

Nerstrand Elementary School

Independent Charter School District #4055



2010-2011 Annual Report on Curriculum, Instruction and Student Achievement October, 2011

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.

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INTRODUCTION

This annual report is written to document academic and fiscal accountability, to assess the 2010-2011 goals and programs at Nerstrand Elementary School and to give an overview of programming for the 2011-2012 school year.

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 and character development.

Progress toward school goals has been measured and documented through formal and informal assessments, forums and surveys. Trends in scores of the Measures of Academic Progress tests and Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments will be summarized along with K-5 assessments used at Nerstrand Elementary School. Pertinent information from Nerstrand parents, students and staff members is also included in this report.

This document has been written in compliance with the annual report checklist provided by the Minnesota Department of Education. This annual report will be approved by the Nerstrand Board of Directors on Monday, October 10, 2011.

SPONSOR INFORMATION

Faribault Public School District 656 has been the Nerstrand Elementary Charter School sponsor since our inception in 1999. We have successfully completed twelve years as a charter school and we are grateful for the support provided by the Administration and School Board of the Faribault School District. We are especially thankful that this past summer, the Faribault School Board approved to extend our sponsor agreement for one more year! The first year of sponsor contract with the Faribault Schools was in 1999-2000 and we renewed that contract in 2002, 2005, 2008, and again in 2011. Nerstrand Elementary School personnel will give a presentation to the Independent School District #656 Board on October 17, 2011. Contact information for the sponsor is:

Mr. Todd Sesker, Superintendent
Faribault Public School District Office
P.O. Box 618
Faribault, Minnesota 55021

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

The student achievement goals set for the 2010-2011 school year were collaboratively determined by the Nerstrand Elementary School staff and were based on data from self-assessment surveys, test scores, ongoing informal assessments and input from parents and students. During the goal-setting discussions, the staff also planned instructional strategies and assessment measures that would support students in these specific areas.

ACADEMIC GOALS

1. Student's reading skills, fluency and comprehension will be enhanced by aligning continuous, direct reading instruction K-5.

Indicators

- 85% of students in grades 3-5 will score at or above level 3 (proficient) on the MCA II reading test
- 85% of students in grades 2-5 will score at or above grade level according to the NWEA MAP tests

Results-MCA II

- 81% of 5th graders scored at or above the proficient level on the MCA II tests
- 92% of 4th graders scored at or above the proficient level on the MCA II tests
- 92% of 3rd graders scored at or above the proficient level on the MCA II tests

Results-NWEA Scores

- 2nd grade NWEA mean score is 183, Nerstrand mean is 191
- 3rd grade NWEA mean score is 195, Nerstrand mean is 198
- 4th grade NWEA mean score is 203, Nerstrand mean is 214
- 5th grade NWEA mean score is 210, Nerstrand mean is 211

2. Students will develop higher level math skills.

Indicators

- 85% of students in grades 3-5 will score at or above level 3 (proficient) on the MCA III tests
- 85% of students in grades 2-5 will score at or above grade level according to the NWEA MAP tests

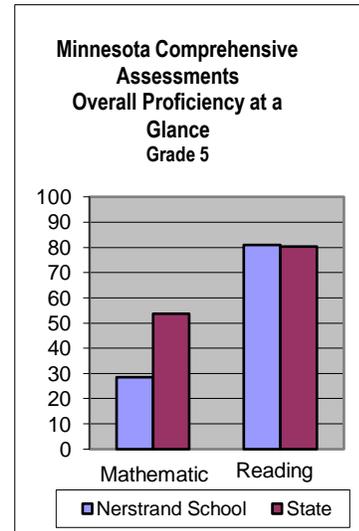
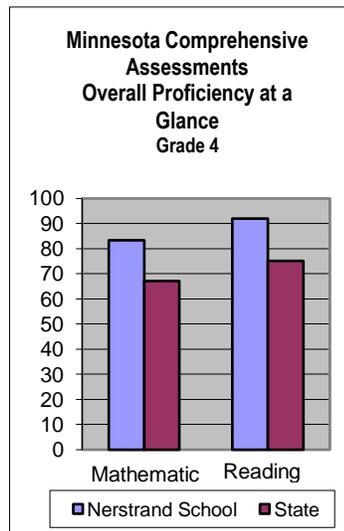
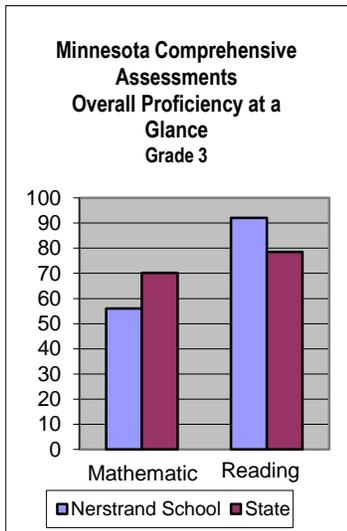
Results-MCA III

- 29% of 5th graders scored at or above the proficient level on the MCA II tests
- 83% of 4th graders scored at or above the proficient level on the MCA II tests
- 56% of 3rd graders scored at or above the proficient level on the MCA II tests

Results-NWEA Scores

- 2nd grade NWEA mean score is 186, Nerstrand mean is 192
- 3rd grade NWEA mean score is 199, Nerstrand mean is 200
- 4th grade NWEA mean score is 209, Nerstrand mean is 217
- 5th grade NWEA mean score is 218, Nerstrand mean is 225

TESTING RESULTS



NON-ACADEMIC GOALS

1. Students will build a stronger character through a character education curriculum in homeroom.

Indicators

- Students will learn about a character education word of the month in homeroom.
- Students will also learn about ways to manage stress.

Results

- The words of the month were respect, responsibility, honesty, kindness, cooperation, and helpfulness.
 - Each student has an opportunity to attend WEB (Where Everyone Belongs) Social Group sometime during the school year and topics like this are discussed and role-played with the students.
2. Students will experience a needs-based, user friendly playground.

Indicators

- A new, handicapped accessible playground apparatus in place with individual pieces.
- Safe and friendly playground discussions during homeroom.

Results

- The PTO is in the middle of fundraising for this project.
- During homeroom, playground discussions were included along with the words of the month.

Satisfaction Surveys

Parents, students, and staff members completed satisfaction surveys in the spring of 2011. The positive results indicate that Nerstrand Elementary School is meeting the needs of our stakeholders. However, the topics that had any amount of dissatisfaction are evaluated by the Nerstrand Elementary School staff for program improvement.

Parent Survey

In the spring of 2011, 101 out of 109 family opinion surveys were returned. Topics that rated highest in parent satisfaction were:

- My child feels safe at school. (100%)
- My child feels valued and respected by his/her teacher at school. (100%)
- The atmosphere at Nerstrand Elementary School is warm and nurturing. (100%)

- I would recommend Nerstrand Elementary School to other families. (100%)
- My child's teacher listens to me, respects me as a parent (or guardian) and supports us as a family. (100%)
- My child's teachers know and respond to my child's individual needs. (100%)
- I feel my child is receiving a well-rounded education at school. (100%)

Although the parent survey results were overwhelmingly positive, the staff pays attention to topics that have even a small percentage of parents who disagree with the statements on the survey. The following statements were among the few where parents indicated they disagreed.

- For parents of students in grades 1-5: I am pleased with the MAPS computerized testing. (2% disagreed)
- My child is happy at school. (1% disagreed)
- My child has made friends at school. (1% disagreed)

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT GOALS, 2011-2012

ACADEMIC GOALS

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Indicators

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2. Students will develop higher level math skills.

Indicators

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NON-ACADEMIC GOALS

1. By using a Responsive Classroom (RC) approach, students will grow socially, which will have a positive impact on their academic learning.

Indicators

- Students will participate in Morning Meetings.
- Students will develop classroom and school wide rules.
- Constant modeling of appropriate behaviors will diminish negative behaviors.

2. During homeroom, students will participate in a Service Learning project to make fleece tie blankets to be donated to the NICU at Children's Hospital in Minneapolis.

Indicators

- Project completed and blankets delivered

STAFF DEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR 2010-2011

Each year, the Staff Development Committee, consisting of three teachers and the Director, meets to make plans for the early dismissals and curriculum days. The focus last year was on aligning our math curriculum with the state standards. We did not accomplish this task so for the 2011-2012 school year, we will be looking at our Everyday Math program to decide if we will stick with it or look for a different option or perhaps different

enhancements for our current program. We had an artist in residency last January and held an Art Show that highlighted the art that the students created during the residency. Other staff development topics discussed were reading, technology and mental health. We watched a video, "Teach Like A Champion" in December and "This Emotional Life" in January.

DIRECTOR’S PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

1. Work closely with the administrative team, teachers and staff to ensure that all students show academic growth from fall to spring.
2. Support the staff both professionally and personally to enhance their professional growth.
3. Collaborate with the Board of Directors to strategically plan for the future of Nerstrand Elementary School.
4. Maintain appropriate communication with all stakeholders of Nerstrand Elementary School.

FINANCES

As a charter school, we are responsible for the education of children and to have a clear knowledge of business and fiscal responsibilities. For more than ten years, Keith Johnson has served as our business manager. While the Board of Directors will continue to guide the school by making sound fiscal decisions, we are pleased to have a business manager on site that has educated and advised us. We have been able to complete more of the fiscal responsibilities "in house" rather than hire an outside firm to do those tasks.

Payroll and insurance items are completed by EdVisions Cooperative. They also provide us with access to NWEA materials and staff development opportunities.

The audited Financial Statements for the year ending June 30, 2011, shows revenues totaling \$1,247,148.04 and expenses in the amount of \$1,266,508.13 resulting in a Net loss of \$19,360.09. The annual financial audit was perfect with no compliance findings, suggestions for improvement, or negative comments whatsoever.

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

In 2010-2011 there were 151 students enrolled at Nerstrand Elementary School who were distributed into multiage core classes as follows:

Prairie	Kindergarten	24 students
Savannah	Grades 1 - 3	80 students
Woodlands	Grades 4 - 5	47 students

Grade Level Enrollment

Kindergarten	24 students	12 boys	12 girls
First Grade	27 students	13 boys	14 girls
Second Grade	27 students	12 boys	15 girls
Third Grade	26 students	15 boys	11 girls
Fourth Grade	26 students	12 boys	14 girls
<u>Fifth Grade</u>	<u>21 students</u>	<u>12 boys</u>	<u>9 girls</u>
Total	151 students	76 boys	75 girls

Enrollment by City

Faribault	95	Dennison	1
Nerstrand	36	Lonsdale	1
Kenyon	11	Dundas	1
Northfield	5	Morristown	1

The following chart provides demographic trends at Nerstrand Elementary School.

	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011
Male	83	80	80	76
Female	72	74	74	74
Special Education	16	21	19	15
African American	0	0	0	1
Latino	2	2	0	0
Asian/Pacific Islander	0	0	1	1
White	153	152	153	146
American Indian	0	0	1	3
F/R Lunch	23	29	31	19
LEP	1	2	0	0

OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Background Information

Nerstrand Elementary School has successfully completed twelve years as an independent public charter school under the sponsorship of the Faribault Public Schools. Nerstrand Elementary School is located in the small rural community of Nerstrand, approximately twelve miles from Faribault. The enrollment in 2010-2011 was 151 students in Kindergarten through grade five. Nerstrand Elementary School has multiage classes, project based learning, a positive atmosphere that is conducive to learning, high behavioral expectations that enhance character development and a strong Service Learning component. The school also is host to many visitors who come to see what is going on at Nerstrand Elementary School. For those parents who need it, there is an after school childcare program called Regal Eagles Club.

Learning Environment

We believe that learning is enhanced when students feel valued and safe. At Nerstrand Elementary School there are high expectations for school-wide behaviors where all students respect themselves, others and property. Each staff member makes a concerted effort to connect with each student as a way to establish a genuinely positive climate where students can comfortably take risks and enjoy learning.

Integrated Curriculum

Many areas of the curriculum at Nerstrand Elementary School are thematic. Social studies, Science and Health are tied with literature-based reading, writing assignments, art and music. There is a focus on project-based learning and technology is used in a variety of ways. Throughout the school year and into the summer, staff members collaborate to develop and refine curriculum.

Visitors

Nerstrand Elementary School has become well known throughout Minnesota and beyond as being a “model” charter school. We continue to open up our doors to visitors from Minnesota as well as other states and countries.

Regal Eagles

The Regal Eagles Club is an after school child care program. Children are given the opportunity to explore their own interests, participate in crafts, games, science, and nature projects and socialize with their friends. Time is also made available to do homework.

A Strong Partnership with Parents and Community

Nerstrand Elementary School staff is committed to maintaining a strong partnership with parents and community members. The areas we are committed to are optimal communication, volunteer opportunities, an "Open Door" policy for school visits and reciprocal support through Service Learning programs.

Optimal Communication

The staff and administration are committed to clear communication with families and community members. The revised Web site provides another way for us to disseminate information. Ongoing communication strategies include sending Weekly Peeks from classroom teachers and Family Updates from the Nerstrand Elementary School office, which inform parents about important school information, enabling them to be supportive and involved. Other information is communicated through the school newspaper, "The Eagle's Nest", invitations to events, posters and personal calls.

Opportunities to Volunteer

Parents and Community members are encouraged to volunteer often at the school. Volunteering takes on many different forms. While some parents volunteer at the school at a specific time and day each week, others find their schedules more conducive to participation in special events that occur at varying times throughout the year. In whatever form it may take, the staff welcomes volunteer support.

PTO is another organization that contributes in a significant way to Nerstrand Elementary School. Through their fundraising efforts, special programs and opportunities are made available to all students. One example of their commitment to the Nerstrand students is the rotation of field trips to Minneapolis Children's Theatre, The Historical Museum, Ordway Theatre and the Science Museum. Traditional fundraisers include the Wreath and Swag Sale in December, Plant Sale and the Carnival/Silent Auction in the spring. The "Eagle Open" golf tournament that takes place in June is another fund-raiser that provides fun for family and community members while raising money for the school.

Ongoing Invitations to Visit

There are many opportunities for parents and community members to visit Nerstrand Elementary School including Community Coffees, Community Lunches, Flu-Shot Clinic, Community Celebration, and Service Learning projects such as Community Clean-up days. Parents are always welcome to visit in classrooms, eat lunch with students, and observe special events such as "Student Spotlights".

Reciprocal Support

We appreciate the ongoing support we receive from the townspeople of Nerstrand who have made our school the "heart of their community". Community members support the school in a variety of ways including partnerships in Learn and Serve projects, volunteering at the school, and donating items for fund-raisers such as the Carnival's Silent Auction.

Community volunteers add a unique dimension to the programs at Nerstrand Elementary School. Elders volunteer in classrooms during the school day, while others help with special projects such as sandwich making.

The Nerstrand Women's Club donates mittens, scarves, hats, socks, sweatpants, and underwear so that we have a supply for students who need them. We so appreciate their help.

INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

Multiage Benefits

The multiage 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 risks
- Enhanced self-discipline and self-confidence

The role of the teacher in a multiage setting changes to one of coaching students and facilitating growth rather than being the "show in the center ring". This role change enables staff to focus more on students as learners than on the curriculum that needs to be taught.

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 for the past twelve years has enabled students, parents, and staff to engage in extensive service projects that benefit the school, the community and areas as far away as Guatemala.

The opportunities for service learning at school are varied. Each day begins with student members of the "Early Bird Crew" who work together to prepare the building for the day by collecting paper to be recycled, emptying trash, cleaning boards and erasers, and washing classroom tables. Students also have opportunities to serve during the school day by helping with lunch clean up. Students also have leadership opportunities by serving on a variety of committees including:

- Peace Garden Committee
- Learn and Serve Steering Committee
- Ambassador Task Force
- School Spirit Task Force
- Behavior Plan/Playground Committee

Many of the established projects have become traditions at Nerstrand. Favorite projects include the Community Celebration, sandwich making for the Simpson Homeless Shelter, the Holiday Sharing Project that enables students to contribute to worthy causes instead of purchasing gifts for school friends, and community clean up days. Service Learning projects that benefit community members include Community Lunches, Community Coffees, Birthday Cards for Elders, Community Clean-up and Downtown Beautification.

Environmental Learning

Other Service Learning projects have an environmental focus. For a number of years, Nerstrand School has worked in partnerships 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.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

School Management

The Administrative Team includes the Director, the Administrative Assistant and the Business Manager. A system of checks and balances has been established for the financial accountability of the school.

Nerstrand Elementary School Board of Directors

Established in May, 1999

The Board of Directors focuses on all dimensions of the school's operation, including, but not limited to:

1. School philosophy, goals and objectives
2. School policy
3. Budget
4. Curriculum and instructional direction
5. Staffing
6. Long range planning
7. Communication (home, community, sponsor)
8. School enrollment and organization

The Nerstrand Elementary School Board of Directors consists of the following voting members:

1. Four teacher representatives, elected by teachers
2. Two parent representatives, elected by parents
3. One community representative
4. One Ex Officio member: building administrator
5. Seven voting members total.

The members serve a three-year renewable term

1. Every year, one (1) of the two- (2) parent or one (1) community member terms expire and board elections are held in May.
2. Every third year, two (2) teacher's terms expire; in each of the two years prior to the third year, one (1) teacher's term expires.
3. A representative may serve two consecutive terms, after which there must be a one-year hiatus before serving on the Board of Directors again.

The Board of Directors meets the second Monday of the month. Special meeting days and times as determined by the Board of Directors are publicly posted and announced to parents, staff, and community.

2010-2011 Board of Directors

Chairperson: Maggie Kiley, teacher
708 4th Street East
Northfield, MN 55057
H 507-664-0970
W 507-333-6865

Jan Boudreau, teacher
1931 16th Street N. W.
Faribault, MN 55021
H 507-332-2801
W 507-333-6858

	Gayle Reuvers, community rep. 7197 Kenyon Blvd. Faribault, MN 55021 H 507-334-5093	Mindy Ray, parent 1000 Shumway Avenue Faribault, MN 55021 H 507-334-1786
Clerk:	Tara Vondrasek, teacher 1601 Armstrong Road Northfield, MN 55057 H 507-202-9950 W 507-333-6864	Carmen Bonde, parent 16751 Kane Avenue Nerstrand, MN 55053 H 507-334-4012 W 507-333-6850
	Paula Shroyer, teacher 401 3 rd Street Nerstrand, MN 55053 H 507-334-3369 W 507-333-6862	Director: Lauren Satrom 1708 Red Iron Lane St. Peter, MN 56082 H 507-934-9381 W 507-333-6854
Admin. Asst.:	Barb Grote 11492 East 200 th Street Kenyon, MN 55946 H 507-789-5369 W 507-333-6856	Business Manager: Keith Johnson 8704 Bagley Avenue Northfield, MN 55057 H 507-645-2870 W 507-333-6859

STAFFING

Staff Members for the School Year 2010-2011

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>File Folder</u>
Boudreau, Jan	Special Education Teacher	#249690
Hertle, Wayne	Speech/Lang. Clinician	#177708
Kiley, Margaret	Gr. 4-5 Classroom Teacher	#308466
Paulson, Ellen	Gr. 4-5 Classroom Teacher	#328639
Satrom, Lauren	Physical Ed. Teacher	#313359
Shroyer, Paula	Gr. 1-3 Classroom Teacher	#332268
Stensrud, Sarah	Kindergarten Teacher	#289550
Temple, Linda	Gr. 1-3 classroom Teacher	#345544
VanRoekel, Melodi	Music Teacher	#289572
Vondrasek, Tara	Gr. 1-3 Classroom Teacher	#408258

NON-CERTIFIED STAFF

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>
Amy, Lori	Paraprofessional
Bonde, Carmen	Special Education Paraprofessional
*Erickson, Mike	Custodian
*Eul, Brenda	Head Cook
Grote, Barb	Administrative Assistant
Isaacson, Margaret	Media Paraprofessional
Ivers, Karin	Paraprofessional
* Jandro, Joan	Cook's Assistant
Keller, Cheryl	Special Education Paraprofessional

Tralle, Pamela
Wesely, Sue

Paraprofessional
Paraprofessional

*These individuals are employed by either the Faribault School District, or Sodexo Food Service. Their services come to Nerstrand Elementary School as a result of agreements between the Boards of Directors of the respective schools/organizations.

Licensed teacher percentage turnover rate:
2010-2011=0%, 0 teachers

FUTURE PLANS

This past summer, 8 of our 9 teachers attended a weeklong Responsive Classroom workshop in Rochester. (The 9th had already attended an RC training). This was not a paid training so this demonstrated the commitment of our staff to making RC work school wide. Our paraprofessionals and office staff just participated in a half day RC training at Nerstrand Elementary School on September 21st. We have been praised by the Responsive Classroom Consultants for including our *entire* staff in RC training. This is very rare and it brings us an opportunity to work on RC principles all day long and everywhere the students go. We are already noticing the social benefits of RC and the hope is that this will transfer to the academic piece also.

We are not at all satisfied with our MCA-III math scores and we are making a commitment to reviewing our current curriculum to see if it is meeting the needs of the students. We are also looking into purchasing a Study Island program to improve the reading and math skills of our students.

We have an application in to an approved Authorizer for the 2012-2013 school year and this is waiting for state approval. We are also looking into some other choices for authorizers in case a back-up plan is needed.

Last year, the Board adopted a strategic plan for Nerstrand Elementary School, with improving student academic performance as the top vision.