



Discovery Woods



PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL DISTRICT # 4198-07

SCHOOL YEAR 2022-2023  
WORLD'S BEST WORKFORCE & ANNUAL REPORT

Discovery Woods OW FY23 World's Best Workforce & Annual Report, | Drafted August 7, 2023

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## **School Information**

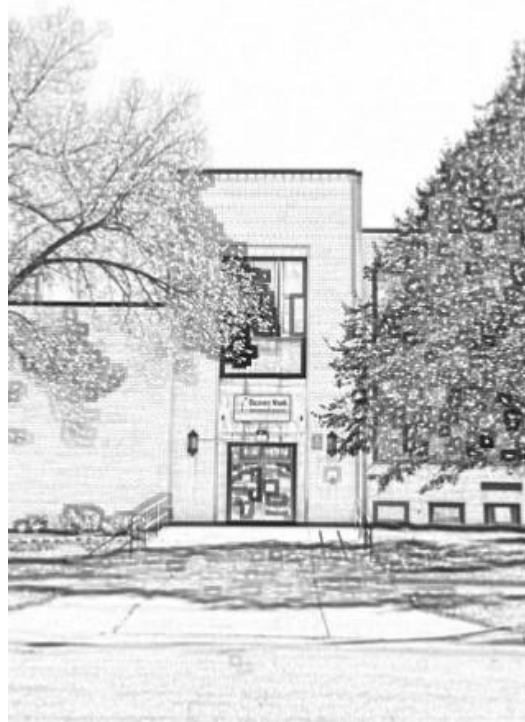
Discovery Woods is a Montessori inspired and environmentally centered charter school that opened its doors to students the fall of 2011 for kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade. In 2012 we were able to expand through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. We currently serve 108 students. DW also has a tuition based preschool option that currently serves 20 students. We are dedicated to creating a high quality charter school where each child is respected as an individual and given the foundation to become a lifelong learner and responsible leader. Our facility location provides opportunities to explore the neighborhood park and Mississippi river as well as other field trip possibilities.

### **MISSION**

To provide Brainerd Lakes Area families a choice for quality elementary education centered around the individual needs of the child with a focus on the environment.

### **VISION**

Discovery Woods is dedicated to educational excellence, environmental stewardship, and personal growth. Our students will have the foundation to be critical thinkers and responsible citizens.



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## **AUTHORIZER INFORMATION**

Discovery Woods is proud to have been authorized by the Osprey Wilds in Sandstone, Minnesota. Osprey Wilds has authorized Discovery Woods since January of 2011 with Discovery Woods officially opening in the fall of 2011. OW recently renewed Discovery Woods' contract through June 30, 2028.

The authorizing mission of Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center is to ensure quality academic and environmental literacy outcomes for students in Minnesota by conducting effective oversight and evaluation of its authorized schools, providing strategic support to schools, and making informed and merit-based decisions about its portfolio of charter schools.

The authorizing vision of Osprey Wilds is to authorize a portfolio of high performing charter schools that instill a connection and commitment to the environment in their school communities, while working towards a healthy planet where all people live in balance with the Earth.

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## Implementation of Primary and Additional Statutory Purposes

Discovery Woods is a charter school that serves students by providing instruction that will improve student learning and student achievement through unique and innovative teaching methods including Montessori philosophy and beyond.

**Primary Purpose:** Improve all pupil learning and all student achievement. DW uses Response to Intervention (Rtl) programming to provide accurate remediation and acceleration for students. Currently, data is used from STAR and/or Fastbridge assessments in Reading and Math to also determine the students' level of learning. Classroom assessments and data are also collected to determine additional struggles or acceleration needs. Discovery Woods uses a mixture of individualized, small group and whole group instruction while helping all children learn to work together respectfully and productively in the learning environment. DW has been intentional to provide support to improve math and reading proficiencies through teacher professional development, parent information nights and literature, as well as additional instructional opportunities. DW has many staff taking advantage of Sourcewell's workshops and networking. Sourcewell is a service cooperative created by the Minnesota legislature that provides contract purchasing solutions and professional development opportunities for schools in the area. DW has worked with Reading Corp tutors since the 2018-2019 school year and added a K-3 Math Corps tutor in the 2022-23 school year.



**Additional Statutory Purposes:** DW increases learning opportunities for pupils by participating in field trips, using the school garden and other learning opportunities. Our sixth graders have worked with Project YES! (Youth Eco Solutions). YES! provides a unique opportunity for students to learn about clean energy, waste reduction, local foods, habitat restoration, and water quality issues and opportunities by working on and completing hands-on projects. Our Upper level (5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> graders) students were able to go to Deep Portage to do some teambuilding in September and then got to explore Camp Shamineau at the end of the year. Third and fourth graders had a wonderful time at the Paramount Theater in St. Cloud as well as Camp Confidence and visiting the

local bowling alley. First and Second Grade students got to visit the Historical Society as well as explore the Mille Lacs Kathio State Park. DW teachers also take advantage of the city park and school garden on almost a daily basis. DW has had parents and staff begin extracurricular activities such as basketball, Anime Club, Yearbook Club and Nature Club. This year we were limited to our Discovery Book Club and Math Club and had large turnouts. DW added flag football for Grades 5 and 6 for a couple of days after school in February. Our Physical Education teacher has continued to teach tennis and ice skating by using the Gregory Park tennis courts and ice rink and using the school's tennis rackets, ice skates and helmets.

## Student Enrollment & Demographics

### STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Discovery Woods is continuing marketing and recruitment practices to sustain the increased enrollment that is happening. DW is building up a relationship with the North Side Association which is a group within the school neighborhood and networking with local businesses and families. DW staff continually build relationships with DW students and families to achieve greater student retention as well as a better attendance rate each year.

<b>Number of Students Enrolled</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>
Kindergarten	16	21	18
1st Grade	8	17	15
2nd Grade	18	15	20
3rd Grade	13	21	16
4th Grade	18	11	9
5th Grade	8	9	16
6th Grade	14	5	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>104</b>
<b>Total ADM (Average Daily Membership) for year</b>	<b>110.87</b>	<b>114.74</b>	<b>124.54</b>

### STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Discovery Woods' student demographics have not changed much since 2011. The Brainerd area is not very racially diverse, and those numbers are reflected in the DW student body. The largest demographic groups include Special Education and those who qualify for free and reduced lunch. Discovery Woods' philosophy is that all students have equal access to educational programming, in a safe and caring environment, regardless of race, gender, religion, ethnicity, ability, beliefs, sexual orientation, or economic status.

Demographic Trends	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Total Enrollment	119	115	95	107	104
Male	58	61	39	51	49
Female	61	75	56	56	55
Special Education	19	22	22	27	32
English Learners	4	2	2	0	0
Free/Reduced Priced	67	58	52	60	64

Lunch					
Black,not of Hispanic origin	6	7	11	8	8
Hispanic Latino	5	6	2	2	4
Asian/Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0	0
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2	1	7	9	6
White,not of Hispanic Origin	92	107	75	88	86

## Student Attendance, Attrition & Mobility

### STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Discovery Woods believes good attendance promotes academic success. It is very important that all students attend school and class on time every day. DW does have families who may take occasional trips out of town, but most students' absences are due to illness. DW is watching absences more frequently and keeping families informed of the importance of attendance for all ages of students. Letters, emails and phone calls are ways DW communicates with families regarding absences and the attendance policy. DW's attendance policy states that it is expected for every student to attend school at least 96% of the school year and through diligent efforts this will continue to be the goal. Attendance has been better however you still see effects of the pandemic either through students having Covid or mental health issues that have gotten worse since the pandemic. DW continues to support families by providing Covid test kits, Northern PinesMentalHealth providing services through the school as well as county services when needed.

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
<b>Overall Student Attendance Rate</b>	96%	93%	93%

<b>Consistent Attendance Percentage</b>	80%	74%	83%
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### STUDENT ATTRITION

Discovery Woods has had consistent numbers of students remain at the school. There have been two major staff changes within the school's existence where multiple students/families did leave, however, student retention is consistently within the 80 percentage range. Going into the 2021-22 school year we had 84% for our student retention which increased to 86% going into the 2022-23 school year and going into the 2023-24 we are again at 86%. Nine of the 13 students who left were either in Grades 4-5, moved or had extenuating family circumstances. There are multiple families

who have had students here since preschool or kindergarten.

<b>Percentage of students* who were continuously enrolled between October 1 of the 2021-22 school year and October 1 of the 2022-23 school year.</b>	86%
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<b>Percentage of students* who continued enrollment in the school from Spring 2022 to October 1, 2022.</b>	86%
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**STUDENT MOBILITY**

Mobility rates have remained consistent with some students leaving due to family moves and a few deciding that they wish to go back to traditional schools or homeschooling. Most years we have 4<sup>th</sup> and/or 5<sup>th</sup> grade student summer leavers due to the public school beginning middle school in a separate building for 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Discovery Woods is becoming more balanced and other than times around the pandemic our mobility rates are dropping.

	<b>Summer Transfers In</b>	<b>Number of students on Oct. 1</b>	<b>Mid-year Transfers In</b>	<b>Mid-year Transfers Out</b>	<b>Total Mid-year Transfers</b>	<b>Mobility Index* (as a percent)</b>
<b>2018-19</b>	20	117	7	3	10	9%
<b>2019-20</b>	33	110	8	9 <small>(½- homeschooling-Covid)</small>	17	15%
<b>2020-21</b>	28	95	14	3	17	18%
<b>2021-22</b>	13	99	5	0	5	5%
<b>2022-23</b>	25	103	*3	*1	4 (*1 student was only here for a few days)	4%

<b>Percentage of students who were enrolled for 95% or more of the 2022-23 school year.</b>	97%
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## **Educational Approach & Curriculum**

Discovery Woods uses Montessori philosophy as well as a personalized approach to learning that incorporates hands-on activities, inquiry-based, project-based and place-based learning. All curriculum choices and decisions are influenced and guided by the goals and mission of the school and based on the Minnesota State Academic Standards. DW has developed scope and sequence as well as a curriculum review cycle. Curriculum mapping aligns curriculum, skills, standards, and expectations of course levels. Children’s House uses the Montessori math curriculum which the students enjoy and have had success with. DW is using Guided Math instruction as well as Moving with Math for Grades 1-4. Moving with Math is a research based program using true manipulatives and the Concrete-Representational-Abstract Instructional method. Moving with Math and Montessori work well together with uses of manipulatives. For Grades 5-6 pieces of the above math curriculums are used along with GoMath which help students develop a deeper and more analytical understanding of math. At the same time, the program uses common sense explanations, plenty of visuals, hands-on activities and even games to help make learning a little easier and less intimidating for students. In regard to literacy/ELA, Discovery Woods School is entering into Year 3 of the Curriculum Review Cycle. The school has successfully reviewed curriculum, researched and selected materials, and has even started the implementation process. The school uses Montessori and Heggerty in Kindergarten, Flyleaf Publishing in grades 1-2, and Bookworms for grades 3-6. Several teachers finished an extensive literacy training called LETRS at the end of the 2022-2023 school year. The school will monitor data and make adjustments as needed, and continue to find professional learning opportunities for teachers to further develop and enhance the school’s literacy program. All these elements tie together well and will give students the fundamental skills that they need while hitting the state standards. DW has also introduced the Caring School Community (CSC) to help with social emotional learning. Caring School Community is a comprehensive, research-based social and emotional learning (SEL) program that builds school-wide community, develops students’ social skills and SEL competencies, and enables a transformative stance on discipline. CSC also works well with our Montessori beliefs showing empathy and being peaceful. This CASEL SEL program promotes positive behavior through direct teaching of responsibility, empathy, and cooperation, creating settings where students feel heard, known, and cared for. Students become intrinsically motivated to contribute productively to a community they feel invested in, and where they know they matter. We have been able to expand the CSC curriculum to involve cross-age buddies which has been a great success and we were also able to add in some family projects and events. DW will continue staff development activities and share professional development opportunities.



## **Pedagogical Approaches and their Alignment to our Mission**

Discovery Woods utilizes a mixture of individualized, small group, and whole group instructional practices to learning that incorporates hands-on activities and manipulatives, community learning opportunities, and learning in the natural environment. All students experience nature based learning through integration in all curricular areas, but also do hands-on work in the school garden.

Discovery Woods is dedicated to building character in all students, and strives to do so with the incorporation of activities such as sorting recycling in the correct bins once a day and by having a student leadership team comprised of upper elementary students; the team brings innovative ideas to the administration as well as helping come up with solutions for concerns brought to the team. Teachers at Discovery Woods are eager to extend beyond the walls of a traditional classroom into the natural environment and local community. Classes regularly use the environment as a context



for learning. Discovery Woods uses field trips to the local city park at least weekly along with our own playground and school garden. We have also incorporated invitations from neighbors of the school to see their worm compost and gardens. Discovery Woods brings on project based learning as well, and our school garden was the most significant of these projects. Students helped with many aspects including deciding the layout, what to plant, how/where to plant, amount of soil needed for the planters and the actual labor of getting the school garden built and ready. The classes have also watched to see what kind of rain barrel works the best for our garden. DW students have also developed a butterfly garden and rain garden.

Discovery Woods also recognizes the extreme need for reading, writing, and comprehension skills. DW staff are devoted to building each child's literacy through evidence-based instruction. Discovery Woods staff prioritize teaching classroom and school wide expectations during the first week of school, and revisit these expectations as often as necessary so every student can develop confidence, build character and become collaborative.

### **Remediation and Acceleration Practices and Programming**

Discovery Woods has students attend classes in multi-age learning environments. We have 1st and 2nd grade in our lower elementary program, 3rd and 4th grade in our middle elementary program and 5th and 6th grade in our upper elementary program.

We also offer a fee-based preschool program known as Children's House for children ages 33 months through 5 years old. Kindergarten children enrolled in the charter school are included in the mixed age Children's House environment.

Children's House uses the Montessori philosophy by our teachers presenting lessons, but most of the student's education is taught through/within five main areas: language arts, mathematics, geometry, cultural studies (science and history) and geography. These subjects are integrated with one another. Upper and Lower Elementary are using a mixture of individualized, small group, and whole group instruction, and lessons are aligned with the Minnesota state standards. Music and Art are taught by the classroom teachers. We have a Physical Education teacher to teach the PE curriculum which includes ice skating and tennis. DW also has a full time Title I reading teacher and a Title assistant for intervention with struggling readers. DW also has Reading Corps and Math Corps tutors.

The following characteristics are integral to DW and offer a new alternative to learning in the community:

- Individual and small group instruction used daily in all subject areas.
- Specialty multi-sensory materials used alongside trade books, text books, work books, and graphic organizers
- Choice of work from interests and abilities under the guidance of the teacher.
- Freedom to move around the room, students choose their workspace and work partners every day and are not assigned a desk or table (except in rare cases at the teacher's discretion).
- Grace and Courtesy lessons as well as CSC meetings that help children learn etiquette, cooperation, conflict resolution, and consideration for others.
- Multi-age classrooms of two grades combined.
- Students remain with the same teacher and classmates for two to three years.
- Discovery Woods offers an Environmental Education curriculum as well, which enhances and adds depth to the program. Contact with nature is a priority, and taking students to learn in natural outdoor spaces is part of this program.

**The specific goals for the children who attend Discovery Woods are:**

**Developing a positive attitude toward school**

By building our Social Emotional Learning through our Caring School Community curriculum and listening to students through our Student Leadership Team we hope to continue building relationships and engaging with the students so they feel listened to and respected.



**Helping each child develop self-confidence**

The student tasks are designed so that each new step is built upon what the child has already mastered, thus removing the negative experience of frequent failure. A carefully planned series of successes builds upon inner confidence in the child assuring him that he can learn by her/himself. These confidence building activities likewise contribute to the child's healthy emotional development.

**Assisting each child in building a habit of concentration**

Effective learning presupposes the ability to listen carefully and to attend to what is said or demonstrated. Through a series of absorbing experiences, the child forms habits of extended attention, thus increasing her/his ability to concentrate.

**Fostering an abiding curiosity**

Curiosity is a prerequisite for creative learning. By providing the child with opportunities to discover qualities, dimensions and relationships amidst a rich variety of stimulating learning situations, curiosity is developed and an essential element in creative learning is established.

**Developing habits of initiative and persistence**

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Surround the child with appealing materials and learning activities so the child becomes accustomed to engaging in activities on their own. “Ground rules” call for completing a task once begun and replacing materials after the task is accomplished. This “completion expectation” gradually results in a habit of persistence and perseverance.



### **Fostering inner security and sense of order in the child**

The classrooms provide an environment where children are free to explore, to work, and understand their world. The environment is intended to foster independent functioning resulting in the child’s ability to care for themselves, their environment and each other.

### **What our school implements to meet these goals includes:**

**Differentiated instruction.** In a DW classroom, instruction is tailored to the individual needs of students. The teachers work with small groups or individual children to provide lessons at different skill levels while the other children complete assignments or practice skills. Assignments vary in complexity and are geared to different ability levels and/or learning styles. Independent work also allows students to devote different amounts of time, according to their needs, in order to achieve mastery of tasks.

**Assessment.** Continuous ongoing assessment is vital for effective differentiated instruction. Teachers will use a comprehensive battery of assessment tools for diagnostic, formative and summative assessments. Using multiple assessments, the teacher can obtain a comprehensive picture of student achievement and use the data to inform ongoing instructional decisions such as adjusting activities to particular learning styles or providing additional support and/or intervention. Such data can also be used to gauge the effectiveness of the instructional program, and inform professional development and school progress towards accountability.



**Multi-age groups.** Students will remain with the same teacher for two or three years in the Elementary Levels: This continuity maximizes teaching and learning time, as students do not spend time every year getting to know new teachers, routines, classrooms, and entire new peer groups. Multiage grouping aids in the identification of students’ learning styles, learning needs, and improves school culture, resulting in peer tutoring, peer modeling, and peer reinforcing. Since all students are not expected to have identical skills or perform equally, there is less competition, more respect for each person’s individuality, and the recognition that everyone has unique strengths and contributions to offer the group, which promotes cooperation, empathy, and a sense of

community. It also encourages self-respect and keeps students involved and motivated, which is particularly useful for at-risk and special needs students.

**Unique Design Characteristics** include the development of independence and the freedom and ability to make choices. In a DW classroom, the teacher provides freedom within limits. Children

become independent learners and make choices which permit them to become responsible for their own learning, and contribute to the formation of lifelong learners.

### **Special Education**

Discovery Woods had a special education fiscal and compliance audit during the 2018-2019 school year and was awarded by the Commissioner for having a clean report and no findings for corrective action. DW also received a Notice of No Findings on May 13, 2020 by the Minnesota Department of Education after review of compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, federal grant guidance and state requirements as they relate to procurement and internal controls. The teaching staff attend regular training opportunities for instructional and behavioral interventions, fiscal compliance, and strategies for working with students throughout the school year offered by the Paul Bunyan Service Cooperative and the Minnesota Department of Education.

Discovery Woods has a dedicated special education staff, special education teachers, behavior interventionist, special education paraprofessionals, a licensed speech pathologist, and offers a variety of intervention services. DW works in partnership with the Paul Bunyan Special Education Cooperative of Brainerd which provides DW with the Special Education Director. The Cooperative provides specialized services such as monitoring DW special education compliance, school psychologists, specialists in all areas such as OT, PT, ASD, and behavioral specialists. The Cooperative participates regularly in child observation and child study meetings to assist in identification of special needs students on site.

The curriculum and approach to instruction are designed/adapted to students with disabilities. Our implementation of the inclusion model allows us to serve the needs of all students, including those students classified as students with disabilities, in the least restrictive environment. At DW full inclusion of special education students means the delivery of services inside the regular classroom. Thus, children who qualify for related services (as dictated by their IEPs) will, to the extent possible, receive their adapted curriculum work, and other therapies such as speech-language, physical, and/or occupational therapy, within their regular education classroom. Teachers receive copies of their students' IEP goals, and must be knowledgeable about the needs of students with disabilities, informed of their responsibilities regarding the particular student's program needs, and actively implement any modifications or accommodations in their classes in accordance with the students' IEPs.



When inclusion is appropriate and in accordance with students' IEPs, it is required that special education teachers and special education paras come into the regular education classroom, to provide services to individuals or small groups of regular and special education students in ratios dictated by the IEPs. A special education teacher, special education para, or teaching assistant may sit with students to help implement the goals of an IEP. Full inclusion is our school's goal and will ensure that social and academic interactions with general education students are valued and leveraged to support all student needs. For special education students,

full inclusion provides the opportunity to observe appropriate behaviors and actions modeled by others and foster's development of feelings of empowerment and self-control. For general education students, full inclusion and work on joint projects with special education students fosters an appreciation and respect for the fact that everyone has unique characteristics and abilities. Teachers must be knowledgeable about the needs of students with disabilities, informed of their responsibilities for particular students, able to implement a student's program, and implement any modifications or accommodations in their classes in accordance with the students' IEPs.

### **English Learner Program**

DW's English Language Learners are monitored via ACCESS for ELLs standardized testing. Currently there are not ELL students at DW. As the need arises through home language surveys, intensive intervention strategies will be employed for English Language Learners who demonstrate a greater need than those typically outlined through programs such as Title I and RtI. Every effort will be made to bring the unique cultural needs of individual students into the school day to aid in the transition from home to school.



### **Staffing to Meet the Mission**

Discovery Woods is staffed with Highly Qualified teachers that are selected after an interview process that includes evidence of strong teaching practices, differentiated instruction, and experience with diverse learners.

Refining the quality of classroom instruction, enabling individuals to grow professionally, introducing some Montessori manipulatives to help with the applications of research based strategies and assisting teachers in implementing and teaching strategies aligned with the Minnesota State Academic Standards. The training days for teacher team meetings are regularly scheduled for four times a month and all staff meetings monthly, and for seven in-service days to evaluate programs, discuss children, and plan strategies that will ensure that instruction is targeted to children's individual needs, and that teachers are informed.

It is deemed important that teachers are able to create appropriate academic plans based on the Montessori philosophy and research-based best practices for students of all ability and skill levels. This includes instructional planning and assessment of learning as an integral part of instruction to meet students where they are and move each one to growth. Teachers must also apply the school's assessment system to planning and use effective classroom management techniques.

Through Professional Learning Community meetings, monthly Response to Intervention meetings, and staff development throughout the school year, the teaching staff receive ongoing training on the Minnesota Academic Standards, assessment, and differentiation of instruction, classroom management, and both math and reading interventions.







## **High School Graduation**

Discovery Woods teaches students the tools they need to foster their own learning. Discovery Woods teachers use language that helps students realize the need for high school graduation and studies beyond high school. We help students understand and work with issues facing today's youth by reaching beyond the classroom. We bring in guest speakers, visit universities through Project YES!, participate in team-building activities, and encourage students to take leadership roles. These opportunities give our students the confidence to focus on their studies and develop a solid work ethic both in class and through extracurricular activities. DW facilitates academic decision-making, curriculum information, and assessment of student interests and needs. DW also provides a positive school culture, meaningful relationships with adults, and engaging instruction to help motivate students to want to be in school. DW also uses technology as a tool to bolster learning and keep the students' attention.



Discovery Woods 2022-2023 Calendar

	S	M	T	W	T	F	S		In Session	Workshop	No School =	
<b>September</b>	28	29	30	31								
			1	2	3			Teacher Workshop 8/29-9/1		4		
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Labor Day 9/5		4		
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	First Day of School 9/6		5		
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24			5		
	25	26	27	28	29	30				5		
									19			
<b>October</b>							1					
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Inservice Day 10/7		4		
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15			5		
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	EM Conference		3		
	23	24	25	26	27	28	29			5		
	30	31								1		
									18			
<b>November</b>			1	2	3	4	5					
	6	7	8	9	10	11	12			4		
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19			5		
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	Thanksgiving 11/24-25		5		
	27	28	29	30				Inservice 11/28		3		
										2		
									19			
<b>December</b>				1	2	3						
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			2		
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17			5		
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24			5		
	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Winter Break 12/23 -1/2		4		
									0			
									16			
<b>January</b>												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Inservice 1/3				
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	School resumes 1/4		3		
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	Inservice 1/16		5		
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	End of 1st Semester 1/20		4		
	29	30	31							5		
									2			
									19			
<b>February</b>			1	2	3	4						
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11			3		
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Inservice 2/17		5		
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	President's Day 2/20		4		
	26	27	28							4		
										2		
									18			
<b>March</b>			1	2	3	4						
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Inservice 3/3		2		
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Spring Break 3/13-3/17		5		
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	School resumes 3/20		0		
	26	27	28	29	30	31				5		
									5			
									17			
<b>April</b>							1					
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Good Friday 4/7		4		
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Inservice 4/10		4		
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22			5		
	23	24	25	26	27	28	29			5		
	30									1		
									18			
<b>May</b>		1	2	3	4	5	6					
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13			5		
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20			5		
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	Last PS Day 5/26		5		
	28	29	30	31				Memorial Day 5/29		2		
									22			
<b>June</b>			1	2	3							
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Last Kindergarten Day 6/1		2		
								End of 2nd Semester 6/2		2		
								Last student day 6/2		2		
								Teacher Workshop 6/5		1		
									168	12		

**No School =**   
**Staff Workshop =**   
**School Days =**   
**First/Last Day =**   
**Board Meeting =**   
**Early Out =** 

Semester Start/End Dates		
	Start	End
Sem 1	Sept. 6	Jan. 20
Sem 2	Jan. 23	Jun. 2

Board Meeting Dates	
7/25/2022	1/30/2023
8/29/2022	2/27/2023
9/26/2022	3/27/2023
10/24/2022	4/24/2023
11/21/2022	5/22/2023
12/19/2022	6/26/2023

Testing Calendar			
	Fall	Winter	Spring
STAR/FAST Testing	Sept 12th-23rd	January 9th-27th	May 8th-19th
MCA Rd & M	NA	NA	April 3rd-28th
MCA Sci	NA	NA	May 1st-5th
MTAS	NA	NA	April 3rd-28th



## Innovative Practices & Implementation

### After School Care:

To accommodate working parents' schedules, there is an after school care program available to all students. The after school care program runs from 2:50pm to 5:30pm. Registration for after school care is a separate process from the school's enrollment registration. This is a fee based program.



### Discovery Woods Preschool Program:

The Montessori preschool students share a classroom with the kindergarten students in the morning. The grouping of students is called "Children's House". The ages of the children in the preschool are 33 months through age 5. The classroom is a "living room" for children. The instruction is individualized and after a lesson the children choose their work from among the materials displayed on open shelves, and they work in specific work areas. In the Montessori preschool, academic competency is a means to an end, and the manipulatives are viewed as "materials for development".

### Montessori Philosophy and Manipulatives:

The philosophy of Maria Montessori will be the cornerstone of the educational programs at Discovery Woods while complying with the requirements of the Minnesota Department of Education. Students will have the freedom to move about the room, have individualized instruction, participate in extended work periods every morning, have grace and courtesy lessons, have multi-age classrooms, utilize the outdoors as a classroom and remain with the same teacher for 2-3 years.



### Successes and Challenges:

DW has had success with having a school wide Title I Reading Specialist who shares with staff what techniques and research shows is working well with students so we can continue to see the growth in our student's reading proficiency. DW continues to work with Math Corps to help with our math skills as well as finding curriculums to supplement Montessori that not only are shown to work well for students but will help our teachers as well. DW has also had success with student retention by listening to the families and students and providing what they need through academics, SEL and student leadership teams. DW has also implemented a new social emotional learning curriculum, CSC that will help students in many ways including academics. DW has had great challenges with finding teachers who are Montessori trained but continue to use the Montessori philosophy knowing that when implemented correctly our students will receive great benefit in educational learning. We will continue to find high quality teachers who enjoy hands-on, individualized learning and train and mentor them with the philosophy that goes with Montessori.

### **Strategic Plan Highlights:**

- **Financial Stability:** Discovery Woods will continue the financial plan for long term sustainability. DW will continue marketing and fundraising efforts.
- **Academic Programming:** Discovery Woods will continue to find the educational strategies that are working well for our students as well as continue developing our curriculum mapping and retain open minds to new and innovative strategies.
- **Nature & Outdoors:** Continue to implement more outdoor classroom experience as well as exploring and playing outdoors daily. All staff involve the students in our school gardens for lessons.
- **Community & Culture:** Continue with our CSC SEL curriculum and Grace & Courtesy efforts to strive to have school-wide behavior management that all staff believe in and are part of. Increase parent and community involvement by having continuing communication and involve parents and neighborhood adults to volunteer.

### **Academic Performance: Goals & Benchmarks**

#### **PROGRESS ON OW CONTRACTUAL ACADEMIC GOALS & WBWF ALIGNMENT**

Discovery Woods has always had their students at the forefront of every decision that is made. Staff at Discovery Woods go above and beyond what they need to make sure they are doing all that they can for students. Our assessment data has been looked at to address certain needs in our students and we look at this data routinely and come up with strategies to make quick changes along with long term ideas. We have been using STAR and Fastbridge assessments to truly dig deep into the data and see where we as a school need to concentrate academically and also for our educators to see where individual students are struggling.

We continue to use local assessments to find out where students are and have openly discussed with teachers that they can use STAR assessing throughout the school year as they feel necessary. For younger grade levels we have also used Fastbridge to assess as well as use their top notch intervention system. Kits have been made for 1/2 classrooms so teachers do not have to take the time to put the games together or print anything out, everything is there for them. We are continuing to look at adding resources for teachers for teaching math as well as increasing extra math assistance for students. We had a Math Corps instructor this year to help with students in Kindergarten through 3rd grade. We plan to continue with our school wide Title I reading program and have also taken advantage of the Minnesota Reading Corps beginning in FY19 and continued through FY23. DW is working hard on continuing their high staff retention to help further our proficiency. DW continues to monitor and assess closely to provide the instruction each student needs so they are not falling behind or have pieces or gaps in their instruction due to the pandemic.

DW does plan to provide all performance data for every goal to make it clear that we have had progress and will meet the standard; DW is planning to continue our school wide Title I Reading instruction as well as part time Title Math instruction to keep us on board with proficiency. DW is also continuing our Environmental Education (EE) instruction through each classroom teacher as well as having our EE lead instructor help provide lessons and resources. Our EE teacher is also addressing science proficiency along with our upper elementary teachers so we can meet our contractual goals and meet standards. Students schoolwide will participate in our Environmental Education Exhibition. Preschool staff will prepare students for kindergarten and measure their work completion. DW will continue to work on attendance and work hard to keep this above 90%.

**World’s Best Workforce (WBWF) Goal Areas:**

- **Ready for Kindergarten [R4K]:** All students are ready for kindergarten.
- **Reading Well by 3rd Grade [RG3]:** All students in third grade achieve grade-level literacy.
- **Achievement Gap Closure [AGC]:** All racial and economic achievement gaps between students are closed.
- **Career and College Ready [CCR]:** All students are career- and college-ready before graduating from high school.
- **Graduate from High School [GRAD]:** All students graduate from high school.

**Indicator 1: Mission Related Outcomes**

*Goal: Over the period of the contract, students at Discovery Woods School (DWS) will demonstrate growth in critical thinking and environmental stewardship as measured by classroom observations of executive function and environmental education projects.*

**WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal:**

- **Achievement Gap Closure [AGC]:** All racial and economic achievement gaps between students are closed.
- **Career and College Ready [CCR]:** All students are career- and college-ready before graduating from high school.
- **Graduate from High School [GRAD]:** All students graduate from high school.

**Key Measures & Results for this Goal:**

Based on the results for the school’s ELP, students had growth in environmental awareness and knowledge throughout each grade level.

Through use of Project Learning Tree materials teachers and students in younger grades learned about seasons, tree parts and life cycle. 66% of students were successful in the goal. Students in grades 1-2 also learned about Minnesota animals and their habitats, with a success rate of 95% of students receiving a passing score on the rubric.

Students in grades 3-4 learned about ecosystems and energy flow, 72% of students received a score of 75% or better on the assessment.

All students were able to visit the school garden for planting, harvesting, and exploring the plants and insects that live there.

The fifth and sixth graders learned a lot about recycling and were successful in helping the school increase their recycled materials throughout the school year. They also educated others and formed a school-wide Green Team which implemented an electronic recycling program and plastic bag recycling drop off site.

**Indicator 2: English Language Learners**

**Goal:** Discovery Woods is not evaluated in this indicator area as it does not serve a significant

population of English Learners. We do not currently have any ELL students.

**WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal:**

- **Achievement Gap Closure [AGC]:** All racial and economic achievement gaps between students are closed.

**Key Measures & Results for this Goal:**

DW has an English Learner Plan of Service in place and our District Assessment Coordinator and on-site testing coordinator have had training for ACCESS testing. As needed we will collaborate with English Learner certified teachers. DW provides school wide Title I services and our ELL students would participate in this program.

ACCESS Data: Discovery Woods does not serve a significant population of English Learners.

**Indicator 3: Reading Growth**

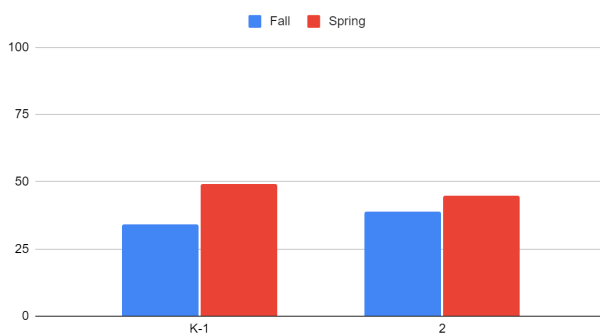
*Goal: Over the period of the contract, students at DWS will demonstrate growth in reading as measured by state accountability tests and nationally normed assessments.*

**WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal:**

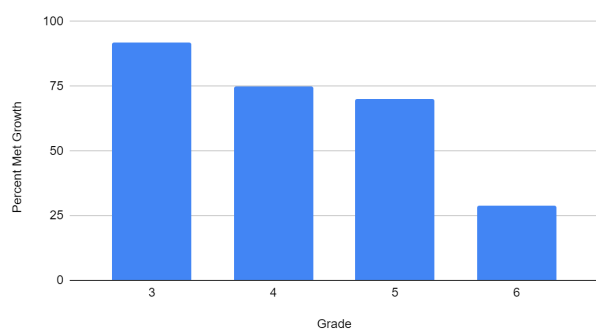
- **Reading Well by 3rd Grade [RG3]:** All students in third grade achieve grade-level literacy.
- **Achievement Gap Closure [AGC]:** All racial and economic achievement gaps between students are closed.
- **Career and College Ready [CCR]:** All students are career- and college-ready before graduating from high school.
- **Graduate from High School [GRAD]:** All students graduate from high school.

**Key Measures & Results for this Goal:** DW has continued to provide a full time Title I Reading teacher. There was also a ReadingCorps program in place for the 2022-2023 school year. This allows the school to commit time and resources to help our students reach their reading goals. Our local assessment results show that students in grades K-1 grew from 34% at a no risk level (fall) to 49% at a no risk level (spring). Our 2nd grade students grew from 39% (fall) at no risk to 45% at no risk (spring) as evidenced by FastBridge results. The 3rd grade students have a slightly different measure with STAR testing showing grade-wide results at 92% of students at or above 50 points on the Student Growth Percentile.

Percent of students at "Low Risk" or above



Percent Met Growth Goal



## Indicator 4: Math Growth

**Goal:** Over the period of the contract, students at DWS will demonstrate growth in math as measured by state accountability tests and nationally normed assessments.

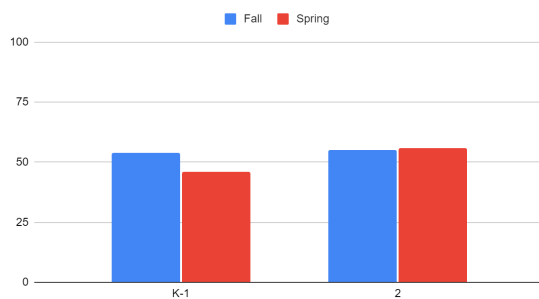
### WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal:

- **Achievement Gap Closure [AGC]:** All racial and economic achievement gaps between students are closed.
- **Career and College Ready [CCR]:** All students are career- and college-ready before graduating from high school.
- **Graduate from High School [GRAD]:** All students graduate from high school.

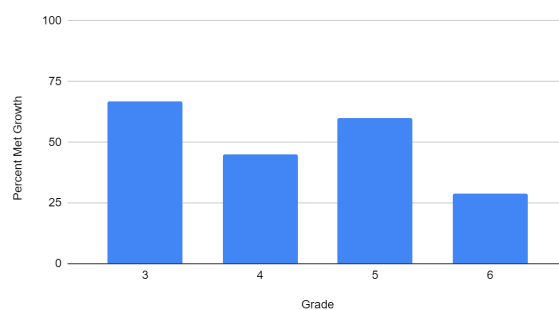
### Key Measures & Results for this Goal:

Discovery Woods had a MathCorps tutor for the 2022-2023 school year that was able to work with students. Our local assessment (FastBridge grades K-2) results show that students in grades K-1 did not grow overall with 54% at a no risk level (fall) to 46% at a no risk level (spring). Our 2nd grade students grew from 55% (fall) at no risk to 56% at no risk (spring). The 3-6 grade students have a slightly different measure with STAR testing showing overall results at 51% of students at or above 50 points on the Student Growth Percentile.

Percent of students at "Low Risk" or above



Percent Met Growth Goal



## Indicator 5: Reading Proficiency

**Goal:** Over the period of the contract, students at DWS will demonstrate proficiency in reading as measured by state accountability tests.

### WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal:

**Reading Well by 3rd Grade [RG3]:** All students in third grade achieve grade-level literacy.

**Achievement Gap Closure [AGC]:** All racial and economic achievement gaps between students are closed.

**Career and College Ready [CCR]:** All students are career- and college-ready before graduating from high school.

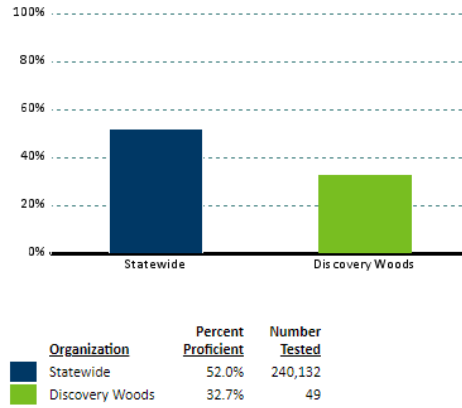
**Graduate from High School [GRAD]:** All students graduate from high school.

### Key Measures & Results for this Goal:

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Discovery Woods decreased reading proficiency from last year compared to the statewide results for grades 3-6. This year's results are 32.7% proficient vs. the state results of 52%.

**Schoolwide Results for Reading Proficiency:**



**Indicator 6: Math Proficiency**

**Goal:** *Over the period of the contract, students at DWS will demonstrate proficiency in math as measured by state accountability tests.*

**WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal:**

**Achievement Gap Closure [AGC]:** All racial and economic achievement gaps between students are closed.

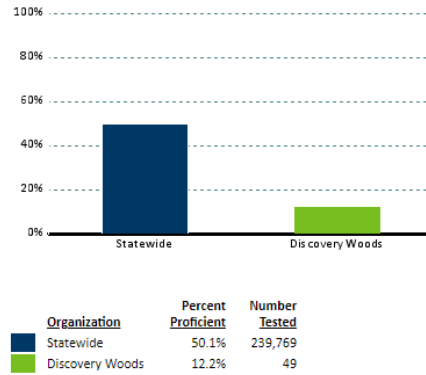
**Career and College Ready [CCR]:** All students are career- and college-ready before graduating from high school.

**Graduate from High School [GRAD]:** All students graduate from high school.

**Key Measures & Results for this Goal:**

Discovery Woods (grades 3-6) was far below the statewide results for math proficiency compared to the same grades statewide. 12.2% vs. 50.1%.

**Schoolwide Results for Math Proficiency**



**Indicator 7: Science Proficiency (and Growth)**

**Goal:** Over the period of the contract, students at DWS will demonstrate proficiency in science as measured by state accountability tests.

**WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal:**

**Achievement Gap Closure [AGC]:** All racial and economic achievement gaps between students are closed.

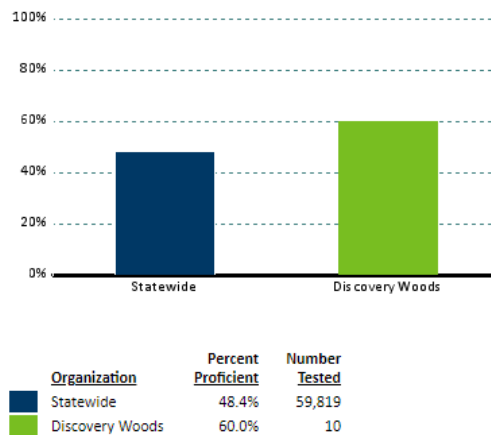
**Career and College Ready [CCR]:** All students are career- and college-ready before graduating from high school.

**Graduate from High School [GRAD]:** All students graduate from high school.

**Key Measures & Results for this Goal:**

Discovery Woods exceeded the state proficiency in the 5th grade Science MCA in 2023. Discovery Woods proficiency was at 60%, the state proficiency was at 48.4%.

**Fifth Grade Results for Science Proficiency**



**Indicator 8: Proficiency or Growth in Other Curricular Areas or Educational Programs**

**Goal:** Over the period of the contract, preschool students at DWS will demonstrate readiness for kindergarten as measured by work completion rates.

**WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal:**

**Ready for Kindergarten [R4K]:** All students are ready for kindergarten.

**Key Measures & Results for this Goal:**

Work completion rate for preschool students was 100% from SY23. Students are given chances to master a work before moving on to another lesson, so they practice until proficiency. If students are not consistently meeting expectations, they are monitored and parents are met with concerning kindergarten entrance or recommendation of remaining at preschool status. Since students are in the same classroom for Pre-K and Kindergarten, parents and staff are open to this option.

**Indicator 9: Post Secondary Readiness**

**The school is not evaluated in this indicator area as it does not serve high school students.**

**Indicator 10: Attendance**

*Goal: Over the period of the contract, students at DWS will attend the school at high rates.*

**WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal:**

**Achievement Gap Closure [AGC]:** All racial and economic achievement gaps between students are closed.

**Career and College Ready [CCR]:** All students are career- and college-ready before graduating from high school.

**Graduate from High School [GRAD]:** All students graduate from high school.

**Key Measures & Results for this Goal:** Discovery Woods believes good attendance promotes academic success. It is very important that all students attend school and class on time every day. DW is watching absences more frequently and keeping families informed of the importance of attendance for all ages of students. DW wants each student to know their worth and feel good about themselves. DW is developing a culture and climate through CSC (Caring School Community) so students are feeling good and have that structure and positive feeling while they are attending DW. DW also works with families collaboratively at how the family and school can work together on attendance. DW will continue to foster relationships with students and families in order to keep those attendance rates up in the 90% area.



**Teacher Equity Data:**

Conversations include the School Director, Instructional Lead and members of the Leadership Implementation Team as part of Discovery Woods’ annual staffing process February to March of each academic year. Teachers are also part of our bimonthly PLCs to ensure alignment across curriculum and grade level spans.

School Director, Assistant Director, Instructional Lead along with the business manager and administrative assistant maintains data on all teachers including demographic data, number of years’ experience, professional degrees, licensure areas, and evaluation results.



Our priority is to hire highly qualified candidates for all positions, as well as those who will be a good fit for our district/school/students as determined through the interview and reference check process. As positions open, we prioritize hiring licensed staff for direct, core instruction, and look to community experts or teachers with a variance for specialized areas.

Discovery Woods continues to develop a 3-year evaluation cycle to support professional growth on an ongoing basis. Teachers who are not making adequate gains participate in a professional improvement plan to support their growth and development.

We actively encourage staff to advance their education by offering salary adjustments annually. Many district sponsored staff development activities offer recertification credit. At times we offer stipends for staff to take advanced training.

We try creative recruitment ideas to attract high quality teachers during this time of teacher shortages. DW is also continually educating teachers of cultural diversity and providing any knowledge needed to be sure we are educating all students equally.

We attempt to hire teachers from diverse backgrounds by posting and recruiting at locations where they would likely be connected. DW's student population includes African American, Native American Indian and Spanish ethnicities and DW continues to not only send job notifications to families but also in local newspapers, bulletin boards and other areas we feel notifications will meet all cultural diversities. It has been difficult to find diverse staff due to the Brainerd Lakes Area not having high diversity but continuing to look and offer to qualified individuals.

It is Discovery Woods' policy and practice to provide equal educational opportunity for all students, as evidenced through school board policy, as well as the district's mission and vision statements. All policies along with the mission and vision are available on the district website for the public and school families to access.

DW is a member of the service cooperative, Sourcewell, and takes advantage of the many professional development opportunities they offer for teachers, administration and support staff. DW currently sends the Title I teacher to the Title I network meetings and workshops, as well as classroom teachers who have attended different subject networks and workshops and our Instructional Lead attends the DAC and science networks and workshops.

Discovery Woods' recruitment/interviewing team meets annually to look at staffing and discuss whether any staff need to be rotated to better serve student needs as well as looking at where each teacher may excel depending on their teaching/learning styles, their background and their licenses and degrees. We gather assessment results, parent/student feedback as well as staff input to see if there are areas/classrooms that may



need to be re-structured. Discovery Woods also looks through every class list and places students as evenly as possible dependent on knowledge of data, gender etc. We previously moved a teacher from the classroom to a Title I Reading/Reading Specialist position as she has a Master’s in Reading, Bachelor’s in Communication Arts/Literature and due to that being her love she routinely looks at research to better every student and herself. We in turn use her skills to then help classroom teachers with reading strategies and interventions and she helps mentor new teachers or those that lack the ELA knowledge. Discovery Woods’ goal is to have experienced licensed educators for every classroom so every student receives the best education possible. We have had great success in finding teachers who teach what they have a license in so luckily have 100% in that area. However, retaining experienced teachers has been a struggle; we currently have 75% of teachers having at least three years of experience. We have been lucky enough to have some educators with advanced degrees who bring a great element of insight into the student instruction. We will continue to not only find retention in those highly qualified teachers but also continue to seek experienced and qualified teachers when a position arises and be sure to have staff in the areas where they exceed so all students have an equal opportunity to a great education. DW also aspires to help guide struggling or new teachers so they become successful instructors.

	Licensed Educators	3+ Years Experience	Working in Area of License	Advanced Degrees	Racially/Ethnically Diverse
Teachers	12	9 (75%)	12 (100%)	2 (17%)	0 (0%)
Support Staff	1	1 (100%)	1 (100%)	1 (100%)	

**Federal and State Accountability**

During the school year of 2014-2015, Discovery Woods was identified as a priority school by the Minnesota Department of Education using the Multiple Measurement Ratings system. Since then, we have worked with various advocates assigned to us from different Centers of Excellence and continue to work on a comprehensive needs assessment, aligning the state standards in math and reading, and identifying and implementing research-based instructional and assessment strategies to increase student learning. During the first three years we implemented an authentic Montessori program, and the majority of the teachers were unfamiliar with the state standards and how to integrate them with Montessori methods/philosophy. Thus, our students were not exposed to standards-based instruction and assessments in their regular classroom practice as explicitly as best practice would indicate is ideal. Additionally, we identified that while Montessori materials are high quality and effective at teaching concepts, the state tests often refer to manipulatives or concepts that our students had not been exposed to, so we needed to bring a standards-based model to use with our Montessori philosophy so that our students receive the best of both conventional and Montessori philosophy instruction. Additionally, we brought in a Math Corps tutor for students to get more support in learning complex math concepts and also to go over the base math that students need prior to advancing. We have

concentrated on our ELA standards for scope and sequence and have tied in Montessori materials and philosophy with these state standards. DW continues to work with our scope and sequence and continues concentrating more on the math standards. DW has been identified as a High Quality Charter School by MDE but did not apply for the CSP grant.

### **ESSA Identification**

DW has not been identified to receive comprehensive support or additional targeted support for the FY23 school year.

## **Educational Effectiveness: Assessment & Evaluation**

### **Curriculum & Instruction Review Process:**

Discovery Woods implements the Minnesota State Standards, in addition to the state standards Discovery Woods is a school based on Montessori philosophy and this philosophy into each content area across all grades, kindergarten through grade 6, as teachers are able. The DW curriculum review cycle is ongoing and used to evaluate alignment of standards and curriculum, review common assessments, and complete curriculum mapping. DW continuously reviews instruction to align with the Minnesota State Standards. We are currently implementing a new evidence-based ELA curriculum in grades 1-6. We are continuing to match our Moving with Math program to a teacher-created Guided Math curriculum After a year of curriculum implementation, teachers review the success of the curriculum and make adjustments to ensure student success. The process is guided by the Curriculum Committee and Administrative Team.



The Montessori focus is ensuring each child learns and from their own individual launching point, we are here to help children learn. Adding in the instruction, learning targets, and assessments of content aligned with the Minnesota State Standards/Benchmarks ensures that students are prepared for success from grade level to grade level within and beyond our school. DW works hard to be equitable for all students by using multiple learning methods, getting the tools each child needs and meeting each child where they are. Our teachers watch for professional development opportunities regarding equity and have gone through cultural competency training. DW monitors data to identify gaps and then meets to discuss how we will address these gaps by using interventions, specialists and tutors as well as other methods of instruction.

### **Teacher Evaluation**

DW implemented a teacher evaluation process.

The framework for the teacher evaluation consists of:

- Annual Evaluation Process
- Professional Learning Communities

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- Student Engagement Measures
- Student Growth Measures
- Professional Growth Plan

The education staff is responsible for:

- Understanding and implementing the requirements of the Minnesota State Statute 122A.40
- Measuring and documenting student growth
- Measuring and documenting student engagement explicitly aligned with the elements of their content specific curriculum
- Participation and documentation of a Professional Growth Plan (PGP) and (Professional Growth Goals PGG) that includes:
  - Annual goal setting based on school level goals
  - Administrative conferences 2 times per year
  - Reflection and documentation of their PGG
  - Peer Mentoring
  - Self Evaluations

Teacher observations are performed by an administrative team member three times per year. Observations are also performed by the Instructional Lead and Director on a rotating basis, with feedback given informally and formally.

### School Director Evaluation

The Executive Director is responsible for ensuring that students are achieving at the highest levels. Recruiting and retaining exceptional school leaders is a means by which our School ensures exceptional achievement. It is the Executive Director’s responsibility to champion its leader, build and nurture trust, encourage and reward candor, and address challenges proactively and in partnership with the staff. The evaluation process allows the Board to engage formally with its Executive Director about performance strengths and challenges and to discuss professional development opportunities.



### OBJECTIVES FOR A SCHOOL LEADER EVALUATION

- Foster explicit communications at regular intervals between the Board and the Executive Director regarding personal performance, progress against goals, and accountability
- Develop clear performance measures and goals so the Executive Director’s work is aligned with and supports the school’s strategic direction
- Discuss the Executive Director’s performance throughout the school year, allowing for opportunities to revise performance expectations, goals, and professional development plans
- Create opportunities to discuss long-term leadership needs of the school throughout the year
- Provide opportunities for professional development, where needed, provide an opportunity via self-assessment for the Executive Director’s to reflect on his/her performance

- Evaluate the Executive Director’s ability to perform the core competencies of the position and to complete pre-defined goals, recognizing successful completion of goals and addressing performance issues associated with incomplete goals
- Reward performance per results achieved and behaviors demonstrated.
- Address performance concerns and develop targeted professional development plans to improve performance.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR EVALUATION TIMELINE**

**August**

- Jointly establish Executive Director’s goals
- Included but limited to: Areas defined in job description
- Collectively establish Executive Director’s professional development/improvement plan (if required)

**January**

- 6 month progress check in
- If necessary, jointly adjust goals

**June**

- Executive Director completes self-assessment
- Board conducts 360 evaluation in accordance with Board procedure
- Executive Director and Board summarizes assessment results
- Jointly establish and adjust Executive Director’s goals

It is the understanding of the Board and the Executive Director that the Board would evaluate the Executive Director’s performance based on progress being made toward the achievement of these expectations along with his/her overall performance relative to the usual responsibilities of the Executive Director.

**Additional Data:**

- A Title I teacher for reading continues to work with students and also helps mentor classroom teachers and provides some push in instruction. Also, extra math help was provided by Math Corps on an as-needed basis determined by the assessments in class as well as STAR and/or Fastbridge score from each student. Fifth grade students are given time for a science class every day based on fifth grade science MCA scores. We have done well on this assessment in most previous years and want to continue with the high scores.



- Teachers use the state standards to implement and further develop curriculum and instruction for students. The formal and informal assessments performed in class are based on this instruction. Students are given the STAR and/or Fastbridge assessment in the fall, winter, and spring. The data from this screening assessment is analyzed for each student with the areas of skill improvement highlighted in future

lessons. All primary students (K-2) are assessed for reading skills through the Title I School Wide Reading program using a Phonics Inventory and a Phonemic Awareness Skills Test.

- A School Wide Title I Reading Plan is in place to support those students at Discovery Woods School who are not meeting state standards and who are not reading at grade level. The Discovery Woods Director, Assistant Director, Instructional Lead, Reading Specialist, Special Educator, and Teachers meet regularly to discuss our strategic Response to Intervention (RtI) Plan for students that need additional academic support, and Professional Learning Communities (PLC) Meetings. The Administration team made up of the instructional lead, director and assistant director lead the PLCs.
- The purpose of a School Wide Title I Program is to improve the academic program for the entire school community. Title I resources may be used to help classroom teachers improve core academic instruction, provide prevention and intervention services, and/or to coordinate any school wide learning improvement initiatives.
- The overall goal of the School Wide Title I Reading program is to provide classroom support and intervention in the primary grades (K-2) to prevent later reading difficulties, and to remediate reading difficulties in older students (grades 3-6). The reading goals set forth in the Title I narrative are measured using FastBridge, STAR Assessments, as well as phonics, phonemic awareness, and oral reading fluency measures.
- Students who receive School Wide Reading Title I Services as part of the school's Response to Intervention (RtI) plan are progress monitored on a weekly or bi-monthly basis. If progress is being made after 8 weeks, the intervention continues until the student is no longer in need of intervention. If progress is not being made, a new intervention is started for another 8 weeks. If a student fails to make necessary progress, the student may be referred for a special education evaluation as determined by the RtI team and the student's parents or guardians.
- Data from MCA tests are examined at the end of the school year, with staff working together to determine the percentage in each score category (does not meet, partially meets, meets, exceeds) of each student group. These are discussed and strategies are developed for improving curriculum and instruction within these sub groups.

**Student Learning:** Discovery Woods improves student learning in a variety of ways. Foremost in improving learning is using evidence-based instruction while weaving in the Montessori model or philosophy to meet the academic and social needs of each child. Lessons are given in a variety of ways including individually, in small groups, or in whole groups. Students are encouraged to keep track of their assignments and have the opportunity to meet frequently with the teacher to discuss progress. Teachers promote student responsibility by providing them with choice academic activities, encouraging them to track assignments, and promoting cooperation with peers. Through such tasks, students can improve executive function skills, which are an important predictor of success. Students are able to show their best work by sharing it with their class at gathering times, displaying it in the hallway, sharing it with families during events or publishing it in the local newspaper. Discovery Woods teachers meet

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children where they are and work to advance their skills, whether they are lower, higher, or at an average level. We want to have flexibility in meeting the child's learning needs. Discovery Woods uses multi-age groupings and a vast variety of materials and books that allow a child to practice skills below an average level or to encourage curious and faster learners to reach beyond the standard curriculum and explore their interests further in language, math, science, history, geography and the arts. Discovery Woods can capitalize on this flexibility further in some cases by sending a child with advanced skills to another classroom for lessons meant for older children or supporting a student that needs extra social or academic encouragement in a classroom with younger children while maintaining that student in his/her age-based grade. These techniques improve learning for students, but don't always translate to better standardized test scores. Discovery Woods gives options to students who have trouble learning in traditional settings or don't feel like their needs are being met in the large elementary schools in the local district. The hands-on manipulatives and freedom to move about the classroom entices some children to progress that would otherwise lose interest or give up on studying. Discovery Woods helps lower-performing students improve their learning, even though the student may be performing below standard norms or unable to meet grade-level standards..

Struggling students get further support through additional services Discovery Woods provides. The school utilizes Title I funding to give identified children extra instruction. Discovery Woods holds frequent Response to Intervention (RtI) and Child Study meetings of collaboration with teachers, special education staff and special education experts through the Paul Bunyan Cooperative, the school's special education director, to identify and support children with special needs.

Discovery Woods uses Title I, Reading and Math Corps, and Special Education to supplement regular classroom instruction, but considers the methods listed above and the use of the outdoors as part of the school's mission-fulfilling educational priorities. Discovery Woods describes its implementation of the Montessori philosophy, environmental education, Title I, and special education services in each annual report.

### **Secondary Purposes:**

#### **1. Increase learning opportunities for pupils:**

Discovery Woods offers the non-traditional public school option in the Brainerd Lakes area. Our Montessori philosophy offers a new learning opportunity for students, and those that choose Discovery Woods are taking advantage of this option. Discovery Woods uses the Montessori philosophy of multi-age classrooms, manipulative learning materials, prepared environment, small group lessons, and self-directed learning that is more effective for some learners.



#### **2. Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods:**

World's Best Workforce & Annual Report, | Drafted August 7, 2023

Discovery Woods uses the Montessori philosophy, now over 100 years old and the most widespread educational method in the world, yet considered innovative as it is not the typical technique used in the United States. All Montessori trained teachers will also support those who do not have official training. Discovery Woods is implementing more environmental education and outdoor classroom experience for students to expand their educational experience.

Discovery Woods is working on both staff retention as well as student retention by addressing needs of both staff and students and using additional help by Sourcewell to also help with student achievement. DW has also introduced a new social emotional curriculum, Caring School Community, that we feel will help with retention as students and staff will be heard and supported.

DW is reaching out for help with teacher networking opportunities and training to integrate high quality instruction. Our team works together in leadership teams and meetings to provide a rigorous curriculum for students. Children's House (preschool and kindergarten) classes push a full Montessori education. Practical Life activities help the child to develop independence, competence, and confidence through use of materials that speak to the young child's love of doing and participating. This curriculum area offers a wide variety of everyday materials for the child to use to develop order, coordination, concentration, and independence – all of which lay a strong foundation for later academic achievement. The Sensorial curriculum speaks to the young child's innate desire to directly and actively explore the world through one's senses. These materials help to refine the child's sensory awareness and foster his/her ability to make judgments and comparisons on the basis of size, shape, weight, texture, and sound. Montessori Children's House classrooms are language rich environments. From the earliest age children learn to use language to express their needs and feelings, developing oral and receptive language skills as powerful communication tools. Children's vocabularies are enhanced on a routine basis through specific lessons and through the practice of using accurate and correct language when naming things. Words like "sphere", "peninsula", and "rectangle" are examples of specific language that children learn to use in relation to experiences with concrete objects. The Language curriculum follows the child through sequential activities that develop skills in sound discrimination, prepare the hand for writing, encourage the development of written expression, and lay a foundation of phonetic skills that prepare a child for reading and writing. Children develop visual and auditory discrimination skills through matching, sequencing and rhyming activities, playing "I Spy" games to develop awareness of the sounds that make up words. The child is introduced to sandpaper letters to aid in the mastery of sound/symbol association, eventually composing simple phonetic words and learning to read (decode) both phonetic and sight words. This process unfolds in a predictable sequence, but as the child is ready, not on a set teacher-directed time table. The refinement of the pincer grip through various Practical Life activities supports the eventual use of a pencil for handwriting. During the Kindergarten year the child continues to practice with phonetic and phonemic skills, putting them into daily practice with actual reading and writing activities. The refinement of the hand continues as the child practices handwriting skills on a daily basis. In this year, the children are introduced to the story elements of character, setting, plot, conflict and resolution as well as the genres of folk tales, fables, fairy tales, fantasy, non-fiction, and poetry. The Montessori Math materials support the child's gradual understanding of abstract mathematical concepts through the manipulation of





concrete materials. Over the 3-year Children's House cycle the child internalizes concepts of number, symbol, and sequence, exploring the decimal system through use of concrete materials, and working with operations such as addition and subtraction, again through use of concrete, attractive, and engaging materials. The Montessori Math materials help the child build a solid foundation of the basic math principles to prepare for later abstract reasoning and to develop problem-solving capabilities. Using hands-on materials, the Kindergartners are introduced to the concepts of number relations and algebra, geometry, measurement, money, and telling time. The Children's House History and Geography curriculum builds upon the child's keen interest in our planet and the life upon it. Beginning with the creation of the Earth, during a child's birthday celebration, the child gains an impression of the passage of time; this concept will be explored much more fully in the Lower, Middle and Upper Elementary classrooms. Children's House classes focus each year on continent studies, helping children to gain an appreciation of different cultures, holidays and traditions celebrated around the world. The Science curriculum introduces them to the concept of living and non-living, plant and animal, magnetic and non-magnetic, sink and float, the nomenclatures of the animal kingdom and the human body. The Nature curriculum often changes with the season and helps children understand the reasoning behind common phenomena such as leaves changing color, hibernation of animals, migration of birds etc. Teachers are using both large and small group instruction as well as one on one instruction when able for teaching lower, middle and upper elementary students literacy.

Classes also worked on math in a different variety of ways including using manipulatives and extra small groups and one and one time with a math specialist during the school day. Teachers are using state standards to educate with a rigorous curriculum. Teachers not only use inquiry-based instruction but also use concept-based instruction and manipulatives to achieve better absorption of material for students who learn in many different ways.

Our school is its own district, we also have a small student and teacher population, these factors contribute to a small need for teacher distribution. We continue to have only seven classroom teachers. However, we do look at background and academic needs when placing students within a classroom, and split them evenly throughout. We also have administration meetings two times a month to look at data and inquire as to what is working for students and what we need to work on and how to address those needs.

## **Student & Parent Satisfaction**

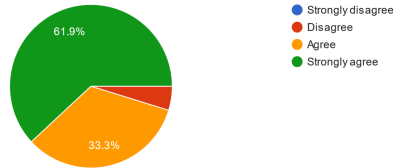
Discovery Woods did reach out to families with surveys for parents and students. Fall surveys did show families are happy with Discovery Woods in areas of safety, feeling welcome, communication, instruction and discipline. Student survey was communicated through the classroom teacher and students felt heard and safe however students were still not feeling prepared for assessments.

### **Fall Parent Survey Results:**

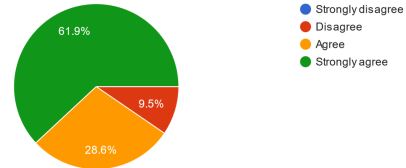
Family involvement has been a struggle for Discovery Woods; we only had 21 responses for the fall survey. 20 of the 21 respondents agreed that their child is safe at DW, DW has appropriate academic expectations, children enjoy going to DW, students are recognized for doing good work, families feel welcome, the school building is clean and inviting, and families would recommend DW to others. 100% of respondents agreed that the students have highly effective teachers at DW! Areas with 2-3

who disagree are the school has high standards for student behavior, the school provides a caring environment for the students, the school meets the academic needs of the children, communication and volunteer opportunities. Administration has begun a behavior team and are revamping our behavior protocols. Our team did a book study reviewing a few different programs and will be transforming some into what will work for DW and their students. Admin has continued great work with ELA and has now began more with the math curriculum. We are working hard at better communication not only district wide but classroom to family also.

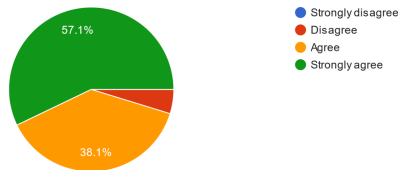
My children enjoy going to this school.  
21 responses



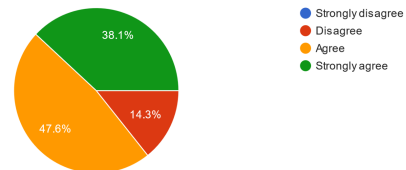
The school provides a caring environment for my children.  
21 responses



My children are recognized for doing good work.  
21 responses



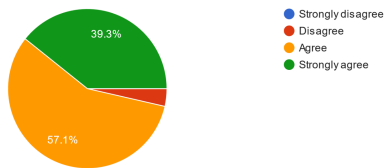
This school meets the academic needs of my children.  
21 responses



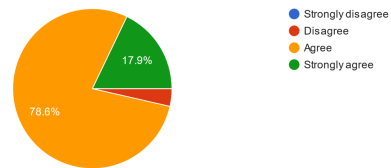
### Spring Parent Survey Results:

We actually received more responses in the spring this year than in the fall which is unusual so even though we only had 28 responses for the Spring 2023 survey we are glad we did have that many! Within these results only one responder disagreed so 27 agreed that the school had appropriate academic expectations, their child felt safe at the school, the school has high standards for student behavior, their children enjoy going to school, the school provides a caring environment, the children are recognized for doing good work, the school building is clean and inviting, the school provides volunteer opportunities, the teachers are highly effective, families feel welcome and they would recommend Discovery Woods to other families. Three respondents disagreed that the school had good communication however 89.3% felt communication was good. We will continue to strive at making communication the best that it can be and using multiple ways.

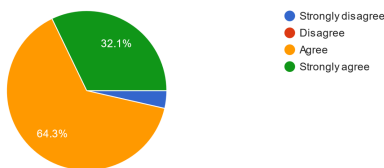
My child is safe at this school.  
28 responses



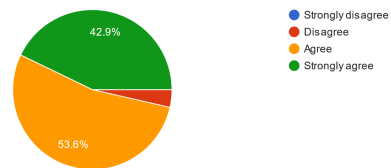
This school has high standards for student behavior.  
28 responses



This school has appropriate academic expectations for my children.  
28 responses



I would recommend this school to other families.  
28 responses



OR

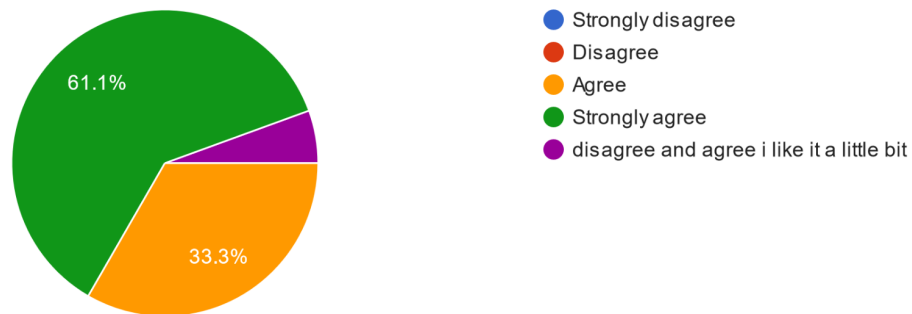
## Student Surveys

It is hard with some very young students to get true survey results so for the students we did some interviews and small groups as well as surveys . The students felt safe throughout the school year showing about the same results from the fall to the spring. The students also felt they were pushed just the right amount academically and that they enjoy coming to school. Of the older students 61.1% strongly agreed that they learned well from their teacher while 38.9% agreed that they learned well from their teacher, 100% agreed or strongly agreed! DW staff continually make sure they are treating their students with respect and let them know we want to hear from them and that their opinions and ideas matter.

From Student Fall 2022 Survey:

Overall, I am satisfied with Discovery Woods

18 responses



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## Environmental Education

The mission of Discovery Woods' authorizer, Osprey Wilds, is to instill a connection and commitment to the environment in people of all communities through experiential learning. Osprey Wilds defines environmental education as the implementation of values and strategies that foster learning and create environmentally literate citizens who engage in creating healthy outcomes for individuals, communities, and the Earth. The overarching goal of environmental education is an environmentally literate citizenry. The test of environmental literacy is the capacity of an individual to work individually and collectively toward sustaining a healthy natural environment. This requires sufficient awareness, knowledge, skills, and attitudes in order to create a healthy planet where all people live in balance with the Earth.

### Indicator Area 1: Awareness

*Students demonstrate an awareness of the relationship between the environment and human life and the diversity of life that shares the earth with humans.*

**Goal:** Students and staff *Discovery Woods* have the awareness, or are increasing their awareness, of the relationship between the environment and human life.

#### Strategy 1.1

Teachers in grades K-2 will implement the Project Learning Tree Tremendous Science curriculum throughout the school year to engage students in the awareness of tree parts and what trees need to live.

#### Evaluation method 1.1

90% of students in grades K-2 will receive a score of 75% or greater on the rubric for the end of the unit. ([K rubric 1/2Rubric](#))

#### Results:

Students in

1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>: 32/36=89% received a score of 75% or greater on the rubric.

K: 1/14=7% received a score of 75% or greater on the rubric.

Total for K-2: 33/50= 66%

### Indicator Area 2: Knowledge

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*Students have knowledge of how natural systems function and how human systems interact with and depend on them.*

**Goal:** Students and staff at *Discovery Woods* have the knowledge, or are increasing their knowledge, of human and natural systems and processes.

**Strategy 2.1**

Students in grades 1-2 will learn about MN animals and their habitat. Gregory Park and the school grounds will be used to search for animal signs such as track and scat.

**Evaluation method 2.1**

90% of 1st-2nd grade students will receive a passing score (according to teacher created rubric) on their animal project.

**Results:**

36/38=95% of students received a passing score on their project according to the rubric.

**Strategy 2.2**

Teachers in grades 3-4 will implement the Project Learning Tree Energy in Ecosystems curriculum to engage students in the knowledge of how animals and plants interact with each other and their environment.

**Evaluation method 2.2**

80% of students in grades 3-4 will receive a score of 75% or better on the post-assessment for the unit.

**Results:**

23/32=72% of students in grades 3-4 received a score of 75% or better on their post-assessment.

## **Indicator Area 3: Attitudes**

*Students demonstrate respect and concern for the earth's health and the motivation to participate in environmental stewardship.*

**Goal:** Students and faculty at *Discovery Woods* have an attitude, or are increasing their attitude of, appreciation and concern for the environment.

**Strategy 3.1**

The school's Green Team (made up of 3-6<sup>th</sup> graders) will encourage and teach students and staff about the importance of recycling and reducing waste. The efforts will be tracked via PepsiCo Recycle Rally website.

### **Evaluation method 3.1**

Recycling in the school will increase by 25% from the beginning of tracking to the end of the school year.

#### **Results:**

Measuring for 4 weeks at the beginning of the year and 4 weeks at the end of the year (using the PepsiCo Recycle Rally website tracking system), recycling of plastics and cans increased by 88%. From an estimated 77 gallons at the beginning to 139 gallons at the end of the school year.

## **Indicator Area 4: Skills**

*Students possess the skills needed to identify and critically analyze environmental issues, and to contribute to resolving the root of environmental challenges.*

**Goal:** Students and faculty at *Discovery Woods* have or are increasing their problem solving and critical thinking skills as it relates to the environment and human life.

### **Strategy 4.1**

Sixth graders will make a presentation of an environmental action project which will be available through a live and/or virtual format.

### **Evaluation method 4.1**

90% of students will receive a passing score on a teacher created [rubric](#) based on their presentation about the action project including how the project impacts our school and community.

#### **Results:**

Students created a presentation on the recycling project and their Green Team efforts. 5/5=100% of students received a passing score on their rubric for the presentation.

## **Indicator Area 5: Action**

*Students have the capacity, or are increasing their capacity, to perceive and interpret the health of environmental and social systems and take appropriate action to maintain, restore, or improve the health of those systems.*

**Goal:** Students and staff at *Discovery Woods* demonstrate the capacity, or are increasing their capacity, to work individually and collectively toward sustaining a healthy natural environment.

### **Strategy 5.1**

Sixth grade students will work towards sustainable environmental solutions by implementing their Project YES! action project in the school or community, involving other students and community members.

### **Evaluation method 5.1**

At least 70% of the sixth grade students will be involved in following through with all aspects of the action project, including working on the presentation and doing the actual project. Participation will be assessed based on a teacher developed [collaborative work rubric](#). Past examples include building a rain garden, educating students and staff about single-use plastics, and storm drain stenciling in the school neighborhood.

### **Results:**

All students (7/7=100%) were involved with the project, most students (5/7=71%) worked on the presentation aspect of the project, and all students received a passing score on the rubric. Students were able to educate the school and families about many varieties of recycling; including paper, cans, plastics, e-waste and plastic film. They also learned a lot about what is recyclable in our community and why everything cannot be recycled.

### **Strategy 5.2**

All students at Discovery Woods will be active in preparing, planting and harvesting the school garden.

### **Evaluation method 5.2**

90% of students in K-6 will plant, weed, and harvest crops in the school garden as evidenced by the sign-in sheet and record log in the garden.

### **Results:**

96/104= 92% of students in grades K-6 were involved in planting, weeding, watering, and harvesting the school garden. Students who were absent on the dates of garden work may have had a chance during recess or after school care time but it was not recorded.

## **Additional Questions:**

1. Describe the school's approach to environmental education.

*Discovery Woods incorporates environmental and nature-based education in as many aspects as we can throughout the school day. Teachers are encouraged to take students outside for all subject areas. The school has recently received grants to add an outdoor classroom space to the garden area and we now have convertible benches and shade umbrellas for classes to use in the garden space. This has helped teachers be outside more and has given students a break from the indoor class space. The*

*school reading specialist and EE coordinator work together to implement classroom picture books and chapter books that have nature and ecological themes within the ELA curriculum.*

*The PE teacher checks out equipment available locally such as bicycles and snowshoes to get students outside in all seasons. In addition, all PE classes are held outside (on days without rain) in fall and spring. The students also have an ice skating unit in the winter.*

*Children's House and grades 1-2 have a nature/EE area in each classroom for students to explore. We include plants, animals, and the natural world to help teach the standards in as many areas as possible, math, science, and art.*

2. What have been your successes and challenges related to environmental education this year?

*Weather is always a challenge. Most years it seems that the time to get outside comfortably is limited to a short span in the fall and spring, teachers and students have a hard time staying motivated in extreme heat or cold. We try to encourage and provide support in these situations and I think teachers have been beginning to adapt to being outdoors in all conditions.*

*We have been mostly successful with our new ELP, teachers have responded well to the specific lessons and assessments. The EE coordinator has been reminding teachers at each monthly staff meeting of what is needed for the EE program and goals. Teacher turnover is slowing down which helps with making sure the goals are met in the ELP and teachers have had more time to understand the mission of our school.*

3. What voices are being centered in the school's EE program? What voices are currently missing in the EE program?

*The population of Discovery Woods School includes a majority of white students. When looking at our goals I can see room to include other voices. When we explore the school grounds and neighboring natural areas we have begun to include natural history lessons involving indigenous populations that have used the land before European settlement. Our ELA curriculum includes a diverse set of authors and backgrounds, which we have then expanded into our EE and Social Studies programs by having parents and community members come into the classroom to discuss their traditions and viewpoints. We can do more of this and look forward to working more with our AIPAC to specifically include our American Indian population of students and help educate all students about other voices.*

*Other opportunities include gardening and planting seeds when we can include cultures of not only the majority of our students but make sure to include cultures students may not encounter daily. We have discussed and planted three sisters gardens in the past, but more emphasis could be placed on companion planting and where the ideas come from. We also go outside often and do many field trips throughout the year, if there are students who come from cultures*



*that are not comfortable being outdoors, we need to recognize that and work with students to find solutions and how to increase their comfort.*

4. Based on the results from this year, what are some of your plans for EE in the school next year? Include how you plan to increase students' environmental literacy during periods of distance learning should they occur.

*We will continue using the Project Learning Tree lessons in K-4 for teachers and keep providing at least one staff EE training per school year. EE agenda items will be included in the monthly staff meetings. We will be beginning a new math program and will be looking for ways to include outdoor and EE learning there.*

*If we are in need of distance learning plans, I think we have found ways for EE to be incorporated successfully as far as what students can do at home. We encourage nature journaling in the classroom and students can use what they have learned in their journals to observe in their own neighborhoods. A difficulty is that not all students have access to a conducive home environment in which to complete their assignments. Our upcoming school year also has no e-learning dates in case of inclement weather, students will have snow days instead where we will encourage them to go outdoors and explore.*



## Governance & Management

### Includes Annual Board Training & Administrator Professional Development Report(s)

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Discovery Woods School Board meets monthly during the calendar year. The Board is composed of 6 voting members: 1 community member, 2 teachers and 3 parents. The DW Board meetings are conducted with Robert's Rules of Order and comply with Minnesota Open Meeting Law. Board members and OW are sent meeting materials approximately one week prior to a meeting. After a board meeting, all meeting minutes are posted on the Discovery Woods website. The DW Board reviews the school policies, financial statements and operational data regularly during meetings. Through the board's work it is ensured that the school meets its mission goals, provides financial stability, maintains rigorous academic programming and develops committed community relationships within the Brainerd lakes area.

Member Name	Board Position	Affiliation	Date Elected	Date Seated	Term End Date	Email Address
Dawn Verdon	Chair	Community Member	May 18, 2020	July 20, 2020	June 2023	dverdonboard@discoverywoods.com
Emma Needham	Vice Chair	Parent	May 18, 2020	July 20, 2020	June 2023	eneedhamboard@discoverywoods.com
Natalie Morey	Secretary	Parent	May 25, 2022	July 27, 2022	Resigned June 2023	nmoreyboard@discoverywoods.com
Allison Christensen	Member	Teacher	August 29, 2022	August 29, 2022	Resigned June 2023	achristensenboard@discoverywoods.com
Kara DeVriendt	Treasurer	Teacher	May 26, 2021	July 28, 2021	Resigned Jan 2023	kdevriendtboard@discoverywoods.com
Amanda Westlund	Member	Parent	September 26, 2022	October 24, 2022	June 2025	awestlundboard@discoverywoods.com
Kristi Crocker	Ex-Officio	School Leader	May 18, 2020	July 20, 2020	June 2023	kcrockerboard@discoverywoods.com




#### Board Training and Development

The Board participates in board training through Minnesota School Boards Association, Minnesota Association of Charter Schools and Bergan KDV annually. The Board has continued work sessions to address additional training and development needs. The Board is asking more questions, being more involved and continues to seek out training regularly and has continued using OW's Sounding Board for training topics. DW is a member of MACS to help the continued training and development. Each new member is given a quick training before being seated and is given a 3-ring binder with training requirements, bylaws etc. There is also a Google Drive that Discovery Woods board members will track their board training.

## 2023 Discovery Woods Board Training – Initial and SY23

Initial Training				
Board Member Name	Original Date Seated	Governance-Board's Role & Responsibilities	Employment Policies & Practices	Financial Management
Dawn Verdon	7/20/2020	02/10/2021 MACS	06/23/2021 MACS	02/23/2021 MACS
Kara DeVriendt	7/19/2018	10/6/2018 MACS	11/10/2018 MACS	11/10/2018 MACS
Emma Needham	7/20/2020	8/12/2020 OW	11/18/2020 OW	8/11/2020 OW
Natalie Morey	7/27/2022	2/7/2023 OW	2/7/2023 OW	8/29/2022 MACS
Allison Christensen	8/29/2022	2/7/2023 OW	2/7/2023 OW	2/7/2023 OW
Amanda Westlund	10/24/2022	2/7/2023 OW	2/7/2023 OW	2/7/2023 OW

## Annual Training FY23

Month	Training	Provided by	Members Present
July	Meeting Quorum  Quorum.pdf	Osprey Wilds	Kara, Dawn, Natalie, Emma, Kristi
August	Open Meeting Law  OpenMeetingLawPP.pdf	Osprey Wilds	Dawn, Kara, Emma, Natalie, Allison, Kristi
September	Annual Board Tasks Review  ANNUAL BOARD CALENDAR	DW Board	Emma, Kara, Natalie, Allison, Dawn, Kristi
October	Financials & Audit	Bergan KDV	Emma, Amanda, Kara, Allison, Natalie, Kristi
November	Ongoing Training for Charter School Board Members <a href="#">Sounding Board - Issue 13</a>	Osprey Wilds	Dawn, Emma, Amanda, Allison, Kristi
December	Supporting the School Leader <a href="#">Sounding Board - Issue 25</a>	Osprey Wilds	Dawn, Allison, Emma, Natalie, Amanda, Kristi

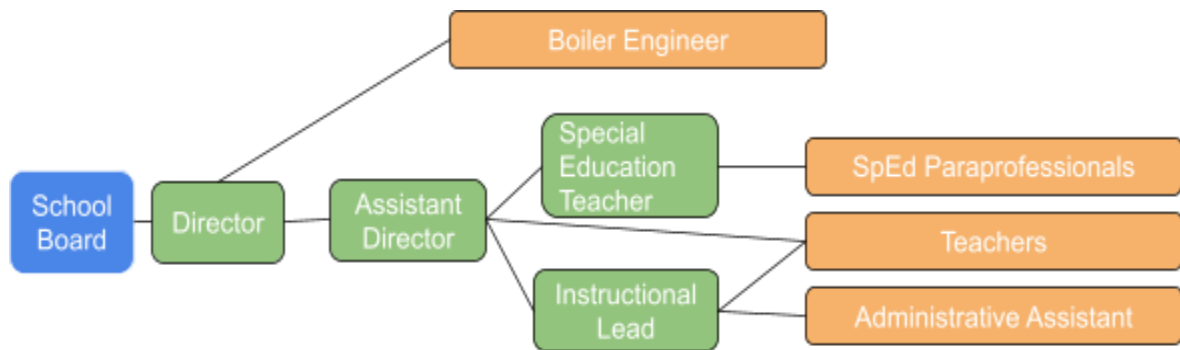
January	<i>OW Sounding Board Issue 11 - Promoting Quality Charter School Governance</i>	Osprey Wilds	Dawn, Emma, Allison, Natalie, Kristi
February	<i>OW Sounding Board Issue 10: Board Evaluation of School Leaders</i>	Osprey Wilds	Emma, Amanda, Natalie, Kristi
March	<i>OW Sounding Board Issue 26: Teacher and Staff Retention</i>	Osprey Wilds	Dawn, Emma, Allison, Amanda, Natalie, Kristi
April	<i>OW Sounding Board Issue 19: Board Self-Evaluation</i>	Osprey Wilds	Dawn, Emma, Allison, Amanda, Natalie, Kristi
May	<i>OW Sounding Board Issue : 17 Board Member Roles &amp; Responsibilities</i>	Osprey Wilds	Dawn, Emma, Allison, Amanda, Natalie, Kristi
June	<i>OW Sounding Board Issue 7: Onboarding New Board Members</i>	Osprey Wilds	Dawn, Amanda, Kristi

**MANAGEMENT**

The Board oversees the operations through a finance report and management report produced by Bergan KDV every month at the board meeting. With staffing we needed to fill two classroom teaching positions as well as a few Educational Assistants.

In addition, DW is supported by contracted consultants to provide additional administrative functions:

- Mindy Wachter and Kelly Rimpila, Bergan KDV, Financial Management & Accounting
- Jennifer Johnson, Paul Bunyan Educational Cooperative (PBEC), Special Education Director



**Discovery Woods had three administrators in FY22:**

- **Kristi Crocker, Executive Director**

Kristi Crocker has been with DW since August of 2012 in different positions. She is currently the Executive Director and works with BerganKDV on the day-to-day finances. The director’s duties include managing the budgeting and finance, board meeting preparation, title grants, special education, reports due to MDE and the authorizer; HR management and personnel issues; parent involvement; facilities construction, improvement and maintenance; insurance; instruction and

academic management; student support; testing; professional development for teachers; overseeing observation and evaluation of teachers; creating the agendas for, conducting, and participating in weekly staff meetings; teacher development for accountability (aligning the curriculum to the Common Core Standards) and analyzing student achievement data as examples; managing student behavior when sent out of the classroom; creating the board agendas and keeping minutes at each meeting, distributing board packets; preparing reports and gathers data regarding academics and assessments. Kristi obtained her Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration with an emphasis in finance at Bemidji State University in December of 2022. Kristi has had much work experience with both managing and finances. Kristi additionally oversees the website; sends out RFPs for services; reports to MDE; and is the MARSS Coordinator. Kristi's main goals/area of focus for 2022-23 was finance and she obtained this through getting her Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration with a finance emphasis. Kristi's main goals/areas of focus for 2023/24 will be in providing more managerial support in our Social Emotional and Math programs as well as continued operational guidance and training.

### **Kristi Crocker** **2022-2023 Professional Development Plan**

To advocate for rigorous academic opportunities for all children, and to identify and support strategies that further DW's students' proficiency and growth in Minnesota Academic Standards

- Active with PLC (Professional Learning Team) Meetings
- Active with RtI (Response to Interventions) Meetings
- Active with CST (Child Study) Meetings

To advocate and support the mental health of all children, and to ensure that youth serving professionals identify and support children with mental health challenges and to help support children with other special needs

- Mandated Reporter Training, August 31, 2022
- Efficient and Healthy Schools Campaign - Minnesota, November 30, 2022
- Mental Health and Self-Care, Northern Pines Mental Health - Holly Mathieu, November 28, 2022
- Local Implementation Alignment: Evidence-Based Practices used by School Linked Behavioral Health (SLBH) Providers and Exemplar Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Schools, January 31, 2023
- Co-occurring Disorders, February 6, 2023
- Why Do I Care So Much About What They Think?, February 10, 2023
- Why Young Children Act In Unkind Ways and How To Help, May 25, 2023
- GoTo Webinar - Joyful Music for Social-Emotional and Language Development, by Pam Gittleman, June 8, 2023

To advocate and support equality and equity of all children

- Catalyst Training, Sourcewell - Jenni and Dawn, November 28, 2022
- Teaching Native American subjects in school podcast, January 17, 2023
- Introduce UDL of Math Part 1, January 24, 2023
- Early Childhood Grant Webinar, January 30, 2023
- Remove Barriers to Grade Level Content for All Part 2, January 31, 2023
- Support Expert Learning: Tier 2 and 3 Using Formative Assessment Part 3, February 7, 2023
- GoTo Webinar - Natural Playscape Makeover! Practical Design Tips for Supporting Child-Directed Play In Natural Spaces on Any Budget, April 20, 2023
- Amplifying Students, Elevating Community, May 4, 2023
- Funding and Sustaining After School Programs, June 7, 2023

To establish a stable financial framework for Discovery Woods

- Monthly Financial Team Meetings
- College courses taken in Fall 2022 at Bemidji State University: Senior Seminar - Business Administration - Finance Emphasis
- 2023 SRSA Application Webinar, February 14, 2023
- Multiple webinars regarding the new MDE central data collection system, MEGS (Minnesota Education Grant System) for the overall system and for each application within it.

To establish an effective working relationship with the school board and obtain knowledge to be a successful effective leader

- Monthly Charter School Admin Support Call - MACS
- Charter School Bootcamp, dependent on topic - monthly
- College courses taken in Fall 2022 at Bemidji State University: Strategic Management
- School Law Seminar - Ratwik Law, December 2, 2022
- MACS Legislative session weekly updates - January 20, 2023 to May 19, 2023
- MACS Policy Briefing, January 26, 2023
- Board Chat: Overview of the Student Expulsion Process in Minnesota, March 15, 2023
- Charter Lease Aid Training, April 27, 2023
- MDE Staff Development Webinar, April 28, 2023
- Tools to Use from the Cultural Responsiveness Field Guide (ie: classroom, staff PD, core components), May 3, 2023
- MDE MnMTSS June District/Charter School Conveners, June 5, 2023
- GoTo Webinar - Plan a Magical Teacher In-Service With Various Pedagogical Approaches, by Rachel Supalla, MA, June 7, 2023

## **Professional Development Report**

Erin Anderson, Assistant Director

Erin Anderson has been the Assistant Director at Discovery Woods since the fall of 2020. As Assistant Director, Erin has many duties including, but not limited to, evaluating staff, implementing initiatives, administering educational programming, administering special education programming, evaluating and planning curriculum along with the Lead Teacher, determining professional development needs of the staff, providing professional development, assisting in hiring and staffing decisions, enforcing discipline policies with students, attending various meetings to organize and continue school improvement, organizing opportunities for Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and ensuring that staff understand goals, expectations, and strategies for this time, and collaborating with other principals throughout the region to improve school culture and performance. Erin has her Principal K-12 Administrative license. Erin did leave DW mid year to pursue her dream of being a camp director.

### ***Education***

Bachelor of Arts in English & Education - Luther College

Master of Science in Teaching, Learning & Leadership - Southwest Minnesota State University

Educational Administration K-12 Principal - Saint Mary's University of Minnesota

#### Courses:

1. Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction Systems
2. Leadership Theory
3. Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction Leadership
4. Organization and Human Resources Management
5. Special Education and Diverse Learners
6. Student Management
7. Ethical Issues for Administrators
8. Financial Management
9. Legal Issues in Education
10. Data Collection and Assessment
11. Principal as Building Leader
12. Principal Seminar
13. Principal Field Experience I
14. Principal Field Experience II

### ***Currently enrolled*** (completed April 2023):

Graduate Nonprofit Management Certification - Saint Mary's University of Minnesota

#### Courses:

1. Strategic Nonprofit Management
2. Nonprofit Human Resources Management
3. Nonprofit Fund Development and Financial Management
4. Community Engagement and Partnerships

### ***Goals for the School Year***

- Increase implementation of Caring School Community, including Caring School Discipline, Cross-Age Buddies, Schoolwide Community-building Activities
  - Implement the Individual Learning Plan (ILP) element of Caring School Discipline
  - Implement Cross-Age Buddies along with Lead Teacher using the new teacher-created, theme-based schedule
  - Plan and host Schoolwide Activities with the Student Leadership Team
- Implement effective PLC strategies to continue reviewing and improving instruction and assessment
  - Work with preschool teachers to ensure that instruction is standards-based, engaging, and assessed to determine effectiveness
- Provide extensive training for staff:
  - Caring School Community
  - Licensure requirements
- Increase and improve strategies for working with high-need students and effectively track data related to any interventions that are used, often through the Response to Intervention (RtI) Team

**Professional Development Report**  
**Heidi Auel, Instructional Lead**

Heidi Auel has been with DW since 2013 in different positions. She is currently the Instructional Lead and Environmental Education Coordinator. The Instructional Lead's duties include instruction and academic management; student support; statewide and other standardized testing; professional development for teachers; coaching and mentoring of teachers; teacher development for accountability (aligning the curriculum to the Common Core Standards) and analyzing student achievement data as examples. Heidi also teaches 5th and 6th grade science classes and helps guide teachers with environmental education and science curriculum. Heidi has her Bachelors of Science in Animal Ecology with an emphasis in environmental education, minor in environmental studies. Heidi has her teaching license in 5-8 General Science and 9-12 Life Science and has completed 30+ Masters credits in the MAT program at Hamline University.

**Goals for the Previous School Year**

- Continue Instructional Coaching training and continue coaching programs with teachers.
- Continue participation in Sourcewell Networks.
- Attend subject area conferences including those that are science and school garden related.

**Goals for Current School Year**

- Begin reviewal and development of school-wide science curriculum based on the new standards of Phenomena-based inquiry.
- Continue Instructional Coaching, meeting with teachers at least twice per year for a



coaching cycle.

- Continue participation in Sourcewell Networks.
- Attend subject area conferences including those that are science and schoolgarden related.

### **Professional Development 2022-2023**

Schoolyard Garden Conference at Minnesota Landscape Arboretum

Sourcewell networks, including Curriculum Coordinator and DAC

LETRS training (Science of Reading training to assist teachers with Instructional Coaching)

### **Professional Organizations**

Member of MnSTA

Member of NSTA

### **Goals for the School Year**

Develop PLC agendas and inservice days to assist teachers in curriculum work

Review LIT goals and work with Director to develop long term plan for LIT

Research curriculum and development in other schools plus best-practices as referenced by Regional Centers of Excellence

Continue personal subject area professional development (science, EE, school garden)

Develop long-term professional development plan after this school year based on new duties

### **School Board:**

#### **Activities Completed/Progress/Results for 2022-23:**

- MN Association for Charter Schools (MACS) membership continued for use of their resources for board training, access to policies, board insight and self-evaluation tools
- Monthly review of contractual goals through academic reports, financial reports, authorizer report and the Director's report
- Using Google Drive to organize board documents
- Addition of new board members

#### **Professional Development Goals/Areas of Focus for 22-23:**

Board members are invested in and continue to incorporate training to develop our knowledge as a board in the areas of finance, operations, and legal compliance. The board continues to implement new oversight and organizational strategies. We have continued to organize all board documents on google drive in order for everyone to have access at all times. We have also begun a cycle to go over policies which we work on together at our monthly work meetings. These small steps make our meetings more productive. Epicenter has been kept up to date through the director.

We continue to work as committees to take on projects. We also continue to work on our strategic planning committee.

Administration will continue leading staff with assessing data, social emotional learning and professional development opportunities.

Social emotional learning has been and will remain the priority of the 2022-23 school year until we feel we have reached a good balance. DW staff feel that if students are doing well mentally and emotionally then they will be able to do better with academics. Our Title I Reading/Reading Specialist position will continue to cover a wider range of students since we are a schoolwide Title program. There will be more opportunities for families to come in and be part of their student’s literacy education. DW continues to collaborate on how to expand our math program and will continue to research effective instruction strategies.

### Staffing

Discovery Woods’ hiring process follows a basic hiring procedure that involves a minimum posting of two weeks, a scoring rubric evaluated by two staff to select candidates to interview, a minimum of one interview with 2-4 members of the staff, and required background checks after the offer but prior to the hiring being approved by the DW Board of Directors. During our interviews with new candidates they are always made aware of our Montessori philosophy and what that means and also that we are an environmental education school and what that means. DW wants to make sure staff are qualified for their position and know the school’s mission so they are capable of helping educate every child as an individual and with a focus on environmental education. DW has a Montessori consultant work with staff regarding individualized learning and DW holds workshops that will help staff with the environmental factor.

### 2022-23 Staffing

2022-23 Licensed Teaching Staff				
Name	File #	License and Assignment (subject/grades)	2022-23 Status*	Comments <i>Include information regarding special licensure (e.g., Community Expert) or other relevant information.</i>
Dawn Snook	446715	Special Education	R	
Renee Huberty	427018	Elem. Teacher Kindergarten Pre-Primary	R	
Chasidi Grant	1016469	Elem. Teacher Kindergarten Pre-Primary	R	Tier 1
Kara DeVriendt	485948	Title I Coordinator Reading Specialist	R	Reading K-12 license Master’s in Literacy
Shawna Sachs	480413	Elem. Teacher	R	
Emily Sipprell	1023126	Elem. Teacher	R	Tier 2
Rachel Hanford	518156	Elem. Teacher	R	
Allison Christensen	1005464	Elem. Teacher	NR	
Ashley Gangestad	454339	Elem. Teacher	R	
Heidi Auel	413652	5-6 Science Teacher Instructional Lead	R	
Kayla Huether	470648	Physical Education Teacher	R	Tier 3 Restricted - DAPE Special Permissions

Erin Anderson	393288	Assistant Director Special Education Social Skills	NR	OFP-Academic and Behavioral Strategist
Cindy Anderson		Speech Pathologist	NR	Part time, semi-retired

\* R = Returning, NR = Not Returning

**2022-23 Teacher Professional Development Activities:**

DW conducted professional development workshops in the following areas and provided them to the teachers throughout the school year:refining the quality of classroom instruction, enabling individuals to grow professionally, Bookworms ELA training, and LETRS for those interested teachers. DW worked hard at looking through data to see where we could help each student. Teachers met weekly talking about what strategies to use for each student and what the assessments said for each. The training days for teacher team meetings were regularly scheduled for four times a month and all staff meetings monthly and for eleven in-service days to evaluate programs, discuss children, and plan strategies that will ensure that instruction is targeted to children’s individual needs, and that teachers are informed.

**Teacher Retention:**

Discovery Woods is continuing to find the right staff for the school. Many teachers that apply are first year teachers and coming into a school that does not have a set curriculum has been very overwhelming so DW has put together a scope and sequence to help guide as well as bought resources such as Moving with Math curriculum and manipulatives. Our Title I and Reading Specialist helps with many ELA materials and guidance as well. Retention has been difficult as some staff are finding our school as a start or end to their careers. DW continues to look at ways to retain staff. Teacher training and administration flexibility and open-mindedness are also great tools used for teacher retention. Retention has gotten much better and with the 3 licensed staff we lost, one was moving out of state and one was retiring fully.

<b>Percentage of Licensed Teachers from 2022-23 not returning in 2023-24</b>	23%
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<b>2022-23 Non-Licensed Staff</b>			
<b>Name</b>	<b>Assignment</b>	<b>2022-23 Status*</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Sara Prettyman	Special Education 1:1	R	
Nick Forbes	Special Education 1:1	R	Teaching license 23-24
Michael Knakmuhs	Boiler Engineer	R	
Tom Lytle	Behavior Interventionist	R	
Kristi Crocker	Director	R	
Taylor Crocker	Business Manager	R	Part time
Jenni Blessing	Teacher Assistant	NR	
Alyssa Marvin	Special Education 1:1	R	
Amanda Bell	Special Education 1:1	R	
Katie McGuire	Special Education 1:1	R	

Lillian Kujala	Special Education 1:1	R	
Samantha Mudderman	Special Education 1:1	NR	

\* R = Returning, NR = Not Returning

## Operational Performance

Discovery Woods complies with applicable laws, rules and regulations of a public charter school. Our school building contains ten classrooms, a main office, bathrooms, a staff workroom, storage, a computer lab, a gymnasium with a stage, a kitchen and a lunch service area. There is also a large playground on the school grounds. Access to the main school building is secure and monitored by staff and surveillance cameras. Classrooms are beautifully arranged and maintained by teachers. Each room strives to create a balance between a structured classroom environment and a comfortable home-like environment that sparks student interest and engages the children in a variety of academic studies through use of a multitude of specially designed manipulative materials. This building gives us 27,000 square feet of space, and provides for adequate 1:1 and small group instruction and services for Title I and special education needs. In the summer of 2015, an elevator was added, first floor bathrooms were made accessible, and secure building access was relocated along with adding new practice of keeping the building locked from 8:00 a.m.—7:35 a.m. daily, having the school unlocked only from 7:35-8:00 a.m. for student arrival.



School facility records, inspections are kept on schedule and are maintained in the office. Fire and emergency drills are held several times per year, and are recorded in the emergency plan and drill log book.

Discovery Woods administrative staff fulfills many duties of school operation under school board oversight. Administrative staff and personnel committee members advertise job openings, conduct interviews and use fair hiring practices. Background checks are conducted for staff, board members and volunteers. Administrative staff maintains secure and private student records and transfers records when needed. Student enrollment procedures follow policies that direct a fair and open process. Enrollment for the 2022-23 school year began with an advertised two week application period, concluding in a lottery draw on February 23, 2022, for spaces that had more student applications than spots available. Applications were randomly assigned a space by grade or a waitlist space by grade for the upcoming school year. Applications received after the lottery draw deadline were added to the class lists or wait lists. The class lists and wait lists are maintained and updated by administrative staff. School policies direct other processes, including student discipline, First Amendment protections, Pupil Fair Dismissal Act, and prohibition of religious instruction in a public school. Lastly, Discovery Woods administration provides basic first aid and dispensing of medication to students when needed.

Discovery Woods does work with Brainerd School District 181 to provide student busing. The school works closely with the Brainerd transportation office and its bus provider Reichert to coordinate safe and effective transportation to and from school.

Discovery Woods contracts with other organizations in order to provide all necessary services. The school has a joint agreement with ISD 181 to provide daily hot lunch to students. Cleaning services were provided by Minnesota Cleaning Solutions. Accounting and financial oversight was conducted by Bergan KDV. Schlenner Wenner and Company conducted the fiscal year 2022 financial audit. Discovery Woods finances were maintained and stayed steady. Paul Bunyan Educational Cooperative manages our Special Education department.

Discovery Woods is communicating with the North Side Association, which is a group of people in the neighborhood, about our events and open our events to DW families and the community. DW is working hard on engaging more families and giving the community more opportunities to learn about the school. Discovery Woods’ has put most events on hold or conducted them digitally due to Covid.

**Finances**

For questions regarding school finances and for complete financials for 2022-23 and/or an organizational budget for 2023-24, contact:

Name: Mindy Wachter  
 Position: Outsourced Controller  
 Contact info: BerganKDV now Creative Planning  
 Phone: 612-227-7793  
 Email: Mindy.Wachter@bergankdv.com

The school contracts with BerganKDV/Creative Planning to provide accounting and financial management services for the school. Information presented below is derived from preliminary unaudited figures. The full financial audit will be completed and presented to the Minnesota Department of Education and Audubon Center of the North Woods no later than December 31, 2023.

<b>FY23 Finances</b>	Fund 1	Fund 2	Fund 4
Total Revenues	\$1,580,853	\$0	\$117,341
Total Expenditures	\$1,626,010	\$0	\$55,251
Net Income (Deficit)	(\$45,157)	\$0	\$62,090
Total Fund Balance	\$901,390	\$0	\$116,414

**Overview**

The school ended the year under the enrollment targets (98.77 actual ADM compared to 105 budgeted) so General Education aids were budgeted higher than actuals. Special Education funding came in considerably less than we budgeted for but it’s only a 5% difference to our bottom line so

not a huge budget impact. The state's holdback remained at 10% and with the currently healthy cash balance, the school did not need to rely on a line of credit to meet cash flow needs during the year.

## **Revenues**

### General Fund

General Education and Charter School Lease aids both came in under budget due to enrollment targets being 6 kids short of our budget estimates. The school had REAP grant award revenues of \$12,517 in FY23.

General Fund revenues came from the following sources:

State Aids and Grants: \$1,170,715

Federal Aids and Grants: \$247,366

Fees Collected and other Miscellaneous Revenues (including ERC): \$162,972

### Food Services Fund

The Food Service Fund has been closed due to the food service program being moved to the District.

### Community Services Fund

The school operates a before and after school program and a preschool program through its Community Services Fund. The revenues from these programs are intended to cover operating expenses. Community Services Fund revenues came from the following sources:

Pathways Scholarship funds (from State): \$15,000

COVID Childcare Funds (from MN Department of Human Services): \$15,156

Fees Collected and other Miscellaneous Revenues: \$87,185

## **Expenses**

### General Fund

The school's largest expense was for employee salaries and benefits (\$921,814). Other expenses incurred by the school were for:

Lease, property taxes, and property insurance: \$162,567

Purchased Services (including building utilities): \$315,016

Supplies and Instructional Materials Purchased: \$115,886

Building Improvements and Equipment (including technology equipment): \$96,422

Memberships, Other Fees, and Fund Transfer: \$14,305

### Food Service Fund

The Food Service Fund has been closed due to the food service program being moved to the District.

### Community Services Fund

Expenses in the Community Services Fund for the programs operated consisted of:

Salaries, Wages, and Benefits: \$51,268

Utilities: \$2,832

Supplies and Food: \$1,151

### **Net Income and Fund Balance**

The net operating income of \$16,933 in all funds resulted in an ending fund balance of \$1,017,804 for the year, or 60.5% of current expenditures. The FY24 approved budget is projecting a deficit of (\$197,720) due to implementing a pay scale for teachers and COVID funds expiring, this will use some of the school's fund balance.

### **World's Best Workforce Annual Budget**

There is no information for the budget/expenses related to implementation of the WBWF plan. This was not broken down and tracked.

The school's annual audit was performed by Schlenner Wenner & Company, St. Cloud, MN, 56302

### **Future Plans**

- Discovery Woods will continue our weekly Professional Learning Communities and full day professional development to look at assessment data and state standards. Our instructional leaders will continue to work with teachers on scope and sequence and curriculum mapping through our curriculum review cycle. Our future plans largely include continuing to make gains in student learning so that our state assessment scores and local standardized assessments reflect that.

Discovery Woods OW FY23 World's Best Workforce & Annual Report, | Drafted August 7, 2023

- DW was granted the four star Parent Aware rating in the spring of 2016 and continues to renew every two years for our preschool so we are able to offer our families Early Learning Scholarships.
- Discovery Woods would like to find a grant and do fundraising to update our playground and obtain equipment that is higher quality. DW would also like to look into Peaceful Playgrounds and take advantage of all of our space on the playground, including the basketball court which could also hold Peaceful Playground markings.
- DW board members have started discussions with families regarding possibilities of renovating the current building, an addition to the current building and/or grounds or building an entirely new building on different grounds as we outgrow our current facility. A strategic planning committee has begun to collect data and information to lead us in this area. There has been an ABC formation, Friends of Discovery Woods, to pursue the possibility of owning the school building.
- DW continues to expand the arts and language in hopes of having full time language, music and art instructors in the future.
- We continue to see that students are needing extra support which in turn impacts finances with the need of added staff and grant funding winding down. DW can see that students not only need extra instruction to build them back up from the learning loss due to the pandemic but to also be there to support those students struggling with social emotional welfare. This will continue to make an impact on the FY24 budget. Administration is trying to start a parent/staff group to help with fundraisers to offset this cost.
- DW will also look at ways to bring summer instruction and would like to expand the day with extra instruction beyond the regular school day.
- DW continues to look at implementing a year round preschool program.
- DW is looking at the possibility of capping grades at Grade 4, however, possibly offering an online option for Grades 5-6 and then possibly adding grades beyond that if the program shows success.

