



# Nerstrand Elementary School Strategic Plan 2025-2027

## Table of Contents:

I.	Introduction.....	4-6
	Mission, Visions, Primary Purpose for Charter & Authorizer information	
II.	Goals & Benchmarks.....	6-9
	Comprehensive Achievement & Civic Readiness Goals	
III.	Process to Evaluate Progress towards Standards.....	9
IV.	Process to Identify Gifted & Talented Students & Accelerate their Learning.....	9
V.	Process to Adopt Early Admissions Procedure.....	10
VI.	System to Review the Effectiveness of Instruction & Curriculum.....	10
VII.	System to Provide Students Access to Effective Teachers Who Reflect the Diversity of Enrolled Students...	10-11
VIII.	Strategies for Improving Development of Multilingual Learners.....	11
IX.	Practices that Integrate High Quality Instruction, Rigorous Curriculum, Technology & a Collaborative Professional Culture.....	11-14

X. Annual Budget for Implementing the Long-Term Strategic Plan.....14

## INTRODUCTION:

Our Mission: Nerstrand Elementary School will empower students to be self-directed, lifelong learners by providing a nurturing, multiage environment that fosters cooperation and character development.

Our Vision: Nerstrand Staff members will work collaboratively to plan programs that ensure that students develop skills and attitudes necessary for being responsible citizens in the twenty-first century.

The primary purpose of mission-driven charter schools is to improve the learning and achievement, and success of all students. The additional purposes of our charter school is to:

(1) increase quality learning opportunities for all students;

Nerstrand Elementary School is committed to providing a quality, child-focused educational program for all students. The staff collaboratively works to ensure that students receive a balanced education that includes academic achievement, physical growth, social education, arts programming, and character development.

(2) encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods;

Staff at Nerstrand Elementary School continue to evolve their practice. The latest addition to their repertoire is training in LETRS, which incorporates the Science of Reading into our classrooms. Part of the staff is trained in this approach and began using it during the 23-24 school year. The remainder of the staff will be trained in the Science of Reading during the 24-25 school year.

(3) measure learning outcomes and create different and innovative forms of measuring outcomes;

Individual student progress is measured and documented through formal and informal classroom assessments and used as a tool to develop instructional strategies. Achievement is reported in a variety of ways to parents. Nerstrand Elementary

School uses the Benchmark System to level readers, the FASTBridge aReading and aMath standardized tests, and the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs).

(4) establish new forms of accountability for schools; or  
The majority of the School Board is represented by teachers, which is a form of accountability NES has used for years. This creates an onus by the staff that is seen in much of the work that they do. They have a voice in decisions that are made at all levels, as well as accountability for the outcomes of those decisions.

(5) create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site.

Licensed staff have significant input into the staff development opportunities afforded to them at Nerstrand Elementary School. Beginning two years ago, over half the staff voluntarily elected to get trained in the science of reading (LETRS). This research based instructional pedagogy is now being mandated through the READ Act, but over half the staff at the school is already, voluntarily trained.

### *Authorizer Information*

Nerstrand Elementary School is pleased to have the opportunity to function under the authorization of NEO. We are proud to be the first Minnesota public school to have officially “converted” from regular district school status to charter school status. We have been a charter school since the spring of 1999 and are thankful for the support provided by the Administration and School Board of the Faribault School District during our first thirteen years and now by NEO. We recognize the strong support we have received from the community of Nerstrand and the parents of Nerstrand Elementary School. The sense of celebration that we experienced at the time of our chartering remains with us today as our community demonstrates its commitment to the vitality of the school in countless ways. We submit this Annual Report to NEO with gratefulness and in anticipation of many productive years to come.

Novation Education Opportunities (NEO)  
 3432 Denmark Avenue, Suite 30  
 Eagan, MN 55123  
 Wendy Swanson Choi,  
 Executive Director  
 Phone – 612-889-2103  
 Email – [executive.director.neo@gmail.com](mailto:executive.director.neo@gmail.com)

**GOALS & BENCHMARKS:**

**All Students Ready for School**

Goal	Result	Goal Status
Long term goal: By June 30, 2027, 75% of kindergarten students will be ready for first grade by reaching the kindergarten end of year Benchmark, Level D, as measured by the Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention System.	In the spring of 2024, 76% of Kindergarteners had reached Level D.	Check one of the following:  On Track (multi-year goal)

**All Students are Prepared to be Lifelong Learners**

Goal	Result	Goal Status
By June 30, 2027, Nerstrand School's combined FY 2022-FY2027 proficiency rate in reading will exceed the state combined FY2022-FY2027 proficiency rate. This is measured by the MCA Reading tests in 3rd grade.	In three years, we have exceeded the State two out of three times. We exceeded in 2022 and 2024.  22: NES: 56.3 State: 48.1  23: NES: 47.1 State: 47.4  24: NES: 57.1 State: 46.5	<i>Check one of the following:</i>  On Track (multi-year)

### Close the Achievement Gap(s) Between Student Groups

Goal	Result	Goal Status
Through June 30, 2027, Nerstrand School's proficiency rates for Free and Reduced Students (FRP), as measured by the MCA Math test (grades 3-5) will be greater than 10 percentage points above the state average.	For school year 23-24, Nerstrand scored 78.57% and the State scored 34.98%. Over the past three years, NES' average is 10 percentage points above the State.	<i>Check one of the following:</i>  On Track (multi-year goal)

### All Students Career- and College-Ready by Graduation

Goal	Result	Goal Status
<p>The overall percentage of students identified by FastBridge in the 'some risk' or 'high risk' categories, as measured by aMath, will decrease by more than 10 percentage points between Fall to Spring.</p> <p>The overall percent of students identified by FastBridge, aReading in the 'some risk' or 'high risk' categories will decrease by more than 10 percentage points between Fall to Spring.</p>	<p>The decrease in students in the "high and some risk " category for aMath was 1%.</p> <p>The decrease in students in the "high and some risk" category for aReading was 4%.</p>	<p><i>Check one of the following:</i></p> <p>Not On Track (multi-year goal)</p>

All Students Will Graduate



Goal	Result	Goal Status
Students will be in school 94% (attendance) of the time over the course of the school year.	This is a five year goal. 21-22 = 92.50% 22-23 = 94.26 23-24 = 94.22	<i>Check one of the following:</i>  On Track (multi-year goal)

### PROCESS TO EVALUATE PROGRESS TOWARDS STANDARDS:

Data meetings are held with our problem solving teams on reading and math interventions and student progress so adjustments can be made accordingly. Data meetings are also held in individual team meetings with the Executive Director, using data collected three times a year through the FASTBridge program (reading & math). In team meetings, all subject areas are reviewed and analyzed. Workdays are also a time for reflection and evaluation of curriculum, instruction and student work. We are a small staff so all licensed staff are part of our ongoing planning and reflection of academics and the climate of our school.

### PROCESS TO IDENTIFY GIFTED & TALENTED STUDENTS & ACCELERATED THEIR LEARNING:

If students show they are above grade level via FASTBridge testing or other assessments such as the MCA tests, differentiated learning is provided within the classroom. This happens naturally in our multi-age classrooms in grades 2-5. Intervention groups are offered for students who are behind, but acceleration opportunities are offered for students who show extra potential.

### PROCESS TO ADOPT EARLY ADMISSIONS:

We follow policy 509 Admissions and Lottery, as well as 509A Early Admissions with respect to admitting students early to our school. Both policies can be found on our website at [nerstrand.charter.k12.mn.us](http://nerstrand.charter.k12.mn.us).

### SYSTEM TO REVIEW THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INSTRUCTION & CURRICULUM:

We believe in reflection and adjusting our practice based on data. In team meetings, time is given to reflect and discuss the curriculums and instruction, as well as to analyze its effectiveness through student's success. We are using our FASTBridge results, MCA scores, F&P data and in classroom assessments to measure effectiveness. Lastly, math & reading interventions are happening based on assessment data (FASTBridge) and implemented in classrooms based on a prescribed basis. Students are progress monitored, data is analyzed and adjustments to groups are made based on that feedback. Given all of this, when we meet every other week to look at data, our students and our school, we go over learning. This is our time to talk about student achievement and progress. Currently, we are satisfied with all curriculums except reading. We have begun the process to obtain a new reading series that we plan to implement during the 25-26 school year.

### SYSTEM TO PROVIDE STUDENTS ACCESS TO EFFECTIVE TEACHERS WHO REFLECT THE DIVERSITY OF ENROLLED STUDENTS:

Nerstrand School is a small school, with only five classrooms. Our students will have access to all classrooms and specialist teachers during their time at Nerstrand School. All students will have worked with every general education licensed teacher by the time they have graduated from Nerstrand School. Historically, Nerstrand has veteran staff who come to Nerstrand and stay.

We do have a small population of African American & American Indian students, but unfortunately our staff is not racially diverse. We have had no African American or American Indian teaching candidates apply for teaching positions. We would need one African American or American Indian teacher to reflect our student population. We use multiple hiring websites to recruit a diverse pool of applicants. Our number of applicants has increasingly gotten smaller over the years. We have tried to increase our salary scale to attract more candidates of all demographics. However, our best recruitment strategy tool seems to be word of mouth.

### **STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING DEVELOPMENT OF MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS:**

The Nerstrand Elementary School Board of Directors has developed a policy for English Language Learners. A variety of measures may be used to determine if a child would benefit from ELL services. Once eligibility for services is determined, a variety of curriculum is used to work with students. Our PRESS interventions through FASTBridge are beneficial for ELL learners in reading. If needed, contracted services with licensed ELL teachers would also be assessed.

## PRACTICES THAT INTEGRATE HIGH QUALITY INSTRUCTION, RIGOROUS CURRICULUM, TECHNOLOGY & A COLLABORATIVE PROFESSIONAL CULTURE:

### *Multi-age Benefits*

The multi-age setting positively impacts the overall climate of the school by enhancing positive social interaction, reducing interfering behaviors, and strengthening a strong sense of community. The benefits of multiage education for student growth and development are many:

- Increased time on task
- Greater student self-direction
- Emergence of peer leadership
- Active participation of students
- Greater student ownership
- Enhanced learning through teaching others
- Increased willingness to take learning risks
- Enhanced self-discipline and self-confidence
- Reduced competition among peers
- More individualized instruction
- Added inclusivity

### *Service Learning*

We define Service Learning as “a form of experiential learning whereby students apply content knowledge, critical thinking and good judgment to address genuine community needs.” More simply, it is the “blending of both service and learning in such ways that both occur and are enriched by each other.” Through Service Learning projects, interpersonal skills such as collaboration, civic engagement, and problem solving are developed while students’ academic skills in reading, writing, science, art, math and social studies are enhanced through reflection and the projects themselves. The successful school-wide implementation of service learning has enabled students, parents, and staff to engage in extensive service projects that benefit the school and the community. Students also have leadership opportunities by serving on a variety of committees and task forces, including:

- Peace Garden Committee
- Learn and Serve Steering Committee
- Ambassadors
- School Spirit Task Force
- Safety Patrols

Many of the established projects have become traditions at Nerstrand Elementary School, which continue on today.

### *Environmental Learning*

Other Service Learning projects have an environmental focus. For a number of years, Nerstrand Elementary School has worked in partnership with both the Nerstrand Big Woods State Park and Rice County's Caron Park where reforestation, landscaping, and prairie restoration efforts have been carried out with the help of community volunteer Larry Richie. We also maintain and enhance the Peace Garden on the school grounds. During 2022-2023 we began to restore another prairie in town. Students walked to Prairie Creek Engeseth Rinde and worked with Larry on helping to grow this prairie into a lush establishment. Our work continued into the 2023-2024 school year as students planted more prairie seeds and flowers there to help that prairie continue its establishment.

### *Responsive Classroom*

We recognize the benefits of using a shared language around behavior that creates a supportive climate for students. Therefore, we have continued our successful implementation of this program. No matter what adult is speaking with students, the words addressing behavior are consistent. As new personnel join the Nerstrand staff, we are committed to providing training for them.

### *Web-based Enrichment and Intervention:*

In the fall of 2011, with the help of the Nerstrand PTO, the *Reading Eggs* program was purchased to promote reading development at the K-1 level. Students use these online activities at home and at school to strengthen their academic skills.

In the fall of 2023, the Savannah classrooms began using UFLI Foundations as an intervention for students needing additional help with phonemic awareness. Students are progressed monitored using our FASTBridge program where gains are detectable. This program was expanded to include the Prairie Classrooms in the 24-25 school year.

Cultural Competency: Multiple times a week, in their core rooms, students experience social-emotional learning through our Second Step curriculum. Through this, students work through different social situations and outcomes. They learn about perspective taking, empathy, processing emotions, understanding and resolving conflict and building positive relationships. We see the positive effects of this program in the daily interactions with students towards staff and towards each other. We value this curriculum and the experiences it has created for our students.

### **ANNUAL BUDGET FOR IMPLEMENTING THE LONG-TERM STRATEGIC PLAN:**

Our Title II funds support our professional development goals, which are tied to lower class sizes and reading instruction improvement. In addition, we have the REAP Grant, which we use to reduce class sizes. We also support professional development training that is tied to teacher licensure requirements. In addition, we used Literacy Aid funds to support READ ACT training legislative requirements. This amounts to approximately \$47,000 a year.