



Ridgeway Community School

C.S.D. 4083



2022-23

Annual Report to Innovative Quality Schools (IQS) and the Minnesota Department of Education

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Table of Contents

Introduction and Executive Summary	1
Annual Report Narrative	5
School Enrollment and Student Attrition	5
School Governance and Management	6
Members of the Board of Directors	7
Board Professional Development	8
Management and Administration	9
School Staffing	11
Teacher Turnover Information	12
Teacher Information	13
Non-Teacher Staff Information	13
Staff Professional Development	14
Finances	14
Academic performance	17
Innovative practices and implementation	23
School Wellness Programs	27
Future plans	25
Operational performance	27
School's nonprofit status	27
Charter Authorizer Information	27
Attachments: A through F	28

Introduction and Executive Summary

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 124E.

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 (now authorizer). 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 2022-23 school year with an enrollment of 93 students in its kindergarten to fifth grade program. The school's fee-based preschool had 17 students enrolled in its preschool programs.

School Values, Vision, and Mission Statements:

The school's board of directors used a strategic planning process to develop the following values, vision, and mission:

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.

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 curriculum being delivered in a multi-age educational environment. During the 2022-23 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 classroom instruction for the second to fifth grades takes place in multi-age classrooms, the students are broken out by grade level for math instruction.

Inclusive, differentiated instruction is used by all teachers who work diligently and collaboratively to help all students 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 referred for special education evaluation.

A central component of the school's focus on multi-age education and community building is the school's homeroom program. In this program all RCS kindergarten through fifth grade students are grouped into six K-5 multi-age homerooms, which meet four times every year. 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 where individual student differences are appreciated and celebrated. The students are expected to behave responsibly and respectfully and always to be prepared and safe.

RCS students also benefited from instruction by specialists in art, music (including band instruments in 2022-23), and physical education; as well as special education and speech therapy. Classes are also scheduled for a half hour of library time each week. This year the K-5 students also participated in a 30 minute per week class in Social and Emotional Learning. As part of the school's wellness program RCS typically 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. The school was able to offer multiple activities or after school clubs each season (fall, winter and spring). RCS takes pride in striving 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 in September, January, and May using the FASTBridge benchmarking in reading and early literacy skills, and the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments for math and reading skills. The students in grades three to five 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 Reading Corps or RISE programs. The MCA math and reading assessments were given in the spring of 2023. Analysis of the available data shows that RCS performed higher than both the state average and that of our resident district, Winona Area Public Schools. Seventy-one and one tenth percent of the third through fifth grade students met or exceeded standards on the math MCA and seventy-three and seven tenths percent met or exceeded standards on the reading MCA.

Facility Background:



Aerial photo of the school taken in 2020.

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). In 2006 the non-profit organization called the Ridgeway Community Association (RCA) formed to purchase the school building and grounds from Winona Area Public Schools (WAPS). 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. 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. This preschool and fine arts addition was made possible with a \$300,000 donation from Don and Roxanne Weber.

In May of 2020 the RCA undertook a major renovation of the school's parking lot, with the assistance of a loan from Merchants Bank. The project was completed in July 2020 and the loan was paid off in December of 2022. A hail storm in June of 2022 caused damage to the roof of significant amounts to re-roof the school. This project was undertaken, with the assistance of an insurance payment in the summer of 2022.

A number of improvements to the six acre school grounds have also taken place since the building was purchased from WAPS. These include the installation of a 960 foot fitness track encircling the athletic field; the relocation and expansion of the school playground; and the establishment of a native prairie area, a rain garden, a vegetable garden, and a small orchard. A major playground renovation took place in September of 2015 and a new climbing wall was installed in the summer of 2017 with the assistance of a grant from a BK5K Youth Fund grant. During the fall of 2017 a new GaGa Pit was built next to the school's playground. The GaGa pit was an Eagle Scout project – a gift to the school by a Winona Senior High School student. During the summer of 2022 improvements to the school's playground surfacing and equipment were undertaken during a school-community work day that also benefited the Ridgeway Youth Baseball Program. During the summer of 2023 a new outdoor classroom was constructed with funds from an anonymous \$50,000 donation to the school.

Annual Report Narrative

School Enrollment and Student Attrition:

Ridgeway Community School (RCS) had an enrollment of 92 students in its kindergarten to fifth grade program on October 1, 2022, up from the 54 students who attended RCS during its first year of operation. The school's fee-based preschool-aged enrichment program had a total of 21 students enrolled in the two mornings per week and three mornings per week programs.

The table below shows student enrollment and attrition for the past five years as well as the current student enrollment. The school experienced its highest student attrition rate since it opened in 2001 as a number of families transitioned to other schools in the middle of the 2022-23 school year due to disagreement with the school's COVID-19 safety management practices. Student attrition during has been minimal with the primary reason for students leaving the school before fifth grade being a family move or changes in the family schedule or logistics. Students from six other families left RCS over the summer due to family moves and logistical issues, primarily related to student transportation.

Ridgeway Community School Student Enrollment, Retention, Demand, and Attendance Rates

FY 2018 to FY 2023 Data is based on October 1 Enrollment

Grade	2017 - 2018	Student Retention (from class in previous year)	2018 - 2019	Student Retention (from class in previous year)	2019 - 2020	Student Retention (from class in previous year)	2020 - 2021	Student Retention (from class in previous year)	2021 - 2022	Student Retention (from class in previous year)	2022 - 2023	Grade
K	16		18		19**		17		18		18	K
1	17	Gained - 3 Lost - 1	18	Gained - 2 Lost - 1**	18	Gained - 0 Lost - 1	18	Gained - 2 Lost - 1	18	Gained - 1 Lost - 3	16	1
2	14	Gained - 0 Lost - 0	17	Gained - 1 Lost - 1	18	Gained - 3 Lost - 5	16	Gained - 0 Lost - 1	17	Gained - 2 Lost - 2	18	2
3	13	Gained - 1 Lost - 2	13	Gained - 1 Lost - 0	18	Gained - 1 Lost - 1	18	Gained - 2 Lost - 3	15	Gained - 2 Lost - 5	13	3
4	18	Gained - 2 Lost - 0	15	Gained - 1 Lost - 0	14	Gained - 1 Lost - 1	18	Gained - 0 Lost - 0	18	Gained - 1 Lost - 2	14	4
5	17	Gained - 2 Lost - 2	18	Gained - 2 Lost - 1	16	Gained - 2 Lost - 1	15	Gained - 1 Lost - 2	17	Gained - 2 Lost - 7	13	5
Total #	95	Gained - 8 Lost - 5	99	Gained - 7 Lost - 3	103	Gained - 7 Lost - 9	102	Gained - 5 Lost - 7	103	Gained - 24 Lost - 7	92	Total #
Retention Rate	91%	73/78	94%	78/81	96%	78/87	90%	80/87	92%	69/86	87%	Retention Rate
Demand Rate	88%		93%		99%		95%		99%		86%	Demand Rate
Attendance Rate	98.7%		100%		NA		NA		100%*			*Consistent Attendance Rate

Retention Rate = $\frac{\text{Number of 1}^{\text{st}} \text{ to 5}^{\text{th}} \text{ Grade students returning from previous school year}}{\text{Number of Kindergarten to 4}^{\text{th}} \text{ Grade students enrolled in previous school year}}$

Demand Rate = $\frac{\text{Enrolled Students} + \text{Valid Excess Demand (waiting list)}}{\text{School's Current Enrollment Capacity (6 classrooms with a max of 18 students=108)}}$

*Over enrollment in these classes was due to an exception that was made to allow students who had been attending another rural charter school in Southeast Winona County that closed continue to attend a small school in their rural "neighborhood." The board was aware that the following year there would be students leaving the school so the class sizes would return to our 18 student maximum.

**This class was overenrolled due to a kindergartener who repeated kindergarten. The student is not counted as lost going from Kindergarten to 1st grade since he stayed enrolled at the school. The decision to have the student repeat kindergarten came after we had already accepted 18 students into our kindergarten class.

The majority of students attending RCS reside in the Winona school district, with the

remaining students coming from neighboring Houston and Lewiston school districts. Students are transported to RCS on Winona district buses, a van owned by RCS, and by parents. About 21.7% of RCS students qualified for the federal free and reduced lunch program during the 2022-23 school year. In the same year 7.5% of our students received speech or other special education services. During the school year no members of the student body were homeless or in Foster Care. As a small elementary charter school located in a rural part of Winona County, the RCS student body has relatively little racial diversity with 100% of the students identifying as white. This is reflective of the rural community in which the school is located. There were no English proficiency students enrolled during the 2022-23 school year.

The RCS open enrollment period is typically held from January 1st to January 30th. An open house and Kindergarten Roundup are held during this period. Anyone who submits an enrollment application is eligible for any remaining spaces in each K-5 grade level with priority given to siblings of current students and children of RCS staff as dictated by RCS Admissions and Enrollment Policy #501. Students who attend Ridgeway Community School's preschool program **are not** given enrollment preference unless they are a sibling of a currently attending student or a child of a staff member. If there are more applicants than spaces available, a public lottery is held under the observation of our authorizer liaison. During the open enrollment period all school families are notified that their kindergarten to fourth grade students will be considered enrolled for the next school year unless the family notifies the school otherwise. The school's enrollment application and registration form are included as **Attachment A1 & A2**. Copies of the school's admission policies are included as **Attachment B**.

School Governance and Management:

Board of Directors: Ridgeway Community School's seven-member board of directors is a teacher majority board composed of four teachers, two parents, and a community member (see the board roster for the 2022-23 school year in the table below). The board is elected by the school's parents/guardians and staff at the annual meeting held each May. On May 4, 2023 the school held its annual meeting. Two teachers, (Danielle Helms and Jennifer Krings), and one parent (Sarah Bloom) were elected for two year positions on the school's board of directors beginning on July 1, 2023.

The RCS board meets once every month with committee meetings being held in between the

regular board meetings to accomplish tasks and make recommendations to the board for final action. The board has five committees which meet regularly and include board and non-board members: board governance, finance, personnel, policy, and wellness.

Table 2: Ridgeway Community School Board Membership
July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023

Name	Board Position	Group (teacher, file folder #)	Term Start	Term Expires	Dates of Required Board Trainings	Phone Number	E-Mail Address	Meeting Attendance rate 2022-23
Anderson, Rhonda	Member	Teacher 340025	7/1/22	6/30/24	9/15/12 All trainings	507-454-9566	randerson@ridgewayschool.org	Rhonda A. 85%
*Conway, Samantha	Chair	Teacher 422825	7/1/21	6/30/23	11/23/15 1/12/16 4/28/16	507-454-9566	sconway@ridgewayschool.org	Sam C. 77%
Brad Kanz	Member	Teacher 478793	7/1/22	6/30/24	8/4/22 8/12/22	507-454-9566	bkanz@ridgewayschool.org	Brad K. 92%
Krings, Jennifer	Treasurer	Teacher 430134	7/1/21	6/30/23	11/14/13 2/24/14 5/19/14	507-454-9566	jkrings@ridgewayschool.org	Jen K. 85%
Breana Larsen	Secretary	Parent Rep.	7/1/22	6/30/24	8/4/22 8/12/22	507-450-6992	blarsen@ridgewayschool.org	Breana L 92%.
Tessa Loken	Vice-Chair	Parent Rep.	7/1/11	6/30/24	11/26/20 2/8/20	507-643-6584	tloken@ridgewayschool.org	Tessa L. 77%
David Nutter	Member	Community Rep.	7/1/22	6/30/24	8/4/22 8/12/22	507-643-6548	dnutter@ridgewayschool.org	David N 77%

Ex Officio Board Members – Mandated Board Training Dates

Jodi Dansingburg, School Coordinator - Mandated Trainings 6/14 & 15/10, 11/3/16, 10/7/17, 11/10/18, 8/4/22, 8/12/22 - 92% meeting attendance

The board reviews academic progress at a fall, winter, and spring board meeting from the lead teachers. The assessment results and educational program plans are the basis for the revised academic and non-academic goals and future plans that are described later in this report. The table above shows the membership of the RCS board between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023.

Board Professional Development Plan: All of the seven sitting board members and both ex-officio board members have participated in state-mandated charter board training. The RCS board adopted the following **Board Training and Development Plan:**

I. In-house procedure:

- a. When someone is newly appointed to the school's board, (s)he receives a board member information binder that contains a list of current board members and board member job descriptions. Descriptions of how to run a board meeting, keeping and posting board minutes, the different board committees at the school, general school information including a current school calendar, list of staff, school policies and Charter School State Revenue source guide are also included. School documents including the by-laws, an employee handbook, parent-student handbook, and the administrative job description are included as well.
- b. Newly seated board members meet with the school coordinator to learn how a charter school works, review the school's history, review the school's vision and mission, review the school's academic history, and receive an overview of the board's oversight of the school coordinator.
- c. Newly seated board members meet with the lead teacher(s) to receive an overview of the school's education program, student assessment practices, teacher evaluations, and educational professional development plans.
- d. Newly seated board members meet with the school's business manager for an in-house training on the business manager position, school's banking information, auditing requirements and process, review of financial reports, state accountability, accounting application, UFARS compliance, budget process, bank reconciliation process, and office procedures.

II. Off-site training procedures:

- a. Every charter school board member shall attend a Minnesota Department of Education-mandated training on board governance, the board's role and responsibilities, employment policies and practices, and financial management. A board member who does not begin the required training within six months of being seated on the board and complete the required training within 12 months of being seated is ineligible to continue to serve as a board member.
- b. Board members are encouraged to participate in continuing education and development related to current issues in public school and public charter school law.
- c. Trainings are paid for by the school. Members will receive per diem and compensation for mileage and other costs associated with attending, but no stipend or wages will be received for attending the training.

Because of the busy personal schedules of our board members and the difficulty in traveling to

off-site trainings—many of which are located in the Twin Cities—the RCS board is prioritizing incorporating trainings into its regular board meetings as well as making online/video trainings available to the board members. These include detailed reports of relevant trainings attended by board members and staff, webinars, and guest speakers on topics including student assessment and academic performance, board governance, charter school law, school finance, human resource management, and other critical areas. Additional trainings were presented at RCS board meetings during the year:

School Management and Administration: During the 2022-23 School year RCS was managed by a school coordinator and two lead teachers. A copy of the school’s organizational chart is included as **Attachment C**.

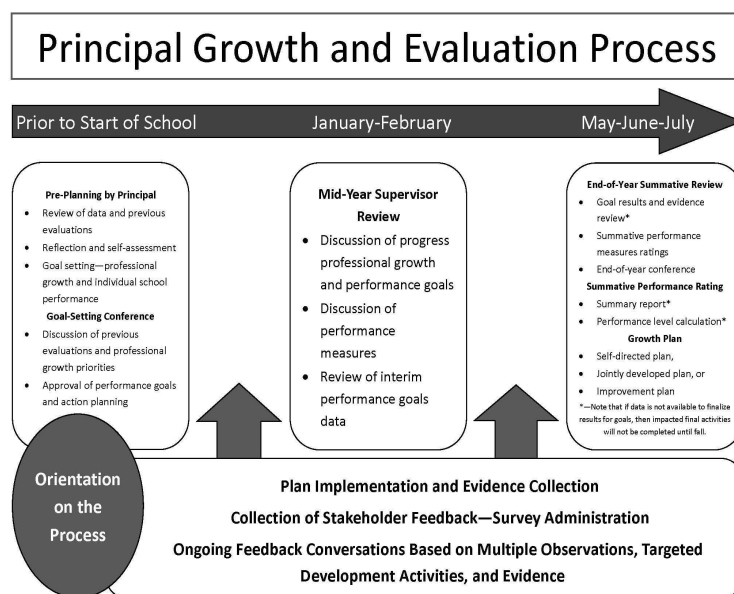
The school coordinator reports directly to the school’s board of directors and is responsible for maintaining a professional atmosphere in the school while overseeing the school’s administration, non-educational staff, school and community enrichment, and special education programs. This individual is also responsible for communication with the school’s authorizer and representing and marketing the school to the public. The school coordinator is assisted by an administrative team that consists of the business manager, administrative assistant, and office assistant as well as the lead teachers. While the current school coordinator, Jodi Dansingburg, does not have an administrative license, she has 38 years of experience in non-profit program administration and has provided administrative leadership to the school since its inception in 2001. The school coordinator is also responsible for supporting the board and assurance of compliance with all federal, state, and local laws. The school’s business manager, Mary Feathergill, began transitioning into retirement in January of 2023. She had served as Ridgeway Community School’s business manager since the school opened. School Management Services has been hired to oversee the school’s financial reporting and planning. SMS Staff Member has been working as the school’s business manager with Mary Feathergill continuing in the business office as the business coordinator to assure a smooth transition.

The lead teachers report directly to the school’s board of directors and oversee the regular education and Q-Comp programs with the assistance of the Educational Leadership Team that is composed of the four other classroom teachers, special education teacher, and school coordinator. In carrying out these duties, the lead teachers are responsible for planning and

implementing teacher professional development, curriculum development and alignment with state standards, and instruction and curriculum, as well as managing school climate, student behavior, student assessment, teacher supervision and evaluation, and regular classroom instruction. The school’s two lead teachers have long tenures at RCS. While neither of the lead teachers have administrative licenses, which are not required for charter school administrators, Rhonda Anderson has 24 years of teaching experience, has taught at RCS for 20 years. In December of 2020 she completed a master’s of education program at the College of St. Scholastica. Jennifer Krings has 16 years of teaching experience all of which have been at Ridgeway Community School.

During the 2022-23 school year the RCS board used a revised rubric for administrative evaluations that was aligned to the Minnesota Department of Education Principal Evaluation Guidelines. The board evaluates the school coordinator and co-lead teachers annually. A copy of the position descriptions and evaluation rubrics for these positions are included as **Attachment D**. These administrators are evaluated on the following areas: mission and vision, instructional and programmatic leadership, human resource, professional and ethical relationships, and resource management. The school coordinator and lead teachers’ evaluation process is done in three distinct phases according to the general description in Figure 1. The professional development plans are developed in phase I of the evaluation process and are used as the basis of the evaluations.

Figure 1



School Staffing:

Ridgeway Community School has a staff of very dedicated teachers. Under the leadership of the two co-lead teachers, the classroom and special education teachers meet monthly as the Educational Leadership Team (ELT) to both manage the educational program and improve their teaching skills as a Professional Learning Community (PLC). The following table describes the schedule and content of the various meetings. The RCS teachers have participated in the Q Comp Program developed by the Minnesota Department of Education since the 2007-08 school year. The Q Comp program has provided the RCS classroom and special education teachers with additional professional development opportunities, mentors and coaches, and a framework for teacher evaluations and incentives for achieving professional and student goals. For the past several years, participation in the Q Comp program has supported staff development in reading, differentiated instruction and improved student performance, goal setting, data monitoring, number talks, alignment of curriculum to Minnesota standards, and Responsive Classroom program.

Table 3: School Leadership Committees

Team Title	Team Acronym	Meeting Schedule & Time	Attendees	Duties
Educational Leadership Team	ELT	4 th Wednesday of alternate months, 2:30 – 3:30	School Coordinator, Lead Teachers, Test Administrator, Mentor Teachers, Teachers	Set calendar, plan/implement special programs, align standards to curriculum, choose curriculum
Teachers Assisting Teachers (Child Study Team)	TAT	2 nd & 4 th Tuesday, 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.	School Psychologist, School Coordinator, ADSIS Teacher/Coordinator, Lead Teachers, Test Administrator, Mentor Teachers, Teachers	Analyze data to determine interventions for targeted students, review data to assess effectiveness

Professional Learning Community	PLC	1 st Wednesday 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.	Lead Teacher, Test Administrator, Mentor Teachers & Teachers	Identify barriers and choose strategies to aid the team in reaching their goals
Teacher Teams	TT	2 nd Wednesday, 2:30 – 3:30	PLC Topic Teams	Define, explore and implement strategies to reach goals

All of the school's licensed teachers returned to RCS for the 2022-23 school year. The tables below show the licensed teacher turnover rate and information about the school's faculty during the 2022-23 school year.

Licensed teacher percentage turnover rate for teaching staff

Years	Turnover Rate	Years	Turnover Rate
2001-02 to 2002-03	44%	2002-03 to 2003-04	40%
2003-04 to 2004-05	38%	2004-05 to 2005-06	20%
2005-06 to 2006-07	20%	2006-07 to 2007-08	46%
2007-08 to 2008-09	16.7%	2008-09 to 2009-10	8.3%
2009-10 to 2010-11	0%	2010-11 to 2011-12	33.3%
2011-12 to 2012-13	21%	2012-13 to 2013-14	14.3%
2013-14 to 2014-15	33.3%	2014-15 to 2015-16	50%
2015-16 to 2016-17	0%	2016-17 to 2017-18	8.3%
2017-8 to 2018-19	8.3%	2018-19 to 2020-21	18.2%
2020-21 to 2022-23	20%	2022-23 to 2022-23	9.1%
2022-23 to 2023-24	0%		

Ridgeway Community School 2022-23 Teaching Faculty Information

Name	Tier	File Folder Number	Assignment	Years Employed	Left during 2022-23	Not returning 2023-24
Anderson, Rhonda	4	340025	4 th & 5 th Grade Teacher Co-Lead Teacher	20		
Conway, Samantha	4	422825	Special Education Teacher	16		
Helms, Danielle	4	341020	Kindergarten Teacher	8		
Johnson, Maureen	4	350491	1st Grade Teacher	22		
Kramer, Anne	4	1005284	Intervention Teacher	2		
Krings, Jennifer	4	430134	4 th & 5 th Grade Teacher Test Administrator Co-Lead Teacher	16		
Kanz, Bradley	4	478793	2 nd & 3 rd Grade Teacher	8		
Larson, Dustin	4	454032	Physical Education and DAPE Teacher	9		
Meyer, Sarah	4	413821	2 nd & 3 rd Grade Teacher	12		
O'Brien, Becky	4	350524	Music Teacher	1		
O'Laughlin, Amy	4	469788	Speech-Language Pathologist	5		
Sobeck, Deborah	4	294334	Art Teacher	2		

Table 4: Ridgeway Community School 2022-23

Non-teacher Staff Member Information:

Name	Assignment	File Folder # or certifications	Years Employed By School	Left during 22/23	Not returning 223/24
Belter, Abbey	Preschool Childcare Program	DHS License Eligible	5		
Dansingburg, Jodi	School Coordinator	CPI, First aid, CPR, AED, and MACS and MDE Administrative PD	21		
Drussell, LeeAnn	Preschool Assistant Food Service Coord.	First aid, CPR, AED, Child Passenger Safety Technician	15		X
Exe, Hailey	School Nurse	RN #2025436	4		

Feathergill, Mary	Business Manager	MDE and Region V Business Manager PD	21		
Fort, Linda	Special Ed. & Title I Para	First aid, CPR, AED, ETS Para Pro Assessment, MDH PCA Training, Orton Gillingham Certified	16		
Groth, Joann	Library/Media Aid	Teacher FFN: 223935	12 - library aid		
Groth, Steven	Maintenance	Asbestos, Indoor Air Quality, Well operator	11		
Mark, Corrine	Food Service Director and Cook	Serve Safe & Food Manager	1		
Pflughoeft, David	Custodian		22		
Rakovec, Matt	4 Year College Degree	CPI Certified	6		
Schossow, Amber	Custodian		1		
Sennes, Laurie	Special Ed. & Title I Para	HVED Para Training, CPI Certified	5		

Staff Satisfaction – A copy of the Staff satisfaction survey that was conducted in the spring of 2022 is included as **Attachment E**.

Professional Development -

During the 2022-23 school year the RCS Classroom, Special Education, and Intervention Teachers participated in a monthly Professional Learning Community (PLC) that focused on Jennifer Serravallo's *Writing Strategies Book* along with Lucy Calkins' book *Units of Study for Writing*. The books gave the teachers a toolbox of essential strategies to implement in the classroom to improve student's writing skills, strategies, and stamina. Ridgeway Community School employed three paraprofessionals during the 2022-23 school year. These paraprofessionals all met the highly qualified criteria by being either college graduates or passing the ETS ParaPro test. All staff members are provided an orientation which includes blood-borne pathogens, worker right to know, mandated reporter, homeless student identification, and restrictive and emergency procedures training along with school policies and procedures training within the first month of school or shortly after they are hired. Many staff members are also trained in Crisis Prevention and Intervention strategies.

Finances:

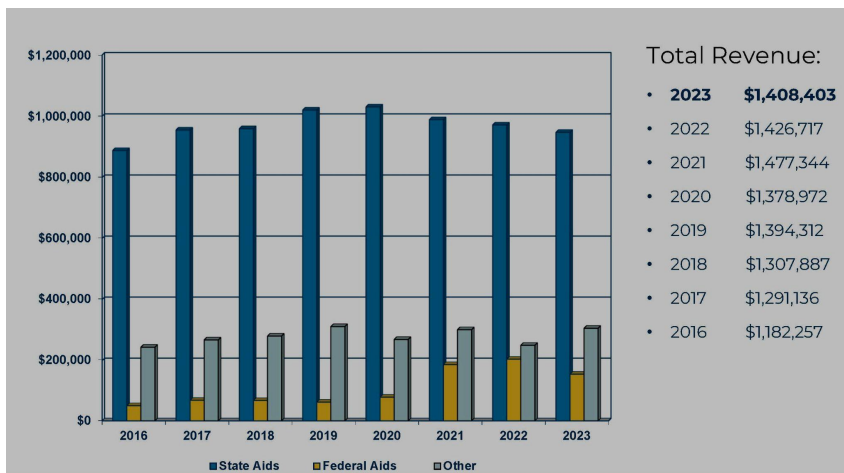
The school's 2023-23 audit is being finalized for submission to the Minnesota Department of Education. The school's auditor, Smith, Schafer & Associates, LTD, who are experienced in public school district and charter school auditing procedures, has conducted our

annual audit since the 2015-16 school year. The school did not have any audit findings in their 2022-23 school year audit.

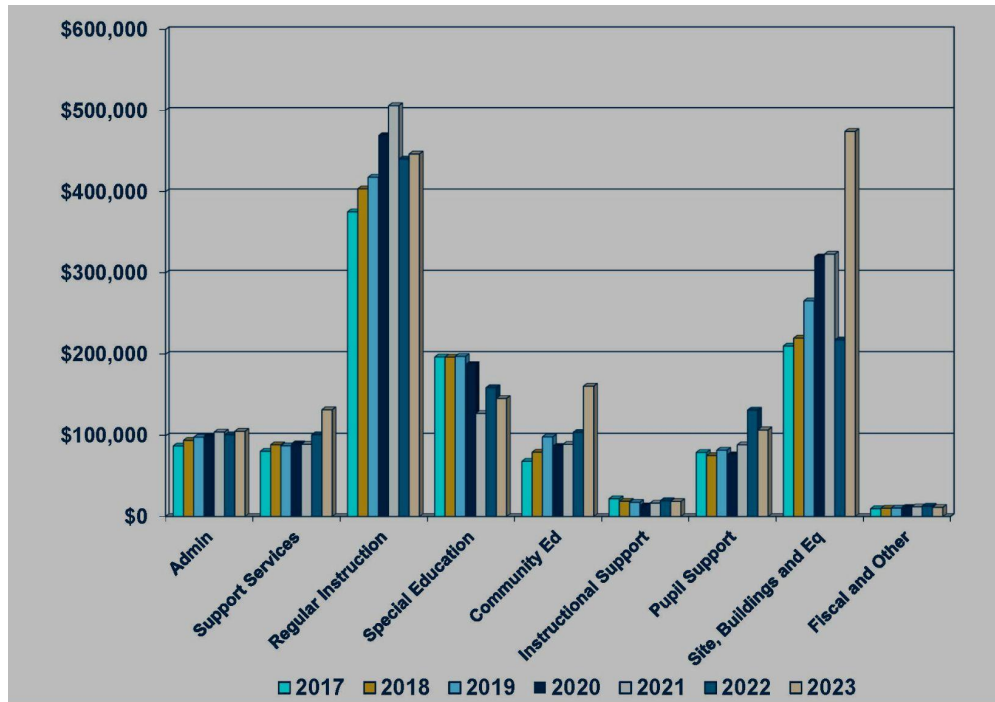
General Fund operating expenditures exceeded revenues by \$97,512 in 2023. The General fund transferred \$13,166 to cover operating deficits and the total decrease of the fund balance of \$110,678. The unassigned General Fund balance at June 30, 2023 is \$326,515 or 29.08% of current general fund expenditures. General Fund restricted fund balance as of June 30, 2023 was \$39,630. The Food Service Fund expenditures exceeded revenues by \$28,391 before transfers. Food Deficit balance as of June 30, 2023 was \$13,926. The Community Service Fund revenues exceeded expenditures by \$5,190.

The school's Finance Committee is composed of the board treasurer, school coordinator, business manager, a classroom teacher, and a community member who is not on the board. The board and board committees consistently reviewed the school's strategic goals throughout the year to make sure funds went toward improving academics with curriculum and technology purchases and the school will continue to work on increasing staff salaries when fiscally able to do so. In the spring of 2023, the school was awarded the Minnesota School Finance Award for the thirteenth year in a row. The school will continue to put our educational programs first and maintain a strong financial oversight. The Tables below show the highlights of the auditor's report to the Ridgeway Community School board at their November 14, 2023 board meeting. A copy of the auditor's 2022-23 report to the board is included as **Attachment F1** and a copy of the complete 2022-23 audit will be included as **F3**.

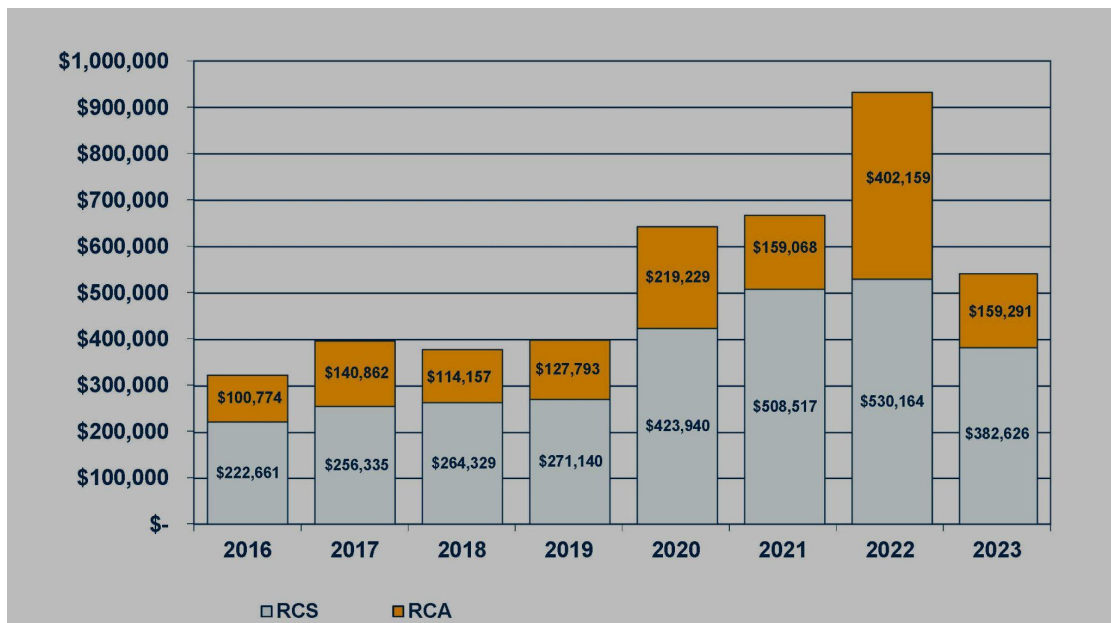
2022-23 Revenues - All Funds



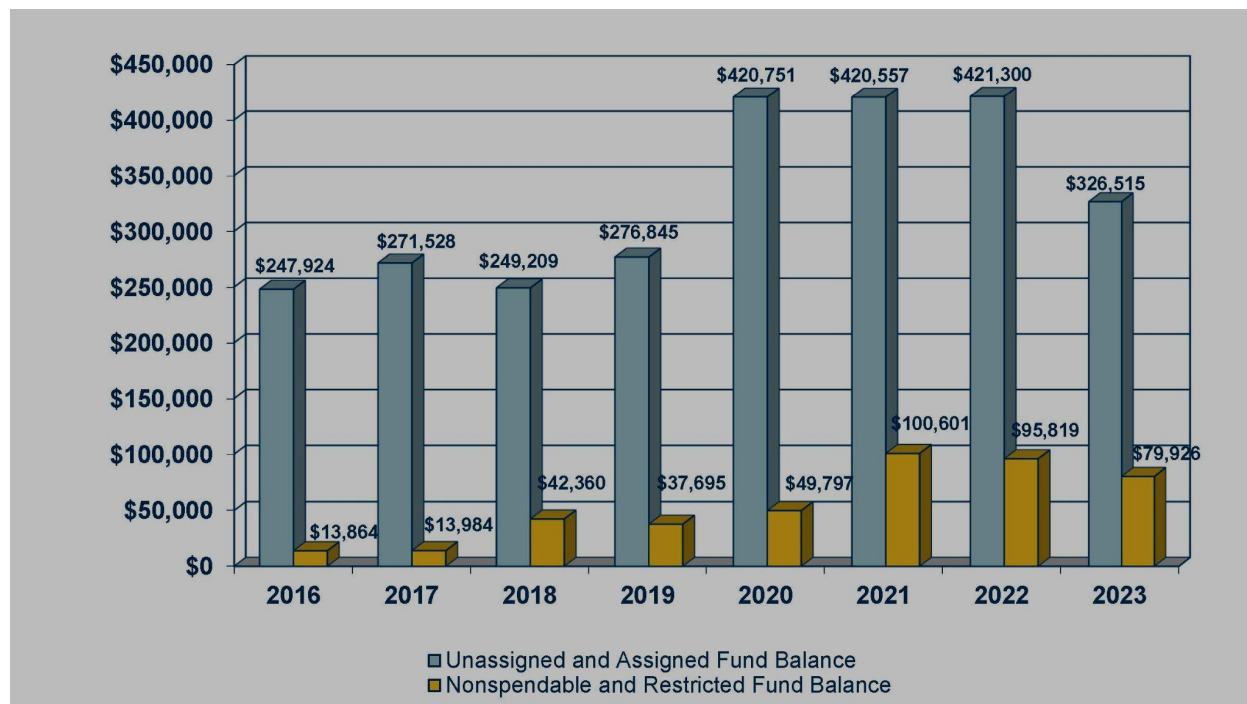
2022-23 Expenditures - All Funds



2022-23 Cash Balances - All Funds



2022-23 General Fund Balance



Academic Performance:

Students at Ridgeway Community School are assessed in September, January, and May using the FASTBridge benchmarking in reading and early literacy skills, and the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments for math and reading skills. The students in grades 3 – 5 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 Reading Corps and/or RISE programs.

During the 2022-23 school year the Alternative Delivery of Specialized Instructional Services (ADSIS) funds allowed RCS to retain a licensed teacher to provide reading and math interventions through the Ridgeway Interventions for Student Excellence (RISE) program. The program allows us to identify, intervene, and monitor students who fall at or below the 25th percentile in reading and math proficiency.

The MCA math and reading assessments typically given each spring are taken by our third through fifth grade students. Our fifth grade students also take the Science MCA.

Academic Goals: Ridgeway Community School had the following academic goals and results for the 2022-23 school year:

- **Math Goal** - The percentage of all students in grades 3 to 5 at Ridgeway Community School who are enrolled by October 1, 2022 and are proficient on all state accountability tests (MCA, MTAS) will increase from 74.4% in 2022 to 75% in 2023. The students were 71.1% proficient.
- **Reading** - The percentage of all students in grades 3 to 5 at Ridgeway Community School who are enrolled by October 1, 2022 and are proficient on all state accountability tests (MCA, MTAS) will increase from 65.1% in 2022 to 70% in 2023. The students increased their proficiency to 73.7% of students meeting or exceeding standards.

The NWEA Map assessments are adaptable and adjust in difficulty based on each individual student's performance. The changes help pinpoint what the students actually know instead of only what they don't know. It gives us a look at the individual skills to adjust our teaching.

After each testing event the general education teachers, special education teacher, and interventionist, school psychologist and school coordinator meet to review the data. Due to the small size of Ridgeway Community School in the NWEA testing data each child is representative of an average of one percentage point each when looking at aggregate (whole school) data and approximately 6 percentage points when looking at grade level data. Due to these small class sizes it is difficult to determine a school wide trend because of those small numbers and the variation of individual students and classes.

Math	Percent of Students \geq 40th Percentile
K	78%
1st	69%
2nd	67%
3rd	62%
4th	87%
5th	85%

Reading	Percent of Students \geq 40th Percentile
K	78%
1st	63%
2nd	44%
3rd	54%
4th	87%
5th	85%

Additionally, in regards to reading, the decision was made to begin fully aligning the curriculum not only to the standards but from grade to grade. Reading strategies are being explicitly taught to staff for use within the classrooms and a more dedicated focus on vocabulary has been incorporated into the language arts curriculum. The teachers have also decided through these processes that the use of more varied informational texts in the science and social studies areas would be beneficial to the students. A cross curricular approach to literacy is most important. Special consideration is also being given to those grades most affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Innovative Practices and Implementation:

Overview: RCS employs a variety of instructional models to deliver standards-based curriculum designed to successfully engage all students. Direct instruction, differentiated instruction, small group activities, and project-based learning models help us meet the needs of students with a variety of learning styles. These and other innovative practices proven to increase student engagement and achievement are described below:

Multi-age Educational Program with Smaller Class Sizes: During the 2022-23 school year RCS students were grouped into the following grade configurations: self-contained kindergarten, self-contained first grade, multi-age second and third grade, and multi-age fourth and fifth grade. While most of the second grade through fifth grade classroom instruction takes place in the multi-age configurations, the students are broken out by actual grade level for math instruction. 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. This configuration allows our class sizes to remain small and balanced by genders, ages, and personalities. The board deems small class sizes to be a benefit to students and teachers.

Balanced Multi-age Reading & Language Arts Program: The school uses a teacher-developed, balanced language arts program with the goal of integrating reading and language arts standards through exposure to class sets of quality literature. Multi-sensory Orton-Gillingham phonics materials and strategies are used for early-emergent and emergent readers, while phonemic strategies support fluency and spelling skills for developing and established readers. [Heggerty Curriculum](#) was introduced in 2022 to develop phonemic awareness for primary students. Spelling patterns and rules are taught using the [Words Their Way](#) program. The program's succession allows the teacher to discuss letter patterns, division rules, root words, prefixes and suffixes, and build student vocabulary. The school began using the [Handwriting Without Tears](#) penmanship and language arts program for the preschool to 5th grade students in 2019.

Makerspace and STEAM Program Development – The classroom teachers continued developing and implementing the makerspace lab during the 2022-23 school year and worked to learn about and incorporate best practices in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics) into the curriculum.

Saxon Math Curriculum – In the fall of 2019 the RCS teachers began delivering math instruction to our K-5 students with the use of a newly purchased ***Saxon Math*** curriculum. In ***Saxon Math*** concepts from every math strand are woven together and connected throughout the year. Skills or concepts are reinforced each year helping students build a strong foundation of understanding of core math concepts. This incremental approach gives students the time to understand and practice a small concept before adding the next step. Distributing skills across the year and cumulative practice and assessments cover ideas from earlier lessons to ensure students retain and make connections between concepts. The teachers are very pleased with the curriculum.

School Wide and Classroom Morning Meetings: Ridgeway Community School (RCS) typically holds an all school morning meeting in which the entire student body and staff identify behavior and activities to celebrate and review any issues of concern such as playground

behavior prior to saying the pledge of allegiance and the Ridgeway Community School Pledge. Classrooms hold morning meetings to allow for community building, more individualized student check-ins, review of daily schedules and reminders about expectations for good behavior.

Social Skills Development: During the 2022-23 school year RCS continued to utilize the research-based [Second Step](#) program to enhance the social and emotional development of its preschool to fifth grade students. The curriculum is used by classroom teachers to share developmentally appropriate lessons on core skills such as empathy, emotion management, and problem solving as well as self-regulation, executive function skills, and skills for learning.

Developing Student Problem Solving: During the 2022-23 school year RCS also used the [Kelso's Choice](#) conflict management curriculum with its preschool to 5th grade students. [Kelso's Choice](#) curriculum offers age-appropriate lessons to help students identify the difference between big problems and small problems and gives students strategies on how to solve the small problems by themselves.

Behavior Fix-It Plans - Students who choose to act in inappropriate ways are given a warning. If inappropriate behavior continues, or if behavior is severe, students complete a Behavior Fix-It Plan. The plans are sent home to be reviewed and signed by parents. These completed forms are to be returned to school the following day. Students who receive three behavior plans will be required to attend a meeting with their teacher and their parents or guardians to develop a plan to make better behavior choices.

Behavior Data – A behavior log is used to record the student's behavior Fix-It plans with information on for documenting Behavior Fix-It plan data by student, location and type of incident and staff involved or observing incident. This data is used at the Teacher Assisting Teacher meetings to identify students who are in need of assistance in learning to manage their behavior.

During and After School Intervention Programs: RCS again received approval to participate in the Minnesota Department of Education's Alternative Delivery of Specialized Instructional Services (ADSIS) program. The Ridgeway ADSIS program is called Ridgeway Intervention for Student Excellence or RISE. The additional funds available through this program allowed us to reach students whose reading and math scores fell at or below the 25th percentile in performance in their reading and math skills as measured by nationally normed

FASTBridge and NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments. An intervention teacher is employed to implement additional instruction with research-based curriculum for improving reading fluency and math proficiency to reduce referrals of at-risk students for special education services. These programs are being coordinated by the RCS resource teacher and implemented by the full time intervention teacher. Additionally, Ridgeway Community School received funding for a part-time Reading Corps member to assist students in kindergarten through third grade with reading skills. Reading Corps provides one-on-one tutoring with evidence based literacy interventions and data based assessments. The school does not qualify for Title 1 funding due to its small overall enrollment and lower Free and Reduced lunch percentage.

Parent and Community Involvement: Ridgeway Community School places a very high value on family and community involvement. Parents are encouraged to attend Parent/Student/Teacher Goal Setting Meetings in fall and spring to give students an opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning by setting academic and behavior goals with the support of their teachers and parents. These sessions were held both in person and virtually this year to accommodate families as best as possible. They may also participate in after school clubs, as field trip chaperones, classroom volunteers, or in other aspects of school life as needed. A parent satisfaction survey was conducted in the spring of 2023. A copy of the parent survey results can be seen in **Attachment G**.

AmeriCorps program: Through a contract with the Southern Minnesota Initiative Fund RCS participates in the Learning Early Achieves Potential (LEAP) AmeriCorps program which places a full-time AmeriCorps member at the school to work with preschool and kindergarten students on social and emotional development.

Collaboration with area college programs and students to provide additional educational and enrichment opportunities for our students. During the 2022-23 school year Winona State University students participate in field experience and student teaching positions. RCS students also benefitted from a year-long collaboration with a Winona State University community health nursing class that worked with the students, staff and families on various wellness activities throughout the year.

Community Library Programming: through the assistance of a dedicated group of volunteers, Ridgeway Community School opens their SELCO-affiliate library for parents and

community members to check out books and media materials. Due to increasing costs the SELCO program was discontinued as of May 2023. However, all materials are still available for our local patrons.

SMART Boards: The K-5 classrooms, art & music classroom, and the special education and resource room have SMART Boards and teachers have found them to be an incredible asset in delivering engaging instruction to our students.

Multi-age Homerooms for Character Development and Service Learning: Once per quarter RCS kindergarten to fifth grade students come together in multi-age (K-5) homerooms to experience character development and service learning activities. Siblings are grouped together for these homerooms. Respectful, Responsible, Prepared, and Safe behaviors were the focus of this year's homerooms.

Experiential Learning: RCS teachers work hard to provide their students with hands-on opportunities to learn about subjects covered by the direct instruction given during their regular class time. Many of these opportunities come in the form of field trips that are made possible with funds provided by the school's active parent organization, Ridgeway Parents and Community (RPAC). Some of these opportunities also come through collaboration with specials teachers, parents, grandparents, and community members.

School Wellness Programs:

In implementation of its Wellness Policy, RCS encourages students and their families to make good choices regarding health and wellness through daily recess and physical education opportunities, increased servings of fresh fruits and vegetables from the food service program, and athletic and lifetime fitness enrichment opportunities. Below is a list of activities that were implemented to carry out its Strategic Wellness Goals during the 2022-23 school year.

- **Daily physical education classes:** Ridgeway Community School provided all kindergarten to fifth grade students 30 minute long physical education classes. Outdoor recess was held twice each day for a total of 40 minutes.
- **School garden program:** Ridgeway Community School had an active school garden program that offers students educational opportunities through classroom science and social studies activities as well as during our after school childcare program.
- **Brain breaks:** Many of our school's classrooms are now taking "brain breaks" during the middle of longer stretches of stationary lesson time. These breaks take place in the

classroom or on our new fitness track and give a 3 to 5 minute period of increased cardiovascular activity to help get the blood flowing through students' brains and help them increase productivity in the classroom.

- **After School Clubs:** The school offered the following after school clubs to our students between January and May of 2002.
 - **4-H Agriculture Club** (4th & 5th grades)
 - **Archery Club** (4th & 5th grades)
 - **Chess Club** (3rd to 5th grades)
 - **Dance Club** (Kindergarten to 2nd grade and 3rd to 5th grades)
 - **Dodgeball Club** (kindergarten & 1st grade, , 2nd & 3rd grade, and 4th and 5th grades)
 - **Garden Club** (1st to 5th grades)
 - **Kickball** (Kindergarten to 2nd grade and 3rd to 5th grades)
 - **Makerspace/Lego Club** (kindergarten & 1st grade, 2nd & 3rd grade, and 4th & 5th grade)
 - **Nordic Ski Club** ((kindergarten & 1st grade, **and** 2nd to 5th grade)
 - **Soccer Club** (Kindergarten to 2nd grade and 3rd to 5th Grades)
 - **Spanish Club** (2nd & 3rd grade and 4th & 5th grades)
- **Family and community wellness activities:** Due to COVID-19 safety restrictions the school wasn't able to offer as many family wellness activities as it does in a typical year.
 - **Fall Classroom Hikes** – RCS held after school classroom hikes with classroom cohorts after school in October. Parents and other family members participated in these outdoor activities.
 - **Family Climbing Nights** – During the spring semester RCS held three family climbing nights at the WSU climbing wall with the assistance of a class of WSU nursing students described above. Students and their family members were able to participate in these climbing nights for free due to the assistance of the nursing students.



- **Miles for Smiles Family Fun Run** – the school hosted its annual Miles for Smiles Fun Run around West Lake Winona on June 3rd, 2023. The event raises funds for Wellness programs and projects throughout the year.



- **Arts Enrichment Programming:** The school held programs on Grandparents' Day, Veterans' Day, and Winter and Spring Concerts.



Future Plans:

The school's values, vision, mission and goals were reviewed at a strategic planning meeting held by the Ridgeway Community School board of directors on August 13, 2020. The ideas discussed during this meeting included input from RCS parents, teachers, staff, and community members that was gathered through focus groups and surveys conducted earlier in the year. The RCS board was assisted in this work by Roderick Haenke who is an educational leadership

professional and has worked extensively with charter schools throughout Minnesota. The RCS board finalized their strategic goals and measurable objectives at their meeting on September 24, 2020. Since that update of the school's strategic goals, the board has updated the strategic outcomes they plan to achieve each year to help the school reach our strategic goals.

Strategic Goals

The board and staff of Ridgeway Community School have established the following goals to achieve the mission and vision of the school:

Goal Area 1: Each student at Ridgeway will be valued as a whole child that has social, emotional, academic, and ethical needs that must be met to ensure he or she is holistically healthy, ready to learn and grow, and leave Ridgeway as a responsible and engaged citizen.

Comments: Education research shows that before children can make academic progress they need to feel physically and emotionally safe and have a healthy connection with the adults providing their education. The Ridgeway Community School board and staff are committed to valuing and supporting our students in a holistic way that addresses their individual needs so that they can grow to be successful, caring citizens. This is done through collaboration, utilization of our STEAM resources and outdoor classroom spaces, community service projects, encouragement of a healthy lifestyle, and by striving to meet our academic goals.

Goal Area 2: Ridgeway will become a more culturally conscious, friendly, and accepting community toward all.

Comments: In order to achieve the other two strategic goals identified in this plan, the RCS staff and board acknowledge that we must recognize and eliminate historical barriers to parent engagement and the development of the whole child. We recognize the need to treat every student and their family with dignity and support the individual student's differentiated needs that may be presented by his or her individual, family, community and/or cultural history. Our school is committed to work to eliminate historical barriers that present challenges to our students', families', and staffs' ability to participate in a quality educational program.

Goal Area 3: Overall parent engagement will increase to maximize the home-school connection for the betterment of our students.

Comments: Research shows that parent involvement is a critical factor in student success in school. The RCS board wants to prioritize the home-school connection. Our annual home-school activities were able to be held this year. The school board and staff were committed to making the extra effort to engage our students' families in their learning, both at school and at home. As noted above, many events were held that allowed our families to engage with their students' learning in the building.

Operational Performance:

Ridgeway Community School continues to strive to improve operational efficiency while working toward fulfillment of our strategic goals as identified above. During the 2022-23 school year the administration began the process of documenting administrative procedures and practices to improve organizational efficiency as it was transitioning to a new administrative assistant and preparing for transition in our business management personnel. The school was unable to replace a long-time food service director and cook who departed in mid-September. Therefore a Winona catering company has been preparing the school lunches \ and they were transported to school by temporary food service personnel. The increased costs associated with the catering contract resulted in a food service program budget that ended up in the red, despite the increased revenue associated with the free school meals provided for all students made possible by COVID-19 relief funds.

School's Nonprofit Status:

Ridgeway Community School continues to be registered as a non-profit corporation with the Minnesota State Attorney General's office. A report of Ridgeway Community School's nonprofit status is included as **Attachment F**.

New Authorizer for 2022-23 School year:

At the beginning of the 2022-23 school year Ridgeway Community School was notified by Bethel University that it intended to cease being a charter authorizer effective June 30, 2023. In

the spring of 2022 RCS applied to Innovative Quality Schools (IQS) to serve as Ridgeway's authorizer. The school's application was accepted and the new authorizing contract was signed at the school's September 20, 2022 board meeting. Laurie Schroeder is the Managing Partner of IQS and oversaw the school's transition from Bethel University. Jim Zacchini, (EdD, Prosci-CP, SHRM-CP) is serving as the school's [IQS](#) Cadre Leader for the 2022-23 school year.

Authorizer name	Contact information	Partnerships Coordinator	Contract Termination date
Innovative Quality Schools	P.O. Box 580 Hutchinson, MN 55350 651-234-0900	Laurie Schroeder Managing Partner lschroeder@iqsmn.org Jim Zacchini IQS Cadre Leader jzacchini@iqsmn.org Direct: 612-567-9139	June 30, 2027



**Ridgeway Community School
2022 - 2022 Annual Report
Attachments:**

- A. Enrollment Application and Registration**
- B. Admission Policies**
- C. Staff Organizational Chart**
- D. Administrative Evaluation Rubrics**
- E. Staff Satisfaction Survey**
- F. 2022-23 Financial Reports**
- G. Parent Satisfaction Survey**
- H. Non-profit Status**

[Click on this link](#) to see copies of the above attachments