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Clarkfield Area Charter School

Annual Report School Year 20-21

Submitted November 2021

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Clarkfield Area Charter School

Annual Report 2020-2021

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 2020-2021 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-resigned in spring 2021
3640 240th Avenue
Boyd, MN 56218
320-841-0018

Vice Chairwoman: Brenda Risa – Community Member
Re-elected in spring 2020 – 3-year term
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-chose not to run in 2021
2834 430th Street
Clarkfield, MN 56223
320-226-0298

Teacher: Kathy Jessen - Teacher 3-year term
Re-elected in spring 2020
3065 450th Street
Clarkfield, MN 56223
940-256-0398

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:

All 5 board members viewed the webinar: Financial Oversight #1 and also #2 through the website MN Charter Board Training. The 5 members are: Eric Jahn, Brenda Risa, Kathy Jessen, Nicole Wold and Sara Smith. The first webinar was viewed on December 15, 2020 and the second one was February 17, 2021. All 5 members also viewed Safeguard Private Data on November 18, 2020. Brenda, Eric and Sara have attended the required board trainings: Board’s Role and Responsibilities, Employment Policies/Practices and Financial Management. Nicole and Kathy have attended the online Financial Board Training.

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. Business operations are managed by our local service cooperative located in Marshall and our business manager is Sarah Bartz.

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 2020-2021 school year:

Pre-K	Krystal Koepp	FFN-451017
K	Rachel Weiss	FFN-423096
1	Kathleen Jessen	FFN-348476
2	Nancy Schmidt	FFN-476295
3	Elsa Boe	FFN-859098
4, 5, 6/phy-ed	Grant Will	FFN-433672
Special Education	Pamela Williams	FFN-412862

In addition to the staff mentioned above, we had a contracted speech pathologist; Jacqueline Johnson and psychologist Karin Falness – FFN 449350; who provided special education assessment services. We were not able to provide music classes during the school year due to COVID.

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
2020-2021	47 + 19 early childhood students

Student Attrition

These students left during the 2020-2021 school year:

Kindergarten – 1 student

Third Grade - 1 student

Total of 2 students left during the school year.

Activities were limited during this school year due to COVID.

These activities were offered to CACS students including every day physical education, after school activities including some programs with our local extension/4-H office in our community and these were held outside or virtually. No events were held in the school building.

Academic Performance 2008 through 2021

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.**

2021	Math	63% proficient	State Average 44%
	Reading	68% proficient	State Average 52%
	Science	Only 1 student in 5 th grade	

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, Social Studies, Science 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.

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	86%	84%
2020-2021	79% - goal was 87%	81%

The charter school implemented q-comp during the school year 2020-2021. Individual SMART goals and a school-wide goal was set in the fall of 2020. Six teachers participated in q-comp and 5 of 6 received full compensation. Our students took the NWEA in the fall of 2020, winter of 2021 and spring of 2021. 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 2020 and March 2021.

CACS has created strong partnerships in the community which has generated unique learning opportunities for students. During the 2020-2021 school year the opportunities to be out in the community were very limited; due to COVID concerns. The students still made the effort to connect with the assisted living facility and the nursing home by making and sending cards to the residents during the

school year. We were also limited with the number of opportunities to bring in people from our community because we did not have our typical events during the school year. The fundraising efforts focused on completing our playground initiative. This initiative had started 3 years ago and because of COVID the project took longer than we had planned. However, in May the new playground equipment was finally installed and the students were able to use it for two weeks before the school year ended. This community project was fully supported by our CACS families, our areas businesses and previous fundraisers.

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. This past year we updated our school information and the flyers/brochures and continued to distribute this information around the community. When information is sent we send to all families that are located in our community and use the bulk mailing so we reach everyone. 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. The school was active during the school year and summer, attending the local parades and community celebrations that were held, ensuring that we had a school presence during these events and taking advantage of the opportunities to promote the school. The director has been attending many city meetings throughout the school year and is active on local boards that have a vested interest in the success of the school.

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. During the spring of 2021 the school contacted parents and held discussions on this topic. A concern was raised during the 2020-2021 school year that parents were unhappy with the

combination of three grades in one classroom. We had 8 students in grades 4th, 5th and 6th. They felt the students lost the individualized instruction when so many ability levels were in one classroom with one teacher. The board had numerous discussions about this concern. Our authorizer was also involved and heard the concerns. The decision was made to take out the 5th and 6th grade students and focus on our youngest learners; PreK through 4th grade. We found that the data showed the majority of our students over the past few years have been in the primary grades. The difficulty with finding staff and effectively teaching 3 grade levels in one room was difficult. Beginning with the current school; 2021-2022 CACS will be a PreK through 4th grade school.

An ongoing challenge is finding qualified staff. The list of interested applicants has decreased over the last few years to the point of having one applicant for a teacher position. We are also seeing the same difficulty with finding paraprofessionals and substitutes. We are networking with area school districts hoping to share resources and keep the door open to collaboration between school districts because we are all facing this challenge.

Celebration

We are proud to report that our Early Childhood program is growing. We have two different programs that began in September 2012. 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 are fortunate to have a teaching staff that have the students learning as a top priority and work towards giving each student the most effective education we can. Because we are small the atmosphere in our building is similar to a close family that rely on each other for success. Each student is a member of our family too and close relationships have been formed with the students as well as their parents.

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 FY20 showed the General Fund ended the fiscal year with a negative balance of \$17,224, the Food Service Fund ended with a negative balance of \$22,363 and the Community Service Fund ended with a negative balance of \$9,564. The General Fund transferred to the Food Service Fund and to the Community Service Fund to cover operating deficits. The unassigned fund balance is 30.5% 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. COVID played a huge factor in 2019-2020 and continued into 2020-2021. The outlook is positive; showing an increase in student enrollment.

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. We have submitted our renewal application in 2021.

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.

With our new grades/structure in place this year we are putting our efforts into providing a very strong academic base to build on. Our focus is on learning and individualizing instruction so that each child has the skills they need for the next level.

Report compiled by Kathy Koetter - Director

Report approved by Brenda Risa - Board chairperson

INDIVIDUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

2021-2022

The school director is part of a group of administrators in Southwest Minnesota that meet throughout the year. This group is made up of area administrators that meet virtually at least twice a month. In addition to this group, she is working with a mentor that is a principal in her area. This person has been a teacher in a traditional public school, a charter school, and is now a principal in a traditional public school. This one on one time includes discussions around the same challenges they both face and providing support and resources that benefit both of them. They share ideas about classroom management, curriculum, finances, grants, staffing, etc. All topics are open to discussion and this time provides very valuable information.



* 301 13th St. * Clarkfield, MN 56223 * Phone 320-669-1995 * Fax 320-669-1997

November 30, 2021

Annual Report Supplement

During the summer of 2020, the board and staff were involved in area community celebrations and our local parade. We handed out a flyer that included school information, highlighting our small class sizes and activities we have during the school year. Events were limited due to COVID.

We also sent out the information to all families that live in our community to advertise our open house that we have in August before school starts each year. We send to everyone; we do not pick and choose who receives any of our information. It is a community outreach, which includes all families who live in our community. We also use other means to advertise throughout the school year: sign outside the school building, sign in front of our city hall, face book, weekly and monthly newsletters that we post in the area businesses and our website. The city administrator sends a monthly newsletter to all community members and businesses and he has now included the school's information in the newsletter each month highlighting upcoming events and school opportunities. This newsletter reaches families that live in Clarkfield, as well as surrounding rural areas.

In addition to the summer events, the school director attends city meetings throughout the school year to ensure that the charter school is positively advertised and promoted when new families move into Clarkfield. She attended meetings with the city council, EDA, and Lion's Club. A positive relationship has been formed between the school and the area businesses and city groups. These businesses have all been very supportive of the school and will continue to support the school when we are able to return to fundraising events.

“Providing a great education with community values”



* 301 13th St. * Clarkfield, MN 56223 * Phone 320-669-1995 * Fax 320-669-1997

An additional effort was made to reach our Hispanic families that live in Clarkfield. We have a staff member who speaks fluent Spanish and English and she has been very helpful when we need to translate information about our school, especially upcoming events.

The charter school provides many opportunities during the school year to promote our school and to inform all families what we have to offer. Our community is small and when we disseminate information it goes to everyone in our town. When we have a fundraiser or event at the school we invite everyone and no family would be excluded for any reason. With the support of our community we can disseminate all information to the families and no one is left out.

Kathy Koetter – Director of CACS