



Discovery Woods



*PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL DISTRICT # 4198-07
SCHOOL YEAR 2023-2024
WORLD'S BEST WORKFORCE & ANNUAL REPORT*

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School Information

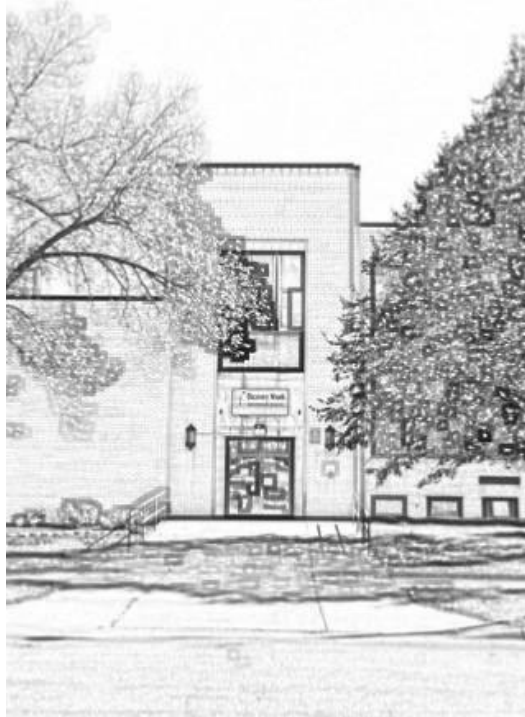
Discovery Woods (DW) is a Montessori inspired and environmentally centered charter school that opened its doors to students the fall of 2011 for kindergarten through 5th grade. In 2012 we were able to expand through 6th grade. We currently serve 108 students. DW also has a tuition based preschool option 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 walking 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 be authorized by Osprey Wilds (OW) 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' primary purpose is to improve the learning of all pupils and enhance the achievement of all students. Discovery Woods improves student learning in a variety of ways. Foremost in improving learning is using evidence-based curriculum and explicit teaching strategies. Discovery Woods uses multi-age groupings and emphasizes flexible seating options in each classroom, which are both Montessori-inspired educational concepts. Students participate in environmental education activities throughout the school year. DW highlights student accomplishments by encouraging students to share their work with classmates at gathering times, displaying it in the hallway, or sharing it with families twice per year during the end-of-semester Student Showcase. Discovery Woods School provides an alternative option for students who have trouble learning or don't feel like their needs are being met in the large elementary schools, or the middle school, in the local district. Discovery Woods School meets the needs of lower-performing students by improving their self-concept, which translates into increased motivation to learn and enhanced success in the classroom environment.



Struggling students get further support through additional services provided at Discovery Woods. The school utilizes Title I funding to support children identified with needs for extra instruction each day. DW also hosts the following AmeriCorps positions: Early Learning tutor, Reading Corps tutor, Math Corps tutor. Discovery Woods holds frequent Response to Intervention (RtI) and Child Study meetings where teachers, special education staff and special education experts through the Paul Bunyan Cooperative (the school's special education director) cooperate to identify and support children with special needs. Discovery Woods uses Title I, AmeriCorps tutors, and Special Education to offer additional instructional opportunities beyond their core lessons. Discovery Woods describes AmeriCorps tutoring, Montessori-inspired approaches, environmental education, Title I, and special education services in each annual report.

Student Enrollment & Demographics

STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Discovery Woods continues marketing and recruitment practices to further increase enrollment. DW continues to build a relationship with the North Side Association, 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.

Number of Students Enrolled	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Kindergarten	21	18	18
1st Grade	17	15	13
2nd Grade	15	20	20
3rd Grade	21	16	14
4th Grade	11	9	9
5th Grade	9	16	17
6th Grade	5	10	9
Total	99	104	100
Total ADM (Average Daily Membership) for year	114.74	124.54	99.12

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Discovery Woods' student demographics have not changed significantly 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	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Total Enrollment	107	104	100
Special Education	27	32	28
English Learners	0	0	0
Free/Reduced Priced Lunch	60	64	66
Black, not of Hispanic Origin	8	8	7
Hispanic/Latino	2	4	4
Asian/Pacific Islander	0	0	0
American Indian/Alaskan Native	9	6	11
White, not of Hispanic Origin	88	86	78
Two or more races			17

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 has families who may take occasional trips out of town, but most students' absences are due to illness. DW diligently monitors absences and keeps families informed regarding the importance of attendance for all ages of students. DW communicates with families regarding absences and the attendance policy via letters, emails, and phone calls. DW's attendance policy states the expectation that every student attend school at least 96% of the school year and, through consistent efforts, this will continue to be the goal. Although attendance has improved, DW still sees the effects of the pandemic due to an increased attention to keep students who are ill at home or due to the uptick in mental health issues as a result of the pandemic. DW continues to support families through contracting with Northern Pines Mental Health, who provide mental health services through the school, as well as county services when needed.

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Student Attendance Rate	93%	93%	94%

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 chose to leave; however, student retention is consistently within the 80 percentage range. Going into the 2021-22 school year we had 84% student retention which increased to 86% going into the 2022-23 school year and stayed at 86% for 2023-24. Currently, that rate has dipped down to 79% retention; however, over half of those who left the school cited the reason as being due to moving out of state, younger siblings following older siblings to districts within the area and many transitioning to the middle level due to the resident district transitioning from elementary to middle level at grade 4. There are multiple families who have had students here since preschool or kindergarten. It has also been great to see siblings of DW graduates attending the school!

Percentage of students who were continuously enrolled between October 1 of the 2022-2023 school year and October 1 of the 2023-24 school year.	79%
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Percentage of students who continued enrollment in the school from Spring 2023 to October 1, 2023.	80%
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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, online schooling, or homeschooling. Most years the school has 4th and/or 5th grade students leave due to the public school beginning middle school in a separate building for 5th through 8th grade. Discovery Woods is becoming more balanced and, other than times around the pandemic, our mobility rates are dropping; the school even hit 96% this year which included two students who were unenrolled and then re-enrolled.

	Summer Transfers In	Number of students on Oct. 1	Mid-year Transfers In	Mid-year Transfers Out	Total Mid-year Transfers	Mobility Index* (as a percent)
2020-21	28	95	14	3	17	18%
2021-22	13	99	5	0	5	5%
2022-23	25	103	*3	*1	4	4%
2023-24	24	99	3	6	9	9%

*Total mid-year transfers (in and out) divided by number of students on October 1.

Percentage of students who were enrolled for 95% or more of the 2023-24 school year.	96%
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Educational Approach & Curriculum

Discovery Woods’ 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 adopted evidence-based curricula for both English language arts (ELA) and math, as well as a curriculum review cycle. 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 is well into the implementation process. The school uses Montessori and supplemental materials 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, make adjustments as needed, and continue to find professional learning opportunities for teachers to further develop and enhance the school’s literacy program. Discovery Woods has dramatically increased reading achievement rates since implementing instructional materials and routines based on the “science of reading”. DW recently began focusing more on math by adopting a new math curriculum and having teachers participate in training with the Open Up Resources Math Curriculum.



Because it takes several years to see the benefits after implementing new learning initiatives, DW will be monitoring and assessing student math growth to gauge how the new curriculum is helping to improve student math skills. 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 philosophy of demonstrating empathy and peace. 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 incorporates evidence-based explicit whole group instruction to maximize academic learning time. 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 and by having a student leadership team comprised of upper elementary students; the team brings innovative ideas to the administration as well as helps to 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 as often as possible, along with our own playground and school garden. Classrooms have also accepted invitations from neighbors of the school to see their worm composting set-up and their gardens. Discovery Woods has, when appropriate, incorporated project based learning, and the school garden has been the most significant of these projects. Students helped with many aspects of the school garden 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 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 learners.

Remediation and Acceleration Practices and Programming

Discovery Woods students attend classes in multi-age learning environments. 1st and 2nd grade comprise the lower elementary program, 3rd and 4th grade make up the middle elementary program, and 5th and 6th grade are together in the upper elementary program.

A fee-based preschool program known as Children’s House for children ages 33 months through 5 years old is also offered at the school. Kindergarten children enrolled in DW are included in the mixed age Children’s House environment.

Children’s House classrooms partially incorporate the Montessori philosophy and utilizes a Great Period along with whole group and small group instruction to present lessons in different domains, such as language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science. Upper, Middle, and Lower Elementary maximize academic learning time by using the effective teaching method of explicit, whole group instruction with curricular units aligned with the Minnesota state standards. Art is incorporated on a rotating basis with specialized instruction by the classroom teachers. A Physical Education teacher teaches the PE curriculum which includes special units in ice skating and tennis at a neighboring park. DW also has a part time Academic Interventionist and Behavior Interventionist for students struggling with academic or behavioral needs, as well as Reading Corps and Math Corps tutors who provide tier two interventions.

The following characteristics are integral to DW:

- Explicit whole group instruction with differentiated support
- Multimodal instructional practices integrating visual, auditory, spatial, linguistic and gestural strategies
- Choices for demonstrating learning, as appropriate
- Freedom to move around the room and choose work spaces and partners, as appropriate
- Grace and Courtesy lessons in Children’s House and CSC meetings that help children learn etiquette, cooperation, conflict resolution, and consideration for others
- Multi-age classrooms with two grades combined
- Students remain with the same teacher and classmates for two to three years
- Discovery Woods incorporates Environmental Education units and outdoor learning time
- Manageable class sizes



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 heard and respected.

Helping each child develop self-confidence

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 confidence in the child assuring that the student becomes confident as a learner. This confidence building progression contributes to a 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 intentional instructional practices and a structured environment, the child forms habits of extended attention, thus increasing a student’s ability to concentrate.

Fostering an abiding curiosity

Curiosity is a prerequisite for creative learning. By providing the child with opportunities to engage with new and interesting topics, make connections with novel materials, and explore stimulating natural and foreign objects, curiosity is developed and an essential element in creative learning is established.

Developing habits of initiative and persistence

Students who feel successful are motivated to continue to succeed and are more willing to persist in tasks. Providing repetitive practice and immediate error correction helps to support students as they develop skills. Structured learning experiences provide a sense of comfort and safety for students that provoke feelings of confidence when initiating new tasks and persisting with difficult tasks.

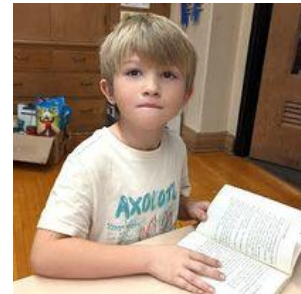
Fostering inner security and sense of order in the child

The classrooms provide a structured environment where children feel a sense of calm, safety, and assurance with solid instructional routines, consistent expectations, and supported learning tasks.

What our school implements to meet these goals includes:

Differentiated instruction. Discovery Woods School has a robust intervention program that includes an AmeriCorps Early Learning tutor, Reading Corps and Math Corps tutors. The school staffs an Academic and Behavioral Interventionist to help support student needs. In grades 1-4, there is a dedicated 30-minute period 4 days per week called Differentiated Instruction (DI) where students get small group instruction based on their needs for skill development in math, reading, or social skills. Within core instructional time, teachers and paraprofessionals work closely with students to ensure successful completion of work and modify tasks and assignments as necessary.

Assessment. Continuous ongoing assessment is vital for effective classroom and differentiated instruction. Teachers use both formative and summative assessments to inform their teaching practices. Along with screening and diagnostic assessments completed by the academic intervention team, classroom formative and summative assessments help the teacher obtain a comprehensive picture of student achievement and use the data to inform ongoing instructional decisions such as adjusting follow-up work activity, providing additional support and/or suggesting specialized interventions. Data is also 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 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 DW teachers embrace a more open classroom design concept to allow for freedom of movement within reason. DW students do not sit at desks; rather, they gather together as a classroom community on a shared rug space, and students also work together at tables (students needing a single spot also are offered that option if need be). Many classrooms feel more welcoming and like a home environment with the use of lamps and plants. In addition, the classroom walls are minimally decorated so as not to be overstimulating to the students. Classrooms have many windows to provide natural light.

Special Education

Discovery Woods received a Notice of No Findings on May June 30, 2023 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. Implementation of an inclusion model allows DW 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 the 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 everyone's unique characteristics and abilities. Teachers are knowledgeable about the needs of students with disabilities, informed of responsibilities for particular students, able to adhere to a student's program, and implement any modifications or accommodations in their classes in accordance with the students' IEPs.

Multilingual Program

DW's Multilingual Learners (MLLs) are monitored via ACCESS for MLLs standardized testing. Currently there are no MLL students at DW. As the need arises through home language surveys, intervention strategies will be employed for MLLs who demonstrate a greater need than those typically outlined through programs such as Title I and RtI. Every effort will be made to meet the unique cultural needs of individual students meeting MLL qualifications.

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, classroom management skills, differentiated instruction, and experience with diverse learners.

The school administration team guides teachers to enhance the quality of classroom instruction, grow professionally through high-quality professional development opportunities, introduce school-chosen Montessori elements, and implement and teach curricula that uses evidence-based instructional routines and satisfies the Minnesota State Academic Standards.



Training days for teacher team meetings, professional learning teams, and response to intervention (RtI) are regularly scheduled each month and all-staff meetings are conducted monthly. Several annual inservice workshops are used to evaluate programs, discuss student needs, and plan strategies to ensure instruction is targeted to evidence-based practices and is supporting student growth and development. Staff members also receive training, as needed, in behavior management, cultural competency, mental health awareness, English language learners, and differentiation practices.

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. Students understand and work with issues facing today's youth by reaching beyond the classroom. Students listen to guest speakers, participate in team-building activities, and participate in leadership roles. These opportunities give 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.

Discoverywoods 2023-2024 Calendar

	S	M	T	W	T	F	S		<u>In Session</u>	<u>Workshop</u>
August	27	28	29	30	31			Teacher Workshop 8/28-8/31		4
September							1	2		
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Labor Day 9/4	4	
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	First Day of School 9/5	5	
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23		5	
	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		5	
									19	
October	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	No School - Inservice Day 10/6	4	1
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		5	
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	No School - EM Conference	3	1
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28		5	
	29	30	31						2	
									19	
November			1	2	3	4			3	
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		5	
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18		5	
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	No School - November Break	3	
	26	27	28	29	30			No School - Inservice Day 11/27	3	1
									19	
December					1	2			1	
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		5	
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16		5	
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23		4	
	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	No School - Winter Break 12/22-1/2	0	
	31								15	
January		1	2	3	4	5	6	No School - Winter Break 12/22-1/2	3	
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	School Resumes 1/3	5	
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	No School - Inservice Day 1/15	4	1
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	End of 1st Semester 1/19	5	
	28	29	30	31					3	
									20	
February			1	2	3				2	
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		5	
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17		5	
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	No School - President's Day 2/19	4	
	25	26	27	28	29				4	
									20	
March					1	2		No School - Inservice Day 3/1	0	1
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		5	
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	No School - Spring Break 3/11-15	0	
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	School Resumes 3/18	5	
	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	No School - Spring Holiday 3/29	4	
	31								14	
April		1	2	3	4	5	6	No School - Inservice Day 4/1	4	1
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		5	
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20		5	
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27		5	
	28	29	30						2	
									21	
May			1	2	3	4			3	
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		5	
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Last Preschool Day 5/24	5	
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	No School - Memorial Day 5/27	5	
	26	27	28	29	30	31		KinderFriend Day 5/30	3	
								End of 2nd Semester	21	
June						1		Last Student Day (1-6) 5/31		
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Teacher Workshop 6/3	0	1
									169	11
									Total	

Board Work Session Dates	
9/7/2023	2/1/2024
10/5/2023	3/7/2024
11/2/2023	4/18/2024
1/4/2024	5/16/2024

Board Meeting Dates	
7/31/2023	1/11/2024
Aug-none	2/8/2024
9/14/2023	3/21/2024
10/12/2023	4/25/2024
11/9/2023	5/23/2024
12/14/2023	6/27/2024

Testing Calendar			
	Fall	Winter	Spring
FAST	Sept 9th-27th	Jan 7th-24th	May 6th-16th
MCA	NA	NA	April 2nd-30th
MTAS	NA	NA	April 2nd-30th

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 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 is a component of the educational program at Discovery Woods; however, the overarching emphasis is to meet the evidence-based instructional practices within the standards set forth by the Minnesota Department of Education. Aspects of the Montessori philosophy DW uses include freedom of movement, explicit instruction, repeated practice, multimodalities, corrective feedback, and multi-age classrooms.

Successes and Challenges:

DW has been successful with a highly-trained staff member running the school wide Title I program. This staff member teaches, models, and supports teachers as new techniques and practices are incorporated into core English language arts instructional time, as well as intervention time, based on what literacy-based research shows works best for students. DW continues to utilize an Academic Interventionist and Math Corps tutor to help students develop math skills, as well as



using a curriculum to guide teachers as they work hard to improve the school's math instructional program. Additionally, DW works hard to retain students by listening to the families and students and providing starting new initiatives for academics, SEL, and student leadership teams. The implementation of a new social emotional learning curriculum, CSC, has helped students in many ways. DW continues to use the Montessori philosophy, as appropriate, in several ways throughout different classroom settings but the use of which has been greatly modified due to challenges within the Montessori educational program and materials and the misalignment to required standards and assessments. DW focuses on hiring and developing high quality teachers who are dedicated to

evidence-based explicit instructional strategies, along with incorporating the school-chosen Montessori elements and meeting the EE goals.

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 analyze data, observe students, and stay abreast of current research in order to further develop our curriculum with proven instructional strategies and do what is best for students.
- Nature & Outdoors: Continue to implement more outdoor classroom experiences as well as explore and play outdoors as often as possible. Staff involve students in the school garden for lessons.
- Community & Culture: DW will continue using the CSC SEL curriculum and Grace & Courtesy efforts to strive for effective social-emotional learning and school-wide behavior management strategies. DW will also increase parent and community involvement through communication and parent and neighborhood involvement.



Academic Performance: Goals & Benchmarks PROGRESS ON OW CONTRACTUAL ACADEMIC GOALS & WBWF ALIGNMENT

Discovery Woods has students at the forefront of all decision-making sessions. Staff at Discovery Woods go above and beyond in efforts to ensure staff are making the best decisions for students. Assessment data is routinely analyzed to address the needs of students. Fastbridge assessments are used for screening purposes three times each year to determine students above, at, or below grade level in reading and math. All students identified as needing services based on the assessment data collected are provided with the proper intervention and support they need to make growth and build confidence as they develop their skills.

In addition to Fastbridge assessments, diagnostic and localized assessments are used to determine student strengths and needs, so as to provide for the enrichment or modifications for classrooms, small groups, or individual students. With a robust intervention program, students in need of reading or math interventions are served by one of the following: Curriculum & Intervention Coordinator, Academic Interventionist, Reading and Math Corps tutors. DW knows that retaining staff has a positive impact on educational programming and student success.

DW will provide performance data for each goal to make it clear that progress is being made and the standard is being met; the DW schoolwide Title I program will continue to emphasize whole school change initiatives to enhance learning success for all students. DW continues to offer Environmental Education (EE) instruction and the Environmental Education Coordinator provides materials, guidance, and feedback as teachers work to meet the goals in the ELP. Students participate in a Student Showcase at the end of each semester to demonstrate one or more educational accomplishments from the semester. Preschool staff prepares students for kindergarten and measure their work completion. DW continues to work on attendance and work hard to keep this above 90%.

PROGRESS ON OSPREY WILDS CONTRACTUAL ACADEMIC GOALS & WBWF ALIGNMENT

World's Best Workforce (WBWF) Goal Areas:

- **Ready for Kindergarten [R4K]:** All students meet school readiness goals.
- **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.
- **Lifelong Learners [LL]:** All students are prepared to be lifelong learners.

Indicator 1: Mission Related Outcomes

Goal: Students at Discovery Woods School (DWS) will demonstrate growth in environmental stewardship as measured by 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.
- **Lifelong Learners [LL]:** All students are prepared to be lifelong learners.

Key Measures & Results for this Goal:

Measure 1.1: 80% of students grades K-6, in aggregate, will receive a passing score on a post-trip assessment* after attending an Environmental Education field trip.

Data and Analysis: 88% of 5th & 6th grade students received a passing score on a post-trip assessment after attending an Environmental Education field trip.

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: 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: Students at DWS will demonstrate growth in reading as measured by state assessments and nationally normed assessments.

Effective July 1, 2023, the READ Act replaces the Read Well by Third Grade goal in World's Best Workforce (MN Stat. 120B.12). The legislature seeks to have every child reading at or above grade level every year, beginning in kindergarten. Because the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments measure reading proficiency for the first time in third grade, reporting on third grade reading proficiency serves as a proxy for determining if the school is meeting the READ Act literacy goal.

Key Measures & Results for this Goal:

Measure 3.1: The overall percentage of students whose achievement level on the statewide assessments for reading (as measured by North Star Academic Progress) improved on statewide assessments is equal to or greater than the state.

Measure 3.2: The overall percentage of students whose achievement level decreased or stayed "does not meet standards" on statewide assessments for reading (as measured by North Star Academic Progress) is equal to or less than the state.

Measure 3.3: The aggregate percentage of students in grades K-6 who meet or exceed their individual growth goal from fall to spring as measured by the FastBridge assessment will be at least 50%.

Data and Analysis:

- Measure 3.1 - 83.3% of those students who remained at Discovery Woods School and took the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) in reading in 2023-2024 improved or stayed the same, as compared to results of their 2022-2023 school year reading MCA. 61% of students in the state of Minnesota in 2023-2024 improved or stayed the same on the 2023-2024 reading MCA, as compared to results of the 2022-2023 school year reading MCA.
- Measure 3.2 - 16.7% of those students who remained at Discovery Woods School and took the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) in reading in 2023-2024 decreased or stayed at "does not meet", as compared to results of their 2022-2023 school year reading MCA. 39% of students in the state of Minnesota in 2023-2024 improved or stayed the same on the 2023-2024 reading MCA, as compared to results of the 2022-2023 school year reading MCA.
- Measure 3.3 - 55% of students in grades K-6 met or exceeded their individual growth goal from fall to spring on the Fastbridge reading assessment (based on 40th percentile growth rate nationally).

Indicator 4: Math Growth

Goal: Students at DWS will demonstrate growth in math as measured by state assessments 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.
- **Lifelong Learners [LL]:** All students are prepared to be lifelong learners.

Key Measures & Results for this Goal:

Measure 4.1: The overall percentage of students whose achievement level on the statewide assessments for math (as measured by North Star Academic Progress) improved on statewide assessments is equal to or greater than the state.

Measure 4.2: The overall percentage of students whose achievement level decreased or stayed "does not meet standards" on statewide assessments for math (as measured by North Star Academic Progress) is equal to or less than the state.

Measure 4.3: The aggregate percentage of students in grades K-6 who meet or exceed their individual growth goal from fall to spring as measured by the FastBridge assessment will be at least 50%.

Data and Analysis:

- Measure 4.1 - 16.7% of those students who remained at Discovery Woods School and took the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) in math in 2023-2024 improved or stayed the same, as compared to results of their 2022-2023 school year math MCA. 56.2% of students in the state of Minnesota in 2023-2024 improved or stayed the same on the 2023-2024 math MCA, as compared to results of the 2022-2023 school year reading MCA.
- Measure 4.2 - 83.3% of those students who remained at Discovery Woods School and took the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) in math in 2023-2024 decreased or stayed at "does not meet", as compared to results of their 2022-2023 school year math MCA. 43.6% of students in the state of Minnesota in 2023-2024 improved or stayed the same on the 2023-2024 math MCA, as compared to results of the 2022-2023 school year math MCA.
- Measure 4.3 - 61.8% of students in grades K-6 met or exceeded their individual growth goal from fall to spring on the Fastbridge math assessment (based on 31st percentile for growth nationally).

Indicator 5: Reading Proficiency

Goal: Students at DWS will demonstrate proficiency in reading as measured by state 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.
- **Lifelong Learners [LL]:** All students are prepared to be lifelong learners.

Key Measures & Results for this Goal:

Measure 5.1: The school's aggregate proficiency index score for students in grades 3-6 will be maintained or increase from the baseline proficiency index score (FY18, FY19, and FY22 baseline – 58.7) OR will be equal to or greater than that of the state for the same grades (3-6).

Measure 5.2: The school's aggregate proficiency index score for students in the Free/Reduced Priced Lunch group will be equal to or greater than that of the state for the same group and the same grades (3-6).

Measure 5.3: The school's aggregate proficiency index score for students in the Free/Reduced Priced Lunch group will be equal to or greater than that of the local district (Brainerd) for the same group and the same grades (3-6).

Measure 5.4: The school's aggregate proficiency index score for students in the Special Education group will be equal to or greater than that of the state for the same group and the same grades (3-6).

Measure 5.5: The aggregate percentage of students in grades K-6 who are at low risk or above in FastBridge Reading assessment will be greater than 50%.

Data and Analysis:

- Measure 5.1 - 50% of Discovery Woods Students met or exceeded on the reading MCA compared to 49.9% of students in the state of Minnesota.
- Measure 5.2 - 43% of Discovery Woods Students qualifying for free or reduced lunch met or exceeded on the reading MCA compared to 33.4% of students receiving free or reduced lunch in the state of Minnesota.
- Measure 5.3 - 43% of Discovery Woods Students qualifying for free or reduced lunch met or exceeded on the reading MCA compared to 43.6% of students in the local district (Brainerd).
- Measure 5.4 - 27.8% of Discovery Woods Students qualifying for special education services met or exceeded on the reading MCA compared to 25.5% of students receiving special education services in the state of Minnesota.
- Measure 5.5 - 62% of Discovery Woods students in grades K-6 were at low risk or above on Discovery Woods OW FY24 World's Best Workforce & Annual Report,| Drafted October 4, 2024

the Fastbridge reading assessment.

Indicator 6: Math Proficiency

Goal: Students at DWS will demonstrate proficiency in math as measured by state 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.
- **Lifelong Learners [LL]:** All students are prepared to be lifelong learners.

Key Measures & Results for this Goal:

Measure 6.1: The school's aggregate proficiency index score for students in grades 3-6 will be maintained or increase from the baseline proficiency index score (FY18, FY19, and FY22 baseline – 41.9) OR will be greater than that of the state for the same grades (3-6).

Measure 6.2: The school's aggregate proficiency index score for students in the Free/Reduced Priced Lunch group will be equal to or greater than that of the state for the same group and the same grades (3-6).

Measure 6.3: The school's aggregate proficiency index score for students in the Free/Reduced Priced Lunch group will be equal to or greater than that of the local district (Brainerd) for the same group and the same grades (3-6).

Measure 6.4: The school's aggregate proficiency index score for students in the Special Education group will be equal to or greater than that of the state for the same group and the same grades (3-6).

Measure 6.5: The aggregate percentage of students in grades K-6 who are at low risk or above in FastBridge Math assessment will be at least 50%.

Data and Analysis:

- Measure 6.1 - 15.2% of Discovery Woods Students met or exceeded on the math MCA compared to 45.5% of students in the state of Minnesota.
- Measure 6.2 - 13.3% of Discovery Woods Students qualifying for free or reduced lunch met or exceeded on the math MCA compared to 27% of students receiving free or reduced lunch in the state of Minnesota.
- Measure 6.3 - 13.3% of Discovery Woods Students qualifying for free or reduced lunch met or exceeded on the math MCA compared to 33.4% of students in the local district (Brainerd).
- Measure 6.4 - 11.1% of Discovery Woods Students qualifying for special education services met or exceeded on the math MCA compared to 24.7% of students receiving special education services in the state of Minnesota.

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- Measure 6.5 - 45% of Discovery Woods students in grades K-6 were at low risk or above on the Fastbridge math assessment.

Indicator 7: Science Proficiency (and Growth)

Goal: Students at DWS will demonstrate proficiency in science as measured by state 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.
- **Lifelong Learners [LL]:** All students are prepared to be lifelong learners.

Key Measures & Results for this Goal:

Measure 7.1: The school’s aggregate proficiency index score for students in grade 5 will maintain or increase from the baseline proficiency index score (FY18, FY19, and FY22 baseline – 60.5) OR will be greater than that of the state for the same grade (5).

Measure 7.2: The school’s aggregate proficiency index score for students in grade 5 will be equal to or greater than that of the district for the same grade (5).

Data and Analysis:

- Measure 7.1 - 40% of Discovery Woods Students met or exceeded on the science MCA compared to 39.6% of students in the state of Minnesota.
- Measure 7.2 - 40% of Discovery Woods Students qualifying for free or reduced lunch met or exceeded on the science MCA compared to 48.3% of students in the local district (Brainerd).

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

Goal: Preschool students at DWS will demonstrate readiness for kindergarten as measured a curriculum based measure.

WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal:

Ready for Kindergarten [R4K]: All students meet school readiness goals.

Key Measures & Results for this Goal:

Measure 8.1: The aggregate percentage of preschool students who have mastered 50% of the ready for Kindergarten skills on the school implemented Parent Aware approved assessment will be 85%.

Data and Analysis:

- 58.3% of preschool students at Discovery Woods mastered 50% of the ready for
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Kindergarten skills on the school implemented Parent Aware approved assessment

Indicator 9: Post Secondary Readiness

The school does not have a contractual goal in this indicator area as it does not serve high school students.

Indicator 10: Attendance

Goal: 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.
- **Lifelong Learners [LL]:** All students are prepared to be lifelong learners.

Key Measures & Results for this Goal:

Measure 10.1: The average of the school's annual consistent attendance rates will be equal to or greater than the state.

Data and Analysis: Attendance rates have consistently been coming up and staying high until this year. There seems to be a drop suddenly and the school is looking at data and working with families to find out how they can help. The school will continue to track attendance and meet with families that have habitual truancy issues to help work through any deterrents. The school will also continue to work with the social emotional learning curriculum we have and continue having our behavior interventionist do push in social skills.

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

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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 FY24 school year.

ADDITIONAL ACADEMIC DATA

Consider the goal information already provided. In this section, include additional data (narratives and/or tables/charts/graphs) that would be helpful to tell your school's story to the public.

Education Effectiveness Practices

Curriculum & Instruction Review Process:

Discovery Woods is a public Charter School meaning that the Minnesota State Standards are center stage in the curriculum. The DW curriculum review cycle is ongoing and used to evaluate alignment of standards with the curriculum, review common assessments, and contribute to the overall mapping of the school's curriculum. The school has implemented an evidence-based ELA curriculum in grades 1-6 for the past several years. The school is now entering its second year of implementing a new math curriculum in grades K-6 in which most teachers were provided training. The Montessori philosophy is incorporated into several areas of the academic program, and is especially prevalent in the Children's House classrooms. The Curriculum & Intervention Coordinator, along with teaching staff, review the success of the curriculum and make adjustments to ensure student success.



DW works hard to create an equitable environment for all students by using evidence-based curricula and instructional practices along with differentiated learning tasks and maximized intervention support. Teachers take advantage of professional development opportunities regarding equitable educational practices (like ensuring all students can read), and participate in a cultural competency training, which the school provides on a three-year cycle, to meet teacher relicensure requirements. DW monitors data to identify gaps and then meets to discuss how to address these gaps by using interventionists, specialists, and tutors as well as other methods of instruction. The changes made within the ELA curriculum and literacy intervention program have resulted in equitable access to reading for

students from lower socioeconomic households; the data shows that DW has a higher reading

achievement rate for those students who receive free & reduced lunches than the state or surrounding districts.

- The school's Curriculum & Intervention Coordinator continues to work with students for reading intervention services and also helps mentor classroom teachers and provides push in instruction in ELA. AmeriCorps tutors and an Academic Interventionist help provide interventions in math and reading.
- 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 screened using the Fastbridge assessment in the fall, winter, and spring. The data from this screening is analyzed for classrooms and individual students to determine intervention groups and focus areas in core instruction. All primary students (K-3) are given diagnostic assessments in phonics and phonemic awareness as part of the Title I School Wide reading program.
 - 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, Curriculum & Intervention Coordinator, Special Educator, and Classroom Teachers meet regularly to discuss Response to Intervention (RtI) Plans for students who need additional academic support. Professional Learning Communities (PLC) meetings focus on core areas of instruction in ELA and math. The administration team made up of the director and Curriculum & Intervention Coordinator 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-3) to prevent later reading difficulties, and to remediate reading difficulties in older students (grades 4-6). The reading goals set forth in the Title I narrative are measured using FastBridge screening results, as well as phonics, phonemic awareness.
 - 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 evident, adjustments to the intervention are made and intervention continues 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.

Evidence-based learning environments require explicit teaching and maximized academic learning time while interleaving or spiraling needed skills and topics. As able and appropriate, the Montessori philosophy is woven into classrooms to meet the academic and social needs of the classroom community and individual children. Lessons are provided mostly in whole groups to maximize explicit teaching and academic time on task; however, small group and one-to-one lessons and supports are provided. 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 is an important factor for success in many areas of life. Students are able to show their best work by sharing it with the class at gathering times, displaying it in the hallway, or sharing it with families during events. Discovery Woods teachers work to meet the community of learners at grade level while also offering modifications for students who need more support and enrichment for students who need to advance their skills. Discovery Woods has multi-age classrooms and, in addition to using set curricula in core subject areas, uses a variety of materials and books that allow students 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. 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. Multimodal instructional strategies, multiage classrooms, and freedom of movement provides an opportunity for many students to find success who would otherwise feel lost or restricted as learners. Discovery Woods helps lower-performing students improve their self-concept about themselves as learners, even when 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 provide identified students with 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:

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. Discovery Woods is implementing more environmental education and outdoor classroom experience for students to expand their educational experience.



DWS is its own district with a small student and teacher population. The school only has seven classroom teachers. Student background and academic needs are considered when placing students within a classroom. Administration meetings occur weekly to discuss what is working for students and what work is needed to address identified needs. 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 that Sourcewell offers to boost teachers' skills and student achievement. DW introduced a new social emotional curriculum, Caring School Community, that will help with retention as students and staff work together to create a shared voice to build a positive social-emotional environment. DW connects teachers to networking opportunities and professional development opportunities to equip them to provide high quality instruction. The DW team works together to develop and implement a rigorous curriculum for students.



Children's House (preschool and kindergarten) classes have Practical Life activities that help the child develop independence, competence, and confidence through use of materials that speak to the young child's desire for active participation. 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 high frequency words. 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 phonetic and phonemic awareness 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. 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 use both large and small group instruction as well as one on one instruction.

Teacher Evaluation

DW implemented a teacher evaluation process.

The framework for the teacher evaluation consists of:

- Annual Evaluation Process
- Professional Learning Communities
- 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 1-2 times per year
 - Reflection and documentation of their PGG
 - Peer Mentoring
 - Self Evaluations

Formal Teacher observations are performed by an administrative team member one to three times per year. Informal observations are also performed by the Curriculum & Intervention Coordinator and Director on a rotating basis, with feedback provided.

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 the School ensures exceptional achievement. It is the Executive Director's responsibility to champion staff, 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.



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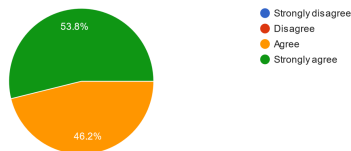
Student & Parent Satisfaction

Discovery Woods reaches out to families with surveys for parents and students annually in the fall and spring as well as staff just checking in with families through email and face to face discussions as our surveys only reach a small percentage and we want more feedback from everyone. Surveys did show families and students are happy with Discovery Woods in areas of safety, feeling welcome, communication, instruction and discipline.

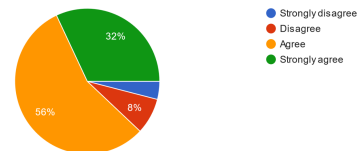
Family Survey Results:

Family involvement has been a struggle for Discovery Woods; we only received surveys from a quarter of families. Survey results showed that 100% of respondents agreed that their child is safe at DW, has appropriate academic expectations, the school provides a caring environment, students are recognized for doing good work and that the school building is clean and inviting. At least 92% of respondents agreed that the school has high standards for student behavior, their children enjoy going to DW, the school meets the academic needs of their children, they feel welcome at the school, the school does a good job of communicating with parents, we have highly effective teachers and that they would recommend DW to other families. 11.5% of respondents did not feel that DW provided parent volunteer opportunities. DW has periodically asked through newsletters and emails for volunteers for book fairs, lunch time help etc however we continue to not get many volunteers. We also ask for parent chaperones for field trips. DW will continue to brainstorm volunteer ideas and also discuss how to reach families about these opportunities. 15.4% of respondents did not know the mission of the school so this is also an area that DW staff will continue working on, making sure every family knows what the mission of the school is. One respondent did leave a comment stating that it would be beneficial to have an on-site pre-k special education program and having an American Indian Parent Advisory Committee. DW was accepted to have a Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program beginning the Fall of 2024 so we will be able to provide Special Education services to preschool students. We will continue to visit having an American Indian Parent Advisory Committee. Although our American Indian student population has not hit 10 we have tried for the last two years to begin an American Indian Parent Advisory Committee however we have not had enough parents interested and at the last meeting no one showed. DW will continue looking at this and determine how to proceed. DW will continue to reach out to the staff at MDE for guidance as well.

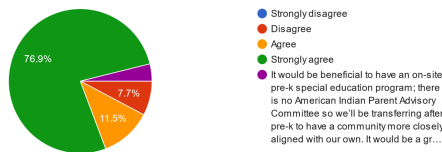
My child is safe at this school.
26 responses



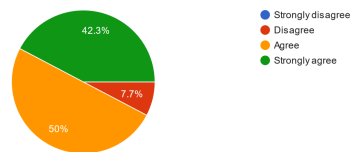
This school has high standards for student behavior.
25 responses



Overall, I am satisfied with Discovery Woods
26 responses



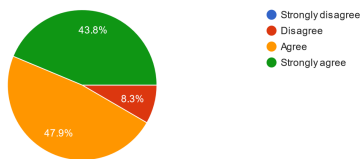
This school meets the academic needs of my children.
26 responses



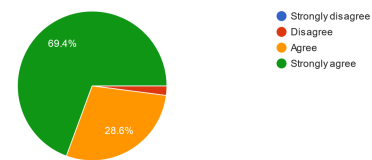
Student Survey Results:

Around half of our student body responded to our surveys this year. Over 90% of respondents felt safe at the school, felt behavior was an important part of the school, felt the school had appropriate academic expectations for them, felt cared for while at school, felt they were learning what they needed to, felt welcome at the school, felt school communication was good and that they learn well from their teachers. They also would recommend the school to other kids and were overall satisfied with the school. 16% of students did not feel they were recognized for doing good work and 12% did not agree that the school building was clean and inviting. An overwhelming number of students at 65.3% said they did not know the mission of the school. Knowing the ages of the students some may be too young to know this information however the school will look at ways to teach all students the mission of the school in terms they understand.

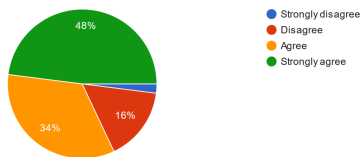
I feel safe at this school.
48 responses



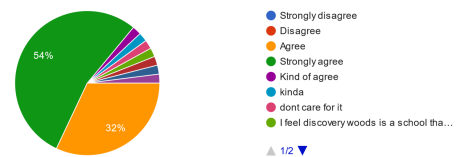
Student behavior is an important part of Discovery Woods school.
49 responses



I am recognized for doing good work.
50 responses



Overall, I am satisfied with Discovery Woods
50 responses



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 goal of environmental literacy is to support people as they work individually and collectively toward developing and sustaining a healthy natural environment. Developing and sustaining a healthy natural environment requires people to obtain sufficient awareness, knowledge, skills, and attitudes in order that facilitates the creation of a society where all people live in a way that balances the needs of the people with the needs of the natural world.



Discovery Woods incorporates environmental and nature-based education in many respects throughout each week, month, and semester. Teachers are encouraged to take students outside for any subject area. The school has an outdoor classroom space in the garden area which has

convertible benches and shade umbrellas for classes to use in the garden space. These additions to the garden have helped teachers utilize the space more and given students a break from the indoor class space.

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. Plants, animals, and other artifacts from the natural world are used to enhance the teaching of standards in as many areas as possible.



Successes and challenges related to environmental education:

Although modifications need to be made, teachers have found success with our new Environmental Learning Plan (ELP). Project Learning Tree units are used in grades K-4, an animal habitat project takes place in grades 1-2, and an energy action project takes place in grades 5-6. Additionally, the school has a Green Team that is composed of students in grades 5-6; the Green Team collects and tracks recycling on a weekly basis. The Curriculum & Intervention Coordinator, who has taken over the EE program, has been reminding teachers at each monthly staff meeting about what is needed for the EE program and goals. Teacher turnover is slowing down which helps to ensure goals are met in the ELP and teachers have had more time to embrace this part of the school’s mission.

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, and teachers and students have a hard time staying motivated in extreme heat or cold. Teachers are encouraged and provide support in these situations, so many teachers are adapting to being outdoors in all conditions. The EE program encourages classrooms to have an outdoor “sit spot” or special tree. Students can participate in nature journaling or other activities at this special spot. In the case of inclement weather, DW has chosen not to do e-learning dates so that students can experience snow days as the school encourages them to go outdoors on such days.

DW strives to offer opportunities to include diverse voices including investigating the customs of gardening and seed planting within various cultures from long ago and today. Even though the population of Discovery Woods School includes a majority of white students, the school works hard to incorporate voices of any cultural or racial group represented within the walls of the school and beyond. The ELA curriculum includes a diverse set of authors and backgrounds and extends these diverse voices into EE and Social Studies programs by having parents and community members come into classrooms to discuss traditions and viewpoints. Each year, the school attempts to form and collaborate with an American Indian Parent Advisory Committee (AIPAC) to specifically address the needs of the school’s American Indian student population and help students build understanding and community with voices of the state’s indigenous population.

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 8 voting members: 2 community members, 2 teachers and 4 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 22, 2023	July 31, 2023	Resigned May 23, 2024	dverdonboard@discoverywoods.com
Emma Needham	Vice Chair	Parent	May 22, 2023	July 31, 2023	Resigned February 8, 2024	eneedhamboard@discoverywoods.com
Amanda Westlund	Treasurer	Parent	September 26, 2022	October 24, 2022	Resigned November 9, 2023	awestlundboard@discoverywoods.com
Ashley Gangestad	Secretary	Teacher	May 22, 2023	July 31, 2023	June 2026	agangestadboard@discoverywoods.com
Dawn Snook	Member	Teacher	May 22, 2023	July 31, 2023	June 2026	dsnookboard@discoverywoods.com
Natalie Schiferl	Vice Chair	Community Member	May 22, 2023	July 31, 2023	Resigned June 27, 2024	nschiferlboard@discoverywoods.com
Rebekah Kent-Ehlebracht	Treasurer	Parent	May 22, 2023	July 31, 2023	June 2026	rkentboard@discoverywoods.com

Board Training and Development

The Board participates in board training through Minnesota School Boards Association, Minnesota Association of Charter Schools and Creative Planning 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.

Activities Completed/Progress/Results for 2023-24:

- 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 23-24:

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 2023-24 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 Curriculum & Interventionist and Academic Interventionist positions 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.

Initial Training				
Board Member Name	Original Date Seated	Board's Role & Responsibilities	Employment Policies & Practices	Financial Management
Dawn Verdon	July 31, 2023	02/10/2021 MACS	06/23/2021 MACS	02/23/2021 MACS
Emma Needham	July 31, 2023	8/12/2020 OW	11/18/2020 OW	8/11/2020 OW
Natalie Schiferl	July 31, 2023	7/8/2023 OW	10/4/2023 OW	11/1/2023 OW
Amanda Westlund	October 24, 2022	1/11/23 MSBA	1/11/23 MSBA	11/15/2022 OW
Ashley Gangestad	July 31, 2023	9/7/23 OW	12/15/23 OW	12/15/23 OW
Dawn Snook	July 31, 2023	7/8/2023 OW	7/16/2023 OW	11/7/2023 OW
Rebekah Kent-Ehlebracht	July 31, 2023	11/4/23 OW	11/4/23 OW	11/4/23 OW

FY24 Self Board Training

Month	Training	Provided by	Members Present
July	<i>The Sounding Board #2 – Board Purpose and Training Review Strategic Plan</i>	Osprey Wilds	Amanda, Emma, Ashley, Dawn V, Bekah, Natalie S, Matt, Dawn S, Kristi
August	<i>None</i>	Osprey Wilds	No Meeting held
September	<i>OW Sounding Board Issue 20: Use of Public Funds</i>	Osprey Wilds	Amanda, Natalie S, Rebekah, Emma, Matt, Ashley
October	<i>OW Sounding Board Issue 30: Public Comment</i>	Osprey Wilds	Amanda, Dawn S, Natalie S, Ashley, Dawn V, Emma, Matt, Kristi
November	<i>OW Sounding Board Issue 6: Board Meeting Agendas</i>	Osprey Wilds	Dawn S, Rebekah, Natalie, Ashley, Amanda, Matt, Emma, Dawn
December	<i>OW Sounding Board Issue 18: Charter School Board Committees</i>	Osprey Wilds	Rebekah, Natalie, Dawn S, Ashley, Matt, Kristi
January	<u>OW Sounding Board Issue 33</u> Complaint Policy	Osprey Wilds	Ashley, Natalie, Dawn S, Matt, Kristi
February	<u>OW Sounding Board Issue 32</u> Financial Oversight	Osprey Wilds	Ashley, Natalie, Rebekah, Matt, Dawn V, Dawn S, Kristi
March	<u>OW Sounding Board Issue 31</u> MN Government Data Practices Act	Osprey Wilds	Tabled
April	<u>OW Sounding Board Issue 31</u> MN Government Data Practices Act <u>OW Sounding Board Issue 29</u> Cameras in Classrooms	Osprey Wilds	Dawn V, Dawn S, Natalie, Rebekah, Matt, Kristi
May	<u>OW Sounding Board Issue 28</u> Conflicts of Interest	Osprey Wilds	Ashley, Dawn S, Dawn V, Matt
June	<u>OW Sounding Board Issue 7</u> Onboarding New Board Members	Osprey Wilds	Ashley, Dawn S, Rebekah

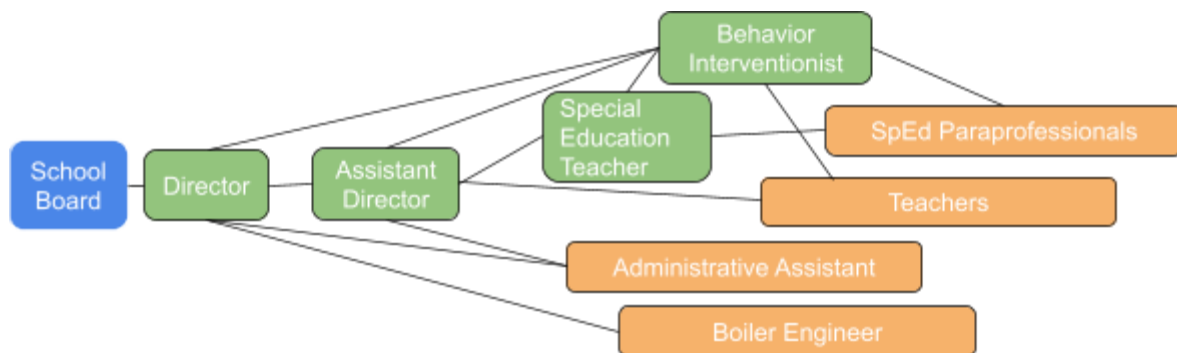
Discovery Woods OW FY24 World's Best Workforce & Annual Report,| Drafted October 4, 2024

MANAGEMENT

The Board oversees the operations through a finance report and management report produced by Creative Planning every month at the board meeting. Staff retention with teachers has been a huge success and with this comes more uniformity. Although we have been able to hire Educational Assistants there is still a challenge of chronic absenteeism. We have also lost many key administrative figures in the last two years including our former assistant director, instructional lead, business manager and administrative assistant so have had to readjust our team. Our Curriculum & Intervention Coordinator has stepped in to help with some of these duties and we have replaced the administrative assistant. Although the Curriculum & Intervention Coordinator and Director have taken more on with these vacancies we want to move slowly and gradually to look at what positions we may need to add/fill. We constantly look at ways to not only help staff with mental health but also have support in place at the workplace and continue to listen to what needs there are and work at providing fair pay and benefits for our staff.

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

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



School Management Evaluation

Discovery Woods has a Policy and Procedure in place for evaluation of the director and administration team. The purpose and objective of this policy is 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. August of each year the Director and School board jointly establish goals and a professional development or improvement plan if required. In January of each year there is a 6 month progress check in and goals are adjusted if needed. Then each May board meeting the Director completes a self-assessment, the board conducts 360 evaluation in accordance with board procedure through staff survey etc and together the board and director summarize the assessment results.

ADMINISTRATORS

- **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 Creative Planning 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 2023-24 was providing more managerial support in our Social Emotional and Math programs as well as continued operational guidance and training. Kristi's last date of School Leader Evaluation was May 23, 2024

Kristi Crocker

2023-2024 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

- Weekly check-in with contracted school mental health providers through Northern Pines Mental Health.
- SPDG Webinar: Mental Health from an Indigenous Perspective, MDE, January 24, 2024

To advocate and support equality and equity of all children

- Making Peace with War Play: Exploring Consent and Power in the Preschool Classroom-Engagement Strategies-Mike Huber, August 3, 2023
 - Non Exclusionary Session , MDE, August 24, 2023
 - Mandated Reporting, Non-Exclusionary Discipline & HEARTS, MDE, November 9, 2023
- Discovery Woods OW FY24 World's Best Workforce & Annual Report,| Drafted October 4, 2024

- Difference, Disability and Disadvantage, MDE, December 13, 2023
- Intro to Transcend's 10 Leaps, Transcend - OW, February 13, 2024
- Cultural Competency, Sourcewell, March 2, 2024

To establish a stable financial framework for Discovery Woods

- Financial Team Meetings
- Pathway II Implementation Webinar, MN DCYF, August 22, 2023
- Information Regarding the FY 2023 Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) Grant, US Dept of Ed, August 31, 2023
- Numerous meetings with TenSquare, ABC Board members, Whittier Capital Group, USDA and other affiliates as needed for building purchase
- Public Policy Forum, MACS, December 14, 2023
- FY25 Preparation Pathway Grant Information

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

- Weekly Charter School Admin Support Call - MACS
- Monthly School Leader Community of Practice meetings, Osprey Wilds
- Charter School Boot Camp, MDE, varied dates/times determined on topics covered
- MACS Legislative session weekly updates
- PERA Legislative Update for Employers, PERA, August 10, 2023
- PELSB Licensure Information Session, PELSB, August 10, 2023
- MN Employment Law Seminar, Assured Partners, October 10, 2023
- Unveiling the WHY behind Indicators of Distress – Refining Quality, Empowering Change for All Students, A-Game - OW, February 14, 2024
- Navigating Indicators of Distress for Sustainable School Improvement, A-Game - OW, April 3, 2024
- Mastering Labor Law Compliance for 501(c) Organizations, June 6, 2024
- Labor & Employment Law Update, Kraus-Anderson Insurance, June 20, 2024

Professional Development Goals/Areas of Focus for 2023-24:

- Long term plan for building - purchase agreement in place
- Review new curriculum standards - reviewed with Curriculum & Intervention Coordinator - Literacy Lead, plans for READ ACT and new math curriculum and teacher training in place.
- Long term strategy for grades 5 - 6 - best to keep 5-6, will work hard on recruitment for a teacher with the right fit.

Professional Development Goals/Areas of Focus for 2024-25:

- Continue work towards building purchase and renovations
- Solidify READ Act plans and new math curriculum
- Recruitment for 5-6 teacher in the spring
- Marketing strategies for increased enrollment

Discovery Woods OW FY24 World's Best Workforce & Annual Report,| Drafted October 4, 2024

- **Kara DeVriendt, Curriculum & Intervention Coordinator**

Kara DeVriendt has worked as an educator for over 20 years. She has been with Discovery Woods School since the 2017-2018 school year. She worked as a lower elementary classroom teacher for two years, then moved into a Title I Reading Specialist position, and is currently the Curriculum & Intervention Coordinator. This current position oversees all aspects of curriculum and intervention, including coaching teachers, the academic interventionist, and Reading & Math Corps tutors; teacher and teacher assistant evaluations, curriculum guidance, development, and modeling; teaching English language arts to 2nd grade students, coordinating the environmental education program, leading the response to intervention initiative, implementing Fastbridge and diagnostic assessments, creating data reports for teachers and the school board, sharing information with families in regard to student progress; scheduling all school interventions; reporting for the READ Act; reporting to Authorizer in regard to EE and academic data, developing and leading Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) for teachers; overseeing and communicating with stakeholders regarding the Schoolwide Title I program; running an after school book club. Kara has a Bachelor's degree in liberal arts & science (English & Environmental Studies), a Master of Science degree in Sustainable Community Development and a Master of Arts degree in Education with an emphasis on Literacy Curriculum & Instruction. She holds teaching licensures in 5-12 Communication Arts & Literature and K-12 reading. She is also certified through the Center for Effective Reading Instruction (CERI) as a Structured Literacy Dyslexia Interventionist. She has taken many other trainings, particularly in the area of literacy, such as Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) and CORE Online Literacy & Language Academy (OL&LA) facilitator training.

Professional Development Goals/Areas of Focus for 2024-25:

- Facilitate PLCs for teachers taking the CORE OL & LA training as part of the READ Act requirements
- Participate in the Early Childhood LETRS training, along with the PreK Lead teacher, to help support and guide needed changes in our preschool literacy program.
- Support the PreK Lead teacher as she implements a new assessment system (Teaching Strategies GOLD) per Voluntary PreK (VPK) requirements.
- Supervise and coach the school's new Early Learning Corps tutoring position, along with the school's Math & Reading Corps tutors
- Participate in MnMTSS training through the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) to further develop our response to intervention efforts and ensure a cohesive and effective schoolwide system of support



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 at least 2 members of the staff as able, 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 holds workshops that will help staff with environmental initiatives and understanding the mission of the school.

2023-24 Licensed Teaching Staff				
Name	File #	License and Assignment (subject/grades)	2024-25 Status*	Comments <i>Include information regarding special licensure (e.g., Community Expert) or other relevant information.</i>
Dawn Snook	446715	Special Education	R	
Nicholas Forbes	1024792	Special Education	R	OFP ABS
Renee Huberty	427018	Elem. Teacher Kindergarten Pre-Primary	R	
Chasidi Grant	1016469	Elem. Teacher Kindergarten Pre-Primary	R	Tier 1, Tier 2 obtained June 2024
Kara DeVriendt	485948	Curriculum & Intervention Coordinator	R	Reading K-12 license Master’s in Literacy
Shawna Sachs	480413	Elem. Teacher	R	
Emily Sipprell	1023126	Elem. Teacher	R	Tier 2, Tier 3 obtained June 2024
Rachel Hanford	518156	Elem. Teacher	R	
Kiersten Kralovetz	480223	Elem. Teacher	NR	
Ashley Gangestad	454339	Elem. Teacher	R	
Kayla Huether	470648	Elem. Teacher - PE	R	Tier 3 Restricted

* R = Returning, NR = Not Returning

2023-24 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, Math training - language and stations. DW worked hard at looking through data to determine overall and individual student needs. Teacher team meetings happen regularly to plan and refine educational practices. Staff meetings occur monthly to update all staff about school happenings, and new initiatives, and to open up conversations around successes and challenges. The school conducted eleven in-service days to evaluate programs, discuss children, and plan strategies that will ensure instruction is targeted to children’s individual needs, and that teachers are informed regarding current best practices.

Teacher Retention:

Discovery Woods continues to retain and recruit quality staff for the school. Many teachers that apply are first year teachers, so DW put together a scope and sequence to help guide new teachers and purchased math & ELA curricula that are both evidence-based and easy to follow for teachers to provide the best opportunity for effective instruction. The Curriculum & Intervention Coordinator creates, models, teaches, oversees, and adapts most of the ELA materials, which helps provide teachers with the support and guidance they need to be successful. Retention has improved as a direct result of these initiatives; however, DW continues to look at ways to retain staff by offering a more competitive salary. Teacher training and administration flexibility and open-mindedness are also great tools used for teacher retention.

Percentage of Licensed Teachers from 2023-24 not returning in 2024-25 (non-returning teachers/total teachers from 2023-24 x 100)	9%
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2023-24 Non-Licensed Staff			
Name	Assignment	2024-25 Status*	Comments
Sara Prettyman	Special Education 1:1	R	
Michael Knakmuhs	Boiler Engineer	R	
Tom Lytle	Behavior Interventionist	R	
Kristi Crocker	Director	R	
Taylor Crocker	Business Manager	NR	was part-time, one day/week
Jenni Blessing	Teacher Assistant	R	
Hannah Reynolds	Special Education 1:1	NR	
Jordan Buckles	Special Education 1:1	NR	
Katie McGuire	Special Education 1:1	NR	
Lillian Kujala	Special Education 1:1	R	
Christine Peterson	Special Education 1:1	NR	
Cora Collins	Special Education 1:1	R	
Ann Weber	Teacher Assistant	R	
Betsy Peterson	Special Education 1:1	NR	
Rhonda Addison	Janitor	NR	
Bonnie Hiemenz	Janitor	NR	

* R = Returning, NR = Not Returning

Operational Performance

Discovery Woods complies with applicable laws, rules and regulations of a public charter school. The 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 with a staff at the door welcoming and monitoring.

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 2023-24 school year began with an advertised two week application period, concluding in a lottery draw on February 8, 2023, however there were no spaces that had more student applications than spots available. Applications were randomly assigned a 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 works 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 breakfast and lunch to students. Accounting and financial oversight was conducted by Creative Planning. Schlenner Wenner and Company conducted the fiscal year 2023 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.

Finances

For questions regarding school finances and for complete financials for 2023-24 and/or an organizational budget for 2024-25, contact:

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

The school contracts with 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 Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center no later than December 31, 2024.

FY24 Finances	Fund 1	Fund 2	Fund 4
Total Revenues	\$1,462,053	\$0	\$128,612
Total Expenditures	\$1,531,297	\$0	\$110,091
Net Income (Deficit)	(\$69,244)	\$0	\$18,521
Total Fund Balance	\$845,830	\$0	\$135,385

Overview

The school ended the year over the enrollment targets (100.04 actual ADM compared to 97 budgeted) so general education aids were budgeted lower than actuals. Special education funding came in less than we budgeted for but it's only a 5% difference to our bottom line so not a vast budget impact. The state's holdback remained at 10% and with the current 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 over budget due to enrollment targets being 3 kids above our budget estimates. The school had REAP grant award revenues of \$16,323 in FY24. Student Support and Library aid were a new funding stream in FY24 resulting in an additional \$40,000 in revenues.

General Fund revenues came from the following sources:

State Aids and Grants: \$1,315,839

Federal Aids and Grants: \$131,041

Fees Collected and other Miscellaneous Revenues : \$15,173

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): \$10,820

Fees Collected and other Miscellaneous Revenues: \$102,792

Expenses

General Fund

The school's largest expense was for employee salaries and benefits (\$921,541). Other expenses incurred by the school were for:

Lease, property taxes, and property insurance: \$171,638

Purchased Services (including building utilities): \$328,023

Supplies and Instructional Materials Purchased: \$63,071

Building Improvements and Equipment (including technology equipment): \$33,987

Memberships, Other Fees, and Fund Transfer: \$13,037

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: \$57,313

Purchased Services (including building utilities): \$43,568

Supplies and Food: \$9,210

Net Income and Fund Balance

The net operating deficit of (\$50,723) in all funds resulted in an ending fund balance of \$981,215 for the year, or 59.8% of current expenditures. The FY25 approved budget is projecting a net income of \$59,915 due to our plan to move the lease to Friends of Discovery Woods and using our extra cash reserves to partially fund that project.

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 is 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. The administrative team will continue to oversee the curriculum review cycle. Future plans largely include continuing to make gains in student learning so that state assessment scores and local standardized assessments reflect that.
- DW was granted the four star Parent Aware rating in the spring of 2016 and continues to renew every two years for our preschool 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 available space on the playground, including the basketball court which could also hold Peaceful Playground markings.
- There has been an ABC formation, Friends of Discovery Woods, to pursue owning the school building with a projected extended closing date in December 2024. With this purchase through a USDA loan, renovations will take place on the lower level of the building to provide staff a nursing mother's room and break out rooms for community affiliates and student needs as well as help with some technology needs. Renovations should hopefully be done during the summer of 2025.
- DW would like to continue emphasizing the need for arts and world languages in hopes of having language, music and art instructors in the future.
- DW continues to serve students needing extra support, which impacts finances due to the need for additional staff without further grant funding. DW students need extra instruction to rebuild skills and provide needed social emotional support and development as a result of the pandemic. This staffing need will continue to make an impact on the FY25 budget. Administration is trying to start a parent/staff group to help with fundraisers to offset this cost.
- DW has provided after school groups to help students through physical activity, math and book clubs as well as adding a kindness club in SY25.
- DW is adding a summer preschool program to help families with child care as well as help students with kindergarten preparedness. DW continues to look at implementing a year round preschool program.

