

Clarkfield Area Charter School

Annual Report

Submitted October 2017

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# Clarkfield Area Charter School

## Annual Report 2016-2017

District #4172

### School Mission Statement:

At Clarkfield Area Charter School, we believe that all PreK-6 students have a purpose and learn in a unique way. Our mission is to develop a love of learning by finding and teaching to the students' individual learning styles and expanding their knowledge through community based learning. This will allow students to master academic building blocks necessary for a successful transition to junior and senior high school. Learning will take place in a nurturing and stimulating environment with a 15 to 1 student to teacher ratio where staff, families and community members support students to become life-long learners leading healthy, active and productive lives.

### School Vision Statement:

Clarkfield Area Charter School envisions itself as a school of excellence that fosters a love of learning which allows all students to reach their maximum potential.

Clarkfield Area Charter School will accomplish educational excellence by utilizing highly effective teachers, whose data driven instruction, will focus on their students' individual learning styles in order to build concrete foundation in academics. Educators will promote strong moral values, healthy lifestyles, global and local awareness, and utilize community involvement to ensure academic success. As a change friendly school, CACS faculty and staff will embrace opportunities and innovation that will increase their effectiveness and sustain a financially sound institution. CACS faculty and staff, along with strong parental partnerships, will guide each student to reach his/her full academic and social potential in order to ensure success in their future.

### School Core Values:

Student needs first, **Honesty, Integrity, Respect** for all, and **Teamwork**, this spells "SHIRT".

### Governance

Clarkfield Area Charter School's board of directors for school year 2016-2017 consisted of a five member board made up of 1 community member, 1 teacher and 3 parents. Board members were:

Chairwoman of the Board: Stephanie Brock - Parent 3 year term  
Term expires June 2019 (was re-elected spring 2016)  
913 13th Street  
Clarkfield, MN 56223  
320-669-4892

Vice Chairman: Eric Jahn - Parent 3 year term  
Term expires June 2017 (was re-elected spring 2017)  
3640 240th Avenue  
Boyd , MN 56218  
320-841-0018

Clerk: Sara Smith - Parent (appointed)  
Term expires June 2018  
2834 430th Street  
Clarkfield, MN 56223  
320-226-0298

Secretary: Nicole Linscheid - Teacher 3 year term  
Term expires June 2017 (moved summer of 2017)  
1535 13th Avenue  
Clarkfield, MN 56223  
320-761-1635

Clerk: Doug Clevenger - Community member 3 year term  
Term expires June 2017 (was re-elected spring 2017)  
621 10th Avenue  
Clarkfield, MN 56223  
320-669-4777

**Board Committees:**

Accountability: Nicole and Stephanie  
Curriculum Advisory: Nicole and Sara  
Facilities: Eric and Doug  
Finance: Brenda Risa, Kathy Koetter and Stephanie  
Marketing: Sara and Stephanie

**Board Training:**

All 5 board members have attended the mandatory trainings for board members: board governance, finances, employment and personnel. In addition all 5 of our members participated in ongoing board trainings that were provided by our auditor from Hoffman & Brobst and the staff at our service cooperative during the school year, including our business manager to provide ongoing financial training and understanding the monthly board financial reports. We were also part of a charter school group of board members that met in April with staff from Minnesota Association of Charter Schools. This training covered personnel issues, financial responsibilities and roles of board members. This collaboration was very valuable because we discussed many issues with other charter school board members.

### **School Management and Administration**

The school's administration team is made up of the director and administrative assistant. The director is Kathy Koetter and the administrative assistant is Aubrey Johnson. Business operations are managed by our local cooperative located in Marshall and our business managers are Darin Jensen, Barb Marron and Mary Jo Henkel.

The director oversees all school operations. Primary functions include overseeing day to day operations of the school and school wide management, overseeing ongoing business and financial affairs, managing school human resources, ensuring quality academic and extra-curricular opportunities, coordinating school transportation and providing Visionary Leadership for the school. The position includes being the main liaison for parents, community and authorizer. The current director holds degrees in elementary education, special education; with licensures in Emotional Behavior Disorders and Specific Learning Disabilities and also a master's degree in Special Education. She was involved in the development of the charter school application, the pre-operational years of planning and has been employed by the charter school since they opened in 2007.

The administrative assistant assists with administrative requests, provides secretarial and receptionist duties and assists with scheduling, attendance records, MARSS records, lunch program records, nursing, school supervision, monitoring and various other concerns that students, parents or staff may have. She has been employed by the charter school since July 2013. She continues to attend workshops, conferences and webinars that provide ongoing training and support for her position.

All business management, payroll and financial matters are completed by our business managers located at the cooperative. They provide monthly board reports and prepare for the annual financial audit. The cooperative also provides numerous training opportunities for the director and the administrative assistant, as well as the teaching staff.

### **Teaching Staff Information 2016-2017school year:**

Pre-K	Jackie Sachs	Preschool certificate
K	Rachel Weiss	FFN-423096
1	Kathleen Jessen	FFN-348476
2	David Schwarz & phy-ed	FFN-340006
3-4	Nancy Schmidt	FFN-476295
5-6	Nicole Linscheid	FFN-422505
Special Education	Pam Williams	FFN - 412862
Title I	Licensed Staff/Nancy Schmidt	FFN - 476295

In addition to the staff mentioned above, we had a contracted speech pathologist; Deborah Moore – FFN 235989, who provided speech/language services to students twice week and contracted school psychologist Karin Falness – FFN 449350; who provided special education assessment services.

### School Enrollment

School Year	Number of Students
2007-2008	60
2008-2009	64
2009-2010	74
2010-2011	67
2011-2012	62
2012-2013	62 + 15 early childhood students
2013-2014	58 + 19 early childhood students
2014-2015	61 + 18 early childhood students
2015-2016	56 + 28 early childhood students
2016-2017	51 + 23 early childhood students
2017-2018 (current)	56 + 23 early childhood students

### Student Attrition

During the 2016-2017 school year these students left during the school year:

Second Grade - 2 students

Third grade - 1 student

Fourth grade - 1 student

Total of 4 students left during the school year

Several activities are offered to CACS students including every day physical education, music once per week, after school activities such as volleyball, flag football, dance team, cheerleading, basketball and a computer lab that contains 21 computers, and SMART boards to all classrooms. In addition to athletic programs we collaborated with our 4-H and county extension staff to provide sessions in lego/robotics, science and animal training sessions. We also had cooking classes for our older students during the school year and a parent class was also offered. Our students were also part of community programs such as: Veterans Day, Memorial Day and a Meet and Greet community event that was sponsored by local businesses. These opportunities are allowing us to work towards the completion of our vision of guiding each student to reach his/her full academic and social potential in order to ensure success in their future, while becoming part of the bigger community. Staff is continuously looking at additional opportunities or activities that would provide our students with more programming and partnerships with our community. Throughout the school year, mainly fall and spring, our students will take walks to our businesses and deliver posters, take tours, connect with our community leaders and make connections with the people that are supporting our school. The businesses have expressed their appreciation with our involvement and it has created many positive relationships between community and our school.

**Academic Performance****School Proficiency – MCA results**

2008	Math	81.25% proficient	State Average 62.03%
	Reading	65.62% proficient	State Average 70.69%
	Science	42.85% proficient	State Average 40.02%
2009	Math	69.69% proficient	State Average 63.85%
	Reading	66.66% proficient	State Average 71.91%
	Science	53.84% proficient	State Average 45.79%
2010	Math	79.41% proficient	State Average 65.89%
	Reading	79.41% proficient	State Average 72.34%
	Science	16.7% proficient	State Average 48.58%
2011	Math	51.7% proficient	State Average 57.8%
	Reading	69% proficient	State Average 74.6%
	Science	16.7% proficient	State Average 46%
2012	Math	80% proficient	State Average 65.4%
	Reading	80% proficient	State Average 76%
	Science	60% proficient	State Average 57.7%
2013	Math	73.3% proficient	State Average 62.6%
	Reading	60% proficient	State Average 57.8%
	Science	25% proficient	State Average 59.7%
2014	Math	82.6% proficient	State Average 61.4%
	Reading	86.9% proficient	State Average 59.1%
	Science	100% proficient	State Average 61.2%
2015	Math	74.1% proficient	State Average 60.2%
	Reading	74.1% proficient	State Average 59.4%
	Science	75% proficient	State Average 59.1%
2016	Math	73.1% proficient	State Average 59.4%
	Reading	80.8% proficient	State Average 59.7%
	Science	75% proficient	State Average 66.7%
2017	Math	85% proficient	State Average 58.6%
	Reading	85% proficient	State Average 60.1%
	Science	100% proficient	State Average 59.9%

**Innovative Practices**

In response to this data as well as classroom assessments, CACS has instituted the Daily Five strategy for reading, Read Naturally fluency program, as well as Words Their Way to increase student vocabulary skills. The school continues to implement a successful guided reading program and guided math program in K-6 classrooms. Teachers continue to attend ongoing workshops and conferences to provide instruction that is up to date and innovative. For students that need a reading intervention, the charter

school implements the Souday System-which is a phonics based program and Read Naturally which focuses on fluency and comprehension. We have added IXL - a math program that tracks individual progress in key math concepts and students are able to graph and track their own progress. We also added Visual Phonics - which is a system of 46 hand-shapes with corresponding movements, called "cues" and these cues represent the 46 phoneme sounds of spoken English. Three staff were trained during the 2016-2017 school year and the remaining staff were trained during the summer of 2017.

The charter school uses NWEA testing for all students in Kindergarten through Sixth Grade. Students are assessed in reading and math 3 times a year. After analyzing this data goals are set for each student, as well as a school wide goal that is part of our q-comp plan. The percentage of students that reached their individual target growth for each year are displayed in the table:

Year	Reading	Math
2008-2009	58.6%	70%
2009-2010	61.8%	65.7%
2010-2011	63.4%	76.3%
2011-2012	76.4%	66.7%
2012-2013	75.8%	74%
2013-2014	78%	100%
2014-2015	71%	80%
2015-2016	78%	78%
2016-2017	81%	77%
2017-2018 (Goal is 80%)		

The charter school implemented q-comp during the school year 2016-2017. Individual SMART goals and a school-wide goal was set in the fall of 2016. Eight licensed teachers participated in q-comp and received full compensation or a high percentage of it. Our students took the NWEA in the fall and the results from those assessments were used the set goals for the school year. PLC meetings took place weekly for 50 minutes and we focused on improving reading comprehension. Our focus in school year 2016-2017 was on the following strategies: characterization, cause & effect and main idea/details; utilizing graphic organizers with these strategies. Peer observations took place throughout the year and provided valuable feedback for the staff. Our lead teacher also conducted numerous informal observations throughout the year with valuable feedback and suggestions following the observations. Formal evaluations also took place; each staff member had 3 formal evaluations completed throughout the school year. One evaluation by the q-comp leader, one by the director and one by a contracted licensed principal from another school district.



CACS has created strong partnerships in the community which has generated unique learning opportunities for students. During this past year students took part in monthly community outreach programs such as performances for senior citizens, reading to the elderly and community clean ups. This service learning is effectively generating community support for the school and teaching students the importance of giving back to the community in which they live. Every Friday we had community members and business people come in for a reading buddy time with our students. We also have many fundraisers throughout the school year and we always have a very well attended event with support from many people in our community. Our parent group is very active and had 4 events/fundraisers during the 2016-2017 school year.

The school continues to operate from a clear strategic plan which is guiding the decision making and actions within the school. School finance, curriculum, staff development, accountability, and community relationships are five areas the plan addresses. This plan is allowing school leadership to focus its work on the areas of most importance to the overall success of the school and provides benchmarks for success assessment.

### **Dissemination information**

The charter school reaches out to all families that live in Clarkfield. We have a welcoming basket that staff and/or board members deliver to new families that move into Clarkfield. We include a brochure about the school and make sure the family knows about the charter school and what we offer. Because Clarkfield is small all of the businesses and community members are aware of new families and actively promote the school. We have placed our flyers/brochures in each place of business and have an active facebook account that is updated daily and highlights what we are doing, as well as upcoming events. We do not discriminate when we talk with these families; our goal is to reach everyone that lives in or around Clarkfield. We do not have a lot of different cultures or minorities in our area and the information that we disseminate is the same for everyone. This past school year we had numerous events held at the school that involved our whole community and our marketing committee ensured that each new family received an invitation to come to the event and become a part of our community. The director has been attending many city meetings throughout the school year promoting the school and inviting community members and business owners in to connect with our students.

### **Program Challenges**

One challenge that the charter school is facing is growing the school by increasing enrollment each year. A reason that parents have given for taking their students out of the charter school and enrolling them in another school district is transportation. Because we use the resident district's transportation system, some of the charter school students end up having a very long bus ride. Our students that live outside of Clarkfield may ride the bus over an hour. This is a concern for parents of young children and our school that we may not attract families that live in other communities. Another challenge that we have in our school is that when students reach the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade levels their parents would like them to get involved with sports in the school that they will attend in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Parents have expressed the concern that their children will adapt easier at the elementary level than they would at the junior high level. Because of our student numbers and our space, we are limited to the amount of sports that we

can offer at our school. An additional challenge that has happened recently is the increased special education needs in some of our students. Our staff is not trained or qualified in some of the areas that our students need on a daily basis. We can contract with outside providers to help with these needs, but they are not here on a daily basis and unfortunately some of our students require more support than we can give. In response to this identified need, we are currently implementing a social awareness program that involves lessons in character traits, and bringing in speakers to discuss these traits on a monthly basis. We have enlisted the support of a school psychologist to help guide these lessons. In 2016-2017 we provided resources to students and parents about self-regulation and held a discussion during conferences in the fall with our school psychologist. We plan on continuing this practice with our parents.

### **Celebration**

We are proud to report that our Early Childhood program is growing. We have two different programs that began in September 2012. One of our programs is for 3 and 4 year old students and the other program is for 4 and 5 year old students. Last school year we had 23 students that attended the programs. We are following the guidelines set forth by MDE for our programs. Our resident district closed all early childhood programs that were being held in their school building in Clarkfield, which prompted CACS to act on this opportunity and provide this much needed program for our community of young families. We have a tremendous amount of support from our community and families. We are funding our Early Childhood program with donations, fundraisers and grants. The overwhelming support from our community has validated our hard work in getting this in operation this year. Staff has noticed a significant difference in students that have attended our preschool program when they enroll in kindergarten; socially, emotionally and academically the students are substantially further ahead than those students who did not attend our early programming.

Another celebration CACS was given was the designation of "Reward School" for our scores in the spring of 2016. We received an MMR of 71.43%. This designation is a testimony of all the hard work each staff member contributes each and every day. Because of our small class sizes our staff can devote the time needed to reach student and develop close relationships with the students, as well as their families.

After 2017 MCA results were announced our authorizer, Friends of Education, awarded the charter school \$2,500 award for achieving Reward designation for 2017 scores and also \$500 for receiving the state finance award, for a total of \$3,000. Both of these awards are a testament to the staff, small class sizes, team work and commitment to our students and families.

### **Finances**

CACS has three funds in operation: General Fund, Food Service Fund and Community Service Fund- which is our preschool programming and after school program. The auditor's report from FY16 showed that expenditures and other financing uses exceeded revenues by \$155,527 in the general fund. This was mainly due to \$64,580 being spent on the kitchen addition and \$57,487 transferred to the food service fund for the purchase of kitchen equipment. The kitchen project was a part of our strategic plan that we predict will eventually decrease the deficit in food service that we have each year. The unassigned fund balance is 47.5% of annual budgeted expenditures; which means the district remains within its goal of maintaining an unassigned fund balance equal to 30% of the annual budget.

**Authorizer Information**

The Authorizer for the charter school is: Friends of Education EXO-01-A, 200 East Lake Street, Wayzata, MN 55391 and their email is: [info@improvek-12education.org](mailto:info@improvek-12education.org) . Friends of Education will evaluate the charter school based on fiscal soundness, academic performance and operations and legal compliance. Site visits will be a part of their oversight program and site visits may be announced or unannounced. Friends of Education became our new authorizer in 2011 and we were officially approved by MDE on September 9, 2011. CACS received our first official contract with Friends of Education on July 5, 2012 and in 2016 FOE offered CACS a five year charter renewal.

**Future Plans:**

The future plans of CACS are to continue in the implementation of its strategic plan initiatives in order to become a school of excellence. To accomplish this, the school will continue to assess the initiative areas and make future plans based on data. The school purchased CKLA curriculum and beginning in the fall of 2017 all grades (preschool through sixth grade) will be implementing this new curriculum. The school will continue to look at improving our Early Childhood Program to ensure we are providing the services needed for the families in our community. We have received a lot of financial support from our area businesses and community members to help our families with the early childhood tuition. Our staff is continually attending workshops, conferences and trainings throughout the year to ensure we are using research-based curriculum, resources and strategies that will improve the achievement of our students. We utilize funds from Title II for teacher development and utilize ongoing workshops and conferences offered thru our service cooperative, authorizer and MACS. The school's active marketing committee will continue to create outreach information that allows parents to make an informed decision for their child's education. Their goal is to reach all families that live in Clarkfield and give them the opportunity to enroll at the charter school

Report compiled by Kathy Koetter - Director

Report approved by Stephanie Brock – Board chairperson

**INDIVIDUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

**2017-2018**

The director of the charter school will be involved with two partnerships throughout the school year. She has joined a group of other charter school directors and administrators from our area that will meet once a month, at the various school sites. The purpose of this collaboration is to provide support to directors and administrators that are in schools that have only one administrator and feel like they could gain a lot from other people in similar positions, with similar issues. The group organized this partnership and will begin meeting in October.

The director of the charter school will also be attending a series of pre-implementation meetings to explore mentoring program options to improve student achievement, increase teacher effectiveness and help in reducing teacher turnover rates, especially in our rural areas. The program is sponsored by SWWC and the New Teacher Center. The first meeting is also in October and will be followed by 4 more discussions at the service cooperative in Marshall.

At the monthly board meetings the director will update the board of directors.