

2016-17 Annual Report



A Mature, Marvelous Year



This is a very important time in Rainbow's history. As we approach our 40th anniversary, we have truly reached mature "middle age" with grace. The 2016-17 school year was a year to enjoy the fruits of all that we have accomplished, while planting seeds for the future.

Knowing that our teachers are our greatest treasure, one of our strategic plan goals has been to steadily increase teacher salaries, which we continued to do in 16-17. We are on track to meet our goal of matching (or better) public school salaries within the next two years – something we have done with care, in order to also keep tuition increases moderate. We've come so far in the last ten years!

In general, we enjoyed a year of stability, while becoming a better us. Rainbow will always be a learning organization, meaning that we learn as individuals (not just the students, but everyone). We also learn as an organization. We constantly improve by learning from our mistakes and successes. That's what keeps Rainbow at the leading edge of education.

In 2016-17 we took a leap and truly embraced our role as national leaders in holistic education by launching The Rainbow Institute, the new adult education arm of the school. We hosted our first annual More Than Mindfulness Conference in October 2016, which sold out. It was touching to watch teachers from a wide variety of schools witness the work we do at Rainbow and become enthusiastic about implementing holistic practices in their own classrooms. We are a beacon of light.

Thank you all for making 2016-17 a marvelous year!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Renee Owen". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Renee Owen
Executive Director



“Rainbow teachers are loyal and extremely dedicated – our many years together have built a stellar faculty that works as a trusting team.”
- Renee Owen, Executive Director



We Value Our Teachers

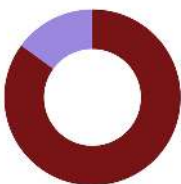
Our end-of-year parent surveys consistently demonstrate that it is Rainbow teachers who make each child and family’s experience at Rainbow special. We have maintained and benefitted from low lead teacher turnover for a decade.

Retention

2016/17 - 2017/18



11 of 12 Lead Teachers



85% Full-time Faculty and Staff



Best of WNC Teacher Awards:
Eddy Webb, Susan Waddell,
Susie Faher, Sue Ford

Teacher Quality

100%

Parent Satisfaction

On a scale of Very Good to Very Poor, 82% of parents who responded to our End of Year Survey ranked teacher quality as Very Good and 18% ranked teacher quality as Good.

Student/Teacher Ratio 9:1

We Are Dedicated to Equity

An Updated Mission

A major improvement goal for the 2016-17 school year was to continue working toward being a more equitable and socially just organization. The words “socially just” were formally added to our mission statement, and the whole community participated directly or indirectly in that work.



Our Mission

“We develop accomplished, confident, and creative learners who are prepared to be compassionate leaders in building a socially just, spiritually connected, and environmentally sustainable world.”



Our Method

We provide an engaging, nurturing learning environment to educate the whole child using the seven domains.

We inspire academic excellence with a program in harmony with the stages of child development.

We model within our community the kind of world in which we aspire to live.

“We chose Rainbow for our two sons because we wanted a nurturing academic environment that also viewed the child as a citizen of the world. Rainbow’s teachers are fantastic! They are empathetic, informed, and they work hard to recognize a child’s learning style and personalize the teaching forum.”

—Anna and David Skinner, Editor and Artist
Parents of Duncan and Raleigh

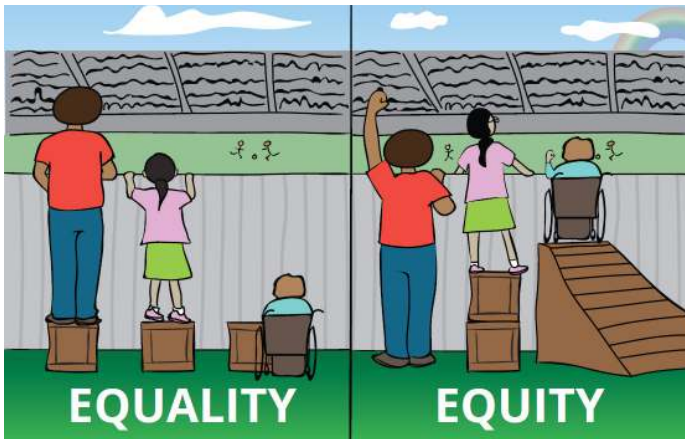
The 7 Domains of the Whole Child



A Director of Equity

For years, the talk has been about the importance of diversity. We all know how important it is. Even a novice in financial management understands that you have a better chance of earning more on your investments if you diversify your portfolio. The same goes for educating our students. Our children learn more when exposed to a diversity of people, material, thought, and experiences.

Along much the same lines, we all agree with and believe in equality - the idea that everyone should have the same opportunities. But equality is about what we provide in the moment. Equity is about outcomes. Rainbow Community School is proud to have started moving the conversation from equality to equity. Equity ensures that, no matter where students begin, they all get what they need to reach their full potential. In other words, we want to level the playing field. In order to do that, some places on the field might need extra fill-in soil.



The work to create a more inclusive and equitable community for our students' best development begins with us! Recognizing that, RCS faculty, staff, Board Members, and parents took big steps toward that work by creating a safe space in-house to talk about how and where inequities show up in our community, by hosting and participating in local education programs to provide the community an opportunity to join in such

discussions, and by hiring a designated Equity Director to facilitate the school community's growth toward equity.

I am excited about the work ahead and happy to be doing it with the RCS community!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Danae Aicher'.

Danae Aicher
Director of Equity

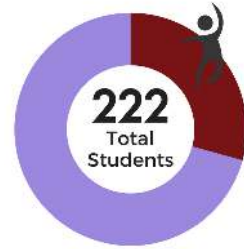
A Year for Taking Action

In 2016-17, RCS launched the **Voluntary Equitable Tuition (VET)** program, in which families can elect to pay more than the required tuition in order to help pay for scholarships and to keep tuition moderate.



27% of RCS Families
PLEGGED

\$18,180 to the VET Program



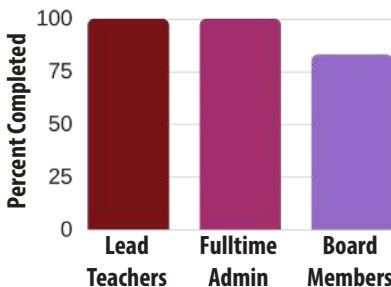
65
Receive a form of tuition assistance

Thank you, VET pioneers – you have made Rainbow a more just organization with your vision and generosity!

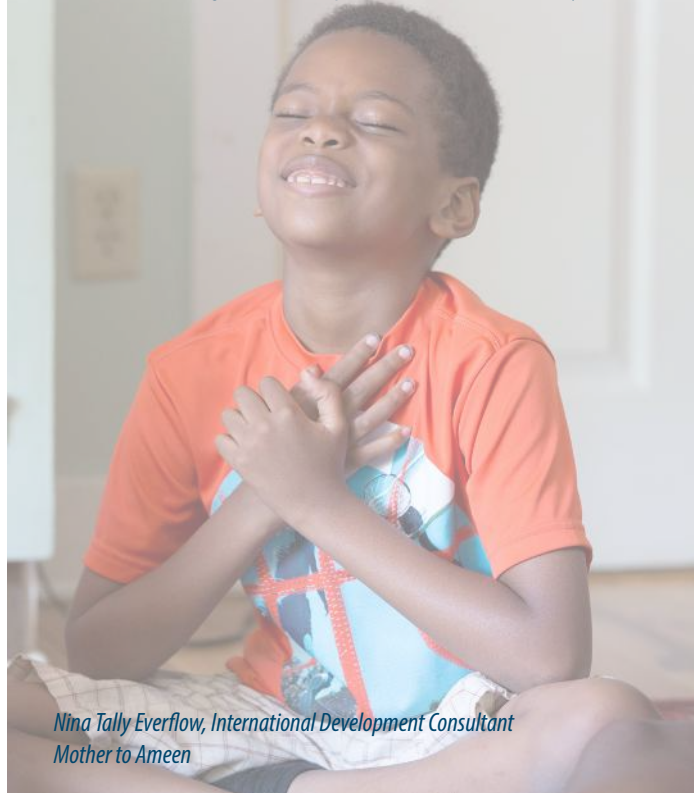
The annual campaign also partially helped to fund financial aid and affirmative action scholarships, making Rainbow a more economically and racially diverse community. To support these efforts, the faculty immersed ourselves in training and deep discussions around racial equity and inclusion, as well as gender identity training.



Building Bridges Training



"Our two years with this community have been a delight! We honor the challenge of building an equitable community that benefits all AND continuing innovation in child-centered development. We hope the partnership with Building Bridges deepens opportunities for authentic healing and understanding the complex dynamics that race continues to play in Asheville. We are so grateful to be a part of this beloved community."



*Nina Tally Everflow, International Development Consultant
Mother to Ameen*

2016-17 Fiscal Year Operations

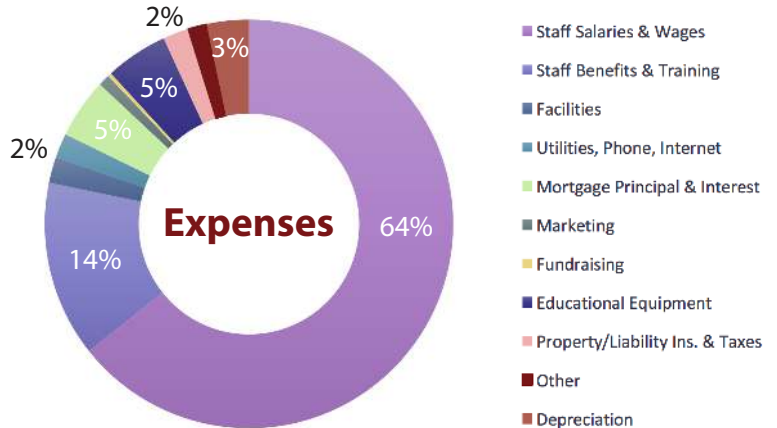
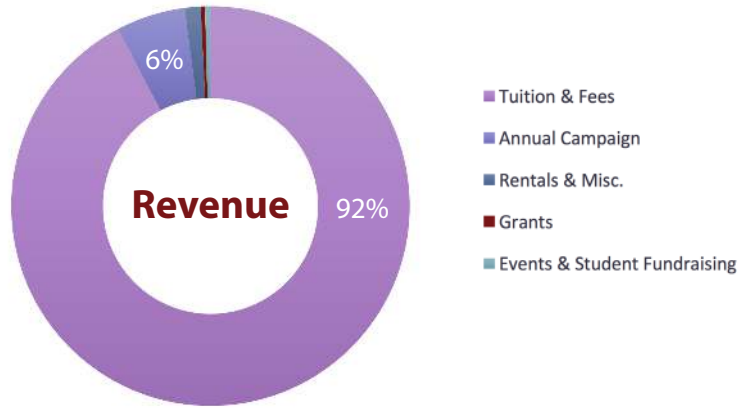
Total Revenues \$2,439,910
 Total Expenditures \$2,405,893
 Difference Remaining \$34,017

The total value of all assets at the end of the 2016-17 fiscal year was estimated at \$4,028,900.

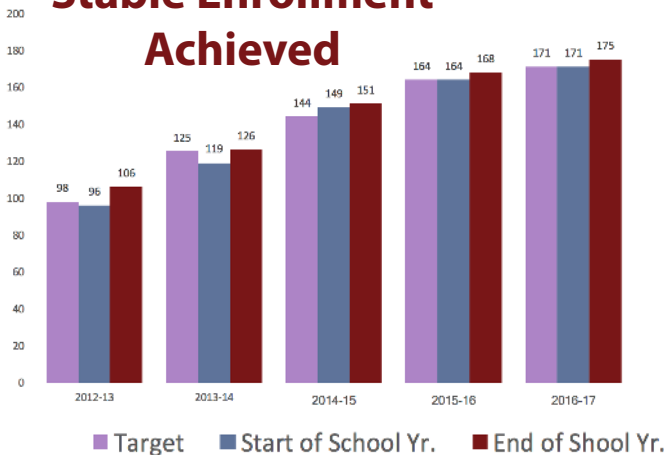
We ended the year with a cash/savings reserve of \$500,000.
 (Up \$24,500 from last year.)

"We moved to Asheville from Florida because of Rainbow Community School. We knew it was the best fit for our child's growth mentally and spiritually, and the school provided so much peace of mind as we made the transition 9 years ago."

*Eddie Delaney, Realtor
 Father to Ayden*



Stable Enrollment Achieved



We Are Visionary

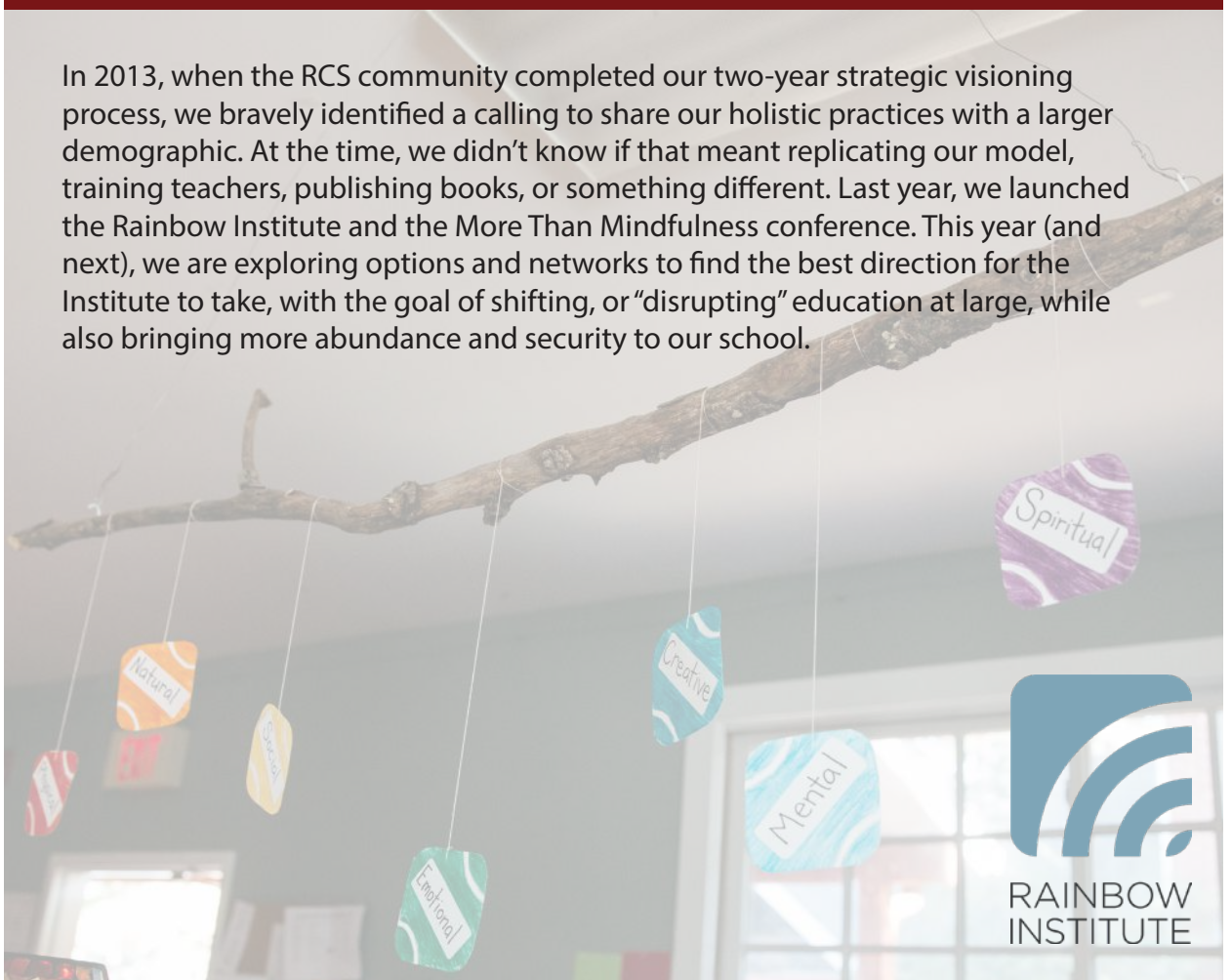
Improvement Goals for 2017-18

Each year the board and administration chooses two to four items from our strategic plan to focus on for the upcoming school year.



Goal 1 — *To establish Rainbow Institute's role as a leader in education, particularly within the mindfulness and holistic movement in our community and beyond*

In 2013, when the RCS community completed our two-year strategic visioning process, we bravely identified a calling to share our holistic practices with a larger demographic. At the time, we didn't know if that meant replicating our model, training teachers, publishing books, or something different. Last year, we launched the Rainbow Institute and the More Than Mindfulness conference. This year (and next), we are exploring options and networks to find the best direction for the Institute to take, with the goal of shifting, or "disrupting" education at large, while also bringing more abundance and security to our school.



RAINBOW
INSTITUTE



Goal 2 — *To enrich students' learning and social-emotional growth by strengthening the connection between school and home with the launch of an inspirational Parent Engagement Program (PEP)*

Research strongly points to the involvement of parents as a key factor in student well-being and success. For the 2017-18 school year, we launch the Parent Engagement Program to better educate parents on the science behind a Rainbow education, while encouraging parents to support one another with discussion and resources.

Parental involvement leads to greater social and emotional well-being and academic success.





Goal 3 — *To create a draft master plan for facilities improvement based on input received from the community*

When we purchased the church property in 2013, our long-range plan was to complete the campus with arts facilities, a gathering space, and more. Now that the first phase is complete with the Omega Middle School space renovated, it is time to finish what we started.

Last year, our facilities design team, headed by board member, Darrah Noble, used a “card storm” to survey parents, students, and faculty about how to complete and improve our facilities. Some of the top goals that emerged will result in a safer, more efficient, more beautiful, and more accessible campus with enough space for our holistic programming in areas that have been left incomplete (such as art, music, and after school which have remained in small and temporary spaces, such as the trailer). Now begins the long process of taking those ideas and consulting with professional architects to turn them into a full plan. A capital campaign is somewhere in our future!





Goal 4 — *To maintain or increase our current racial diversity while improving our culture of inclusion and systems of equity*

Throughout most of Rainbow's forty-year history, our racial population was primarily white. Changing that has been, and will continue to be, a long and arduous process. Early in the process of change, it became clear how challenging, even painful, it often was for people of color to feel included, and not merely "tokenized" when there were so few. We have worked toward increasing the number of people of color on campus to create more emotional and cultural safety. Today, our demographics echo that of Asheville at large, but Asheville remains a very segregated culture where it is challenging for systems of power to transform.

Therefore, over the next year, our improvement goal is not to focus on increasing numbers of people of color, but to create a better culture of inclusion and safety with the community we have; one that recognizes, honors and lives up to valuing equity as a benefit to all of us, not just to those who are underserved.

There are several ways to work toward this goal. One is for all of us to engage in training and discussions around racial equity and privilege. If all faculty and staff enrolled in Building Bridges, for example, it would work wonders for our culture of inclusion. Another important way is to build our faculty of color so students of colors see leaders who look like them, building safety and open dialogue. It can't end there, however. We need for our greater Rainbow community to join this effort, which means ideally all parents will also participate in racial equity trainings and discussions.

We Are Grateful



Thanks for voting for us!
1st place

- Best School**
- Preschool**
- Business that Represents the Spirit of Asheville**
- Art Program**
- After School**
- Elementary Teacher: Eddy Webb**
- Middle School Teacher: Susan Waddell**
- Music Teacher: Sue Ford**
- Business With Earth Friendly Practices**

2nd place

- Elementary Teacher: Susie Fahrer**
- Playground**
- Business That Gives Back to the Community**

2016-17 Business Sponsors

We would like to send a huge thank you to our 2016-17 Business Sponsors! These community-driven organizations help bridge the gap between tuition and the operational costs of the school. We are honored to partner with them!

Pot of Gold Sponsors



Alpha Sponsors



Indigo Sponsors



Rainbow Business Exchange

