

# 2020-21 ANNUAL REPORT

## School of Options and Applied Research Middle School



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## SOAR MS BACKGROUND



The School of Options and Applied Research opened its doors in the Fall of 2013. SOAR Middle School was created by a committee of over 30 members made up of school staff, community members and parents looking at ways to improve student learning within the Northland Pines School District. The work of the committee and the support of the Northland Pines School District and its Board have made the dream of SOAR MS come true!

SOAR’s approach to education is through Project Based Learning (PBL). This instructional methodology encourages students to learn and apply academic content and skill through the development of a well-designed project. In projects, students learn how to apply knowledge to the real world, and use it to solve problems, answer complex questions, and create high-quality products. We believe students need to be able to think critically and solve problems, work well with others, and manage themselves effectively.

This annual report is intended to share our year at SOAR MS. If you have any questions or comments please feel free to contact Carie Brock, SOAR MS Principal, at [cbrock@npsd.k12.wi.us](mailto:cbrock@npsd.k12.wi.us) or 715-547-3619. We also invite you to visit, our door is always open! We believe that one of the best ways to learn more about SOAR MS is to see it in action!



*The mind is not a vessel to be filled but a fire to be kindled. ~Plutarch*

# MISSION AND VISION

## SOAR MS MISSION AND VALUES

The SOAR MS Mission is to inspire learning through student directed projects, service experiences, and the application of 21st century skills.

### SOAR MS VALUES:

- Empower students to reach their innate intellectual, creative and leadership potential
- Prepare students academically and socially to make positive contributions to an ever changing global society
- Engage students in learning outside of school walls through authentic experiences
- Promote student, family and community engagement



### NORTHLAND PINES SCHOOL DISTRICT MISSION:

The Northland Pines community guarantees rigor, relevance, and relationships to prepare all learners for life.

### NORTHLAND PINES SCHOOL DISTRICT VISION:

All learners will thrive in inclusive and welcoming environments.

# 20-21 DEMOGRAPHICS

At the close of the 2020-21 school year, the enrollment was 54 students (see chart). SOAR MS is comprised of students in grades 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th. At the time of this publication we are expecting to open at full capacity in the Fall of 2020 with 57 students and a waiting list to get in!

GRADE	STUDENTS	MALES	FEMALES	STUDENTS THAT LEFT SOAR MS:
5TH	13	6	7	1 RETURNED TO ERES IN SEPTEMBER
6TH	20	13	7	1 TRANSITIONED TO HOMESCHOOL IN JANUARY 1 TRANSFERRED TO ERES IN JANUARY
7TH	10	6	4	
8TH	11	6	5	
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>3 STUDENTS LEFT DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR</b>

Charter schools often get characterized for taking all the “leaders” or the “high achieving” students of the district. SOAR MS’s goal is to have similar demographics reflective of the NPSD district and avoid a homogenous student pool. While SOAR MS populations do not precisely mirror Northland Pines Middle School, we are close in achieving that goal in terms of students with disabilities, those who qualify for free and reduced lunch, and attendance rates (see chart). SOAR MS has no set template or criteria to describe a typical student. However, they all have one thing in common-- they choose to be at SOAR MS!

SCHOOL	% STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	% STUDENTS WITH ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE	RATE OF ATTENDANCE
SOAR MS	4%	49%	96.5%
NPMS	15%	48%	94.8%



# HIGHLIGHTS

## COMMUNITY SERVICE

Community service is a critical component of SOAR MS. We believe that participation in community service develops an increased sense of responsibility as well as teaches compassion and understanding. At SOAR MS students are required to complete at least 20 hours of community service every semester and 15 hours over the summer. Many of the students have found a passion for service; completing many more hours than required. This year, due to pandemic safety, students were not required or expected to meet the Community Service requirements. As a group, we looked for opportunities to continue connecting with our community through hand-written cards, emails, video conferences, and socially distanced meetings. We look forward to the return of safe, in-person service opportunities for our students again next year!



## FIELD STUDIES

We believe that Field Studies are essential to the development of our learners at SOAR MS. These activities give the students a chance to see the world and its cultures, diversity, and realities for themselves. Field Studies bring learning to life. One distinction that needs to be made is that a Field Study is quite different than an average field trip. A Field Study almost always has an expert involved from outside of the SOAR MS staff. They also typically require preparation by the students, engaging work while at the Field Study and reflection upon their return to school. We aim to schedule 2 or more Field Studies per month at SOAR MS. Sometimes these trips are as simple as a nature hike through the nearby National Forests, while other times they require a van full of eager middle schoolers navigating the streets of downtown Chicago! If you would like to see pictures and regular updates of these trips please visit [www.facebook.com/npsdsoar](http://www.facebook.com/npsdsoar)

# FINANCIALS

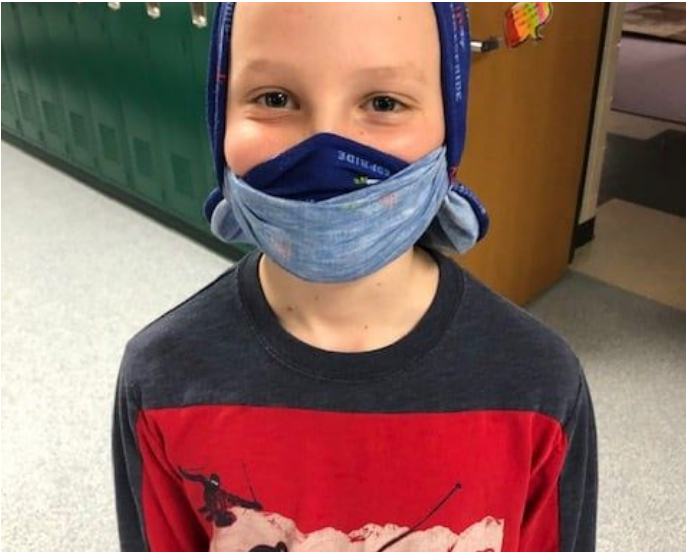
Each spring we design and request a budget for the following fiscal year. We consider equipment needs, travel opportunities, professional development experiences, and school supplies when we plan for our yearly finances. However, there are always additional, often unexpected, expenditures that come up throughout the year. With the pandemic safety measures this year, we had additional costs to keep students socially distanced, working outside more, and participating in activities (such as band) with specialized masks and covers. Throughout the year we report our monthly revenue and expenditures to the Charter School Governance Board for oversight and approval.

SOAR MS GENERAL FUNDS BUDGET				
ACCT	DESCRIPTION	DESCRIPTION	BUDGETED 2019-20	EXPENDITURES
342	EMPLOYEE TRAVEL	REGULAR CURRICULUM	\$300.00	\$0.00
410	SUPPLIES	UNDIFFERENT CURRICULUM	\$2,600.00	\$2,801.96
415	FOOD (TRIGS)	UNDIFFERENT CURRICULUM	\$500.00	\$868.65
430	INSTRUCTIONAL MEDIA	UNDIFFERENT CURRICULUM	\$2,500.00	\$2,123.50
940	DUES AND FEES	REGULAR CURRICULUM	\$1,850.00	\$0.00
342	EMPLOYEE TRAVEL	SCHOOL BLDG ADM	\$700.00	\$197.34
410	SUPPLIES	SCHOOL BLDG ADM	\$300.00	\$235.60
551	EQUIP/VEH NON D	SCHOOL BLDG ADM	\$200.00	\$0.00
940	DUES AND FEES	SCHOOL BLDG ADM	\$700.00	\$250.00
351	ADVERTISING	PUB INFO	\$850.00	\$565.92
353	POSTAGE	PUB INFO	\$300.00	\$0.00
		TOTALS	\$10,800.00	\$7,042.97
		BALANCE		\$3,757.03

Below is the ledger of the SOAR MS Fund 21 account for the 20-21 school year. We generate these funds through donations and school fundraisers, such as the Pasty Sale!

SOAR MS FUND 21 BUDGET				
ACCT	DESCRIPTION	DESCRIPTION	BUDGETED 2019-20	EXPENDITURES
341	PUPIL TRAVEL	PUPIL TRANSPORTATION		\$916.30
342	EMPLOYEE TRAVEL	REGULAR CURRICULUM		
345	PUPIL LODGING & MEALS	FIELD TRIPS		
410	SUPPLIES	UNDIFFERENT CURRICULUM		\$7,336.05
415	FOOD (TRIGS)	UNDIFFERENT CURRICULUM		\$177.69
940	DUES AND FEES	REGULAR CURRICULUM		\$757.38
21R 600		BEGINNING BALANCE	\$5,286.12	
	PASTY FUNDRAISER	SCHOOL BLDG ADM	\$5,612.50	
	PASTY FUNDRAISER	SCHOOL BLDG ADM	\$1,129.50	
	CRAZY CREEK CHAIRS	PUB INFO	\$284.75	
		TOTALS	\$12,312.87	\$9,187.42
		BALANCE		\$3,125.45

# RESPONSE TO COVID



## SAFETY MEASURES

Our goal throughout the Covid pandemic this year was to maintain a joyful and engaging learning environment that was as normal as possible while promoting the safety of all. With attention to safety in mind, we divided students into cohorts, intentionally socially distanced students, added additional transportation, required students to wear masks, scheduled regular handwashing/sanitizing opportunities, and much, much, more! We did whatever we could to keep students & staff safe!



## NEW IDEAS!

Many new and exciting opportunities were generated this year as we navigated the Covid pandemic. We expanded our wifi capacity to reach far and wide corners of our 'outside' learning environment! We also grew exponentially in considering how students could connect remotely to our classrooms through a Hybrid Model of learning. The Social and Emotional needs of students continued to be a priority. We valued every opportunity that we had to be in-person with our learners!



## WORKING TOGETHER

One of the most important pieces of the Covid pandemic course was the partnership of our parents and families. They were incredibly supportive of our safety practices, and worked hard to contribute to the safety of 'all'. At times it was very difficult to ask parents to keep their child home for quarantine for 10-14 days. Parents were often inconvenienced by making last minute transportation and child care arrangements. However, parents were very supportive of our decisions right up until the very last day of school! A huge thank you to all of our parents and families that made this year a success!



# STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

## SOAR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA) GOAL

Each year we develop local, building goals, based on current student achievement data. We aspired to reach the following goal for ELA this year:

*By the end of 2020-2021 school year, 80% of students in grades 5th-8th will score proficient on the Project Essay Rubric. SOAR MS will use the ELA standards and PLCs to enhance student learning for all students in the area of writing.*

RUBRIC SCORE	FALL	SPRING
ADVANCED	0%	17%
PROFICIENT	31%	61%
BASIC	58%	22%
MINIMAL	11%	0%

Although we did not reach our goal of 80% proficient or advanced, we came very close-- 78%! We also gained an enormous amount in terms of developing collaboration as a team, focused on student outcomes. We met on a weekly basis to share teaching strategies, data, and success/challenges. The team was lead by our Title I teacher who also shared expertise in reading instruction. She was very instrumental in holding the team accountable to deadlines and next steps. We look forward to our continued work together as a team!

## SOAR MATHEMATICS GOAL

We also strived to reach the following goal for Mathematics this year:

SOAR MS will use the new math curriculum and PLCs to enhance student learning for all students in mathematics. Our focus will be growing our student's ability to apply and transfer mathematical concepts and knowledge. By the end of the year 70% of our students will be proficient or advanced based in the iReady assessment.

iREADY SCORE	FALL	SPRING
ON OR ABOVE GRADE LEVEL	45%	53%
ONE GRADE LEVEL BELOW	35%	29%
TWO OR MORE GRADE LEVELS BELOW	20%	18%

We did not reach our goal of 70% of students scoring on or above grade level expectations on the iReady assessment at the end of the school year. When we looked further into the data, we discovered that 83% of our 5th grade students scored on or above grade level, which is very encouraging for the years ahead at SOAR MS! We already have plans to work with a mathematical expert from the Mathematical Institute of Wisconsin with the following goals in mind:

- Begin a process to ensure coherence of math standards for grades 5-8
- Continued introduction to the IM Math materials and incorporating them into the PBL Structure





## SUMMARY

We have great pride in the way our students, school, district, and community navigating education during a pandemic. We provided in-person learning opportunities every day this year. The staff also invited students, who were attending school virtually, to be a part of every aspect of our SOAR MS family. The virtual students were, literally, carried everywhere! They had lunch together, outside hikes together, project presentations, and much, much, more! Our staff went above and beyond to find ways to 'SOAR-ify' a socially distanced community. We look forward to the days ahead in hopes of returning to a community that personally interacts with our greater community through service work, field studies, and more.

We had to say goodbye to one of our founding advisors at the end of the school year. Kate Neville is transitioning to Iowa with her family this summer (and although we tried, she is unwilling to commute each day). Kate was very instrumental in the design and development of SOAR MS. Her fun-spirited smile and love for middle school children will be definitely be missed!

As we look ahead to summer, we encourage our SOAR staff to savor the moments of reflection and quiet. In these moments, when we let our minds rest and drift, is when we often discover new and innovative thinking. We look forward to coming back together in August, with a new advisor on board, and charging full speed ahead toward better!



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Any organization can only be as successful as its leadership. SOAR MS is fortunate to have a group of individuals that have the vision and passion to see SOAR MS succeed. The SOAR Governance Board is a key aspect to the success of SOAR MS. The students and families of SOAR MS owe these board members a big thank you for the job they have done and continue to do moving forward!

- President – Emilie Braunel
- Vice President - Jennifer Jefferson
- Secretary – Cheryl Todea
- Treasurer – Betty Wright
- Member – Karen Weber-Mendham
- Member-- Laura Rozga
- Member-- Debbie Tank