

2022-23 ANNUAL REPORT



School of Options and Applied Research Middle School



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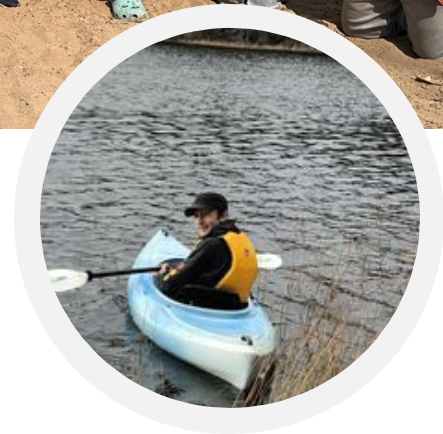
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SOAR MS BACKGROUND



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 Nordine, SOAR MS Principal, at 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!



A mind stretched by a new experience can never go back to its old dimensions.

-O. Homlmes Jr.

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.

22-23 DEMOGRAPHICS

At the close of the 2022-23 school year, the enrollment was 47 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 in the Fall of 2023 with 47 students. We are in conversation with a few perspective families and will continue to advertise additional openings in all grades to reach our target capacity.

GRADE	#	NOTES
5TH	17	*1 student transferred to NPMS 10/23 *1 student added 2/23
6TH	10	*1 student added 1/23
7TH	8	
8TH	12	
TOTALS:	47	

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	2%	41.7%	94.7%
NPMS	13%	47%	93.9%

ENROLLMENT TRENDS

The enrollment trend data for SOAR Middle School over the past 10 years reveals intriguing patterns regarding student retention. Analysis of the data indicates that a fair portion of students choose to stay at SOAR Middle School for the entirety of their middle school education. This demonstrates the positive experience and satisfaction students have with the school's environment and academic programming. On the other hand, the data also suggests a portion of students opt for premature transfers to Northland Pines Middle School or other alternatives. While the reasons behind these transfers may vary, it could be attributed to factors such as changing family circumstances, relocation, easier access to sports and interest in other academic programming. Monitoring and understanding these enrollment patterns can aid SOAR Middle School in refining our programs, addressing potential areas for improvement, and ensuring that students receive an optimal educational experience throughout their middle school years. Please note the following data points:

171 Total Enrolled between Fall 2013 and Spring 2023

24% of students left during year 1 or 2, that were not in 8th grade

If students started in 5th grade, but left before 8th grade:

12% left in 5th grade

9% left in 6th grade

15% left in 7th grade

Of the 139 students who were enrolled and already left, they attended SOAR an average of 2.9 years

Of the 143 students who started SOAR in 5th grade:

(35%) 50 attended all 4 years

(19%) 27 attended only 3 years

(11%) 16 attended only 2 years

(14%) 20 attended 1 year or less

(20%) 29 are still enrolled

2023 Fall Grade Levels as percentage of entire NPSD:

5th Grade 10 of 88 at SOAR: 11%

6th Grade 15 of 110 at SOAR: 7%

7th Grade 11 of 101 at SOAR: 11%

8th Grade 8 of 92 at SOAR: 9%

2022 Fall Grade Levels as percentage of entire NPSD:

5th Grade 17 of 112 at SOAR: 15%

6th Grade 9 of 113 at SOAR: 8%

7th Grade 9 of 95 at SOAR: 9%

8th Grade 12 of 108 at SOAR: 11%

HIGHLIGHTS

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Participating in community service work holds great significance for our middle school students, fostering personal growth and cultivating a sense of civic responsibility. Engaging in service activities empowers young individuals to develop empathy, compassion, and a deep understanding of the world beyond their immediate surroundings. By actively contributing their time and effort to meaningful causes, students witness firsthand the impact they can make on the lives of others and the community as a whole. Service work instills valuable life skills, such as teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving, while nurturing a sense of social awareness and appreciation. Involvement in community service enhances self-esteem and confidence, as students witness their ability to bring about positive change. By immersing themselves in service work during their middle school years, students lay the foundation for a lifelong commitment to service and become agents of positive transformation in their communities. 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, students volunteered for a wide variety of community needs, including improvements to the Land O Lakes baseball diamond, Cranberry Fest, NPSD Mission Possible Running Club, Eagle River Revitalization Program, Land O Lakes Community Soundgarden, LOLA, VFW events, and much, much, more!



HIGHLIGHTS

FIELD STUDIES

We believe that Field Studies are essential to the development of our learners at SOAR MS. The value of bringing middle school students to learn outside the walls of a school building through Field Study opportunities in the natural environment is immeasurable. Field studies provide a unique and enriching educational experience, where intentional learning takes place amidst the wonders of the natural world. By immersing themselves in outdoor environments, students develop a deep appreciation for nature. The hands-on, experiential learning approach stimulates curiosity and ignites wonder, as students witness the marvels of the natural world firsthand. This sense of awe sparks a genuine interest in learning, as students eagerly explore and engage with their surroundings. Field studies also promote physical activity, offering opportunities for students to engage in nature walks, collect samples, or participate in interactive experiments. Learning in nature enhances overall well-being, reducing stress levels and fostering a positive attitude towards learning. SOAR MS aims to schedule 2 or more Field Studies per month. 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 Minneapolis!

If would like to see pictures and regular updates of these trips please visit:
www.facebook.com/npsdsoar



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: SOAR MS will use best instructional practices and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to enhance student learning for all ELA students in the area of Reading. By the end of the year 80% of our students will be proficient or advanced in the STAR Literacy Assessment based on national norms.

	FALL	SPRING
AT OR ABOVE GRADE LEVEL	53%	47%
ON WATCH / INTERVENTION	34%	40%
URGENT INTERVENTION	13%	13%

Although we did not reach our goal of 80% proficient or advanced, we showed areas of success. For example, our 7th grade students ended the year at 71% at or above grade level proficiencies in Reading. 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.

SOAR MATHEMATICS GOAL

We also strived to reach the following goal for Mathematics this year: SOAR MS will enhance student learning for all students in the areas of Mathematics. By the end of the year 80% of our students will be proficient or advanced in the STAR Mathematics Assessment based on national norms.

	FALL	SPRING
AT OR ABOVE GRADE LEVEL	53%	53%
ON WATCH / INTERVENTION	40%	36%
URGENT INTERVENTION	7%	11%

We did not reach our goal of 80% of students scoring on or above grade level expectations on the STAR Assessment at the end of the school year. When we looked further into the data, we discovered that 86% of our 7th grade students scored on or above grade level, which is very encouraging!

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 arise. Throughout the year we report our monthly revenue and expenditures to the Charter School Governance Board for oversight and approval. Below is a Budget summary of funds for the 2022-23 school year:

SOAR MS GENERAL FUNDS BUDGET				
ACCT	DESCRIPTION	DESCRIPTION	BUDGETED 2022-23	EXPENDITURES
410	SUPPLIES	UNDIFFERENT CURRICULUM	\$3,000.00	\$3,222.11
415	FOOD (TRIGS)	UNDIFFERENT CURRICULUM	\$500.00	\$640.15
430	INSTRUCTIONAL MEDIA	UNDIFFERENT CURRICULUM	\$2,500.00	\$1,035.00
940	DUES AND FEES	REGULAR CURRICULUM	\$1,500.00	\$1,426.80
342	EMPLOYEE TRAVEL	SCHOOL BLDG ADM	\$400.00	\$162.17
410	SUPPLIES	SCHOOL BLDG ADM	\$500.00	\$621.22
940	DUES AND FEES	SCHOOL BLDG ADM	\$800.00	\$77.00
351	ADVERTISING	PUB INFO	\$1,400.00	\$1,441.41
353	POSTAGE	PUB INFO	\$150.00	\$298.89
		TOTALS	\$10,650.00	\$8,924.75
		BALANCE		\$1,725.25

Below is the ledger of the SOAR MS Fund 21 account for the 21-22 school year. We generate these funds through donations and school fundraisers, such as the Pasty Sale!

SOAR MS FUND 21 BUDGET				
ACCT	DESCRIPTION	DESCRIPTION	DEPOSITS	EXPENDITURES
341	PUPIL TRAVEL	PUPIL TRANSPORTATION		\$987.28
342	EMPLOYEE TRAVEL	REGULAR CURRICULUM		\$0.00
345	PUPIL LODGING & MEALS	FIELD TRIPS		\$457.64
410	SUPPLIES	UNDIFFERENT CURRICULUM		\$6,090.66
415	FOOD (TRIGS)	UNDIFFERENT CURRICULUM		\$1,136.77
940	DUES AND FEES	REGULAR CURRICULUM		\$500.00
21R 600		BEGINNING BALANCE	\$1,737.42	
		PASTY FUNDRAISER	\$4,495.00	
		SLED DOG RACES	\$2,929.00	
		DONATIONS	\$170.00	
		TOTALS	\$9,331.42	\$9,172.35
		BALANCE		\$159.07

PARENT SURVEY



The results of the spring 2023 parent survey, conducted by School Perceptions: Measuring what matters, provide valuable insights into the perspectives and feedback of SOAR Middle School families. This survey was administered to all families within the school community, aiming to gather information about their experiences, opinions, and suggestions. The analysis of the survey data reveals meaningful information that will influence our school's continuous improvement efforts. By examining the responses from parents, we can identify key areas of strength and areas for growth within SOAR Middle School. See below for a sampling of the survey outcomes:

100% of parents Strongly Agree or Agree that they feel welcome in their child's school.

87.5% of parents Strongly Agree or Agree that their child feels safe at school.

81.3% of parents Strongly Agree or Agree that the school has high expectations for their child.

93.8% of parents Strongly Agree or Agree that the school staff treats their child with dignity and respect.

87.6% of parents Strongly Agree or Agree that they are overall satisfied with how much their child learned this year.

RESPONSE TO LEARNING



COLLABORATIVE TEAM MEETINGS

When we set learning goals for the year, we consider the 4 questions of the Professional Learning Community model (see graphic above). We begin by identifying what it is we want to students to know. When we identify the 'what', we consider a variety of data sources, such as: each student's current levels of performance, their interests, and the identified grade level promise standards. Then we create a pathway of learning for them to achieve their goals.

When we collaborate as a SOAR staff, we continuously monitor and adjust each student's goal and progress towards it. At the same time we set the goals, we also identify the criteria for 'how will we know if they know it?'. At SOAR, students demonstrate their learning in a wide variety of ways including: project presentations, oral reports, written pieces, digital displays, artwork, online math knowledge checks, etc.

Once we determine the 'what' and the 'how', that's when our collaboration really ignites! Questions 3 and 4 are critical for individual growth at SOAR, in all levels and subjects. How do we respond to students who already 'know it' and how do we support students who 'don't know it yet'? One of the benefits of SOAR is that we have the flexibility to support students, based on their needs. If a student already 'knows it', we have the opportunity to design individual projects to enhance that student's learning experience. If a student is 'not there yet', we have an opportunity to individually target their needs. We begin with working to meet their needs universally if other students have the same needs, otherwise we move towards small group instruction or 1:1 support. Based on the needs of the students, we might invite other specialists to join our collaborations (Occupational Therapists, Title I Teachers, etc.) to ensure we have the expertise we need to problem solve. We pride ourselves on taking action and doing whatever it takes to ensure students succeed!



SUMMARY

SOAR Charter Middle School recognizes the challenges of meeting the diverse academic and social-emotional needs of our students. However, our school stands strong with a team of dedicated professionals who possess a growth mindset and a resolute determination to overcome any barriers they encounter. The school's commitment to planning with a Universal Design for Learning approach and implementing Collaborative Team structures has laid a solid foundation for success. By analyzing data, SOAR Charter Middle School strives to determine appropriate levels of rigor and support for all students, ensuring that each individual receives the necessary engagement and rigor in their learning journey. With an unwavering dedication to continuous improvement, the school endeavors to provide an enriching educational experience that meets the needs of every student, fostering a stimulating and challenging environment for their growth and development. We are proud of our students and our school. We can't wait to begin again in the fall!



We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to our Board of Directors for their invaluable dedication to our organization. Your visionary leadership, strategic guidance, and unwavering commitment have played a pivotal role in shaping our success and driving us forward. Your efforts and expertise have been instrumental in guiding us through challenges, making informed decisions, and ensuring the fulfillment of our mission.

President – Emilie Braunel
Vice President - Kari Kirschbaum
Secretary – Cheryl Todea
Treasurer – Mike Wallner
Member – Karen Weber-Mendham
Member-- Betty Wright
Member-- Vacant