

Clarkfield Area Charter School

Annual Report School Year 19-20

Submitted November 2020

Table of Contents

Report Introduction/Mission/Vision/Values	Page 3
Governance	Page 3,4
Board Training	Page 5
School Management and Administration	Page 5
Teaching Staff Information	Page 6
School Enrollment/Student Attrition	Page 6
Academic Performance/Goals	Page 7,8
Innovative Practices/NWEA	Page 8,9
Dissemination	Page 10
Program Challenges	Page 10
Celebration	Page 10
Finances	Page 11
Authorizer Information	Page 11
Future	Page 11
Professional Development Plan	Page 12

Clarkfield Area Charter School

Annual Report 2019-2020

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 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 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 2019-2020 consisted of a five-member board made up of 1 community member, 1 teacher and 3 parents. Board members were:

Chairman of the Board: Eric Jahn – Parent 3-year term
Re-elected spring 2017
3640 240th Avenue
Boyd, MN 56218
320-841-0018

Vice Chairwoman: Brenda Risa – Community Member
Appointed September 2017 (fill out term-2020)
621 10th Avenue
Clarkfield, MN 56223
507-828-2980

Secretary: Sara Smith - Parent
Appointed July 2016 (filled out term-2018)
Elected 3-year term in 2018
2834 430th Street
Clarkfield, MN 56223
320-226-0298

Teacher: Kathy Jessen - Teacher 3-year term
Appointed July 2017 (fill out term-2020)
3065 450th Street
Clarkfield, MN 56223
940-256-0398

Clerk: Natalie Koepp – Parent
Appointed September 2018 (filled out term-2019)
Elected 3-year term in 2019
4445 290th Avenue
Clarkfield, MN 56223
**Natalie and her family moved in December 2019. At that time, the board appointed Nicole Wold to fill out the vacant term.

Clerk: Nicole Wold – Parent
Appointed in December 2019 to fill out Natalie Koepp’s term
Term will be up in 2022
712 7th Street
Clarkfield, MN 56223
651-283-9178

Board Committees:

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

Board Training:

The mandatory trainings have been completed by 4 of the 5 board members. The newest board member Nicole Wold (appointed in December) is in the process of completing the mandatory trainings.

October-December 2019– Eric Jahn, Brenda Risa, Natalie Koepf, Sara Smith, and Kathy Jessen participated in the MACS training that is on their website. The training was entitled “Charter School Board Question Series – What the board of directors should ask about?” The series has 5 sections and includes documents/questions that include: Assessments, Charter Contracts, Finances, Personnel & Human Resources and Academic Programs. The board was given the document and reviewed the questions/answers as a group during these 3 board meetings.

January 2020 – Eric Jahn, Brenda Risa, Nicole Wold, Sara Smith, and Kathy Jessen participated in the Charter School Board Scavenger Hunt, also on MACS training website. We had 12 questions that were given to the board members and for each question they needed to find the provision in Minnesota’s Charter School Law that answered and supported each question. The board of directors have a copy of the Minnesota Charter School Law 124.E in their board packets.

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 Shelley Shultz. Shelley was hired in the spring of 2019 after Aubrey Johnson moved away. Business operations are managed by our local service cooperative located in Marshall and our business manager is Kristina Meulebroeck.

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 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 JMC management, 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 2019. 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 manager located at the cooperative. She provides monthly board reports and prepares 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 2019-2020 school year:

Pre-K	Jackie Sachs-until Jan 2020 Ashley Bendickson -Jan-March	Preschool certificate
K	Rachel Weiss	FFN-423096
1	Kathleen Jessen	FFN-348476
2	Nancy Schmidt	FFN-476295
3, 4 and phy-ed	Steven Koetter	FFN-312694
5, 6	Zachery Hendrickson	FFN-491224
K-6	Douglas Clevenger (part-time)	FFN-499896
Special Education	Pamela Williams	FFN-412862

In addition to the staff mentioned above, we had a contracted speech pathologist; Anthony Frank – FFN 479898 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	56 + 23 early childhood students
2018-2019	49 + 24 early childhood students
2019-2020	54 + 30 early childhood students

Student Attrition

These students left during the 2019-2020 school year:

First Grade – 1 student

Third Grade - 2 students

Fifth Grade – 2 students

Total of 5 students left during the school year.

The following paragraph covers the months of September through mid-March.

Several activities were offered to CACS students including every day physical education, music twice per week, after school activities including programs with our local extension/4-H office in our community. Our students were also part of a community Veteran's Program and a Holiday Concert. 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.

Academic Performance 2008 through 2019

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%
2018	Math	88.5% proficient	State Average 57%
	Reading	88.5% proficient	State Average 59.8%
	Science	100% proficient	State Average 51.7%
2019	Math	96% proficient	State Average 55%
	Reading	84% proficient	State Average 59%
	Science	80% proficient	State Average 51%

****No MCA's were administered in 2020 due to COVID-19.**

Innovative Practices

Because of our small class sizes, each staff member – teachers, paraprofessionals, food service, custodial and administrative – all have opportunities to form close relationships with our students. The students are part of a large school family that are concerned about each of them and their success at school, as well as out of school. In addition to individualized instruction that we are able to do; we implement these school wide programs: Guided Reading, IXL – Math and Language Arts, Typing Club for 3rd through 6th grade and Visual Phonics for K/1st/2nd grade students, which is a system of 46 hand-shapes with corresponding movements called “cues” and these cues represent the 46 phoneme sounds of Spoken English. This system has been very effective, especially with our youngest learners in kindergarten, first and second grade; as well as some of our students that have been identified as having special education needs.

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. ****We were not able to complete the spring 2020 NWEA to determine the percentage of students that reached their individual growth goal; or if the school-wide goal was met.**

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	82%	83%
2018-2019 (goal was 83%)	86%	84%

The charter school implemented q-comp during the school year 2019-2020. Individual SMART goals and a school-wide goal was set in the fall of 2019. Seven teachers participated in q-comp and received full compensation or a high percentage of it. Our students took the NWEA in the fall 2019 (September) and winter 2020 (January), but were unable to complete the spring testing.

Peer observations took place throughout the year and provided valuable feedback for the staff. Formal evaluations (Charlotte Danielson Instructional Domain) took place; each staff member had 2 formal evaluations completed throughout the school year. The school contracted with two outside people to complete the evaluations and they provided constructive and relevant advice for the teachers and strategies that the staff felt was beneficial. One evaluator is a former teacher in our area and the other evaluator is a professor of education at the local college. The formal evaluations were completed in November 2019 and March 2020. We were able to complete both evaluations; the second one occurred the day before the school was closed due to COVID-19. According to information received from MDE we were still able to grant performance pay for each staff member using the formal evaluation results, weekly PLC meetings, and peer observations. All seven staff members received their full performance pay and the two leaders received their compensation as well.

**Community partnerships were active and ongoing from September to mid-March.

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 businesspeople 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 we typically have at least 4 events/fundraisers during the school year. This school year we were not able to have any spring or summer fundraisers due to COVID-19. We have local city organizations and businesses that help support many different causes during the year and are always very generous to our school and help our students and families in many ways.

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 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 until mid-March, 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 5th and 6th grade, their parents would like them to get involved with sports in the school that they will attend in 7th 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 moving forward is maintaining and/or increasing student enrollment due to COVID-19. This is also a factor in finding quality substitutes and support staff.

Celebration

We are proud to report that our Early Childhood program is growing. We have two different programs that began in September 2012. Each year we have seen an increase in our early childhood programs and currently we have an enrollment of 30 children. We have a tremendous amount of support from our community and families. We are funding our Early Childhood program with donations, fundraisers and grants and families have expressed how thankful they are that we have early childhood programs in our school. Another celebration for the charter school is that we continue to score very high on the state assessments, substantially above the state average. The board and staff agree that our small class sizes and committed staff continue to have a huge impact on our academic success. We continue to hire teaching staff that have the students learning as a top priority and work towards giving each student the most effective education we can, no matter what learning model we find ourselves in.

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 FY19 showed the General Fund ended the fiscal year with a negative balance of \$63,785. The General Fund transferred \$10,319 to the Food Service Fund and \$3,310 to the Community Service Fund to cover operating deficits. The unassigned fund balance is 37% 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 11100 Wayzata Blvd. Suite 800 Minnetonka, MN 55305 and their email is: 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:

The future of CACS are to continue in the implementation of its strategic plan initiatives to become a school of excellence. To accomplish this, the school will continue to assess the initiative areas and make plans based on data. The school is focusing on academics and the staff will continue to ensure we are reaching all students with high quality curriculum, staff, and resources. 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. An initiative that began in 2018 is updating and replacing the playground equipment. Most of the equipment has been in place since we opened in 2007. The initiative stopped moving forward for a while due to COVID-19, but efforts have returned with the hope of having new equipment in the spring of 2021.

Report compiled by Kathy Koetter - Director

Report approved by Eric Jahn – Board chairperson

INDIVIDUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

2020-2021

The school director is serving on the EDAL Advisory Committee. The duties and goals of this advisory council is to help build a strong foundation of support and communication between the community at large, schools and their administrators, the SWWC Service Cooperative (which CACS is a member of), and the Southwest Minnesota State University Education program. The committee will identify opportunities for support for candidates in the leadership program, serve as advocates for the EDAL program, review assessments and curriculum of each program and provide advice for marketing the programs.

Currently the plan is to have zoom meetings throughout this school year with hopes of meeting in person at some point next year. She will work closely with other school principals and superintendents to provide the small, rural charter school perspective. This will be a very positive experience to talk with other administrators that are facing the same challenges and getting support from leaders that have knowledge and experiences that can provide meaningful growth for the director.