



VERMILION COUNTRY SCHOOL

PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL DISTRICT #4707

SCHOOL YEAR 2018-2019
WORLD'S BEST WORKFORCE & ANNUAL REPORT

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1. School Information

CONTACT INFORMATION

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GRADES SERVED

Vermilion Country School (VCS) serves grades 7-12.

YEAR OPENED

1993

MISSION AND VISION

Mission: To create a small, safe, nurturing, and multicultural learning environment where students take an active role in their own education and the betterment of their communities.

Vision: Developing autonomy, fostering hope, building relationships, and becoming agents of change: enriching ourselves, our communities, and the world.

Values: Responsibility, Love, Bravery, Respect

AUTHORIZER INFORMATION

On February 6, 2018, the Audubon Center of the North Woods (ACNW) Charter School Division recommended the Audubon Center of the North Woods Board of Directors renew the charter contract of Vermilion Country School for a full term of five years (July 1, 2018-June 30, 2023), giving the school authority to provide instruction to students in grades 7-12 in the manner set forth in its Application for Charter Reauthorization, with a total enrollment of up to 55 students.

The authorizing mission of ACNW 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 ACNW 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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2. Implementation of Primary and Additional Statutory Purposes

The primary purpose of Vermilion Country School is to improve all pupil learning and all student achievement. The school will report its implementation of this primary purpose in its annual report.

In order to meet the mission and vision set forth by the Vermilion Country School's board of directors, the school and its staff will work closely with students and parents to develop an individualized, goal-oriented, project-based approach to learning that works effectively for each student, while incorporating proven instructional techniques.

- Standards-based curriculum designed by teachers that is responsive to individual student needs.
- Small class size to promote a safe, nurturing environment and lower student-teacher ratio.
- Small group work developing critical-thinking and problem-solving skills as students work together rather than compete against each other.
- Honoring life skills, stewardship and leadership opportunities through a habit of community service which includes regular scheduled events that benefit many in our community, young and old as well as meeting state standards and college and career readiness.
- Multi-grade 7-12 students use inquiry learning in a variety of collaborations with local agencies, community experts, volunteers and cross-curricular activities.
- Cohesive staff team teaching and layering curricular concepts to meet all student levels
- An advisor-to-student ratio of approximately 1:10 in most academic settings takes place in open classrooms. This ensures cultural responsiveness, positive behavior, and fair treatment of student-to-student, staff-to-student student-to-staff and staff-to-staff.
- Technology – Students use their own school-issued laptop and VCS uses school wide Google platforms including docs, sheets, calendar, classroom, forms, sites, mail and server. Grades and attendance are available online through JMC for students and parents to access at their convenience.
- Weekly school-wide team-building activities to strengthen emotional security and interdependence resulting in ready-to-learn culture. Within classes, using the latest brain research techniques with common language shared from school-wide social skills work.
- Student-led activities and student-led academics are offered, allowing voice and choice, along with built-in opportunities to make a difference in our school climate and our wider community.

The additional purposes of Vermilion Country School are to:

- Increase learning opportunities for all pupils.
- Create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site.

The school will report its implementation of these additional purposes in its annual report.

1) INCREASING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL PUPILS

VCS operates in an area with rich learning opportunities in environmental education and local economics in forestry/mining that haven't always been used to the full potential by the local school district. VCS staff will capitalize on these opportunities and design program elements to use these resources to the benefit of the students.

The 2018-19 school year focused on **Animals of the North Woods**. We introduced “My Space” observations, provided field trips, and learned from professionals in their fields. By providing more real-world situations for students to see, this increases their understanding and learning opportunities as relates back to the classroom.

▪ **Learning through community service**

Community service is a key element in both the vision and the mission of VCS and the staff see almost limitless opportunity for expanding learning opportunities for students, particularly outside of the classroom, through community service. As part of our educational plan, we intend to incorporate community service into the students’ individual learning plans and elements of environmental education to provide potential college and career opportunities that are available in this region. Our view is that giving back to the community is important, but it is also important for students to see careers beyond minimum wage retail options.

In 2018-2019, we assisted the community in their current projects which include the community food shelf, senior bingo, and caretaking of the local cemetery. Additional service work included highway cleanup, various projects around the city, and service to the school on-site.

▪ **Utilization of community-based assets**

The work of the small rural school is no longer to emulate the urban or suburban school, but to design a learning environment that truly serves the needs of its community’s young people by utilizing the multitude of learning assets and possibilities within the community. The Tower-Soudan area is home to many valuable educational assets that have not been well-utilized by the traditional public school but will be utilized extensively by VCS in order to increase learning opportunities. Such assets include the Department of Natural Resources area headquarters, located in Tower, which maintains staff across a wide range of natural resource disciplines, the new Lake Vermilion State Park, the Soudan Underground Mine State Park, the Bois Forte Heritage Center and Museum, the University of Minnesota’s Underground Science Laboratory in Soudan, the Superior National Forest, Vermilion Community College as well as community residents with particular expertise. The school will take full advantage of all of these for students to develop an understanding of home; its social structure, its history, its economy, its music, its art, and its ecology.

2) CREATING NEW PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEACHERS, INCLUDING THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LEARNING PROGRAM AT THE SCHOOL SITE

Advisors will be responsible for the learning program to a large extent from the beginning. The board of directors is a non-majority with no one group (parents, community members, and advisors) in full control of the board. This will ensure all stakeholders have a place in the management of the school.

3. Student Enrollment & Demographics

STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Number of Students Enrolled	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20 (est.)
7th Grade	6	2	5
8th Grade	5	8	5
9th Grade	9	6	10
10th Grade	5	15	10
11th Grade	8	5	10
12th Grade	9	5	5
Total	42	41	45
Total ADM (Average Daily Membership) for year	44.71	39.43	

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Vermilion Country School has students from multiple communities in the region. The region features small towns with mostly white and American Indian populations. The demographic is mostly lower socioeconomic, and our school population has a slightly higher than average special education makeup due to the alternative nature of the school.

Demographic Trends	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19 (est.)
Total Enrollment	43	42	41
Male	24	18	21
Female	19	15	20
Special Education	16	11	14
English Learners			
Free/Reduced Priced Lunch	31	25	35
Black, not of Hispanic Origin			
Hispanic/Latino	3		
Asian/Pacific Islander			
American Indian/Alaskan Native	7	3	6
White, not of Hispanic Origin	30	30	35

4. Student Attendance, Attrition & Mobility

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Student attendance rates were short of our goal of 90%. To increase our attendance the Academic, Community, Culture, and Discipline team (AC/DC) will revamping our PBIS program to focus solely on attendance. The 2018-2019 year also saw an extensive flu season with many students' sick multiple times and missing more than a week of class.

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Overall Student Attendance Rate	87%	83%	75%

STUDENT ATTRITION

Student attrition rates were higher than our goal of 65%. In the upcoming years, we anticipate a 70% attrition rate based on the number of students that are on track to graduate and the academic, culture, and discipline team's efforts to work with students, parents, and the community to increase student retention.

Percentage of students who were continuously enrolled between October 1 of the 2017-2018 school year and October 1 of the 2018-19 school year.	78%
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Percentage of students who continued enrollment in the school from Spring 2018 to October 1, 2018.	77%
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STUDENT MOBILITY

	Summer Transfers In	Number of students *	Mid-year Transfers In	Mid-year Transfers Out	Total Mid-year Transfers	Mobility Index **
2015-16		43	6	0	6	13%
2016-17		43	9	5	14	32%
2017-18		57	0	7	7	12%

* As of October 1

** Total mid-year transfers divided by number of students on October 1.

Percentage of students who were enrolled for 95% or more of the 2018-19 school year.	95%
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5. Educational Approach & Curriculum

Project Based Learning is what drives our educational model. Students work closely with their advisors to align their education to their goals (created in the Personal Learning Plan). Students learn through both student-led projects developed with their advisors and through teacher-led seminars. As the years continued, we are adjusting the percentage of student-led and teacher-led in order to best meet the needs of the students. This has led to an expansion of teacher-led for the most part except for some students who are capable of self-motivating for projects.

Projects in core subjects are aligned to state standards by staff keeping records. The standards are translated into Learning Targets that each student works towards achieving. Advisors work closely with each student to track his or her progress towards achieving the learning targets. Students are encouraged to focus in depth when approaching learning targets. These projects are then evaluated by advisors who will award credit based on: demonstration of understanding of the state standards addressed; time management; professional presentation; research skills; and quality sources. Reflection is an essential part of each project as the student reflects on his or her growth during the process of the project and sets goals for more growth in future projects. Project tracking was transferred to google docs files and completed credit was recorded in JMC for final transcripts.

VCS has many ways in which remediation and acceleration can occur for students. VCS's front line is an advisor staff working closely with students and helping to keep student programs tailored to the individual. If students are falling behind, they are put on an academic progression plan. This is a plan to move them back on track.

Special Education in the 2018-19 school consisted of one special education teacher and two and a half paraprofessionals. There were 14 special education students for most of the year.

VCS has no English Learner program or students needing services.

VCS requires 24 credits for high school graduation including:

- 3 credits Math
- 4 credits Language Arts
- 3 credits Science
- 3.5 credits Social Studies
- 9.5 credits Electives
- 1 credit in Fine Arts

6. Innovative Practices & Implementation

ADVISORY MODEL

In our mission to provide students with a small, safe and nurturing learning environment. Students are placed in advisories of no more than 20 students and work closely with their advisor to align their education to their goals. Advisories include students in grades 7-12 with careful consideration to the maturity of students who are grouped together. Students gain life, study, and other skills while in advisory.

PERSONAL LEARNING PLANS

Each student at VCS creates a Personal Learning Plan with his or her Academic Team. An Academic Team is made up of the student, the student's parents or guardians, and the advisor. Others may also be a part of this team depending on the student's need; paras who work closely with the student, special education teachers, or grandparents have been a part of student's teams. To ensure plans reflect the student as a whole and best help a team set goals and develop a plan to achieve them PLP's expectations have been expanded to include Reading Plans, Writing Plans, short and long term goals, testing results (NWEA, MCA, HOPE) with plans to address areas of strength and weaknesses, and fitness plans. PLP's will be used to guide instruction and project planning and will be revisited each block to review progress. PLP's will serve as the basis of student led conferences in the future.

7. Academic Performance: Goals & Benchmarks

Examining goals based solely on numbers when VCS is such a small school, it is very difficult to extract any sort of useful conclusions from the data. When a testing group is under 20 students, even a single student can vastly shift the overall scoring of the whole school. So, when reading this section, it is wise to keep that in mind that only the most general conclusions can be drawn. Changes are constantly being put into place to address some of these findings.

PROGRESS ON ACNW CONTRACTUAL ACADEMIC GOALS & WBWF ALIGNMENT

▪ Educational Approach and Curriculum

Project Based Learning is what drives our educational model. Students work closely with their advisors to align their education to their goals (created in the Personal Learning Plan). Students learn through both student-led projects developed with their advisors and through teacher-led projects.

▪ Reading, Writing, and Math

We strive to engage in math skills in projects wherever possible but also address math through coursework in teacher-led math courses. Students are assessed when they begin the program and the program continuously adjusts to ensure they are learning at their level. Each student is placed in their grade-level class, with adjustments made as needed. Students' progress is monitored by their advisor on a regular basis. Students are expected to meet end-of-year progress goals, which are pegged to mastering a significant portion of the required standards. Students who excel can progress to the next level of math once they meet their goals, and students who need extra assistance are given personal attention.

Our intervention teachers provide services in both reading and math. Reading and writing are incorporated into all VCS Projects. Students learn strategies to read non-fiction pieces through research and advisory activities. Since student research is an integral part of the project-based learning process, students are exposed to a wide variety of reading materials. Students were required to use a variety of sources for their research, both traditionally published sources and on-line materials. As the school builds its own library resources, student interest and needs are the driving forces behind our book-purchasing decisions. Each student has a reading plan developed with his or her academic team that determines goals for growth and materials that will be read. Every student also develops a writing plan throughout the year that addresses areas for growth.

WORLD'S BEST WORKFORCE (WBWF) GOAL AREAS

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

♦ INDICATOR 1: MISSION RELATED OUTCOMES

Goal: Students at VCS will demonstrate personal growth through the successful completion of an ILP that includes credit tracking, attendance, community service, environmental education, and social-emotional learning.

WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal: Career and College Ready

Key Measures & Results for this Goal:

Measure 1.1 [CCR] - the aggregate percentage of students that successfully meet their Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) goals in the year will be at least 80%.

FY19 Results: 100% of students demonstrated personal growth through their ILP.

♦ INDICATOR 2: ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

VCS does not have any English Language Learner students enrolled.

♦ INDICATOR 3: READING GROWTH

Goal: Students at VCS will demonstrate growth in reading as measured by state accountability tests and nationally normed assessments.

WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal: Career and College Ready

Key Measures & Results for this Goal:

Measure 3.1 [CCR] - the average growth z-score for students grades 7 and 8 on state accountability tests will be equal to or greater than 0.00.

FY19 Results: Average growth z-score is .2713.

Measure 3.2 [CCR] - the aggregate percentage of students grades 7 and 8 who achieve a positive z-score on state accountability tests will be greater than 50.0%.

FY19 Results: Percentage of students with a positive z-score is 57%.

Measure 3.3 [CCR] - the aggregate percentage of students in grades 7-11 who meet their fall to spring NWEA RIT expected growth target will be at least 50%.

FY19 Results: Percentage of students who met their growth target is 40%.

♦ INDICATOR 4: MATH GROWTH

Goal: Students at VCS will demonstrate growth in math as measured by state accountability tests and nationally normed assessments.

WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal: Career and College Ready

Key Measures & Results for this Goal:

Measure 4.1 [CCR] - the average growth z-score for students grades 7 and 8 on state accountability tests will be equal to or greater than 0.00.

FY19 Results: Average growth z-score is -0.3851.

Measure 4.2 [CCR] - the aggregate percentage of students grades 7 and 8 who achieve a positive z-score on state accountability tests will be greater than 50.0%.

FY19 Results: Percentage of students with a positive z-score is 14%.

Measure 4.3 [CCR] - the aggregate percentage of students in grades 7-11 who meet their fall to spring NWEA RIT expected growth target will be at least 50%.

FY19 Results: Percentage of students who met their growth target is 57%.

♦ INDICATOR 5: READING PROFICIENCY

Goal: Students at VCS will demonstrate proficiency in reading as measured by state accountability tests.

WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal: Achievement Gap Closure, Career and College Ready

Key Measures & Results for this Goal:

Measure 5.1 [CCR] - the school's aggregate proficiency index score will increase by at least 5.0 points from the baseline proficiency index score (FY15-FY17 baseline score – 55.8) OR be equal to or greater than that of the state for the same grades (7-8, 10).

FY19 Results: The Proficiency Index is 72.7%.

Measure 5.2 [CCR] - the school's aggregate proficiency index score will be equal to or greater than that of the St. Louis County School District (ISD 2142) for the same grades (7-8, 10).

FY19 Results: Data not available.

Measure 5.3 [AGC] - the school's aggregate proficiency index score for the FRP subgroup will increase by at least 5.0 points from the baseline proficiency index score (FY15-FY17 baseline score – 51.0) OR be equal to or greater than that of the state for the same subgroup and the same grades (7-8, 10).

FY19 Results: The Proficiency Index is 69.4%.

Measure 5.4 [AGC] - the school's aggregate proficiency index score for the FRP subgroup will be equal to or greater than that of the St. Louis County School District (ISD 2142) for the same subgroup and the same grades (7-8, 10).

FY19 Results: Data not available.

Measure 5.5 [AGC] - the school's aggregate proficiency index score for the Special Education subgroup will be equal to or greater than that of the state for the same subgroup and the same grades (7-8, 10).

FY19 Results: The Proficiency Index is 58.3%.

Measure 5.6 [AGC] - the school's aggregate proficiency index score for the Special Education subgroup will be equal to or greater than that of the St. Louis County School District (ISD 2142) for the same subgroup and the same grades (7-8, 10).

FY19 Results: Data not available.

♦ INDICATOR 6: MATH PROFICIENCY

Goal: Students at VCS will demonstrate proficiency in math as measured by state accountability tests.

WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal: Achievement Gap Closure, Career and College Ready

Key Measures & Results for this Goal:

Measure 6.1 [CCR] - the school's aggregate proficiency index score will increase by at least 8.0 points from the baseline proficiency index score (FY15-FY17 baseline score – 27.6) OR be equal to or greater than that of the state for the same grades (7-8, 11).

FY19 Results: The Proficiency Index is 39.3%.

Measure 6.2 [CCR] - the school's aggregate proficiency index score will be equal to or greater than that of the St. Louis County School District (ISD 2142) the same grades (7-8, 11).

FY19 Results: Data not available

Measure 6.3 [AGC] - the school's aggregate proficiency index score for the FRP subgroup will increase by at least 8.0 points from the baseline proficiency index score (FY15-FY17 baseline score – 24.3) OR be equal to or greater than that of the state for the same subgroup and the same grades (7-8, 11).

FY19 Results: The Proficiency Index is 40.9%.

Measure 6.4 [AGC] - the school's aggregate proficiency index score for the FRP subgroup will be equal to or greater than that of the St. Louis County School District (ISD 2142) for the same subgroup and the same grades (7-8, 11).

FY19 Results: Data not available.

Measure 6.5 [AGC] - the school's aggregate proficiency index score for the Special Education subgroup will be equal to or greater than that of the state for the same subgroup and the same grades (7-8, 11).

FY19 Results: The Proficiency Index is 12.5%.

Measure 6.6 [AGC] - the school's aggregate proficiency index score for the Special Education subgroup will be equal

to or greater than that of the St. Louis County School District (ISD 2142) for the same subgroup and the same grades (7-8, 11).

FY19 Results: Data not available.

♦ INDICATOR 7: SCIENCE PROFICIENCY (AND GROWTH)

Goal: Students at VCS will demonstrate proficiency in science as measured by state accountability tests.

WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal: Achievement Gap Closure, Career and College Ready

Key Measures & Results for this Goal:

Measure 7.1 [CCR] - the school's aggregate proficiency index score will increase by at least 6.0 points from the baseline proficiency index score (FY15-FY17 baseline score – 41.0) OR be equal to or greater than that of the state for the same grades (7-8, 11).

FY19 Results: The Proficiency Index is 50.0%.

Measure 7.2 [CCR] - the school's aggregate proficiency index score will be equal to or greater than that of the St. Louis County School District (ISD 2142) for the same grades (8, High School).

FY19 Results: Data not available.

Measure 7.3 [AGC] - the school's aggregate proficiency index score for the FRP subgroup will increase by at least 8.0 points from the baseline proficiency index score (FY15-FY17 baseline score – 27.6) OR be equal to or greater than that of the state for the same subgroup and the same grades (8, High School).

FY19 Results: The Proficiency Index is 46.9%.

Measure 7.4 [AGC] - the school's aggregate proficiency index score for the FRP subgroup will be equal to or greater than that of the St. Louis County School District (ISD 2142) for the same subgroup and the same grades (8, High School).

FY19 Results: Data not available.

Measure 7.5 [AGC] - the school's aggregate proficiency index score for the Special Education subgroup will be equal to or greater than that of the state for the same subgroup and the same grades (8, High School).

FY19 Results: The Proficiency Index is 40.0%.

Measure 7.6 [AGC] - the school's aggregate proficiency index score for the Special Education subgroup will be equal to or greater than that of the St. Louis County School District (ISD 2142) for the same subgroup and the same grades (8, High School).

FY19 Results: Data not available.

♦ INDICATOR 8: PROFICIENCY OR GROWTH IN OTHER CURRICULAR AREAS OR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

VCS does not have a contractual goal in this optional indicator area.

♦ INDICATOR 9: POST SECONDARY READINESS

Goal: Students at VCS will demonstrate readiness for post-secondary success.

WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal: Career and College Ready, Graduate from High School

Key Measures & Results for this Goal:

Measure 9.1 [GRAD] - the school's aggregate 7-year graduation rate will be at least 67.0%.

FY19 Results: Data not available.

Measure 9.2 [CCR] - the aggregate percentage of graduates that earn at least one college credit prior to graduation will be at least 20%.

FY19 Results: 0%

Measure 9.3 [CCR] - the aggregate percentage of graduates that are accepted into at least one post-secondary option (college/university, military, apprenticeship, post-secondary training program) prior to graduation will be at least 65%.

FY19 Results: 0%

Measure 9.4 [CCR] - the aggregate percentage of graduating students who earn a score of college or career ready or needing no more than one semester of remediation on one of three assessments (ACT, Accuplacer, and ASVAB) will be at least 50%.

FY19 Results: 0%

♦ INDICATOR 10: ATTENDANCE

Goal: Students at VCS will attend the school at high rates.

WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal: none

Key Measures & Results for this Goal:

Measure 10.1 - the average of the school's annual attendance rates will be at least 88.0%.

FY19 Results: The average attendance for the school year was 83.2%

Measure 10.2 - on average, 75% of students will have an annual attendance rate of 90% or higher.

FY19 Results: The percentage of students with an annual attendance rate of 90% or higher was 31.7%.

8. Educational Effectiveness: Assessment & Evaluation

The goal of educational effectiveness is to measure how well the school is performing on a range of measures including: high quality instruction, rigorous curriculum, use of instructional technology, and an effective collaborative professional culture. VCS is currently working on all these areas and making significant strides to providing a strong academic program.

In pursuit of a high-quality program, the analysis and modification of the academic program is centered on student data. Several of our committee teams look at different aspects of student data collected and make modifications to meet those needs that are identified. In the 2014-15 school year it was noted that students were looking for a more structured environment to obtain credits while still wanting to keep a significant amount of project time. So, the staff looked at different ways to design the schedule and settled on a hybrid where seminars were offered on a structured schedule and project time was made available in-between. The result produced mixed success and the staff took time in the summer to modify the schedule yet again for the 2016-17 school year. Results in the 2016-17 year showed increases in reading but flat results in math so again the staff is looking at ways to increase math time for the 2017-18 year. This process continues throughout the year in the Academic, Culture, and Discipline Committee (ACDC) and during our staff PLC times. These two groups focus more on the academic and school culture aspects while our Personnel Committee looks more at staff effectiveness, evaluations, and professional development. The PLC meetings focus specifically on data analysis and instructional practices in order to improve instruction. The school board examines overall program effectiveness and administrator evaluations. This process has continued for the 2017-18 school year.

Instructional technology is addressed in the Operations Committee in the school. Since our program is so tightly integrated into online resources, having a strong technology infrastructure is essential. We encountered some Wi-Fi issues in the 2015-16 year; however, most had been resolved by March 2016. Currently technology is meeting needs at this point so the focus will be shifting towards replacement cycles and maintaining infrastructure.

Being such a small school, our staff is in constant communication with each other at the school. Whereas many larger schools must dedicate time to collaboration, in a small school with only 16 staff, this is not usually a problem. With a distributed team leadership model, the same people are on multiple committees and often approach issues from a variety of directions. PLC is the main venue for staff collaboration, but it is a process that happens all through the day.

9. Student & Parent Satisfaction

In the yearly survey of students, parents, staff, and community members, participants were asked to rank their response 1 thru 5 (1 being disappointing to 5 being exceptional).

The overall rating was 4.4.

10. Environmental Education

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

As part of our contract with our authorizer, we have agreed to the following environmental education goal:

Staff, students and parents at Vermilion Country School will increase their environmental literacy, and develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes to support a sustainable, healthy environment.

To meet the above goal, Vermilion Country School has agreed to provide opportunities to instill a connection and commitment to the environment through experiential learning.

INDICATOR AREA 1: AWARENESS

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

Goal: Students and staff at VCS have the awareness or are increasing their awareness of the relationship between the environment and human life.

Strategy 1.1

- VCS weekly EE topics are implemented into school curriculum.
- A Pre/Post quiz on general environmental awareness will be administered.

Evaluation method 1.1

- At least 80% of all VCS students grades 7-12 will be able to correctly identify at least 80% of environmental awareness issues on pre vs posttest survey in the year.

INDICATOR AREA 2: KNOWLEDGE

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

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

Strategy 2.1

- Schoolwide common language development and experiences that are EE standard centered, developing an academic scientific language related to EE terms.

Evaluation method 2.1

- At least 80% of all VCS students grades 7-12 will be able to correctly identify at least 80% of species by scientific terminology of 'their place' in pre-observation vs post-observation during the year.

INDICATOR AREA 3: ATTITUDES

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

Goal: Students and faculty at VCS establish a baseline attitude to develop and positively increase, appreciate and show concern for the environment.

Strategy 3.1

- Students and staff will develop an EE philosophy in line with the EE standards.

Evaluation method 3.1

- At least 80% of all VCS students grades 7-12 will be able to correctly demonstrate an understanding of how 'their place' could be impacted environmentally and describe why humans should be concerned about those impacts through reflection entries as part of their journal of 'their place' through the year by scoring at least a 3 out of 4 on the project rubric.

INDICATOR AREA 4: SKILLS

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

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

Strategy 4.1

- Identify a problem within an EE topic and find possible solutions utilizing data collection/organization

Evaluation method 4.1

- At least 80% of all VCS students grades 7-12 will be able to correctly demonstrate data collection, analyzing, and reporting skills of an environmental issue as related to 'their place' during the year by scoring at least a 3 out of 4 on the project rubric.

INDICATOR AREA 5: ACTION

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

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

Strategy 5.1

- Over the course of the year, VCS students will incorporate at least one EE related CS activity that is tied to the completion their Expo Day project.

Evaluation method 5.1

- At least 80% of all VCS students grades 7-12 will be able to correctly implement an EE related CS activity related to an aspect of 'their place' and successfully incorporate the results of that activity into their year-end expo day project, scoring at least a 3 out of 4 as determined by the project rubric.

11. Governance & Management

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

During the 2018-19 school year, the board consisted of three community members (all members since before the school opened), two teachers, and two parents. We had two long-time board members leave this school year. Both are still actively volunteering for the school. The board is a non-majority board, which means the board retains a balance between the three types of board members, and no single type can hold a majority of seats. The board operates on a consensus model. The board elections are held at the annual meeting in February. The board has been starting to look at longer term issues of policy and staffing to create a sustainable organization. In March, we seated two new community members, and in June, we lost two parent members whose students had graduated/left our program.

Member Name	Board Position	Affiliation	Date Elected	Date Seated	Term End Date
Jodi Summit vcs.charter@gmail.com	Chair	Community Member	2/23/17	1/1/13	3/30/20
Joan Dostert	Vice Chair	Community Member	2/4/15	7/1/15	Left 9/30/18
Muriel Scott scotty47@midco.net	Treasurer	Community Member	2/23/17	1/1/13	3/30/19
Karin Schmidt kschmidt@vermilioncountry.org	Secretary	Teacher	2/24/16	3/23/16	3/30/22
Allan White awhite@vermilioncountry.org	Member	Teacher	2/22/18	3/22/18	3/30/21
Marjorie Wood mikecwood@gmail.com	Vice-Chair	Parent	2/23/17	3/23/17	Left 6/30/19
Sarah Strong 218strong@gmail.com	Member	Parent	2/23/17	3/23/17	Left 6/30/19
Paula Herbranson pherbranson@vermilioncountry.org	Member	Teacher	Appointed	12/20/18	3/30/21
Richard Larmouth sisuyski@msn.com	Treasurer	Community Member	2/28/19	3/30/19	3/30/22
Marit Kringstad marit@nordic-home.com	Community	Community Member	2/28/19	3/30/19	3/30/21
Ann Yang/ Designs for Learning ayang@designlearn.net	Ex-Officio	Business Manager	NA	NA	NA
Kevin Fitton kfitton@vermilioncountry.org	Ex-Officio	School Leader	NA	NA	NA

BOARD TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Vermilion Country School board members have all attended the required initial board member training. One new board member is currently finishing up her required training. The school subscribes to an online board training system, CharterSource, which means our board members do not need to travel to the Twin Cities for the required initial training. This is the second year we have used CharterSource, and our members appreciate this opportunity. CharterSource is now also offering some advanced training, which we are looking at for annual training needs.

Initial Training				
Board Member Name	Original Date Seated	Board's Role & Responsibilities	Employment Policies & Practices	Financial Management
Jodi Summit	1/1/13	10/26/13 MSBA	10/26/13 MSBA	10/26/13 MSBA
Joan Dostert	7/1/15	10/26/13 MSBA	10/26/13 MSBA	10/26/13 MSBA
Muriel Scott	1/1/13	10/26/13 MSBA	10/26/13 MSBA	10/26/13 MSBA
Karin Schmidt	3/23/16	4/23/16 St Thomas	4/23/16 St Thomas	4/23/16 St Thomas
Al White	9/28/17	5/29/18 CharterSource	5/29/18 CharterSource	5/29/18 CharterSource
Marjory Wood	3/23/17	8/8/17 MSBA	8/8/17 MSBA	8/8/17 MSBA
Sarah Strong	2/22/18	4/23/16 St Thomas	4/23/16 St Thomas	4/23/16 St Thomas
Paula Herbranson	12/20/18			
Dick Larmouth	3/30/18	4/25/19 CharterSource	4/25/19 CharterSource	4/25/19 CharterSource
Marit Kringstad	3/30/18	CharterSoudan underway	CharterSoudan underway	CharterSoudan underway

Annual Training – FY19			
Board Member Name	Director Transition Training 7/26/18 Kevin Fitton/Presenter	Data Privacy review 9/27/18 Kevin Fitton/Presenter	Financial Primer 11/15/18 Business Manager Wilderness Pinna
Jodi Summit	YES	YES	YES
Joan Dostert	NO	NO LONGER ON BOARD	NO LONGER ON BOARD
Muriel Scott	YES	YES	YES
Karin Schmidt	YES	YES	YES
Allan White	NO	NO	NO LONGER ON BOARD
Marjorie Wood	YES	YES	YES
Sarah Strong	YES	YES	NO
Richard Larmouth	NOT SEATED YET	NOT SEATED YET	NOT SEATED YET
Marit Kringstad	NOT SEATED YET	NOT SEATED YET	NOT SEATED YET
Paula Herbranson	NOT SEATED YET	NOT SEATED YET	NOT SEATED YET

Annual Training – FY19 (continued)		
Board Member Name	Open Meeting Law 12/20/18 Jodi Summit	Data Privacy review / Financial Primer (Review for new board members) 3/21/19 Kevin Fitton/Presenter
Jodi Summit	YES	YES
Joan Dostert	NO LONGER ON BOARD	NO LONGER ON BOARD
Muriel Scott	YES	NO LONGER ON BOARD
Karin Schmidt	YES	YES
Allan White	NO LONGER ON BOARD	NO LONGER ON BOARD
Marjorie Wood	NO	YES
Sarah Strong	NO	YES
Richard Larmouth	NOT SEATED YET	YES
Marit Kringstad	NOT SEATED YET	YES
Paula Herbranson	YES	YES

MANAGEMENT

Vermilion Country School worked on a hybrid teacher/staff led management structure, based on the model of the Edvisions Cooperative, of which we are a member. Our entire staff meets weekly, on Wednesday afternoons, to discuss day-to-day operations, address concerns, and conduct trainings. Teacher/staff committees also meeting on a regular basis and work alongside our school administrator. Committees include the personnel team, which addresses parent and student concerns, hiring recommendations, plans professional development trainings, and develops the staff handbook; The academic team with oversees curriculum, instruction, assessment and graduation; finance team, which assists the school administrator with developing the school budget, spending targets, and fundraising; special services, which includes all staff that provides special educational services to students, including Title 1 and our Local Indian Education Committee; learning culture and discipline committee; technology committee, and facilities committee. These committees bring all larger decisions to the weekly staff meeting.

LIST OF ADMINISTRATORS/QUALIFICATIONS

Kevin Fitton, Director

Role/Responsibilities: Provides day-to-day program management, ensures compliance with Minnesota Department of Education and our authorizer requirements, ensures that the school is working towards achieving our stated goals, works with the teaching/staff team, assists the board chair, updates our website to comply with state requirements, oversees the facility, works on student recruitment, supervises program assistants, helps develop the school budget, ensures that funds received are properly accounted for, works with our school business manager, and helps coordinate the annual audit.

Qualifications: Licensed K-12 Principal in MN and completed his Superintendent license in Sept of 2018. Further professional development will continue as outlined by MN licensure standards, and as he works to finish up his PhD in Education.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR KEVIN FITTON, DIRECTOR

Unknown

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS/AREAS OF FOCUS FOR 2018-19:

Unknown

ACTIVITIES COMPLETED/PROGRESS/RESULTS FOR 2018-19:

Unknown

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS/AREAS OF FOCUS FOR 2019-20:

Unknown

12. Staffing

2018-19 LICENSED TEACHING STAFF

Name	File #	License and Assignment	2019-20 Status*	Comments
Al White	361622	7-12 Math	R	
Kevin Fitton	464529	5-12 Social Studies	NR	.50 Admin / .50 Teacher
Morgen Carlon	995701	Learning Disabilities; EBD	NR	Community Expert
Paula Herbranson	351797	7-12 Life Sciences	R	
Karin Schmidt	343434	Title I B.S. El. Ed; Music Minor; Reading Specialist K-12	R	

* R = Returning, NR = Not Returning

2018-19 TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Name	File #	Professional Development Attended
Al White	361622	Board Training, Staff PLC – Eric Jensen, Culturally Responsive Teaching Indian Ed, Technology Voicethread, Google Apps, JMC Tutorial
Kevin Fitton	464529	Graduate work – Educational Administration, Edvisions Conversation Day, Audubon Leadership Retreat. Staff PLC – Eric Jensen, Culturally Responsive Teaching Indian Ed, Technology Voicethread, Google Apps, JMC Tutorial
Morgen Carlon	995701	Staff PLC-Eric Jensen, Audubon Environmental Education Retreat, Google App tutorial
Paula Herbranson	351797	JMC Summer Conference, Teacher Tour Northern MN, MAITC, PLC Eric Jensen: Engaging Students with Poverty in Mind
Karin Schmidt	343434	Audubon EE Retreat, Indian Ed Conference, Staff PLC – Eric Jensen, Culturally Responsive Teaching Indian Ed, Technology Voicethread, Google Apps, JMC Tutorial

TEACHER RETENTION

Percentage of Licensed Teachers from 2018-19 not returning in 2019-20 (non-returning teachers/total teachers from 2018-19 x 100)	40%
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2018-19 NON-LICENSED STAFF

Name	Assignment	2019-20 Status*	Comments
Mandy Northrup	Special Education Paraprofessional	R	
Michele Maki	Special Education Paraprofessional Indian Education	R	
Jolene Herberg	Office Manager	R	

* R = Returning, NR = Not Returning

13. Operational Performance

Vermilion Country School has a wide range of operational areas to attend to everyday. Audubon Center of the North Woods as the school's authorizer evaluates the school in several areas to ensure all tasks are complying and meet MDE requirements. So far, the school has materially complied with applicable laws, rules, regulations and provisions of the charter contract relating to:

- Relevant compliance and reporting requirements to the authorizer, state education agency, and/or federal authorities, including but not limited to:
 - state reporting and applications, including but not limited to: MARSS, STARS, UFARS, EDRS, Q Comp, DIRS, lease aid
 - TRA/PERA
- School website is compliant with statutory and authorizer expectations
- Insurance coverage; the school facilities, grounds and transportation, including but not limited to:
 - Fire inspections and related records
 - Viable certificate of occupancy or other required building use authorization
- Physical space provides a safe, positive learning environment for students
- Appropriate and safe student transportation practices
- Health and safety, including but not limited to:
 - nursing services and dispensing of pharmaceuticals
- Food service
- Emergency management plan;
 - admission and enrollment rights of students, including but not limited to policies and practices related to admissions, lottery, waiting lists, fair and open recruitment

Due process and privacy rights of students, including but not limited to:

- Due process protections, privacy, civil rights and students' liberties requirements, including First Amendment protections and the Establishment Clause restrictions prohibiting public schools from engaging in religious instruction
- Conduct of discipline pursuant to the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act
- Maintain the security of and provide access to students records under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and other applicable authorities
- Transfer of student records
- Employment including transparent hiring, evaluation and dismissal policies and practices
- Required background checks for all school employees

Audubon's report showed compliance with all areas with some room to grow in a few specific sub areas including: 1.2: Instruction & Assessment, 2.1: Board Composition & Capacity, 2.2: Board Decision-Making & Oversight. The growth items are related to the school being new and still formulating the operational procedures that are going to be in place.

VCS leases their building from the City of Tower and in keeping with the non-traditional education program, the building is a former light industrial building. The main portion of the building is open with four advisory areas separated by short walls, the cafeteria, and library with dividing walls. Additional rooms in the building include a gym, woodworking shop, music room, science room, and office spaces. The kitchen next to the cafeteria provides both breakfast and lunch for approximately 60 people daily. All kitchen, bathroom, and public spaces are cleaned daily and the kitchen is passed for inspection by the local health dept. Transportation is provided daily for students, VCS currently has four vans and one small bus available for the various routes to Virginia, Ely, Bois Forte, Embarrass, and Tower-Soudan. The vehicles also double up as transportation for events, field trips, and activities.

VCS has procedures in place to ensure the health and safety of staff and students while on site. There are first aid kits and fire extinguishers located around the building. Staff has been trained on emergency procedures and drills are conducted on schedule and duly recorded. Administration and office staff have procedures in place for records and

ensuring compliance with state and federal laws including discipline data, background checks, hiring procedures, and due process.

Engagement with parents and community is handled on several fronts depending on the event or area of need. The staff offers multiple opportunities for parents and community members to be involved including an online volunteer form, in building sign-ups, and contact through various mediums. The community has been very supportive of the efforts.

The school hosted several community and family events during the school year including a community open house at the beginning of the year, expo day, and fundraisers throughout the year to support various programs. All these public events were advertised in the local newspaper, and many community members, in addition to student family members, attended. Teachers held parent-teacher conferences at the end of each semester.

Community volunteers were an important part of the school year. We continue to seek outside programs, groups, and opportunities to incorporate into the school programs.

Additionally, our students have volunteered at Vermilion Senior Living (assisted living), the Tower Area Food Shelf, the Mesabi Animal Shelter, Roadside Cleanup, Potter's Field, and more.

14. Finances

For questions regarding school finances and for complete financials for 2018-19 and/or an organizational budget for 2019-20, contact:

Name: Frank Zobitz
Position: Administrator
Phone: 218-75301246
Email: fzobitz@vermilioncountry.org

Ryan Krominga and Designs for Learning provided accounting services for VCS for the 2018-19 school year.

Abdo, Eick, & Meyers LLP provide accounting services and auditing for the school.

Information presented below is derived from preliminary audit figures. The full financial audit will be completed and presented to the Minnesota Department of Education and Audubon Center of the North Woods no later than December 31, 2019.

FY19 Finances	Fund 1	Fund 2
Total Revenues	\$657,394	\$31,996
Total Expenditures	\$676,045	\$57,544
Net Income	(\$18,651)	(\$25,548)
Total Fund Balance	\$131,104	\$0

Overview

School financials are substantially influenced by enrollment and as VCS transitions from a startup school to an established the school the focus on financials is shifting from getting the primary capital in place to a sustainability model for the long term.

Revenues

Most of the funding for VCS came from state and federal sources. The CSP implementation grant provided much of the startup funding while state aid made up most of the operational funds to run the school. Regarding Fund 2 - Food Service, food programs at schools always run a deficit so funds were transferred from Fund 1 - General to Fund 2 - Food Service as needed to make up the difference.

For FY19, the financial team revised the budget several times, as changing conditions prompted the reallocation of resources and while the final audit hasn't occurred at the time of this report, estimates indicated the school ended up with a slight deficit.

Expenses

Expenses at VCS were driven by student needs and so were re-projected during the year as necessary.

World's Best Workforce Annual Budget

No funds were specifically allocated to implementing WBWF in the 2018-19 school year as programs related to WBWF areas were already in place in some form and so are already accounted for in the budget. We don't foresee this changing in the near future unless requirements change.

15. Future Plans

Academic Program

VCS evaluated the academic program at the end of the 2018-2019 school year and determined that students are becoming familiar with the project process and anticipate they will respond well to consistently increasing rigor. The proposed action items are as follows:

Attendance

Attendance was identified as a key issue at the end of the year with a significant number of students missing more than ten days of school. PBIS efforts will be redirected toward meeting this need.

Literacy

Reading scores are continuing to improve year over year, so we will be looking at regular language arts offerings in addition to intervention options within the MTSS/ADSI framework.

Math

Math scores are starting to improve, so we will be looking at regular math offerings in addition to intervention options within the MTSS/ADSI framework.

Leadership

- VCS currently uses a teacher-led school model and will continue to refine this process until an effective balance is reached for school operations.

Facilities

- Long term planning is to look at constructing a purpose-built facility for the educational needs of the students and the school's unique program.