



“SPCPA”

DISTRICT 4112 (Charter School)

16 W 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
St. Paul, MN 55102

[www.spcpa.org](http://www.spcpa.org)  
651-290-2225 (Phone)  
651-290-9000 (Fax)

Annual Report  
2024-2025

# Table of Contents

Page 04	A. Arts & Academic Elements
Page 14	B. Governance & Operational Elements
Page 19	C. Financial Elements
Page 20	D. Comprehensive Achievement & Civic Readiness (CACR)

SPCPA is authorized by the University of St. Thomas.



Authorizer Contact:

Teresa Moffatt

Phone:

(651) 962-4372

Email:

tmoffatt@stthomas.edu

## A. ARTS & ACADEMIC ELEMENTS

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### A1. Mission & Vision

#### History

In 2003, following approval by the Minnesota Department of Education, Mayor Randy Kelly (53<sup>rd</sup> Mayor of St. Paul, 2002-2006) worked with civic, arts, and public-school leaders to assess the need to establish a performing arts high school in the downtown area, design a program, and carry forward a plan. With Ordway Center for the Performing Arts as the initial authorizer, the Saint Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists (SPCPA) opened its doors to 154 students in 2005, offering a full academic program and performing arts instruction in dance and theatre.

#### Mission

*The **mission** of the Saint Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists is to **provide the highest caliber of academic and artistic education** for aspiring pre-professional performing artists and to **fully prepare them** for college and conservatory.*

#### Assessment of Mission

The challenge for SPCPA is to balance a structured academic program that is equally rigorous with a sophisticated, current arts curriculum. The school maintains a dynamic arts program by hiring an arts staff each year fully composed of working professional artists. SPCPA regularly assesses programmatic alignment to its mission of providing a high-caliber education.

One indicator of this alignment is academic achievement. SPCPA students consistently perform above local district and most state averages. For example, on the ACT, SPCPA students scored three full points higher than the state average. On the MCA's, SPCPA students scored 45% higher than Saint Paul Public Schools and 29% higher than the state average in reading, in science, SPCPA students scored 35.5% higher than Saint Paul Public Schools and 27% higher than the state average, while in math, SPCPA students scored 4.5% higher than Saint Paul Public Schools and 4% lower than the state average. Additionally, Niche.com ranks SPCPA as the number one high school for the arts in Minnesota.

Among the school's high graduation rates (85% in 2025, 88% in 2024, historically 90–95% pre-COVID), most students, historically around 90% pre-COVID, continue to pursue post-secondary education immediately after high school. It is recognized that this percentage has declined post-COVID and continues to be slow to return to historical values. In 2025–2026, 83% of students that graduated the year prior are attending college. This mirrors national trends which reflect more students taking gap years, often due to financial barriers or perceived cost-benefit concerns. Of the 2025 graduates who applied to college, 100% were accepted to between one and sixteen schools.

Of those pursuing higher education, approximately 30% have chosen majors in dance, theatre, music, visual art, or creative writing. Notably, 53% of students pursuing the arts are enrolled in conservatory programs requiring an audition or portfolio for admission, up from 27% the previous year. Pre-COVID, 50% of SPCPA students pursued the arts after high school.

SPCPA also assesses mission effectiveness qualitatively. Alumni frequently reflect on the importance of their education at SPCPA, and senior students share similar feedback during events involving stakeholders and community members. These constituents consistently note that SPCPA's arts training and college preparation provided access to opportunities, fostered a supportive community of like-minded peers, and offered an academic program that treats all students as college bound. While SPCPA does not maintain comprehensive data on alumni career paths, hundreds of alumni have pursued successful careers in the arts. Many of these achievements are highlighted on the school's alumni webpage and through social media, though these platforms do not yet capture the full scope of alumni thriving in the arts.





## Vision

The mayor's office in 2005 articulated the vision for the school: *A Juilliard experience for everybody*. To better articulate a vision that would resonate with the 50% of the student body who chose not to pursue the arts after high school, the SPCPA Board of Directors rearticulated that vision which stands today:

*A premier arts and academic education for all high school students.*

## Assessment of Vision

A strong vision statement is one that is ultimately unattainable but compelling enough for faculty and staff to continuously work toward. The vision should drive every decision made at SPCPA. If you examine any conversation about teaching and learning among academic or arts teachers at SPCPA, you will discover the question at its root: "How do I deliver Juilliard for everyone or U of MN for everyone better? How can we meet the needs of every student across the wide range of skill levels so that all students are fully prepared for college and conservatory?"

As part of assessing the vision, we look at graduation rates: 88% of 2024–2025 seniors graduated, and 88% of 2023–2024 seniors graduated. Of SPCPA students who applied to college, 100% were accepted. 30% of graduates pursuing the arts in college or conservatory are well ahead of their peers in college, having already completed a four-year arts conservatory-level training program. Of concern, however, is that historically the number of graduates who pursue the arts after high school has been closer to 50%.

## SPCPA's Primary and Secondary Purposes

The primary purpose of SPCPA is to create a *safe* environment that improves student learning and achievement.

The secondary purpose is to increase learning opportunities for all pupils by providing comprehensive academic and artistic education that fully prepares students for graduation from high school and capability to pursue post-secondary education in either the arts or academics.

- 86% of the senior class indicated they plan to continue their education directly after high school.
- 16% of the senior class that graduated on time are taking a gap year.
- 100% of the students who applied to college were accepted by between 1 and 16 schools.
- Acceptances averaged 4.0 per applicant.
- 30% of graduates pursuing college are focusing on dance, music, theatre, art, or creative writing.
- 50% of those students were accepted into audition-based degrees (BFA or BM).

**Mission Specific Academic Goals**

In keeping with its mission, SPCPA aims for more than 90% of students in the senior class to attain acceptance into one or more college or conservatories.

School Year	Rate of Acceptance	Applied to 1 or More	Entering College or Conservatory after High School
SY 24-25	100%	76%	71%

As noted earlier, approximately 85% of SPCPA’s senior class graduated on time in 2025 (88% before the start of the 2025-2026 school year). While our college acceptance rate remains high, our immediate goal is to increase the number of students applying to post-secondary institutions. The percentage of seniors submitting applications has declined from 91% in 2021–2022 to 76% in 2024–2025. However, 100% of students who applied to college were accepted, each receiving offers from between one and sixteen schools, with an average of 4.0 acceptances per applicant. This past year, 71% of students in the senior class enrolled in college immediately after graduation. Although this reflects a slight increase from the previous two years, it remains below historical levels.

SPCPA’s mission is to prepare students for both college and conservatory programs. While student GPAs, MCA test results, and ACT scores indicate strong academic readiness, fewer graduates are choosing to attend college right away. Although it is difficult to predict how many 2026 graduates will enroll immediately, our goal remains to ensure that all students are fully prepared for post-secondary study and encouraged to apply so that they have viable options. SPCPA’s target for 2026 is for at least 90% of graduates to apply to college, with 100% of those applicants gaining acceptance to at least one institution of their choice.

**Non-Academic Goals**

**Attendance Goal**

	Schoolwide	9	10	11	12	Sp Ed	F/RP
SY22-23	87.86%	89.28%	88.73%	85.29%	88.51%	87.86%	87.5%
SY23-24	89.29%	88.01%	90.97%	88.81%	89.20%	89.29%	89.30%
SY 24-25	90.28%	89.89%	90.65%	89.78%	90.93%	89.86%	88.39%

SPCPA was able to meet its school-wide attendance rate goal of 90-94% when excluding students with excused or limited excused absences. As noted above, almost all categories were either over 90% or within a few tenths of a percentage point. Note, this is different than the state’s report regarding attendance, which measures the percentage of students that attend school 90% or the time or more during the school year regardless of the reason being absent. When considering all absences, 65.4% of SPCPA students attend school 90% of the time or more compared to 74.5% of students statewide. Goals aimed at increasing the percentage of students that attend school 90% or more of the time will once again be incorporated into SPCPA’s Q-Comp program. Teachers will implement research-based strategies in each of their respective classes to support the school in improving overall attendance.



## Testing Calendar Link

The Testing Calendar can be found on SPCPA's website.

### **ACADEMICS > ACADEMICS OVERVIEW > 2025-2026 TESTING CALENDAR (QUICK LINKS)**

#### **A3. After School or Extracurricular Opportunities & Summer Programming**

Because SPCPA targets artistically passionate students, many participate in individually chosen after-school activities, such as classes or performances with local arts organizations. SPCPA partners with several youth arts organizations throughout the Twin Cities, much of which is facilitated via SPCPA's Arts Advisory Council, composed of staff members from numerous local youth arts organizations. A sampling of the organizations that provided SPCPA students with after-school experiences this past year includes: Park Square Theatre, Children's Theatre Company, Stages Theatre Company, Youth Performance Company, History Theatre, Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphonies, Minnesota Youth Symphonies, TU Dance, Minnesota Dance Theatre (MDT), Lundstrom Performing Arts, Circus Juventas, Larkin Dance Studio, Walker West Jazz, the University of Minnesota Theatre and Dance Departments, and many others. With several of these organizations, SPCPA trades classroom, rehearsal, and performance space. Representatives from each organization are also invited to SPCPA to speak with students about the opportunities they offer.

With students coming from over 80 communities across more than 40 school districts, some choose to participate in activities in their home districts. SPCPA also offers specially chosen after-school opportunities aimed at students seeking to expand their skill sets and build community with peers outside of their regular classes.

Saint Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists has developed a strong and meaningful partnership with Park Square Theatre over the past year, greatly expanding the extracurricular and enrichment opportunities available to our students. Park Square has recently relaunched its youth theater programming and generously offered SPCPA students' full access, at no cost, a unique benefit not extended to the broader community. In addition, Park Square regularly invites our students to attend final dress rehearsals of all mainstage productions, as well as every available student matinee performance, ensuring consistent exposure to high-quality professional theater. Beginning this spring, the partnership will deepen further with the launch of a stagecraft course taught during the school day by Park Square artists. Students will walk just a block and a half from campus to the theater, where they will study lighting, set and prop design, costuming, sound, and stage management in a hands-on, professional environment. This collaboration provides SPCPA students with extraordinary access to professional training and experiences that directly support their artistic and academic growth.

## **Senior Student Ambassadors**

Through a process of student interest and faculty recommendations, senior students who embody SPCPA's mission and values are chosen to act as spokespeople for the school. By participating in the Student Ambassador Program, they serve on Q&A panels during information sessions for prospective families, as well as on stakeholder committees for administration and during the teacher hiring process. Many also represent the school at both public and in-school events, including Back-to-School Night, Parent-Teacher Conferences, and New Student Orientation Day.

## **National Honor Society**

25 students participated in the SPCPA Chapter of the National Honor Society in the 2024-2025 school year. Membership in the National Honor Society is an honor granted to those who apply and have demonstrated excellence in scholarship, leadership, character, and service. Members of NHS coordinate annual service projects to promote the values of NHS and help strengthen their communities. Application and induction into NHS occur each spring semester. 19 students were inducted in a live ceremony on campus on Tuesday, April 22, 2025.

## **Yearbook**

The SPCPA Yearbook is an end-of-the-year publication that highlights students' academic and artistic experiences and celebrates the successes of the graduating class. Students from all grades are eligible to participate in its creation, with many specializing in photography, layout, or organization. The Yearbook team typically meets on Fridays after school from October through March, giving members a hands-on opportunity to develop the theme of the book and make design decisions. Students also take photos, conduct interviews, and attend performances during their free time to ensure the final publication fully represents the SPCPA community. In return, students earn transcript recognition and resume credit.

Beginning this spring, SPCPA will offer two elective courses in Yearbook on Fridays, taught by a visual arts teacher whose specialty is photography. These courses will provide students interested in supporting the Yearbook with dedicated class time to focus on photography, design, and other aspects of production.

## **Student Clubs**

At SPCPA, students have a wide range of clubs that reflect our community's creativity, curiosity, and commitment to connection. Cultural groups such as the Black Student Union (BSU), Asian Student Union (ASU), and Latin and Hispanic Heritage Club create space for students to celebrate identity, share traditions, and build understanding across communities. Curricular and academic interests come to life through clubs like the Math Club, Jazz Club, and the SPCPA Literary Journal, where students can deepen their learning beyond the classroom. For those passionate about making a difference, organizations such as Earth Club, Students Demand Action, and Letters of Love provide meaningful ways to engage in advocacy and service. Finally, clubs like Fiber Arts, Book Club, and D&D offer creative outlets and opportunities to connect with peers who share similar passions.

## **Summer Programs**

Though SPCPA does not offer its own summer programming, it works to connect students to opportunities that align with the school's mission and core values. Typically, during the second semester each year, representatives from numerous performing arts camps, classes, and productions are invited into SPCPA arts classes to inform students about dance, theatre, music, art, and creative writing summer opportunities in the metro area. Every presentation includes information on how students can apply for scholarships or financial aid to cover tuition. This past year, organizations such as the Guthrie Theater, 10,000 Things Theatre Co., MacPhail Music, The Loft, Ballet Co. Lab, NYU, Juilliard, Carnegie Mellon, Park Square Theatre, Stages Theatre Company, Pillsbury House Theatre, Youth Shakespeare Company, the University of Minnesota Dance Program, the University of Minnesota Theatre Program, and many others visited SPCPA to promote their summer programming. All these organizations are returning for 2025-2026.



## A4. Parent/Guardian Involvement

### Annual Parent/Guardian Survey

Parents/guardians are surveyed each year about their and their students' experiences at SPCPA. This year's survey focused on student attendance and the factors that influence it. **109 of approximately 300 families participated.**

When asked about the biggest challenges that make it difficult for their students to attend school every day, **46% of parents/guardians identified illness or ongoing health concerns, 36% cited mental health or anxiety about school, and 32% noted transportation issues.** 15% percent reported weather or safety concerns, and another 15% mentioned oversleeping or difficulty with morning routines. Fewer families cited family responsibilities or work schedules (8%) and lack of motivation or interest in school (7%).

When students do miss school, **67.5% of parents/guardians report absences are most often due to illness or medical appointments. Another 12% identified mental or emotional health reasons,** 4.5% reported transportation problems, and 3.7% cited family or personal responsibilities. All other responses represented less than one percent of those surveyed.

When asked what helps students feel most motivated to come to school, **77% of families selected friends and social connections, followed by 47.5% who chose teachers or staff who care about their students.** 42% percent cited arts classes, productions, or J-Term experiences, while 21% noted specific academic subjects or classes their student enjoys. 15% percent identified a sense of routine and purpose as a key motivator.

Regarding school connectedness, **46% of families indicated their student feels very connected and informed about what is happening at school, while 45% felt somewhat connected** and receive updates, though not as often as they would like. 8% indicated that their student is not very connected and rarely knows what is happening at school. No families reported feelings of not being connected at all. In response to the open-ended question about what would help their student feel more connected, some parents/guardians mentioned more extracurricular activities or the addition of an on-site counselor or social worker, though no strong themes emerged across responses.

When asked what changes would make it easier for their students to attend school every day, **24.5% of families selected improved transportation options, and 20.6% identified an earlier or later start time.** Other notable responses included more mental health and social-emotional support at school (13.5%), more engaging or relevant classes and experiences (11%), and better communication about attendance expectations (5%).

These survey results provide valuable insight into the factors influencing student attendance at SPCPA. **Illness, mental health, and transportation challenges remain the most significant barriers,** while strong relationships, meaningful engagement in the arts, and a sense of belonging serve as the most powerful motivators for consistent attendance. SPCPA will use these findings to guide continued efforts to strengthen attendance.



## **A5. Curriculum (aligns with CACR)**

### **ACADEMICS**

The principal and academic director ensures academic courses align to Minnesota State Standards through an ongoing process of curriculum review and alignment. The academic faculty refine unit curriculum documents to guide teaching and learning throughout the year, while curriculum maps and supporting materials provide context for teachers working with students at the same grade level and outline the baseline knowledge students bring to upper grades.

Aligned with Minnesota's Comprehensive Achievement and Civic Readiness legislation, SPCPA's academic program emphasizes continuous improvement, equitable student outcomes, and preparation for college, career, and life. Staff analyze student data, engage in reflective instructional practice, and design lessons that support both academic achievement and artistic growth. Annual assessments of curriculum are conducted by administration, academic teachers, and staff through course surveys, feedback from students and families, and review of achievement data. Decisions regarding curriculum updates are made each April for the following school year. When state standards are revised, new curricula and resources are evaluated and implemented to ensure that all courses remain rigorous, relevant, and responsive to student needs.

SPCPA offers two levels of coursework for most classes: On-Level and Advanced or Advanced Placement (AP). On-Level courses are aligned to Minnesota academic standards across the four core content areas, to College Board AP frameworks for advanced courses, and to the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) standards in Spanish.

With over 50% of SPCPA's senior class pursuing majors outside of the performing arts, the academic program provides a strong foundation for all pathways. In keeping with the former WBWF's goal of ensuring every student is career and college ready, SPCPA continues to refine its AP offerings and instructional practices to provide students with rigorous, high quality, and engaging learning experiences that prepare them for success beyond high school.

### **ARTS**

Throughout a typical school year, each arts department formulates objectives for students aimed at technical proficiency and performance preparedness. Specified training routines are then incorporated into practicum during the following school year to achieve these goals. Faculty use jury performances in the spring to measure results.

In either the fall or spring semester, each arts department offers a class for students in grades 11 & 12 that includes an entrance requirement such as an audition, interview, essay, or portfolio. At the end of the semester, all other students in all departments are invited to a showing, sharing, exhibition, or reading of the work produced by the advanced classes.

## **A6. Scheduling (aligns with CACR)**

### **Student Days**

The program at SPCPA breaks total days into block scheduling, where students manage ten 80-minute periods over the course of two days (three academic classes, two arts classes daily, flipping each day). This setup of longer periods allows for more time to work with concepts in class and distribute academic workload over multiple days. 40% of each student's day is used to prepare them for a conservatory education and the arts profession. 60% of each student's day is used to prepare them academically for college. During J-Term, 100% of a student's day is devoted to the arts. As such, 50% of the student's year is in Academics and 50% in Arts.

It is customary for students to have at least one Guided Study Hall in this rotation to allow for an environment that supports learning and homework completion. The licensed instructor supervising each Guided Study Hall has access to student data (contact information, grades, scores, attendance, etc.) to support their regular check-ins with each student. Ongoing conversations about graduation requirements and future planning (aligned with college readiness) are commonplace.

The academic schedule supports the former WBWF graduation goals. As students typically meet state requirements in math and science prior to their senior year, there is space in their schedules to recover credits, as needed, to support on-time graduation within the regular school day. Seniors also may replace a guided study hall period to recover credit. Seniors that met their graduation requirements may have extra room in their schedule, which allows them to work, pursue volunteer opportunities or internships, or serve as a TA in SPCPA courses, all of which can support their post-secondary plans.

The arts schedule supports the former WBWF college readiness directives as it models a college conservatory program. Two core arts classes are on Mondays and Wednesdays for 80 minutes. Two different core arts classes meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays for 80 minutes. Fridays are dedicated to meeting periphery skill sets in classes that meet once each week, as well as health and physical education requirements for graduation. This structure replicates the college conservatory approach, preparing students for that experience.

## **A7. Staffing and Professional Development (aligns with CACR)**

### **School Leadership**

SPCPA's arts and academic programs require an organization of leadership staff that supports clear communication and defined reporting structures. Diligent and intentional actions have been taken to create a school grounded in professional collaboration and a shared sense of purpose. For the 2025–2026 school year, SPCPA adjusted its leadership model to accommodate difficulty in filling vacant positions. The school's current leadership team includes the superintendent, principal and artistic director, principal and academic director, director of special education, and an executive assistant.

A delineation of these roles and responsibilities is outlined in "Governance & Operational Elements."

### **Faculty**

SPCPA employed 53 faculty (40 arts, 13 academics) during the 2024-2025 school year in addition to administration, administrative support staff, and student services support staff. The number of SPCPA faculty currently employed for 2025-2026 is 45 (36 arts, 13 academics). The number of arts teachers will likely increase slightly as semester two teachers are often added in December and January.

### **Faculty Evaluations**

Teachers at the Saint Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists (SPCPA) receive formal evaluations. An annual formal evaluation consists of a pre-conference, observation, and post conference by a licensed administrator. Teachers in their first three years at the school receive three formal evaluations annually consistent with the school's commitment to providing support for teachers new to the field or to the school. Additionally, teachers new to the field are assigned a mentor and receive additional coaching, as needed from a licensed administrator. The level of mentorship is individually determined for teachers new to the school that have more than three years of teaching experience. Teachers with three or more years of service are evaluated once annually and receive a summative evaluation once every three years.



Each formal observation is based on the Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching Rubric, and every evaluation includes a post-observation conference that identifies areas for professional growth, establishes next steps and follow-up provisions. All teachers complete individual professional growth plans each year in collaboration with their supervising administrator.

Additionally, the school's Q-Comp program for academic faculty incorporates a structured peer-review process and integrates student learning data into professional goals. Additionally, culturally responsive performance metrics have been added both to the peer-review process and as an addendum to the Danielson evaluation rubric, ensuring that instruction and reflection practices support equity and responsiveness in the classroom.

## **Professional Development**

Prior to the start of the 2025-2026 school year, professional development for all staff was provided by SPCPA's principals and director of special education. Additional training is scheduled for J-term for academic faculty.

Aligning with both the state of Minnesota and former WBWF, SPCPA updated its Q Comp evaluation rubric to include culturally responsive practices.

## **A8. Innovative Practices**

### **Daily Academics**

For the 2025-2026 school year, the principal and academic director will oversee the academic program, curriculum development, and faculty to ensure high standards of education and support student success. The principal and academic director is a licensed administrator with experience leading a school program.

The Guided Study Hall (GSH) is different from a typical high school study hall. Each Guided Study Hall is supervised by a licensed teacher. The Guided Study Hall teacher checks in with each student at least once every 5 class periods and conducts a "grades check" and "missing work check." The Guided Study Hall teacher provides an added layer of support as they build relationships with students and assist them across academic disciplines. GSH is another strategy to meet SPCPA's graduation, college readiness, and opportunity gap goals. Peer-to-peer tutoring is available in Guided Study Halls to students who express a need. All students have access to chrome books and school resources (textbooks, calculators, etc.). Students may also use GSH time to make up tests and/or quizzes in an area of the room sectioned off exclusively for testing.

### **Professional Arts Focus**

All arts instructors are actively working artists with professional training and backgrounds that include a history of demonstrated professional work (performance, exhibitions, publications, etc.). Arts faculty aligns their class structure with the same standard that is expected in the professional arts community. This ensures that current training from the field is brought into arts classrooms.

SPCPA is supportive of students pursuing outside arts opportunities. Predicted Arts Absences are arrangements between students and their teachers and families so students can engage in professional artistic opportunities during the school day while completing their schoolwork and engaging in unique arts experiences.

Numerous partnerships with performing arts organizations across the Twin Cities provide the school access to performance spaces, master classes, professional performance experiences, and guidance from other working artists.

## J-Term

J-Term takes place over three weeks each January, between the first and second semesters. Students select three projects of interest and audition for placement in one of their top choices. During J-Term, students work with SPCPA faculty and guest artists in a rehearsal and performance schedule modeled after professional arts organizations.

To extend learning beyond technical training and foster connections with the Twin Cities professional arts community, J-Term rehearsals and performances are held at professional venues. Regular partner venues include: The E.M. Pearson Theatre at Concordia University, Mixed Blood Theatre, Red Eye Theater, MetroNome Brewery, Park Square Theatre, Open Book Performance Hall, Chicago Avenue Fire Arts Center, Mirror Lab Gallery, The Loft, Jungle Theater, Southern Theater, Minnesota Museum of American Art, The Crane Theater, The Luminary Arts Center, The Anne Simley Theatre at Hamline University, TU Dance, Ballet Co. Lab, St. Paul Ballet, Terrarium Recording Studio, Ananya Dance Theatre, The Playwrights' Center, Illusion Theatre, Pillsbury House Theatre, North Garden Theater, Highpoint Center for Printmaking, Mudluk Studio, Penumbra Theater, Interact Center for the Visual and Performing Arts, SubText Books, and Public Functionary Gallery.

## Juries

Each spring in all arts disciplines, students engage in a summative evaluation process where members of the professional arts community can witness work by students and provide individualized comments and feedback. This opportunity is used for artistic development and helps guide improvement for both the students and for the arts faculty who modify programming, curriculum, and teaching style as needed to support improved student growth the following year.

## Downtown Campus Community

Located in the heart of downtown St. Paul, the school is housed in the historic Lowry Building.

Approximately 70% of SPCPA students make use of the Metro Transit buses and light rail lines to commute to school due to the downtown location and varied home districts.

All students are given open lunch in downtown St. Paul.

## A9. Awards

In 2024, SPCPA was once again recognized by U.S. News & World Report as one of the nation's "Best High Schools." The school received the same recognition again in 2025.

In 2024, SPCPA was also ranked by Niche.com as the #1 School for the Arts in the state of Minnesota, **a distinction SPCPA continues to hold in 2025.**

Current Niche.com rankings for SPCPA (2025):

- #1 – School for the Arts in Minnesota
- #7 – Charter Schools in Minnesota (out of 59)
- #4 – Teachers in Minnesota (out of 437 schools)
- #34 – Best High Schools in Minnesota (out of 453 schools)



## **B. GOVERNANCE & OPERATIONAL ELEMENTS**

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### **B1. Teacher Licensure Verification**

The Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB) collaborated with SPCPA for three years to address the limitations of the state's new tiered licensure system as it relates specifically to arts instruction. As a result of this work, PELSB submitted recommendations to the legislature to create an alternative pathway allowing arts instructors without a bachelor's degree but with significant professional experience to qualify for a Tier 1 license.

In 2023, legislation reflecting these recommendations was passed. Under the new exemption, dance, music, art, and theatre teachers who lack a bachelor's degree but possess at least five years of documented professional experience are now eligible for a Tier 1 teaching license.

The only notable drawback to this change is the cost. The previous Community Expert Permission was free of charge, whereas each Tier 1 license now costs approximately \$100 for both initial issuance and annual renewal plus MTLE costs. With up to 50 arts teachers at SPCPA holding Tier 1 licenses, this results in an estimated annual cost of more than \$5,000 to the school.

### **B2. School Administration**

The school's administrative team consists of the superintendent, principal and academic director, principal and artistic director, and director of special education. Each of these individuals hold supervisory roles and responsibilities and are licensed (file #s below).

**Callie Jacobs**  
**Superintendent**

**File #421062**

Serves as the contact for all schoolwide inquiries.

Callie Jacobs reports to the Board of Directors, serves as chief executive of the Board, and oversees the principals, director of special education, and executive assistants who execute day-to-day operations in alignment with Board policies and school procedures. Callie is also the Human Rights Officer & Title IX Coordinator for employees and alternate for students.

**Tim Sullivan**  
**Principal & Academic Director**

**File #436708**

Serves as the contact for all inquiries pertaining to the academic program, as well as assigned (day-to-day) school operations. Tim is also the designated Human Rights Officer & Title IX Coordinator for students for SY25-26.

**Brian Goranson**  
**Principal & Artistic Director**

**File #431203**

Serves as the contact for all inquiries pertaining to the arts program, as well as assigned (day-to-day) school operations.

**Monica Lonergan**  
**Director of Special Education**

**File #359594**

Serves as the contact for all inquiries pertaining to students with disabilities in Grades 9-12.



**B3. School Enrollment & Attrition Trends**

SPCPA is a free public high school, enrolling applicants in grades 9-12. Starting February 1<sup>st</sup> of each school year, SPCPA begins inviting and enrolling applicants interested in attending the following school year. SPCPA commits to serve as many interested students as possible. In the occasional instance of program capacity based on the ability to serve grade level and artistic discipline, applicants are placed on a waiting list via a lottery process.

Visiting SPCPA is an important step in the application process because it allows students and their families to better understand the school’s unique environment. SPCPA encourages interested students to either shadow a student (opportunities offered once per month during the school year), and/or attend an evening information session with their parent(s)/guardian(s). Shadowing a student provides a chance to see the school day through the eyes of an SPCPA student and meet staff and current students. Information sessions are presentation and an opportunity for prospective families to learn about the school and are hosted by the principal. Additionally, on Fridays, students and families seeking a more personalized experience may sign up for an individual tour led by the principal.

SPCPA accepts all applicants free of charge. SPCPA does not have any initial interview or audition process associated with its application. Enrollment preference is given to new students who are siblings of or are fostered by families of current students.

**See Attachment A: Policy 513 Admissions**

**Student Demographics for SY2024-2025**

October 1, 2024 data indicated a total enrollment of 335 students spanning grades 9 through 12.

Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
84	63	100	88

- 37% Students of Color
- 16% Free/Reduced
- 12% Special Education
- .6% English Language Learners

**Enrollment by Arts Track for SY2024-2025**

Dance	Theatre	Musical Theatre	Music	Creative Writing	Visual Arts
48	38	57	69	34	89

### Student Demographics for SY2025-2026

October 1, 2025 data indicated a total enrollment of 311 students spanning grades 9 through 12.

Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
73	78	67	93

- 36% Students of Color
- 12% Free/Reduced
- 11% Special Education
- .3% English Language Learners

### Enrollment by Arts Track for SY2025-2026

Dance	Theatre	Musical Theatre	Music	Creative Writing	Visual Arts
46	32	56	76	24	77



### School Enrollment Trends

#### Student Attrition for SY2024-2025

Grade	Number of students who enrolled in the school on or before Oct 1	Number of students who enrolled After Oct 1	Number of students who left after Oct 1	Number of students enrolled at the close of the school year	Number of students that remained enrolled in the school for the full year
9	84	4	13	75	68
10	64	6	5	65	57
11	100	4	12	93	84
12	88	3	2	87	81
	336	17	32	320	290

Note:

ADMs at the close of the 2024-2025 school year were approximately 315.

## **B4. Community Partnerships**

As part of its mission, SPCPA connects students to the vibrant professional and post-secondary arts community of the Twin Cities. The school accomplishes this through a variety of ongoing partnerships and initiatives.

### **Arts Advisory Council**

SPCPA's Arts Advisory Council is composed of local professional artists who meet annually, typically each summer, to discuss ways the arts community can connect with the school and to provide feedback and support. Over SPCPA's history, members representing the following organizations have served on this council: Illusion Theatre, History Theatre, Pillsbury House Theatre, TU Dance, Walker West Music Academy, Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphonies, Minnesota Youth Symphonies, Minnesota Orchestra, Guthrie Theater, University of Minnesota Opera, University of Minnesota/Guthrie BFA Acting Program, Skylark Opera, Mixed Blood Theatre, Theater Latté Da, Theater Mu, American Composers Forum, Minnesota Dance Theatre, Lundstrum Center, Red Eye Theatre, Frank Theatre, Park Square Theatre, The Playwrights' Center, Perpich Center for the Arts, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, The Ordway, Penumbra Theatre Company, Zeitgeist, Interact Center for the Visual and Performing Arts, Open Eye Figure Theatre, SteppingStone Theatre, Youth Performance Company, Stages Theatre Company, and many others.

### **J-Term**

A central purpose of J-Term is to move students beyond the classroom and into professional arts environments across the Twin Cities. Each January, all students are placed in one of more than 20 projects, including instrumental, vocal, and dance concerts; plays and musicals; operas; creative collaborations; experimental works; staged readings; and exhibitions or gallery showings. These projects are led by local professional artists who guide students through rehearsals and performances in professional venues. In January 2025, SPCPA students participated in 17 J-Term projects across Twin Cities venues, and 15 projects are planned for January 2026.

### **SPCPA Arts Faculty**

All SPCPA arts teachers are active, working professionals. Each maintains professional connections to at least one organization represented on the Arts Advisory Council, helping to sustain and strengthen SPCPA's relationships within the Twin Cities arts community.

### **Master Classes**

Every SPCPA arts discipline hosts multiple master classes each year. The music, dance, theatre, musical theatre, creative writing, and visual arts programs regularly bring in guest artists to share their expertise and perspectives several times each year.

### **On-Campus College Visits**

SPCPA coordinates with colleges and universities to provide students with direct access to higher education representatives. Each year, the school typically hosts more than 20 on-site college visits and arranges additional opportunities for students to meet with colleges off campus. More than 20 visits are planned for the 2025–2026 school year.

### **National Honor Society**

SPCPA's chapter of the National Honor Society partners with the city of St. Paul's Citywide Spring Cleanup as its primary service project. The cleanup is typically hosted on the Saturday closest to Earth Day and takes place in parks all around the city. SPCPA students, along with other volunteers from the area, meet to pick up trash and litter exposed by the melting snow.



## **Social Studies**

Over the past five years the Social Studies department partnered with the League of Women Voters, whose representatives have spoken with current seniors about active citizenship and civic responsibilities. The League of Women Voters also assists students with the voter registration process.

## **SPCPA Board of Directors**

The Board of Directors includes key community members from Twin Cities arts and education sectors. Current board members represent Illusion Theatre, Interlochen Center for the Arts, Spring Dance and Theatre Academy, COMPAS, Minnesota Public Radio (MPR), and Travelers Insurance. The Board will continue to be a vehicle to further strengthen SPCPA's connection to the community at large.

## **B5. Board of Directors**

The SPCPA Board of Directors is composed of individuals who possess working knowledge of its governance and financial oversight responsibilities. Board membership includes individuals with substantial financial knowledge whether it be via their professions (e.g. Law, Financial Planning, Arts Management, etc.) or experience and expertise obtained via serving on other boards and/or school boards. The 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 SPCPA Board of Directors includes community members, a teacher member, a parent member, and ex-officio member (Superintendent).

SPCPA maintains Board meeting agendas and minutes on its website:

### **ABOUT SPCPA > SPCPA BOARD > BOARD MINUTES**

<https://spcpa.org/about/board-minutes/>

Electronic and hard copies of Board meeting materials can also be requested through the school's main office.

New SPCPA Board members are on-boarded through an initial meeting. New for 2024, all new board members are required to start training before their term begins on Open Meeting Law, board roles and responsibilities, and data practices law. Within 12 months of being seated, new board members must complete employment policies and practices, financial management and board roles and responsibilities regarding academic achievement and performance. Additionally, all board members engage in required annual training.

## **C. FINANCIAL ELEMENTS**

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### **C1. Fiscal Health**

SPCPA's Board, administrators and staff keep a watchful eye on enrollment numbers to balance the budget as compared to actual ADM counts. In FY25 the school's initially adopted budget was based on 325 ADM and later revised to 315 ADM. The actual ADMs served in FY25 were 315 as of June 2025. It is realized that the school will have slight fluctuations in enrollment given SPCPA is a school of choice. However, the school has made adjustments that align with establishing and revising, if necessary, revenue and expenditure budgets reflective of the actual, lower enrollments experienced in recent years to ensure each year end will result in a surplus rather than a deficit.

Long-term financial challenges would present if enrollment continues to decline. Additionally, creative solutions will need to be sought in terms of additional revenue sources to assist with facilities, staff retention, and resources for students.

**See Attachment B: 2025 June Preliminary Financial Report**

### **C2. Internal Controls & Board Oversight**

Monthly financial reports and supplemental information (bills) are prepared by SPCPA's Business Manager, Travis Berends, at Creating Planning. They are reviewed by SPCPA's Superintendent before being presented to the Board's Executive & Finance Committee for review, discussion, and approval. Additionally, all payables are reviewed and authorized by the Board Chair and Vice-Chair & Treasurer (both members of the Executive & Finance Committee) before being disbursed by the school. The Executive & Finance Committee meets prior to most regular business meetings of the Board, scheduled permitting. It consists of three members of the Board, including the Board Chair and Vice-Chair & Treasurer, and Superintendent. Lastly, all financial reports and supplemental information are provided to the full Board at regular business meetings for action.

Throughout this process, SPCPA's ADMs served reports are reviewed by both the Board and its Executive & Finance Committee in conjunction with regular review of the school's budget quarterly, at a minimum. This process ensures for multi-layered monitoring of available funds, allowing for swift transitions to be made to the budget as necessary based on the school's enrollment or other factors that could affect monetary flow. All significant budget changes made are recorded in the Board's regular business meeting minutes.

### **C3. Awards**

SPCPA received the Finance Award for FY25 which is awarded annually by the Minnesota Department of Education to recognize schools for meeting statutory deadlines for submission of audited fiscal financial data and reporting criteria.



## **D. Comprehensive Achievement & Civic Readiness (CACR) (formerly World's Best Workforce - WBWF)**

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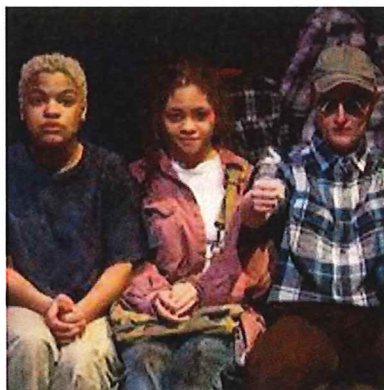
Under Minnesota Statutes 120B.11, SPCPA adopts the following four goals aligned with CACR legislation (formerly WBWF) applicable to students in grades 9-12 during the 2024-2025 school year:

- 1. All racial and economic achievement gaps between students are closed.**
- 2. All students are ready for career and college.**
- 3. All students graduate from high school.**
- 4. Students are prepared to be lifelong learners.**

The achievement gap is analyzed using data from the MCAs in math and reading. The proficiency rate is the percent of students meeting or exceeding state standards. The proficiency rate on MCAs only includes students enrolled at SPCPA as of October 1, 2024.

On December 13, 2024, at 4:00 PM, the school board held its annual WBWF public meeting. The annual report and annual public meeting are focused on the strategies and initiatives that the school engaged in to meet the goals, and the progress made on those goals in the prior school year.

The date for the school board to hold its annual CACR (formerly WBWF) public meeting relevant to the 2024-2025 school year is planned for December 10, 2025, at 4:00 PM. While elements of CACR (formerly WBWF) are sprinkled throughout the school's annual report primarily pertaining to 2024-2025, a summary report of the school's progress on the specific goals referenced above, in conjunction with this annual report, will also be disseminated to stakeholders via email and posted on the school's website.



# Attachment A

Policy 513  
Admissions

## 513 Admissions

### I. Purpose

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The purpose of this policy is to explain SPCPA's admissions process to assure access to the school by all eligible students.

### II. General Statement of Policy

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- A. This policy establishes procedures for admission to SPCPA consistent with Minnesota statutes and other applicable laws.
- B. SPCPA is a charter school and pursuant to state law, must enroll an eligible student who submits a timely application, unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity of the program, class, grade level, or building. If this occurs, students will be accepted through a lottery process.
- C. SPCPA does not discriminate against any student based on race, color, ethnicity, creed, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, familial status, status regarding public assistance, sexual orientation, disability, intellectual ability, prior measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic or artistic ability, or for any other basis that would be unlawful for a public or charter school.
- D. SPCPA does not seek any information about any applicant that may be used to discriminate against the applicant in either the school's policies or governing laws. This does not preclude SPCPA from seeking such information about a student for a lawful purpose after SPCPA admits the student.

### III. Procedures

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- A. Annually, the board will review and establish the student capacity for each grade level and arts program based on facilities for the following school year.
- B. Annually, the board will set an initial date to begin inviting students to enroll for the following school year.
- C. SPCPA will follow the procedures listed below if applications for enrollment at the initial date of admittance established by the board exceed the established capacity for a grade level or arts program.

1. Enrollment preference will be given to siblings of enrolled students and to foster children of that student's parent(s)/guardian(s).
  2. Secondary enrollment preference will be given to children of SPCPA employees.
  3. A lottery will be conducted to fill the remaining openings in each grade level and arts program.
  4. If a student is selected through the lottery process, any siblings of that student will be accepted at the same time.
  5. Students not selected through the lottery process will be placed on a waitlist and invited in order of placement on the waitlist by grade and arts program as openings become available.
- D. If the number of applications is less than or equal to the established capacity after the initial date of admission, all applicants will be accepted into the school.
- E. Enrollment after this date will be on a "first-come, first-served" basis until capacity is reached. Once capacity is reached, new applicants will be placed in a waiting pool. If openings occur, the lottery and waitlist process will again be followed.
- F. SPCPA administration will inform students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) of the status of admission in a timely manner.

#### IV. Complaints & Appeals

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Any complaint regarding the admissions process or appeal pertaining to an admissions decision should first be made to the superintendent before being filed with SPCPA's board.

#### Legal References

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Minn. Stat. § 124E (Charter Schools)

#### Cross References

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SPCPA Policy 103 (Complaints)

# Attachment B

2025

June Preliminary Financial Report



# *Saint Paul Conservatory* FOR PERFORMING ARTISTS

**Saint Paul Conservatory for  
Performing Artists  
St. Paul, MN  
District 4112**

**PRELIMINARY**

**Financial Report**

**June 30, 2025**

**Saint Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists**  
**Saint Paul, Minnesota**  
**Balance Sheet**  
**As of June 30, 2025**

	Audited Balance June 30, 2024	Ending Balance
<b>Assets</b>		
Current Assets		
101-00 Checking - Bremer Bank	\$ 719,014	\$ 1,080,799
101-02 Petty cash	300	300
115 Accounts receivable	16,695	53,993
118 Accounts receivable - Lowry Building improvement	1,938,941	1,921,184
121 Due from MN Department of Education 23-24	394,027	-
121 Current year state holdback (10%)		432,907
122 Federal aids due from MDE 23-24	68,513	-
122 Federal aids due from MDE 24-25		7,895
131 Prepaid expenditures	33,215	7,025
Total Current Assets	3,170,705	3,504,103
Total assets	\$ 3,170,705	\$ 3,504,103
<b>Liabilities and Fund Balance</b>		
Current Liabilities		
201 Salaries and wages payable	84,143	77,999
Summer salaries and wages payable		
206 Accounts payable	32,279	72,099
215 Payroll deductions and contributions	68,200	61,944
Summer benefits payable		
230 Unearned Revenue	-	20,000
Total liabilities	184,623	232,043
Fund balance		
Fund balance 7-1-2024	2,986,083	2,986,083
Net income to date		285,978
Total fund balance	2,986,083	3,272,061
Total liabilities and fund balance	\$ 3,170,705	\$ 3,504,103

**Saint Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists**  
**Saint Paul, Minnesota**  
**Statement of Revenue and Expenditures**  
**As of June 30, 2025**

	FY 2025 Original Budget	FY 2025 Working Budget	Year 1 Act
<b>Enrollment (Average Daily Membership)</b>	350	315	3
<b>General Fund - 01</b>			
Revenues			
State revenues			
211 General education aid	\$ 3,299,717	\$ 3,046,199	\$ 3,
211 EL Cross-subsidy	-		
201 Endowment fund revenue	22,220	23,101	
317 Long term facilities maintenance aid	55,440	49,896	
343 Library Aid	19,916	19,917	
373 Student Support Aid	19,916	20,000	
335 Q-Comp	102,960	94,380	
348 Charter lease aid	551,880	496,692	
360 Special ed aid	312,698	316,521	
356 READ Act Aid	-	8,747	
357 Tchr Trng READ ACT Aid		13,162	
370 Other state aids	-	-	
Prior year over/under accruals	-	-	
10% Estimated state holdback amount	-		
Total state revenues	4,384,747	4,088,616	4,
Federal revenues			
414 Title II program	\$ 4,249	\$ 4,252	\$
419 Special education aid	63,687	63,687	
425 Early intervening services funds	9,534	9,534	
Total federal revenues	77,470	77,473	
Local revenues			
035 Out of state tuition payments	\$ 9,500	\$ -	\$
050 Fees from patrons	38,000	36,100	
092 Interest Earnings	400	400	
096 Annual fund/ticket sales	60,000	45,000	
621 School store sales	4,500	5,000	
621 Dance ticket sales	14,500	13,500	
621 Yearbook sales	12,000	10,000	



**Saint Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists**  
**Saint Paul, Minnesota**  
**Statement of Revenue and Expenditures**  
**As of June 30, 2025**

FY 2025 Original Budget	FY 2025 Working Budget	Year 1 Act
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**Expenditures**

100 Salaries	\$ 1,536,663	\$ 1,418,720	\$ 1,
200 Benefits	425,972	385,341	
Summer salaries payable			
305 Contracted services	380,800	372,175	
320 Communications services	16,200	17,200	
329 Postage	4,500	1,000	
330 Utilities	75,000	75,000	
340 Property and liability insurance		-	
350 Repairs and maintenance	16,500	15,400	
360 Contracted transportation	80,000	71,000	
366 Travel, conferences and staff training	31,100	30,350	
369 Student field trip fees	-	1,400	
570 Building lease cost	699,096	699,096	
335/380/560 Other rentals and operating leases	29,500	33,800	
389 Licensure coursework reimbursement	5,250	5,250	
401 Supplies - non instructional	27,700	30,000	
402 Materials purchased for resale	12,000	14,500	
405/406 Non instructional computer software	26,750	38,350	
430 Instructional supplies	15,500	10,050	
455 Non-instructional tech supplies	1,500	1,500	
460 Textbooks and workbooks	-	500	
490 Food	2,500	1,500	
530/533 Furniture & Equipment	7,500	7,500	
555/556 Technology equipment	75,000	12,000	
820 Dues, memberships, other fees	36,035	33,385	
820 Dues to Lowry	350,000	350,000	
Q-Comp Expenditures	101,268	103,596	
State Special Ed - (723, 740)			
Salaries	268,541	269,476	
Benefits	60,615	70,495	
Contracted Services		6,000	
Supplies and materials			
Federal Title II expenditures (414)	-	-	
FY 2025 Original Budget	5,000,000	5,000,000	
FY 2025 Working Budget	5,000,000	5,000,000	
Year 1 Act	5,000,000	5,000,000	

**Saint Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists**  
**Saint Paul, Minnesota**  
**Statement of Revenue and Expenditures**  
**As of June 30, 2025**

	FY 2025 Original Budget	FY 2025 Working Budget	Year 1 Actual
<b>Total All Funds</b>			
Revenues			
State revenues	\$ 4,384,747	\$ 4,088,616	\$ 4,
Federal revenues	77,470	77,473	
Local revenues	148,900	122,000	
<b>Total revenues</b>	<b>\$ 4,611,117</b>	<b>\$ 4,288,089</b>	<b>\$ 4,</b>
Expenditures			
Salaries and wages	\$ 1,536,663	\$ 1,418,720	\$ 1,
Employee benefits	425,972	385,341	
Purchased services	1,337,946	1,321,671	1,
Supplies and materials	85,950	96,400	
Facilities and equipment	82,500	19,500	
Dues and memberships; fees; other expenses	880,161	899,343	
<b>Total expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 4,349,192</b>	<b>\$ 4,140,974</b>	<b>\$ 4,</b>
<b>Total revenues all funds</b>	<b>\$ 4,611,117</b>	<b>\$ 4,288,089</b>	<b>\$ 4,</b>
<b>Total expenditures all funds</b>	<b>\$ 4,349,192</b>	<b>\$ 4,140,974</b>	<b>\$ 4,</b>
<b>Net Income - All Funds</b>	<b>\$ 261,926</b>	<b>\$ 147,114</b>	<b>\$</b>
<i>Per Compliance Report</i>	\$ 2,986,082	\$ 2,986,082	
<b>Beginning Fund Balance, All Funds, July 1</b>	<b>\$ 2,986,082</b>	<b>\$ 2,986,082</b>	<b>\$ 2,</b>
<b>Projected Fund Balance, All Funds, June 30</b>	<b>\$ 3,248,008</b>	<b>\$ 3,133,196</b>	<b>\$ 3,</b>
<b>Projected Fund Balance Percentage</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>8</b>