadership. Venture's academic program utilizes the Summit Learning program, customized to meet the learning needs of Venture students. Venture's extracurricular activities include EMERGE, a daily afterschool enrichment program; Beyond Walls, a squash and tutoring program based at the nearby University of Minnesota Athletic Center; boys and girls soccer, basketball and track/cross-country teams; wrestling and football; and participation in Youth in Government Model Assembly and Model United Nations, a statewide YMCA program.

Highlights

Highlights of the school during the past year:	<p>During 2016-17, Venture Academy celebrated the following highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Venture Academy opened Venture High School in 2016, enrolling 70 9th-graders and a total of 257 schoolwide. • Venture High launched its internship program, placing students in mentored professional internships. Milestones: 63 of 68 9th-graders secured at least one informational interview, 35 completed at least one off-site workplace shadow day, and 22 completed off-site internships at the Citizens League, the Minnesota Council on Foundations, schools, nonprofits and small businesses. • Venture 9th-graders grew 290% in reading from Fall 2016 to Spring 2017 on the national MAP assessment (100% growth represents average
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	<p>national academic growth on the MAP).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students enrolled at least three years grew 117% in reading and 123% in math on the MAP in 2016-17. • On Summit Learning’s national Cognitive Skills measure, 54% of all students finished the 2016-17 year on grade level in reading and 72% finished on grade level in math, both improvements over 2015-16. • Venture launched a pilot entrepreneurship class for 8th-graders in early 2017. • Venture was selected by the Bush Foundation as one of 9 highlighted models of personalized learning. • Venture students received over \$30,000 in scholarships from the Twin Cities YMCA to participate in leadership-building summer camps and the YMCA Minnesota Youth in Government leadership program. Venture has the largest urban team statewide in Youth in Government’s Model Assembly and Model United Nations programs and the largest number of Latino and African-American participants statewide. • Venture completed the final stage of its facility expansion over the summer, on time and under budget • Venture received a clean audit for 2016-17 and finished the year with a year end fund balance of 13%.
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School Performance

Test scores:	<p>Overall, Venture students in 2017 demonstrated growth in reading and math on the national MAP growth measure. See pages 5-6 below. On MCA proficiency, Venture students schoolwide grew from their performance in 2016 in both reading and math.</p> <p>Growth: Fall-Spring NWEA-MAP (national): Venture students enrolled at least three years achieved fall-spring growth of 117% in reading and 123% in math compared to their peers nationally. (NWEA-MAP test).</p> <p>Proficiency: MCA (MN): 24.7% in reading and 23.5% in math in 2017, compared to 22.6% in reading and 18.2% in math in 2016 (all Venture students enrolled as of Oct. 1, 2016).</p>
Award:	Venture received the Minnesota Department of Education School Finance Award in

	FY2017.
Graduation rates:	n/a



2016-17 World’s Best Workforce Report Summary

District or Charter Name: Venture Academy (4218-07)

Grades Served: 6-10

Contact Person Name and Position: Jon Bacal, Chief Entrepreneurship Officer

1. Stakeholder Engagement

1a. Annual Report

[Note: For each school year, the school board must publish a report in the local newspaper, by mail or by electronic means on the district website.]

- Provide the direct website link to the district’s WBWF annual report. If a link is not available, describe how the district disseminates the report to stakeholders.

<http://www.ventureacademies.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/2016-17-Venture-WBWF>

1b. Annual Public Meeting

[Note: School boards are to hold an annual public meeting to communicate plans for the upcoming school year based on a review of goals, outcomes and strategies from the previous year. Stakeholders should be meaningfully involved, and this meeting is to occur separately from a regularly scheduled school board meeting. The author’s intent was to have a separate meeting just for this reason.]

- Provide the date of the school board annual public meeting to review progress from the 2016-17 school year.

May 24, 2017

1c. District Advisory Committee

[Note: The district advisory committee must reflect the diversity of the district and its school sites. It must include teachers, parents, support staff, students, and other community residents. Parents and other community residents are to comprise at least two-thirds of advisory committee members, when possible. The district advisory committee makes recommendations to the school board.]

- Complete the list of your District Advisory Committee members for the 2016-17 school year. Expand the table to include all committee members. Ensure roles are clear (teachers, parents, support staff, students, and other community residents).

District Advisory Committee Member	Role in District
Amanda Cox	Parent
Mayde Vega	Parent
Susan Woodstrom	Parent
Delores Caldwell	Parent
Lovie Kidd	Parent
Bre Vollrath	Middle School Leader
Jon Bacal	CEO and Parent
Clara Catalan	Family Liaison

2. Goals and Results

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2a. All Students Ready for School

Goal	Result	Goal Status
<p><i>Provide the established SMART goal for the 2016-2017 school year.</i></p> <p><i>n/a</i></p>	<p><i>Provide the result for the 2016-2017 school year that directly ties back to the established goal.</i></p> <p><i>n/a</i></p>	<p><i>Check one of the following:</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Goal Met</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Goal Not Met</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Goal in Progress (only for multi-year goals)</i></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>District/charter does not enroll students in Kindergarten</i></p>

2b. All Students in Third Grade Achieving Grade-Level Literacy

Goal	Result	Goal Status
<p><i>Provide the established SMART goal for the 2016-2017 school year.</i></p> <p><i>n/a</i></p>	<p><i>Provide the result for the 2016-2017 school year that directly ties back to the established goal.</i></p> <p><i>n/a</i></p>	<p><i>Check one of the following:</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Goal Met</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Goal Not Met</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Goal in Progress (only for multi-year goals)</i></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>District/charter does not enroll students in grade 3</i></p>

2c. Close the Achievement Gap(s) Among All Groups

Goal	Result	Goal Status
<p><i>Provide the established SMART goal for the 2016-2017 school year.</i></p> <p>The percent of students in each of the following subgroups (eligible for free or reduced price meals, students receiving special education services, students receiving limited English proficiency services, Hispanic students, black students and American Indian students) in all grades tested earning achievement levels of Meets or Exceeds the Standards on the Reading and Math MCAs will be higher than the statewide subgroup earning these levels.</p>	<p><i>Provide the result for the 2016-2017 school year that directly ties back to the established goal.</i></p> <p>The percent of students in all of the subgroups listed earning achievement levels of Meets or Exceeds the Standards on the Reading and Math MCA in 2017 was lower than the statewide percent for each subgroup earning these levels. <i>The percent of students receiving special education services who also qualified for free or reduced price meals earning achievement levels of Meets or Exceeds the Standards on the Math MCA in 2017 was higher than the statewide percent for that subgroup earning these levels.</i></p>	<p><i>Check one of the following:</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Goal Met</i></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Goal Not Met</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Goal in Progress (only for multi-year goals)</i></p>

2d. All Students Career- and College-Ready by Graduation

Goal	Result	Goal Status
<p><i>Provide the established SMART goal for the 2016-2017 school year.</i></p> <p>The percent of all students who earn achievement levels of Meets or Exceeds the Standards on the Reading and Math MCAs will increase from 22.6% in Reading and 18.2% in Math to 45% in Reading and 45% in Math.</p>	<p><i>Provide the result for the 2016-2017 school year that directly ties back to the established goal.</i></p> <p>The percent of all students who earn achievement levels of Meets or Exceeds the Standards increased slightly to 24.7% in Reading and 23.5% in Math.</p>	<p><i>Check one of the following:</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Goal Met</p> <p>X <input type="checkbox"/> Goal Not Met</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Goal in Progress <i>(only for multi-year goals)</i></p>

2e. All Students Graduate

Goal	Result	Goal Status
<p><i>Provide the established SMART goal for the 2016-2017 school year.</i></p> <p>n/a</p>	<p><i>Provide the result for the 2016-2017 school year that directly ties back to the established goal.</i></p> <p>n/a</p>	<p><i>Check one of the following:</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Goal Met</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Goal Not Met</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Goal in Progress <i>(only for multi-year goals)</i></p> <p>X <input type="checkbox"/> District/charter does not enroll students in grade 12</p>

3. Identified Needs Based on Data

[Note: Data that was reviewed to determine needs may include state-level accountability tests, such as Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs) and/or local-level data, such as local assessments, attendance, graduation, mobility, remedial course-taking rates, child poverty, etc.]

- *List and describe the district's needs that were identified at the start of the 2016-2017 school year and the data the needs were based upon.*
- *Include only the key data used to determine identified needs and limit response to 300 words.*
- *Bulleted points are welcome and appreciate.*

In the Summer and Fall of 2016, Venture Academy's leadership team, with input from teachers, parents, community board members, students and external advisors, conducted a comprehensive needs assessment to examine student data and student needs.

Data examined included: MCA and NWEA-MAP assessment results, stakeholder surveys, input from classroom and school observations and external input.

Needs identified included:

- A. Align content of the personalized learning plan to closely mirror and match MN State Standards.
- B. Strengthen implementation of process of teaching and learning that is focused on formative assessment and how teachers collect evidence of student understanding/progress towards standards mastery in the classroom; move away from analytics driven strictly by online learning programs/personalized learning platform.
- C. Identify and implement a reading intervention program that is clear, cohesive, and sustainable.

4. Systems, Strategies and Support Category

4a. Students

- Describe the areas below. Include only the district focus areas for the 2016-2017 school year and limit response to 300 words. Bulleted points are welcome and appreciated.
- Process for assessing and evaluating student progress toward meeting state and local academic standards.
 - Process to disaggregate data by student group.

In 2016-17, Venture provided its students with a rigorous academic program that included teacher-guided standards-based instruction, included self-paced personalized digital and project-based learning, with the goal of developing core academic and career and college readiness skills.

Measures used to evaluate student progress toward standards:

- 1) Standards-aligned, mastery-based content assessments and authentic cognitive (career/college readiness) assessments
- 2) End of year proficiency and growth data
- 3) Fall, Winter, and Spring MAP data

Timelines and Process:

- 1) Beginning of year: teacher content teams and school leadership team reviewed end of year proficiency and growth data to identify strengths and weaknesses
- 2) Teachers continually adjusted instruction to better meet student needs, based upon daily and weekly data, and with the support of teacher content teams and observation and coaching from school leadership.
- 3) Teacher content teams and school leadership team reviewed progress weekly, monthly, and quarterly, and adjusted instruction and professional development accordingly

The progress monitoring process, grounded in a practice of formative assessment, above was Venture's process for assessing strengths/weaknesses of instruction and adjusting instruction as needed.

Formative assessment practices that include ongoing checks for understanding, ongoing feedback on cognitive skills, standards-aligned, mastery-based content assessments, and quarterly benchmark assessments, with results reviewed and analyzed by individual teachers, by content area professional learning communities and the school leadership team.

The process to disaggregate 2016-17 data by student group featured a careful review of Venture's proficiency and growth data by school leadership with input of teachers and community board members.

4b. Teachers and Principals

- *Describe the areas below. Include only the district focus areas for the 2016-2017 school year and limit response to 300 words. Bulleted points are welcome and appreciated.*
 - *System to review and evaluate the effectiveness of*
 - *Instruction*
 - *Curriculum*
 - *Teacher evaluations*
 - *Principal evaluations*

System to Review Effectiveness of Instruction and Curriculum

- 1) Beginning of year: teacher content teams and school leadership team reviewed end of year proficiency and growth data to identify instructional and curriculum strengths and weaknesses
- 2) Teachers continually adjusted instruction and curriculum to better meet student instructional needs, based upon daily and weekly data, and with the support of teacher content teams and observation and coaching from school leadership.
- 3) Teacher content teams and school leadership team reviewed progress weekly, monthly, and quarterly, and adjusted instruction and curriculum accordingly

Teacher Evaluation

Venture conducted two formal evaluations of teachers and provided ongoing informal feedback to teachers, with the goal to articulate expectations, assess instructional performance, and support the development of teachers who were highly effective at supporting student progress towards standards mastery and college readiness. The evaluation and feedback process improved the effectiveness of instruction and curriculum through personalized feedback and coaching, self-assessment and reflection, individual and PLC goal setting, and school leader and peer observations. Evaluation was based on multiple methods which may have included:

- a. student achievement data
- b. portfolio of planning
- c. video of teaching
- d. self-assessment and reflection
- e. meeting of goals, set collaboratively in individual development plan
- f. informal observation
- g. formal evaluation
- h. lead coach input
- i. student and parent surveys

4c. District

➤ Describe the areas below. Include only the district focus areas for the 2016-2017 school year and limit response to 300 words. Bulleted points are welcome and appreciated.

○ Include the district practices around high-quality instruction and rigorous curriculum which integrate:

- Technology
- Collaborative professional culture

➤ Venture Academy's schoolwide system to meet student learning goals in 2016-17 included the implementation of comprehensive formative assessment practices designed to integrate high-quality instruction, rigorous curriculum, technology and a collaborative professional culture.

➤ Venture Academy implemented the following process to review the effectiveness of its instructional practices:

-Frequent walk-throughs by Venture school leader/instructional coach.

-Regular walk-throughs by Venture's content leads, providing informal observations in content areas.

-Observational data and feedback, along with student outcome data, shared and discussed with the teacher, weekly content-specific professional learning communities and the school leadership team, with the goal of evaluating and improving instructional effectiveness.

-Observational and student content data highlights were periodically reviewed and analyzed and discussed by the school leadership team and used to determine priorities for professional development and coaching and overall school improvement.

-Venture's educator collaboration ensured that teachers and school leadership regularly engage in professional reflective practice, through the following activities:

-Daily opportunities for informal peer collaboration through daily common planning time

-Frequent 1-on-1 meetings between school leadership and teachers to support professional growth

-Weekly content area professional learning communities to review instruction, student work, curriculum and student outcome data

-Weekly instructional leadership team meetings focused on school improvement priorities. The team includes teacher leaders and school leaders

-Day-long professional development opportunities that include training, coaching and other activities related to school improvement priorities

5. Equitable Access to Excellent Teachers

On June 1, 2015, MDE submitted a plan to the U.S. Department of Education that required all states to address long term needs for improving equitable access of all students to excellent educators. The Every Student

Succeeds Act (ESSA), signed on December 10, 2015, now requires states to evaluate and publicly report whether low-income and minority students are disproportionately served by ineffective, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers.

To reach the goals of the WBWF, it is important to ensure that all students, particularly students from low income families, students of color and American Indian students have equitable access to teachers and principals who can help them reach their potential. WBWF now requires:

1. Districts to have a process to examine the equitable distribution of teachers and strategies to ensure low-income and minority children are not taught at higher rates than other children by inexperienced, ineffective, or out-of-field teachers.
2. District advisory committees to recommend to the school board the means to improve students' equitable access to effective and more diverse teachers.

In this 2016-2017 summary report submission, please provide the information below.

- *Describe the areas below. Limit response to 300 words. Bulleted points are welcome and appreciated.*
 - *District process to examine the distribution of experienced, effective and in-field teachers across the district and within school sites using data.*
 - *Include how the district reviews data to examine the equitable distribution of teachers.*
 - *Strategies used to improve students' equitable access to experienced, effective and in-field teachers.*

Venture Academy school leadership believes that the capacity of teachers individually and school-wide is the most pivotal variable in improving student learning outcomes. In 2016-17, school leadership implemented a comprehensive annual process to retain, recruit and select teachers with the most proven experience of meeting student learning needs, with the goal of ensuring that all Venture students have access to highly effective teachers. In this process, school leadership regularly reviewed student academic data (and prior school data for teacher finalists) as one key factor in making teacher selection and retention decisions.