



# 2010-2011 Annual Report

## District 4152-07

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

# Draft Annual Report

## Table of Contents

1. Introduction: Goals, Mission, Vision, History.....	3
2. Notable Accomplishments.....	4
3. School Enrollment, Retention and Attrition.....	6
4. School Governance.....	7
5. Management and Administration.....	8
6. Staffing.....	9
7. Academic Performance.....	12
a. Student Achievement goals for meeting state academic standards	
b. Results of local assessment data	
c. Staff Development and Goals	
8. Finance.....	16
9. Innovative Practices and Implementation.....	18
10. Program Challenges, Updated Goals and Future Plans.....	19
11. Authorizer.....	20
12. School's State Report Card.....	21
13. Non-Profit Status.....	21

## 1. Background and Overview

Twin Cities German Immersion School (TCGIS) is a flourishing, tuition-free public charter school located in Saint Paul, Minnesota. We opened in 2005 with two grades and continue to grow towards the goal of a full K-8 school.

According to representatives of the German government responsible for interacting with German-language schools worldwide, TCGIS is the fastest growing German-language primary school, outside of Germany. At the close of the 2010-2011 school, TCGIS enrolled 238 students in grades K-6.

Our full immersion program utilizes German as the language of instruction beginning in kindergarten. In addition, during the 2010-2011 school year, we introduced Spanish as a third language elective starting in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. TCGIS is excited to offer a third language opportunity, making us one of the few K-8 immersion programs in the nation to provide this level of language instruction in the early instructional years.

### **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 foreign 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 8th grade will possess a high level of language proficiency in German, enabling them to communicate with native speakers comfortably and effectively. In addition, they will be academically challenged to 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 that the gift of German language immersion would be available to children of the greater Twin Cities. We owe a huge debt of thanks to the pioneer staff and parents who were willing to dedicate themselves to the success of our school.

Volunteerism and a commitment to the school are hallmarks of the TCGIS parent community. Recently, TCGIS completed its annual parent survey of the school. In that survey, 87% of respondents (64% response rate overall) reported that they volunteered at TCGIS over the previous 12 months – the highest percentage ever reported in the survey.

The success of TCGIS during these difficult economic times speaks volumes to the dedication of our teachers, staff and volunteers.

**Parent Feedback**

Each spring Twin Cities German Immersion School conducts a parent satisfaction survey. This year, as in previous years results showed strong trends in parent satisfaction. Highlights from the survey include:

- 93% of survey participants are satisfied with their child(ren)’s educational experience at TCGIS.
- 91% of survey participants indicated their child(ren) will return to TCGIS.
- Over three-quarters of survey participants believe TCGIS prepares its students to be informed and active citizens. A historical comparison of performance on key attributes maintains high levels or shows improvement.

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Supportive Environment	91%	92%	90%
Academic Excellence	87%	85%	91%
Classrooms Managed Well	87%	93%	93%
Parents well-informed	77%	89%	82%

- The effective of staff and Director communication effectiveness greatly increased over the prior year.
- Almost all survey participants who volunteered (91%) were satisfied with their volunteer experience.

**2. Notable Accomplishments**

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

**Academic Program**

- We successfully retained a high number of teachers and recruited qualified local teachers adding to the long-term stability for the school.
- We instituted a schedule for a seven-period day that incorporates time for the structure of a day modeled after Responsive Classroom, without taking time from academic subjects.
- We created a position as Middle School Curriculum Coordinator.
- TCGIS successfully launched both a Spanish as a 3<sup>rd</sup> language program and parallel “Vertiefung Deutsch” – or “German Deepening” class as options for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students.

- We achieved a retention rate 88% of students transitioning to the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, which is an entry point into many middle school programs.
- We introduced a new Performing Arts program including two highly successful all school performances.
- Our Performing Arts program was featured in the Star Tribune Rites of Passage feature.
- We continued nurturing two important arts programs, the Strings group and Blumenkranz (a folk dance group), which performed at prominent cultural opportunities, including the Festival of Nations.
- TCGIS instituted a schedule allowing students to attend classes in math one grade level above their own as one means to meet needs of accelerated math learners.
- Two of our students received recognition at a Presentation Contest sponsored by our German sponsoring organization the Zentralstelle für Auslandschulwesen.

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

- Staff worked on aligning academic expectations at each grade level and produced a document called Achievement Goals for grades K- 5 which provides an important reference point for both student assessment and curriculum alignment.
- Staff created and implemented a report-card supplement to the TCGIS grading system that assesses student's social behavior.
- The board updated and approved the middle school educational philosophy document.
- We implemented goal-setting conferences between students, teachers and parents.
- We formalized our early release time for the development of three Professional Learning Communities. K-2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers focused on differentiation strategies. 3rd-4<sup>th</sup> grade teachers focused on strategies for teaching reading. Middle School teachers focused on curriculum development for the upcoming year. Teachers used the book Teach Like a Champion by Doug Lemov as a resource for unity on effective classroom management strategies.
- TCGIS purchased Atlas Rubicon as a Curriculum Management system and had core staff go through training.

### **Financial**

- We raised \$22,685 in our November fundraising goal, exceeding our goal by \$5,685.
- We sent two teachers to the national Green schools conference and launched a Sustainability Council to more fully integrate sustainable practices into the values and operations of TCGIS. We became a member of a national affiliate called EcoSchools to assist us in following a framework towards becoming more sustainable in our operations.
- We avoided use of the line of credit despite a 30% holdback of State funds.

- We expect to finish the 2010 – 2011 school year with a fund balance of 25% an increase of 5% over the previous year.

### **Operational**

- Operational staff restructured both the layout and staffing of the front office to improve customer service.
- We made changes to our cleaning vendor to use more economical and more sustainable line of products
- We instituted the position of Site Administrative Manager allowing a focus on streamlining and improving our business practices while allowing the director to move more towards instructional leadership.

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

- German American Chamber of Commerce organized a fundraiser and selected Twin Cities German Immersion School as a designated recipient. The gala raised \$5,815 of funds with a focus on library and technology funding.
- American Association of Teachers of German nominated TCGIS as a Teaching Center of Excellence. They also granted us \$150 for outreach.
- Germanic American Institute (GAI) was successful in renewing our charter contract despite a climate of legislative uncertainty about the requirements for future authorizers.
- The boards of the German American Chamber of Commerce, German American Institute and Twin Cities German Immersion School met quarterly with General Counsel, Christa Tiefenbacher-Hudson to strengthen our collaboration and promotion of German language and culture.
- Germany's Bundesprogramm Lehrkraft Program (BPLK) awarded TCGIS its first ever placement of a BPLK teacher for the 2011-2012 school year.
- TCGIS hosted a high-profile visit by Felix Emminger, Head of Schools Development in North America program from Zentralstelle für Auslandsschulwesen (ZfA).
- TCGIS drafted and submitted to the ZfA a comprehensive school development plan (Schulentwicklungsplan) to further our relationship with and support from the German government.

## **3. SCHOOL ENROLLMENT, RETENTION AND ATTRITION**

Student enrollment numbers for the 2010-2011 school year tracked closely to our projected enrollment. We enrolled 239 students at the start of the school year and ended the year at 231 students, resulting in a 96.65% retention rate. All school enrollment numbers are very close to what had been projected in both original start up planning and the 2010-2011 budget. TCGIS is on target to grow to a full K-8 configuration by the fall of 2012 and achieve a full complement of classes totaling a projected 360 students by 2014. We budgeted the

year at 230 Annual Daily Membership (ADM) and completed the year at 231. We were paid on approximately 234.5 ADM leaving us safely within budget, with no unexpected enrollment drops (see Table 1).

**Table 1: TCGIS 2010-2011 Student Retention**

Grade Level	Beginning Enrollment	New Students Added	Attrition	Year End Enrollment	Retention %
Kindergarten	47	1	3	45	95.74%
1	47	2	1	48	102.13%
2	38	0	3	35	92.11%
3	37	0	2	35	94.59%
4	30	1	2	29	96.67%
5	22	0	0	22	100.00%
6	18	0	1	17	94.44%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>96.65%</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 2010-2011 was Annika Fjelstad. Kimberly Kompel chaired the Board of Directors. The current board structure is a nine-member board, elected each May by the parents, teachers and staff at the school. Board members serve on a three-year rotation, with one third of the members rotating off of the board each year and each member serving a three-year term. While there has been one teacher on the board over the past three years, ours is a parent majority board. Table 2 summarizes the board composition for the 2010-2011 school year.

**Table 2: 2010-2011 TCGIS Board Members**

Member Name	Board Position	Election Date/Date Seated/Term Exp.	Phone	E-mail
Kimberly Kompel	Chair	Elected 5/21/2009 Seated 6/23/2009 Term exp. 6/2012	(651) 414-0304	kkompel@tcgis.org
Andrew Oxenham	Vice Chair	Elected 5/2008 Seated 6/2008 Term exp. 6/2011	(651) 646-0148	aoxenham@tcgis.org
Renee Moelders	Treasurer	Appointed and Seated	(651) 414-0511	rmoelders@tcgis.org

		6/15 2010 Term exp. 6/2012		
Lisa Friedman	Secretary	Elected 5/20/2010 Seated 6/15/2010 Term exp. 6/2013	(612) 781-5182	lfriedman@tcgis.org
Eric Hauth- Schmid	Parent Liaison	Elected 5/20/2010 Seated 6/15/2010 Term exp. 6/2013	(651) 697-1056	ehschmid@tcgis.org
Susanne Grimm	Teacher Liaison	Elected 5/21/2009 Seated 6/23/2009 Term exp. 6/2012	(952)898- 0871	sgrimm@tcgis.org
Mary Zellmer- Bruhn	Board Member	Elected 5/2008 Seated 6/2008 Term exp.6/2011	(612) 728-5879	mzbruhn@tcgis.org
Anita Ratwik	Board Member (Community)	Elected 5/20/2010 Seated 6/15/2010 Term exp. 6/2013	(651) 222-8350	aratwik@tcgis.org
Juergen Konczak	Board Member	Appointed and Seated 6/15 2010 Term exp. 6/2011	(612) 788-1168	jkonczak@tcgis.org

## 5. School Management and Administration

In 2010-2011 the school maintained one administrative position of director filled by Annika Fjelstad (File Folder #332791- Elementary Education) and one administrative position of Site Administrative Manager filled by Linda Michel. In 1.5 FTE Office Coordinator positions filled by Ann Berge and Andrea Zibble and a .5 FTE Data Coordinator filled by Stefanie Berres rounded out the office staff.

Annika Fjelstad has 14 years of classroom experience and seven prior years of administrative experience. For two years she served as the director of Conflict Resolution Outreach at the Friends School of Minnesota. For two years she served as Director of English Language Training at Abbott Northwestern Hospital where she implemented a nationally recognized program of Workforce Education for non-native speakers. For two years she served as Director of Monteverde Friends School, a pre-K–12 bilingual English/Spanish Immersion program based in Costa Rica. She is entering her third year of leadership at Twin Cities German Immersion School. Annika is fluent in both Spanish and German and comes from a history of working in Immersion education.

#### **Professional Development Plan for the 2009-2010 School Year**

Both Annika Fjelstad and Linda Michel were enrolled in the Charter School Leadership Academy organized through the Center for School Change and funded through the State of Minnesota. The Charter School Leadership Academy is a nationally recognized effort to provide access to successful models of both educational and business leadership to metro area charter school directors. Linda Michel and Annika Fjelstad were supported in this program by business and educational mentors with whom the staff members consulted regularly throughout the year.

#### **Professional Development Plan for the 2011 – 2012 School Year**

Annika Fjelstad continues with her graduate work towards principal certification at St. Mary's University. In addition, she will begin her internship, a program requirement of 320 hours at the elementary, middle school and high school levels gaining experience in a wide variety of areas relevant to school administration. The majority of these hours can be counted through her work at TCGIS, but some will be conducted at other high schools and middle schools.

## 6. Staffing

Successful immersion education depends upon 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.

We have successfully hired teachers both locally and through a partnership with the STEP program at the Checkpoint Charlie Foundation, which provides guest teachers for up to three years. We are pleased with the high level of teacher retention going into the 2011-2012 school year. Table 3 summarizes the composition of staff members at TCGIS for the 2011-2011 school year.

**Table 3: TCGIS Staff Composition**

Staff Name	File Folder Number (if Teacher)	Assignment	Years Employed by the School	Not Returning 2011-2012
Annika Fjelstad	332791	Director	2	
Linda-Rose Michel		Site Administrative Manager	1	X
Andrea Zibble		Office Coordinator	2	X
Annie Berge		Office Coordinator	1	X
Stefanie Berres		Data Coordinator	5	
Gwendolyn Stangel		Lunch/Extended Kindergarten Coordinator	2	X
Kristina Jackson		Lunch	2	X
Esther Eufinger	456307	Kindergarten	1	
Elena Heindl	443274	Kindergarten	4	
Natalia Kruck-Mettke	449452	1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	2	X
Sonja Cooper	444914	1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	2	
Susanne Grimm	296968	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	5	
Scot Stephenson	397485	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	6	
Yvonne Kuhn	450016	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	2	
Michelle Knoll	448290	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	2	
Carolyn Cook-Breithaupt	Community Expert Waiver	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	1	X
Nicole Halvorson	436827	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	2	
Uli Koester	328632	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	1	X
Cornelia Fritsche	450073	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	2	
Michelle Wallace	357442	English	4	
Katie Stephens	431693	English	2	
Hunter Goetzman	445334	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math/Peaceful Playground Instructor	3	

Amy Lenburg	399046	Art	5	
Laura Mueller	997976	Spanish	1	
Valentin Solakhau	447463	Performing Arts	2	
Mandi Rosenthal	396146	Physical Education	1	
Anne Kile	411821	Special Education	5	
Denise Stegmann	448759	Special Education	2	
Amy Davis	436202	Special Education	1	
Amber Hollenbeck	N/a	Classroom Instructional Assistant	2	
Brooke McAdam	N/a	Classroom Instructional Assistant	2	X
Hannah Kinney	N/a	Classroom Instructional Assistant	1	
Margaret Sims	N/a	Classroom Instructional Assistant	3	
Nathan Hartleben	N/a	Classroom Instructional Assistant	2	X
Heidi Scholtz	341798	English Language Learners	5	
Katie Kaari	404724	Speech Language	4	
Jeri Mullan	103401 (Dept. of Health)	Occupational Therapy	1	
Susan Kelley	346511	School Psychologist	5	X

**Addition of Site Administrative Manager**

Addition of the Site Administrative Manager position greatly increased the ability to stabilize some of our vendor relationships and focus on cost cutting measures in our purchasing. We were grateful to go into 2011-2012 with high teacher retention.

### **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 2010-2011, TCGIS was fortunate to have eighteen different interns add their talents to the school as teachers' aids. Of these, six 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 25 hours weekly to the classrooms.

### **Additional Commentary on Staffing**

Challenges remain in finding sufficient time for staff development, maintaining a work load that is not too overwhelming for staff at all levels, ensuring that Minnesota Department of Education licensing proceeds smoothly for guest teachers from Germany and ensuring that all staff have sufficient supervision and feedback.

TCGIS is also committed to finding an appropriate balance between local teachers who can provide continuity to the teaching staff and guest teachers who bring authenticity to the German curriculum. In 2010-2011, two teachers who had been hired as guest teachers on J-1 visas stayed for a second year. Two new teachers were hired locally and two teachers from Germany were American citizens with the option of staying on indefinitely. Of those two, one has stayed on for the 2011-2012 school year.

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

We rely on four key tests identified by our Assessment Committee for summative assessments.

### **Student Oral Proficiency Tests**

We are fortunate for continuity in our assessors who conduct this oral proficiency test for us each year. Due to discontinuation of grant funding from FLAP we have limited this assessment tool to only students at the end of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.

### **Stolperwörter Lesetest**

The Stolperwörter Lesetest is a German reading test available online, free of charge, and is administered by the teacher in the classroom. The task is to read sentences and correctly identify the incorrect word in each sentence. The test is timed and scored based upon how

many sentences are correctly marked in the given time period. The percentile rankings are derived from on-line data submitted by teachers across Germany voluntarily.

TCGIS administers the Stolperwoerter-Lesetest in 3rd and 4th grades.

**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 these have been administered as paper based tests, although electronic versions will be phased in over the next few years. TCGIS has elected to remain paper based until our electronic infrastructure is strengthened. The Science exam is given 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 were administered in early May.

**Deutsche Sprachdiplom A2**

The Sprachdiplom-A2 is created and administered by the Zentralstelle fuer Auslandschulwesen (ZfA). This test, designed for German Language Learners, is 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 in 2011 is 48 or better. The A2 is a basic skills test, assuming mastery of elementary German. Fifth grade is the earliest possible grade level for taking this test.

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

* Blue shaded boxes show TCGIS goal met or exceeded.				
<b>Student Oral Proficiency Assessment - SOPA</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
<b>Expected achievement level: 95% intermediate range.</b>				
2nd Grade listening	91%	97%	100%	100%
2nd Grade speaking	91%	93%	96%	100%
<b>Stolperwoerter-Lesetest</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
<b>Expected achievement level: 75% average (25th percentile +) - compare all German students</b>				
3rd Grade	N/A	N/A	71%	58%
4th Grade	N/A	N/A	76%	79%
<b>Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
<b>Expected achievement level: 85% meet or exceed.</b>				
3rd Grade Reading	86%	82%	84%	80%
3rd Grade Math	75%	100%	94%	56%
4th Grade Reading	N/A	81%	80%	96%
4th Grade Math	N/A	86%	95%	90%
5th Grade Reading	N/A	N/A	88%	95%
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math			65%	55%
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade Science	N/A	N/A	59%	59%
6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Reading				94%

6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math				56%
<b>Das deutsche Sprachdiplom A2</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
<b>Expected achievement level: 95% passing rate overall</b>				
5th Grade overall - % of students passing	N/A	N/A	94%	100%

## Narrative Summaries of Assessment Data

### Student Oral Proficiency Tests (SOPA)

#### Goals

SOPA is designed to allow children to demonstrate their highest level of fluency in listening and speaking. The benchmark that the school strives towards is for 95% of all students in second grade to be at an intermediate low level or higher in both listening and speaking. Additionally, TCGIS looks for 50% of all students in second grade to perform in the advanced range of receptive language - listening and for 35% of all students in second grade to perform in the advanced range of productive language - speaking.

#### Results

In 2011, TCGIS exceeded both the baseline and challenge benchmarks in both listening and speaking.

### Stolperwörter Lesetest

#### Goals

TCGIS has a set a benchmark goal that 75% of students in both 3rd and 4th grades will achieve an average rating or better (25th percentile and higher) when compared to all German test takers.

#### Results

The 2010-2011 results for 3rd grade fall short of that goal, while 4th grade exceeds the goal by 4%. The third grade results suggest the need for further analysis to determine why the students fell short of this goal. The director in consultation with the Curriculum and Assessment Committee will schedule meetings with the third grade teachers to analyze results of individual students and try and understand some of the reasons for falling short in this area this year. In addition, we will administer pre-tests of the Stolperwörter Lesetest so that we can measure individual improvement as well as the final outcome.

### Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment Tests

#### Goals

85% of our students should meet or exceed state requirements at all grade levels and all subject areas.

#### Results

Our MCA results show a mix of extraordinary success tempered by some clear indicators of areas for improvement. We can be extremely proud of our reading results across the board

and particularly in 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade where our kids scored 96%, 95% and 94% respectively. At 80% in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade our English scores are also highly successful. One must remember that these students are only in their first year of instruction in English reading. It is typical to see immersion school test results slightly lower in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and then make a steep increase by 5<sup>th</sup> as students gain experience in English.

We are also extremely proud of our 4<sup>th</sup> grade math scores. Ninety-five percent of our kids passed the MCA test. These successes are a tribute to our students, their teachers and parents who together form the team that educates our children. They are also an affirmation of the strengths of immersion education. Like other immersion school students, our students are tested in a different language than the language in which they are primarily taught.

However, our math scores in 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade are a wake-up call . At 56%, 55% and 56% they are significantly lower than our goals and expectations. We are monitoring how closely our curriculum is aligned with the Minnesota standards and how well it is being delivered by our teachers. We will analyze scores of individual students as well as a breakdown of how students scored in particular skill areas. Patterns in these areas will help us understand the weaknesses in our program and guide an action plan to strengthen both what and how we teach. |

Scores across the state dropped as part of the transition from the MCA-II to the MCA-III. TCGIS' performance is part of a statewide pattern, as math instruction and expectations shift to the newer, higher standards. At Twin Cities German Immersion we take responsibility for our own students' scores and are committed to their improvement. We already have several strong components in place to address performance in the math MCAs.

## **Deutsche Sprachdiplom A2**

### **Goal**

TCGIS has set a benchmark goal for the A2 that 95% of 5<sup>th</sup> graders will pass.

### **Results**

In 2011, the 100% of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade passed this test. TCGIS has met the 5<sup>th</sup> grade standard for German reading, writing, listening and speaking as tested by the Sprachdiplom-A2.

The chart below lists the average scores of TCGIS students in each of the different components of the test. These scores DO NOT reflect passing rates.

5th Grade reading - % points achieved by cohort	N/A	N/A	83%	97%
5th Grade writing - % points achieved by cohort	N/A	N/A	67%	76%
5th Grade listening - % points achieved by cohort	N/A	N/A	81%	88%
5th Grade speaking - % points achieved by cohort	N/A	N/A	91%	91%

TCGIS students showed improvement in both listening and writing from their cohorts from the previous year. In general, immersion education for students from non-native speaking households can result in students possessing a high oral fluency without a corresponding

high-rate of grammatical accuracy. Given this tendency, our students' success on the writing scores is especially noteworthy.

## 8. Finance

In December 2010, TCGIS achieved a clean audit of our 2009 -2010 financial results, with no concerns about how we handle financial or human resources data. This is a result achieved by less than 20% of the schools audited by our accounting firm, Larson Allen. The Twin Cities German Immersion School continued its history of financial strength based on conservative budgeting and access to grants and other outside funding. Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP) grant funding was available to fund a part-time technology staff position, while German Immersion Education Foundation (GIEF) grant funds were used for the purchase of furniture and for our Amity intern costs.

Table 5, below, includes a summary of net assets for 2009 and 2010, the most recent complete statement available.

**Table 5: Summary of Net Assets**

Summary of Net Assets				
as of June 30, 2010 and 2009				
			2010	2009
<b>Assets</b>				
	Current and other assets		506,514	391,038
	Capital and non-current assets		31,512	45,044
		<b>Total assets</b>	<b>538,026</b>	<b>436,082</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>				
	Current liabilities		162,127	174,578
<b>Net assets</b>				
	Invested in capital assets			
	Net of Related Debt		31,512	45,044
	Restricted		8,643	-
	Unrestricted		335,744	216,460
		<b>Total net assets</b>	<b>375,899</b>	<b>261,504</b>

In 2010-2011 the TCGIS donor base contributed generously to support a half-time performing arts position. Additionally, fundraising efforts at the end of the school year raised enough to continue the highly popular performing arts program in the 2011 – 2012 school year, including funds for performing arts supplies and performance space rental. Many thanks go out to our partners, the German American Chamber of Commerce, whose successful Spring Gala brought in \$5,815 for the school's library.

The holdback of State funds during the 2010-2011 school year was 30% of our annual funding, meaning these funds were not paid to the school until the Fall after the school year ended. The school was able to weather this setback without having to draw on the available line of credit.

The TCGIS board instituted a fund balance policy designed to increase our fund balance to 30% of annual expenses. developed by school leadership makes to grow our fund balance to 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. If the organization does reach 30%, it will still be necessary to budget for a surplus, since expenses increase every year, increasing the amount necessary to have 30% of that year's expenses in reserve. Over the last three years, the fund balance has grown an average of 4% per year, a testament to the focus on careful budgeting by the Finance Committee and the Board.

Projected results for the 2010 – 2011 school year are better than budgeted, with an increase in the fund balance of about 5%. This is due to many factors, including unexpected Federal Stimulus funds, higher than budgeted student numbers, and cautious spending by the board and school management. Final results will be available in November, 2010.

Looking forward to the 2011 – 2012 school year, we will for the first time have a teaching position 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 BPLK position was secured for us last year through the hard work of the Grants and External Relations Committee, with particular thanks to the leadership of Board member Jürgen Konzcak, whose vision and hard work resulted in a successful application. A BPLK candidate has been identified and hired, a welcome addition to our wonderful teaching staff.

Additionally, in 2011 – 2012 the Facilities Committee will be taking a more active role in determining the best home for the school in the coming years, as there are now only two years left on our current lease. The committee is exploring all the available options, among them leasing or buying. Fundraising for the cost of the move will be a central focus of the finance committee in the upcoming year, as this will be an expensive event no matter where we move.

Due to strong demand in our Kindergarten program, recruiting will be focused on having enough children to run a third Kindergarten classroom in the 2012 – 2013 school year. This growth would assist with the natural attrition TCGIS faces, as it is nearly impossible to

replace lost students after 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, due to requirements of German fluency. We would ideally grow to three sections in Kindergarten - 4<sup>th</sup> grade, and then if necessary funnel down into two sections each through 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

The State holdback of funds for the 2011 – 2012 school year has increased to 40%, meaning that the State will not pay 40% of the funds due to the school until the Fall after the school year ends. With the 30% holdbacks over the last two years, the school has been able to function without borrowing funds; however, it is expected that with the increased holdback we will need to draw upon our available line of credit. The school has a strong relationship with Park Midway Bank, with whom we setup a line of credit each year. This relationship is increasingly important in the uncertain funding environment created by State government.

## 9. Innovative Practices and Implementation

### **New middle school program model**

Twin Cities German Immersion School follows the program model used in Germany where middle school starts in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. One of the key distinguishing marks between elementary school and middle school is specialty subject area teachers as opposed to homeroom teachers who teach all subjects. It is a logistical challenge to phase in a middle school model as one needs several classes in order to staff with specialty area teachers. Thus although TCGIS has had 5<sup>th</sup> graders for the past two years, these classes have essentially acted as an extension of the elementary school. With the addition of 7<sup>th</sup> grade in 2010-2011 TCGIS planned for the first time a middle school more clearly distinguished from the elementary model. We are very pleased to have come up with a staffing plan that allowed for a gentle entry into having multiple teachers where the 5<sup>th</sup> graders have the benefit of a homeroom teacher who is with them much of the day, but also have the benefit of subject area specialists.

The middle school schedule covers the core subjects of math, science, English Humanities and Social Studies and German Humanities and Social Studies in the morning. Scheduling in 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade allows close collaboration between Humanities and Social Studies teachers in German and English. The afternoon schedule provides opportunities for students from different classes to be mixed with each other for a block that incorporates a Spanish, enrichment German, Media Technology, Visual and Performing Arts.

### **Third Language**

Fifth graders are given the option to begin Spanish study four days a week. Their teacher reports a marked difference in both capacity to understand grammatical structures and comfort in experimenting with language between our Immersion students and classes she instructs in other locations to monolingual children. Children not taking Spanish are offered Enrichment German options designed to deepen comfort and practice with German, build vocabulary, give exposure to German culture and literature and reinforce accuracy with grammatical structures.

**Performing Arts** Our students are given opportunities to use German through a rich tapestry of dance, music and theater in a once a week specialist program. Older students explored significant pieces of literature in German. Sixth graders presented Nathan the

Wise by Berthold Brecht at the February all school performance. Fifth graders presented sections from Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* at the May all school performance. Both provided excellent immersion opportunities for students to develop oral fluency and use rich German vocabulary in addition to the other artistic benefits of participation in Theater. Younger students showed a vivid display of fluency in movement and language through joyful performances in February and May.

**Responsive Classroom** The school is united through a commitment to applying the principles of the social program of Responsive Classroom. New teachers are invited to 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 advantages in this setting are highlighted in this recent article in

### **Conflict resolution**

Students are given the opportunity to resolve conflicts peacefully that arise during the school day through guided discussions with trained staff. All teachers and amity interns are given a training during Orientation on techniques for empowering children to speak up and express their needs and solve problems through agreeing to rules, clarifying issues and making a plan. Adults are available each day following recess to mediate conflicts with students during their lunch hour. No academic time is lost and students are able to return to class with an increased ability to focus after the occasionally emotionally laden demands of social dynamics at recess.

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

As described above, 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. However, TCGIS is challenged to attract a more diverse enrollment population. To that end, the school has created a new task force on inclusion and diversity to explore new approaches to attract under-represented groups.

In addition, as an immersion school, it is very difficult to add children after the first grade and expect the same level of academic achievement, as the first years of language acquisition are vital to achieving second language fluency. Filling the early grades to capacity and then maintaining those grades is critical to the overall mission of the school. To date, we have succeeded in maintaining steady enrollment with classes at or near capacity.

To build on the success of TCGIS and meet our future challenges, the following summarizes a number of goals and future plans outlined by TCGIS leadership for the 2011-2012 school year and beyond.

### **Academic**

- Integrate newly identified Achievement goals into evaluation systems;

- Use curriculum mapping site, Atlas Rubicon, to document essential questions and topics taught in all subject areas at all grade levels;
- Compile curriculum resources in at least one subject area at each grade level into Atlas Rubicon;
- Increase consistency and frequency of teacher/observation and evaluation;
- Formalize teacher mentor program;
- Provide staff development on differentiation; and
- Expand the use of classroom-specific websites as a communication tool for teachers.

### **Financial**

- Maintain the fund balance at 25%.
- Apply for and maintain the School Finance Award.

### **Operational**

- Identify a new facility for our long-term home;
- Determine financing options for a future facility;
- Improve technology infrastructure for library
- Keep technologically up to date using Smartboards, iPads and additional laptop carts for students;
- Establish a stable transition plan to high school for students after they complete 8<sup>th</sup> grade;
- Update the TCGIS website;
- Enhance our outreach and recruitment efforts with goal of getting 120 enrollment forms for incoming Kindergartners and filling a 3<sup>rd</sup> Kindergarten with an enrollment goal of between 60 and 72 Kindergartners.
- Increase the range of economic and cultural diversity within the student body.
- Systematize and make integral to our curriculum and our modes of operating efforts to make our own uses of energy and resources in line with values of sustainability.
- Improve systematic scheduling and use of volunteer talents along with more formalized tracking of volunteer hours and thanking for efforts.
- Increase technological capacity through added hardware and in-house technical support.
- Be able to give standardized tests in an online format.

## 11. Authorizer

A provision that authorizers must have \$2 million dollars in assets presented technical difficulties in having the GAI submit an authorizer application during the 2010- 2011 school year. Fortunately, the 2011 State Legislature changed this provision allowing the GAI to proceed with its authorizer application. Twin Cities German Immersion School is fortunate that the Minnesota State Legislature extended the deadline for charter schools to have officially approved authorizers from June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2011 to June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Under this provision,

Twin Cities German Immersion School is able to continue with the GAI as a sponsor as opposed to an authorizer for one additional year. The GAI is on track to turn in this application to the state by the only date available this year, September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

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 - Nancy Bostrom  
Contact Information – [nancy.bostrom@gmail.com](mailto:nancy.bostrom@gmail.com)  
Contract expiration date – June 20, 2012

12. School's State Report Card

The link to the state department's school report card is at [Minnesota State School Report Card for Twin Cities German Immersion School](#)

13. Non-Profit Status

Confirmation information available at:  
<http://www.ag.state.mn.us/Charities/CharitySearch.asp>

**Approved September 22, 2011 – TCGIS Board of Directors**