



Annual Reports

Curriculum, Instruction, School Achievement & World's Best Workforce

Tesfa International School
Independent School District #4239

2019-2020 School Year

Submitted to the District Board of Directors

VERIFICATION of STATUTORY COMPLIANCE

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INTRODUCTION

The 2019-2020 school year marks the completion of Tesfa International School's (Tesfa) fifth year of operation. Tesfa is a free, public charter school serving students in kindergarten through grade 6 residing in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. During the 2019-2020 school year Tesfa served a population that included over 95% of students qualifying for Free or Reduced Lunch (FRL) and over 70% of students identified as English Language Learners (ELL) .

We are proud of the academic growth of the students in our program which will be detailed in this report. Furthermore, we have built a strong school culture supported by the evidence that in fall 2020 we had 100% teacher retention and 80% student retention during the Covid-19 pandemic. We have evolved as a school characterized by academic growth and stability in staffing and finances.

HISTORY

Tesfa began operation in the fall of 2015. A deep commitment to improving the educational options for the historically underserved children in the Twin Cities, drove the development of Tesfa. Consequently board members that exhibit enthusiasm for the unique mission and vision for Tesfa International School joined the team. A demonstrated commitment to educational equity, and a high degree of expertise continue to be represented on the board, the staff and throughout the Tesfa community.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- 85% Black,
- 14% White/Other
- 1% Two or More Races
- 70% English Learners (LEP)
- 97% Free & Reduced Lunch Qualification
- 13% Special Services Students

MISSION STATEMENT

Through a global-minded education, we empower and prepare all students with the empathy, knowledge, and skills to take risks and pursue goals that contribute meaningfully to their community.

STATUTORY PURPOSE

The content of this annual report fulfills the required data elements and information requested by the Minnesota Department of Education and by Volunteers of America (VOA). State statute requires that school districts create and publish an Annual Report on Curriculum, Instruction, and Student Achievement. Furthermore, this report fulfills the **World's Best Workforce Report** requirements identified by Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.11.

Tesfa's mission and vision are fully aligned with a number of statutory purposes contained in *Minn. Stat. § 124D.10, Sec. 1B. 1*. Its' educational focus lies in *improving learning and increasing opportunities for area students*, particularly those from low-income families. Tesfa places a high value on academic rigor, data-driven instruction, and accountability with a focus on preparing each student toward eventual graduation from high school and college. We hold ourselves accountable for results supported by data. Tesfa has carefully designed an educational program that has the capacity to deliver upon its promises:

- Tesfa will “improve pupil learning” and “increase learning opportunities for pupils” by providing a rigorous and comprehensive program.
- Tesfa will “measure learning outcomes and create innovative forms of measuring outcomes” by using multiple on-line adaptive learning programs to measure student progress toward state and college readiness standards.

AUTHORIZER

Tesfa International School is proud to have Volunteers of America (VOA) as our authorizer. The school has completed our fifth year of operation and will be continuing its second contract with our authorizer. VOA expects its charter schools to provide a quality education and operate a quality school program.

VOA's expectations regarding accountability and performance are clearly stipulated in its contract and through their oversight of school submissions, site visits, attendance at board meetings and other district sponsored events. Copies of each month's board packets, which include agendas, minutes, financial information, and board policies are submitted to the authorizer for review and feedback.

VOA completed a site visit during the school year, which provided the school with critical and constructive feedback about the school's operations and progress. The authorizer liaisons attended board meetings, visited the school, and maintained ongoing communication with school management in order to provide up to date information.



Volunteers of America of Minnesota

Main Contact: Stephanie Olsen, Manager
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DISTRICT GOVERNANCE

The School Board is the policy making body for Tesfa. The Board is responsible for school programs & operations by law; it delegates some portion of that authority to the Executive Director. The School Board monthly meeting schedule is posted on the website as are copies of the Board summary minutes. Elections for the School Board are held in May for available positions. Terms of service are two years. Parents, school faculty, community members, and the public are welcome to attend regularly scheduled Board meetings.

2019-2020 Charter Public School Board

Name	Board Position	Group Affiliation (if teacher, file folder #)	Date Elected or Appointed	Date Seated	Term Expiration or Resignation	E-Mail Address
Patrick Exner	Board Chair	Community Member	May 2018	June 2018	June 2020	Patrick.exner@tesfainternationalschool.org
Abigail Hendricks	Vice Chair	Teacher	May 2018	June 2018	June 2021	Abby.hendricks@tesfainternationalschool.org
Antoinette Johns	Secretary	Community Member	May 2018	June 2018	12/1/19	Antoinette.Johns@tesfainternationalschool.org
Elizabeth Robertson	Board Member	Teacher	May 2018	June 2018	June 2020	elizabeth.robertson@tesfainternationalschool.org
Amir Orandi	Board Member	Parent	May 2018	June 2018	June 2021	Amir.Orandi@tesfainternationalschool.org
John Groenke	Board Member	Community Member	May 2018	June 2018	June 2020	John.groenke@tesfainternationalschool.org
Mohamed Selim	Board Member	Community Member	December 2019	December 2019	June 2021	mohamed.selim@tesfainternationalschool.org
Jonas Beugen	Executive Director Ex-Officio	Ex-Officio Staff				jonas.beugen@tesfainternationalschool.org

**REQUIRED STATUTORY TRAINING
COMPLETED BY SEATED BOARD MEMBERS**

Board Member Name	Governance Basic Training Completed	Finance Basic Training Completed	Employment Basic Training Completed	Dates, locations and trainers
Patrick Exner	X	X	X	MNSBA August 2018
Abigail Hendricks	X	X	X	MNSBA August 2018
Antoinette Johns	X	X	X	MNSBA August 2018
Amir Orandi	X	X	X	MNSBA August 2018
John Groenke	X	X	X	MNSBA August 2018

2019-20 School Management / Administrative Team Information

Name	Admin License Yes/No	File Folder Number	Position	Years Employed by the School	Left During 19/20	Not Returning 20/21
Jonas Beugen	Y	355690	Executive Director	3	NA	Returning
Jason Stockwell	Y	436077	TOSA	2		Returning

MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION

Tesfa International School consisted of 26 positions during the 2019-2020 school year. The school's management team consists of an Executive Director who is responsible for the overall operations of the school, budget, employee evaluation, human resources, and state reporting. An assistant director reports to the director and is primarily responsible for teaching and learning, curriculum, and assessment. The school contracts with a business manager who provides accounting and payroll services for the school. Other contracted services include a director of special education, school psychologist, developmental adapted physical education consultant, speech language pathologist, occupational therapist, MVNA school nurse, and technology consultant.

DESCRIPTION OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Executive Director provides educational leadership; maintains positive behavior management policies; communicates to the board, staff, families, students, and the community; manages the building operations; oversees financing, budgeting, and grant writing; oversees human resources; oversees operations; and reports to the state.

Supervision:

The Director is supervised by the School Board of Directors.

Evaluation:

The Executive Director's job performance is monitored systematically against the job expectations. Reasonable progress must be made toward accomplishment of the Board's policies, annual objectives and goals, and the school's organizational operation.

School Faculty Information

2019-2020 Faculty Information

Name	File Folder Number	Assignment/ Subject	Left During 19/20	Not Returning 20/21
Abigail Hendricks	396283	Elementary Teacher		Returning
Janelle Kopa	1002025	Elementary Teacher		Returning
Jennifer Goeplen	484601	Elementary Teacher		Returning
Marissa Wynja	1002663	Elementary Teacher		Returning
Melanie Niewendorp	417419	Elementary Teacher		Returning
Malaney Peterson	489209	Elementary Teacher		Returning
Megan Kufal	487806	Elementary Teacher		Returning
Paige Merwin	501384	Elementary Teacher		Returning
Chanin Smith	498709	Elementary Teacher		Returning
Julia Nyangacha	508727	Elementary Teacher		Returning
Bryce Bohne	475104	Arabic Teacher / TOSA		Returning
Kristy Ford	451953	Special Education Teacher		Returning
Jonathan Braziel	478171	Special Education Teacher		Returning
Jennifer Reeck	474576	Special Education Coordinator		Returning
Elizabeth Robertson	475077	ESL Teacher		Returning
Seynab Warsame	NA	Kitchen Staff		Returning
Geneo Uga	NA	SPED Para	2/2020	NA
James Cosgrove	NA	SPED Para		Returning
Amin Khelifa	NA	SPED Para		Returning
Jill Phillips	NA	SPED Para		Returning
Falis Mohamed	NA	SPED Para		Returning
Elena Hanson	NA	Office Manager		Returning
Jennifer Heieie	385733	Sped Director-Contracted		Not Returning
Heather Schmidt	102943	OT-Contracted		Staying with company
Gayle Ruevers	432441	Psychologist-Contracted		Staying with company

Professional Development

Tesfa has developed an extensive professional development program for staff members that is focussed upon helping teachers expand their capacity to meet the high expectations established by the school. All teachers and most support staff members participated in intensive training in three primary areas of focus for 2018-2019. Strategic Directions. ENVOY and PYP trainings were held over several days throughout the school year,

Strategic Directions Planning

Our team worked with the regional center of excellence to collaboratively plan to increase student achievement. As a result of this work we established two primary instructional areas of focus:

1. Effectively utilizing and emphasizing academic language for English Learners.
2. Productive struggle in math instruction.

The staff engaged in extensive training in both of these strategies throughout the school year.

Envoy

In August 2019 all staff members participated in a two day training designed to prepare the team to implement Envoy strategies as a school wide approach to creating a calm and positive learning environment.

Strategic Directions Team (SDT)

Our SDT which includes all licensed staff members met weekly for 2 hours throughout the school year. These meetings consistently included at least one segment that was designed to have a professional development focus. Each of the extensive trainings noted above was revisited in these meetings as were several other topics focussed on the professional growth of staff members

Student Enrollment and Attrition

School Year	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	Attrition / Retention Rates
2015-16	32.55	17.91	19.07	19.70	10.94	16.40	14.60	131.17	NA
2016-17	38.58	13.71	15.21	22.78	12.92	17.24	13.99	134.43	
2017-18	32.64	25.32	32.24	22.29	24.21	17.98	10.76	167.44	*30%
2018-19	26.63	22.25	26.04	29.90	21.70	22.25	15.53	164.30	72%
2019-2020	35.99	22.66	26.96	29.83	24.76	22.53	16.49	179.22	77%

ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING

CURRICULUM

Tesfa International School was an authorized International Baccalaureate Candidate School during the 2019-2020 school year.. The International Baccalaureate (IB) is a student focused non-profit educational foundation. The IB's mission statement strives to develop internationally minded students who recognize their importance as global citizens who are motivated to use their knowledge and skills to take action to make changes to and in the world. The mission of IB states:

“The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programs of international education and rigorous assessment. These programs encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.” (IBO.org)

The IB Primary Years Programme (PYP) is a curricular framework that allows for engaging, relevant, challenging and significant learning experiences designed for students in kindergarten through sixth grade. It focuses on the development of the whole child as an inquirer, both in the classroom and in the global community. This framework addresses students' academic, social and emotional well-being, and encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning in an effort to gain an understanding of the world around them.

The International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme challenges students to engage in the study of global concepts. The PYP is developed around six organizing transdisciplinary themes that provide the structure for the Program of Inquiry. These themes identify areas of shared experience that have meaning for individuals of different cultures. They promote an awareness of the human condition and an understanding that there is a commonality of human experience. As students explore these themes collaboratively, they increase their awareness of and sensitivity to others. This is crucial to the development of an international perspective. (www.ibo.org) Specific curriculum maps for each grade level, known as the Program of Inquiry (POI) for Tesfa International School are developed by teachers. It is through these rich learning experiences that students will meet all of the required Minnesota State Standards.

The subject areas of math, language arts, science, social studies, information technology, the arts and physical education are taught through transdisciplinary themes in order to help students make connections between the subjects, thereby facilitating more effective learning. Students are asked to make connections between life in school, life at home and life in the world. These connections contribute to the development of the PYP attitudes. The PYP fosters the development of thinking, communication, socializing, research and self-management skills. Students are encouraged to take action by putting what they have learned into practice through service to the school community, the local community and the global community.

Mathematics

As a future International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme school, Tesfa chose curricula that makes specific allowances for inquiry-based and conceptual learning. According to PYP, mathematics is viewed as a vehicle to support inquiry, providing a global language through which we make sense of the world around us. It is intended that students become competent users of the language of mathematics, and can begin to use it as a way of thinking, as opposed to seeing it as a series of facts and equations to be memorized. (Mathematics Scope and Sequence-IBO.org) Tesfa believes that Investigations in Number, Data, and Space provides students with the research-based, rigorous learning students deserve. Investigations was created to support students in the deep understanding of mathematical concepts necessary for future mathematical success. A truly progressive math curriculum, Investigations sets itself apart from other more traditional math curricula and pairs well with IB philosophy because of its commitment to student dialogue, reasoning, and desire to lead students through real thinking in inquiry-based, real-life experiences.

Literacy

Tesfa International School addresses the Common Core Standards by building upon the Benchmark Literacy program as a curricular resource for developing a balanced literacy and guided reading program. Tesfa uses the Benchmark Literacy Program because it is aligned to many aspects of the IB curriculum and when used flexibly, provides a transdisciplinary approach to instruction throughout the school day. Benchmark Literacy supports student mastery of the five essential elements of reading (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension) and research has shown that this program helps to increase student achievement for all learners. Benchmark Literacy is aligned with Common Core State Standards, and provides many resources such as motivating texts (with a balance of fiction and nonfiction); whole group, small group and one-on-one instructional resources; and uses specific components and materials to target phonics, phonemic awareness, comprehension vocabulary development and fluency skills. Benchmark Literacy offers differentiation for special education students and English Language Learners through visuals and activities, which engage students at a variety of achievement levels.

Social Studies, Science, and the Arts

As a future IB school, Tesfa International School's curriculum is organized around the six-transdisciplinary themes of the IB Primary Years Programme. The IB PYP framework drives our approach to science and social studies, which is taught daily during the Unit of inquiry. Teachers work to plan, implement and reflect upon six rich, inquiry-based IB units over the course of the school year, which address the Minnesota science and social studies standards. It is recognized that teaching and learning science and social studies as subjects is necessary, but not sufficient. Of equal importance is the need to learn these subjects in context, exploring content that is relevant to students, and transcends the boundaries of the traditional subject areas. The transdisciplinary themes provide the framework for a highly defined, focused, in-depth program of inquiry, which will provide an excellent vehicle for teaching science and social studies. Each Unit of Inquiry is developed collaboratively by teachers, incorporating the grade level science and social studies state standards that they weave into (and assess at the end of) each unit.

Physical Education

Tesfa International School designed a physical education program to align with the National Standards for growth and development. The focus is in the areas of physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and nutritional well being, along with motor skill acquisition. Tesfa offers adaptations and accommodations to support our mission, vision and International Baccalaureate curricular focus. The physical education program is a balanced program promoting the skills and knowledge of our students, with the goal of students understanding their bodies, ways to maintain a healthy lifestyle, and the connections that can be made to the rest of the world. Every student at Tesfa has access to a 35 minute physical education class every day.

World Language

Tesfa International School believes that acquiring a second world language is a critical part of any IB school programming. As such, Tesfa offers a 35 minute Arabic World Language to all students. Tesfa chose its language with consideration of input from our parent and student community. Students expanded their language vocabulary using computer software called Rosetta Stone. Rosetta Stone allows students to learn basic listening, reading, writing, and speaking in Arabic. The topics learned include:

ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments

The MN Comprehensive Assessments (MCA-III, MTAS), are tests that measure how well a student has mastered the state’s academic standards in 3rd through 6th grade in reading and math. Students do not pass or fail the MCAs but are considered “proficient” if they meet or exceed the standards set by the State.

DUE TO COVID-19 the MCA ASSESSMENTS WERE NOT ADMINISTERED DURING THE 2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR. THE RESULTS BELOW ARE FROM THE MOST RECENT ASSESSMENTS IN SPRING 2019.

Tesfa showed significant improvement in the number of students scoring proficient in both Math and Reading as demonstrated by the tables below.

Even more significant were Tesfa’s North Star Academic Progress scores which are based upon students improvement from the previous year. Tesfa’s progress scores were:

Reading: Tesfa 3.24 State Average: 2.34

Math: Tesfa 2.62 State Average: 2:01

Tesfa’s Academic Progress score in the top 5% of the state of Minnesota for BOTH Reading and Math.

Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment Results

TESFA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL. District – SPRING 2019 MCA III READING Achievement Levels: GRADE 3, 4, 5, 6 – Reading Performance							
	Grade	Total #Tested	Does Not Meet Standards	Partially Meets Standard	Meets Standards	Exceeds Standards	Proficiency
SPRING 2017	3 rd	22	61.9%	3.3%	4.8%	0%	9.1%
2018		18	77.8%	11.1%	11.1%	0%	11.1%
2019		24	62.5%	12.5%	25.05	0%	25.0%

SPRING	4 th						
2017		12	66.7%	16.7%	16.7%	0%	16.7%
2018		20	70.0%	25.0%	5.0%	0%	5.0%
2019		19	63.2%	10.5%	21.1%	5.3%	26.3%
SPRING	5 th						
2017		16	56.3%	12.5%	25.0%	6.3%	31.3%
2018		17	58.8%	11.8%	29.4%	0%	29.4%
2019		19	36.8%	31.6%	31.6%		31.6%
SPRING	6 th						
2017		14	53.8%	23.1%	23.1%	0%	23.1%
2018		10	50.0%	20.0%	30.0%	0%	30.0%
2019		14	42.9%	21.4%	35.7%	0%	35.7%

Overall Proficiency: 2017 -18%
2018 -17%
2019- 28.9%

TESFA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL. District – SPRING 2019							
MCA III Math Achievement Levels: GRADE 3, 4, 5, 6 – Math Performance							
	Grade	Total # Tested	Does Not Meet Standards	Partially Meets Standard	Meets Standards	Exceeds Standards	Proficiency
SPRING	3 ^d						
2017		23	78.3%	21.7%	0%	0%	0%
2018		18	55.6%	5.6%	38.9%	0%	38.9%
2019		24	33.3%	16.7%	41.7%	8.3%	50.0%
SPRING	4 th						
2017		13	61.5%	30.8%	7.7%	0%	7.7%
2018		20	60.0%	30.0%	10.0%	0%	10%
2019		19	57.9%	15.8%	26.3%	0%	26.3%
SPRING	5 th						
2017		19	89.5%	10.5%	0%	0%	0%
2018		17	88.2%	11.8%	0%	0%	0%
2019		19	42.1%	36.8%	21.1%	0%	21.1%
SPRING	6 th						
2017		16	68.8%	18.8%	12.5%	0%	12.5%
2018		CCTS	CCTS	CCTS	CCTS	CCTS	CCTS
2019		14	42.9%	35.7%	21.4%	0%	21.4%

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*CCTS = Cell Count Too Small to Report

Overall Proficiency:

2017 - 4.2%

2018- 13.8%

2019- 31.6%

TESFA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL. District – SPRING 2017							
MCA III Science Achievement Levels: GRADE 5 – Science Performance							
	Grade	Total #Tested	Does Not Meet Standards	Partially Meets Standard	Meets Standards	Exceeds Standards	Proficiency
SPRING	5 th						
2017		20	75%	15%	10%	0%	10%
2018		20	58.8%	23.5%	18%	0%	18%
2019		22	59.1%	13.6%	27.3%	0%	27.3%

Please note: Only Students who are enrolled by October 1st are counted for calculations on participation and proficiency.

ACCESS

ACCESS is the State of MN designated English Language Proficiency Exam. It is given at all grades K-6 and measures English Language Proficiency in the areas of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. It also uses a formula to calculate scores in the areas of Comprehension and Oral Language. Below is the overall composite score for the ACCESS test for students in Grades K-6.

ACCESS COMPOSITE SCORE RESULTS (SCHOOLWIDE)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Total #	Entering	Beginning	Developing	Expanding	Bridging	Reaching
2017- #81	24.7%	33.3%	28.4%	13.6%	0%	0%
2018 #80	10%	31.3%	33.8%	23.8%	1.3%	0%
2019 #79	8.9%	34.2%	39.2%	16.5%	1.3%	0%

NWEA-MAP

MAP tests are computerized assessments done in the fall and winter, of each year. These assessments show student growth over time as well as providing nationally-normed grade equivalent benchmarks and predictors of performance on the State MCA assessments. Students set goals for growth at each assessment window and teachers are able to pinpoint individual learning targets (standards) for their students.

Fall-Winter 2019-2020 MAP Data

MAP MATH FALL - WINTER GROWTH

Winter RDG	#of students Fall	Fall Median	#of students Winter	Winter Median	norm Growth	Actual Growth	NET +/-
k	37	128	35	142	10.5	14	+3.5
1	24	149	23	157	10.1	8	-2.1
2	26	165	25	177	9	12	+3
3	31	177	29	183	7.8	6	-1.8
4	30	190	25	200	7	10	+3
5	23	194	20	205	5.6	11	+5.4
6	16	200	15	210	4.8	10	+5.2
Total	190		165				+16.2

Based upon our needs analysis conducted in Spring 2018 we determined that addressing student in mathematics was our top academic priority as math growth had been lagging behind reading growth. Consequently, our strategic directions team focussed most of its on bundling and unpacking math standards to support our long-term strategy of engaging in productive struggle in mathematics instruction. The focus on mathematics appears to producing the desired results as our growth scores school-wide continue to exceed national norms by a significant margin. This is also consistent with our spring 2019 MCA results. We have made excellent growth in math test growth across multiple assessments.

MAP READING FALL - WINTER GROWTH

Winter RDG	#of students Fall	Fall Median	#of students Winter	Winter Median	<i>norm Growth</i>	Actual Growth	NET +/-
k	37	133	34	144	9.7	11	+1.3
1	24	149	21	156	9.9	7	-2.7
2	24	159	26	170	8.8	11	+2.2
3	32	171	27	177	6.7	6	-0.7
4	30	186	24	187	5.8	1	-4.8
5	23	192	19	200	6.5	8	+1.5
6	20	204	14	211	3.6	7	+3.4
Total	190		165				+0.2

In our SDT work reading has initially been a secondary focus. Taken as a whole our reading growth in the MAP assessment was slightly above the national norm. During the 2020-2021 school year we will begin to move our focus to more equally addressing reading and mathematics. This will include an emphasis on explicitly teaching academic language the second half of the year.

FINANCES

Tesfa is currently in a strong financial position. The School’s business management for 2019-2020 was contracted out to an accounting company whose primary role is to advise the Finance Committee and School Board on budget and fiduciary matters. Dieci School Finance, LLC, was the recognized and independent professional accounting firm that Tesfa contracted with for business management services and accounting.

Tesfa contracts with a separate company to issue payroll and an independent auditing company, Clifton, Allen, Larsen Inc, Inc. was used for the annual audit.

Fund Balance:

- Fund Reserve-all funds as of June 30, 2019 are estimated at \$486,991 which is 17.1% of the annual budget.

Fiscal Year 2019 Timeline of Audit:

- Clifton, Allen, Larsen Inc. is the audit firm of the school for 2018-2019.
- Audit fieldwork was completed during August 2020.
- Final audited financial statements are expected to be completed by October 31, 2020.

SERVICE LEARNING

A key element of all VOA Authorized schools is engaging students in authentic action projects which encourage students to use the knowledge they acquire throughout their learning to take action to make the world a better place. Tesfa students participated in a variety of service learning through this year. All grade levels participated in at least one project.

Innovative Practices

Innovative Practice #1 - Personalized Learning through Technology Integration

Prior to Covid-19 causing schools to engage in distance learning, Tesfa students were already supported by a 1 to 1 iPad approach that included learning through a variety of educational applications and programs. The implementation of this program helped teachers create a highly differentiated and engaging instructional approach. As a result, we had a successful transition to distance learning and were able to effectively meet the needs of our students. This practice has also helped us effectively address the learning needs of our English Learners through a variety of learning tools.

Innovative Practice #2-The Social Curriculum

At Tesfa International School we believe the social curriculum is as important as the academic curriculum. In addition to a teacher's impact on academic performance, teachers must also have a deep impact on their students' social-emotional development and well being. In order to maximize our teachers' ability to positively impact their students' social-emotional development, Tesfa International School has built specific structures to promote and support the teacher-student relationship and develop student's social and emotional skills. Second Step a social curriculum was utilized as the basis of a social emotional learning course that all Tesfa students grades K-6 participated in for over 40 hours during the school year. Furthermore, all Tesfa students eat breakfast and lunch with their homeroom teacher, participate in daily morning meetings to build classroom community, and end-of-the-day closing meetings for shared reflection.

Innovative Practice #3 Longitudinal Implementation of scientifically based instructional strategies

- During the 2019-2020 our Strategic Directions team met on a weekly basis and worked towards fully implementing two dpecific strategies over a three year period.
 - Explicit instruction of academic language to support all learners but particularly English Learners.
 - An emphasis on productive struggle in math instruction and learning.

Future Plans

- Identifying a school site to support the long term needs of the school.
- Reframing our Instructional Model to Meet the Emerging Needs of our students and families, likely including a transition from being an IB candidate school to a STEM focussed school.
- Pre-K and Middle School Expansion -Tesfa plans to add 7th and 8th grade to our programming in the near future. We have now had consecutive years of improved results on MCA testing and have established a sound financial position. Our families consistently express a strong desire for us to add middle school programming.