

Ridgeway Community School
C.S.D. 4083



2013-14

Annual Report Executive Summary

to

Winona Area Public Schools

and the

Minnesota Department of Education

October 1, 2014

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Introduction:

Purpose: The purpose of this report is to provide our families, our community, our authorizer Winona Area Public Schools, and the Minnesota Department of Education with current information on school enrollment, student attrition, governance and management, staffing, finances, academic performance, operational performance, innovative practices and implementation, and future plans as required by Minnesota Statutes section 124D.10 (2010).

School History: The Ridgeway school building was constructed in 1965 after eight one-room school districts consolidated to form I.S.D. # 859 Ridgeway School District. In 1971 the Ridgeway School District joined Winona Public Schools at the direction of the Minnesota Department of Education and in 2001. Ridgeway Elementary School converted to Ridgeway Community School (C.S.D. # 4083) with Winona Area Public Schools serving as its sponsor. The student population has nearly doubled from its original enrollment of 54. The school's charter sets our purpose as providing our kindergarten to fifth grade students a high quality, well-rounded, multi-age education by capitalizing on the assets of our rural community setting. The school is located near the unincorporated village of Ridgeway in Winona County's Pleasant Hill Township. Ridgeway Community School (RCS) ended the 2013-14 school year with an enrollment of 95 students in its kindergarten to fifth grade program. This was a decrease of 6 students from the previous year. The school's fee-based preschool had 19 students enrolled in its two preschool programs.

School Values, Vision, and Mission Statements: During the summer of 2010 the RCS board began a strategic planning process. During this process the board has approved the following updated values, vision, and mission statements:

Values: Academics, Children First, Community, Respect, Wellness

Vision: To be a growing school that is full of inquisitive learners practicing healthy living habits and becoming engaged community members.

Mission: Ridgeway Community School is an academically challenging school with an emphasis on community and wellness that leaves a positive lasting impact.



RCS K-3 students performing a song during the school's Grandparent's Day event , October 9, 2013

Educational Program: Ridgeway Community School (RCS) is chartered as a kindergarten through fifth grade elementary school. In addition to its focus on building community between its students, families, staff and neighbors, the school's charter calls for a focus on the core curriculum of reading, writing and mathematics delivered in a multi-age educational environment. The majority of the core reading, writing, and math curricula are delivered during morning class periods prior to recess and lunch. During the 2013-14 school year RCS students were grouped into the following grade-level configurations: kindergarten, first grade, second and third grades, and fourth and fifth grades. While most of the classroom instruction for the second to fifth grades takes place in multi-age classrooms, the students are broken out by grade level for math and spelling instruction. The school's board of directors has set the maximum class size at 18 students.

Inclusive, differentiated instruction is used by all teachers who work diligently and collaboratively to assist and facilitate all students to be challenged in the regular classroom whenever possible. While the school employs a full-time, LD licensed special education teacher, the Special Education Director and support services are provided through a contract with the Hiawatha Valley Education District. Beginning in the 2010-11 school year RCS has offered a

reading and math intervention program called RISE (Ridgeway Interventions for Student Excellence) which is supported by the Minnesota Department of Education's Alternative Delivery of Specialized Instructional Services (or ADSIS) program. This program provides partial funding for additional intervention services to reduce the number of students being referred for special education evaluation.

A central component of the school's focus on community building is the school's homeroom program. All RCS kindergarten through fifth grade students are grouped into six K-5 multi-age homerooms which meet for one hour every other month. Siblings are placed together in the RCS homerooms where the curriculum includes community building, character development, conflict management skills, health and safety, and service learning. Throughout the school day the RCS staff and volunteers strive to create a school environment in which individual student differences are appreciated and celebrated. The students are expected to behave in a responsible and respectful manner and to always be prepared and safe.

RCS students also benefit from instruction by specialists in art, music—including band instruments—and physical education, as well as special education and speech therapy. Classes are also scheduled for a half hour of library time each week. RCS students can take advantage of the school's growing SELCO-affiliated book and media collection with interlibrary loan materials delivered several times per week. As part of the school's wellness program RCS offers a wide variety of after school athletic, lifetime fitness, and enrichment clubs to students primarily through the use of volunteer coaches and club leaders. RCS takes pride in continuing to achieve our academic goals and becoming the center of a growing community of students, parents, teachers, families, and community members.



Student Assessment Results: Students at Ridgeway Community School are assessed at the beginning, middle, and end of the year using the AIMS Web benchmarking in reading and early literacy skills, the Fuchs and Fuchs math assessments, and the NWEA MAP assessments. The students also take the state mandated MCAs each spring. The teachers at Ridgeway have determined to use the 40th percentile as the low end of the “normal” range. Students below this mark are referred to intervention programs such as our Title 1 and/or RISE programs.

The AIMS Web benchmarking in reading fluency is one method used to determine which students need interventions. Students in grades K-5 performing at or above the 40th percentile during the Spring 2014 assessments numbered 72%. The Fuchs and Fuchs math assessment is also used to measure the students’ abilities in computation and application of math concepts. In the Spring of 2014 86% of Ridgeway students performed above the 40th percentile on the math computation assessments and 90% of Ridgeway students performed above the 40th percentile on the math applications assessments developed by Fuchs and Fuchs.

The MCA math and reading assessments given each spring are taken by our third through fifth grade students. Our fifth grade students also take the Science MCA. The percentage of RCS students scoring a level of proficient or above increased in both the 2014 reading and math MCA III assessments from the students’ scores in 2013. RCS students showed a 9.8% increase in their 2014 MCA III reading assessments and a 36.2% increase in their 2014 MCA III math assessments over their previous year’s results. There also was a 33.3% improvement in the 2014 5th grade MCA science scores over the previous year’s results. **As a result of these MCA III results RCS once again made Adequate Yearly Progress a distinction achieved every year since opening its doors in 2001.** The school’s 2013-14 MMR rating was 67.13% making it a Celebration Eligible school.

The NWEA assessment results did not match the MCA data exactly. Students performed slightly higher on the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) testing. On the spring NWEA reading assessment 62.5% of Ridgeway students performed at or above the 40th percentile. On the spring NWEA math assessment 78.1% of Ridgeway students performed at or above the 40th percentile.



Facility Background: The original 10,000 square foot brick school building occupied by Ridgeway Community School was constructed in 1965 after eight one-room school districts consolidated to form I.S.D. # 859 Ridgeway School District. In 1971 the Ridgeway School District joined Winona Public Schools at the direction of the Minnesota Department of Education and in 2001 Ridgeway Elementary School converted to Ridgeway Community School (C.S.D. # 4083) with Winona Area Public Schools serving as its sponsor. In 2006 the school formed a non-profit organization called the Ridgeway Community Association (RCA) which purchased the school building and grounds from Winona Area Public Schools. The following year the Ridgeway Community Association undertook a major building expansion and renovation that included a 6,314 square foot addition. An additional renovation was undertaken in 2009 with the assistance of a Federal Charter School Facilities Renovation Grant. The renovation included energy efficient lighting, acoustical management, classroom SMART Boards, and a complete kitchen upgrade. During 2013 the RCA completed payments on the construction of a second addition that is providing better instructional space for the fine arts and preschool enrichment programs. In the spring of 2014 Ridgeway Community School received a grant from Southeastern Minnesota CERTS (Clean Energy Resource Team) to assist with a lighting efficiency upgrade. The project included the installation of LED fixtures, LED ballast replacements, and lower wattage fluorescent bulbs as well as reducing the total number of light bulbs in use; all of which should help reduce the school's electrical costs allowing more of the limited budget to be directed directly towards the education of the students.