



New Heights School

District 4003-07

FY2021-2022

Annual Report

New Heights School

Annual Charter School Report-FY 2022

Table of Contents:

Introduction	2
Mission Statement	2
School Governance	3
Purposes of the Chartered School	3-4
Board of Directors	4
School Management and Operations	5-7
Authorizer Information	7
Admissions, Enrollment, and Attrition	7-8
Program Successes and Best Practices	8-10
Academic Performance	11-12
Future Plans/Innovative Practices	12-14
Teacher Staffing Information	14-15
Student Attrition	16
Progress Toward Authorizer Contract Goals	16-19
Financial Summary	20-23

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to summarize the progress and achievements of New Heights School during the 2021-22 school year. The contents are intended to be informational and factual and may occasionally offer some opinions or anecdotal support on various matters. This annual report serves to meet the requirements of the Minnesota Department of Education as they pertain to charter schools, as well as those of New Heights School's contractual agreement with its authorizer; The Minnesota Guild for Charter Schools.

Board Approval & Availability

The Annual Report will be posted on the school's website once approved by the board of directors at a scheduled board meeting. A copy of the report will be shared with The Minnesota Guild for Charter Schools once it is approved. The report will be posted to the school's website and will also be made available to all parents of students enrolled at the school once it is board-approved.

New Heights School's Mission Statement

The Mission of New Heights School is to inspire and challenge each individual to reach his or her full potential.

New Heights School was among the first schools in the state of Minnesota to be called a "charter school" or "chartered school." The school opened in the fall of 1993 and was established as a small community school created for the purpose of offering a smaller, relationship-based program for families and children wanting or needing a more personalized approach to public education. Although the vast majority of students attending New Heights have always been and continue to be from the Stillwater Area Schools district, many students enroll from surrounding Minnesota public charter schools or traditional districts; New Heights has served families from 13 MN public school districts. Some of the primary and distinct benefits derived from attending New Heights School include the small size of the program, as well as the ability and willingness of the school's teachers to provide assistance to their students in the classroom very quickly and authentically. At New Heights, the teachers strive to assist students at each student's ability-level as opposed to having a common and unrealistic expectation that each student is equally capable and ready to attain the same "expected" level of education within a stipulated time frame or at an arbitrary pace regardless of individual differences and circumstances. Therefore, it is built into the mission of New Heights to address the needs and aspirations of all students, each according to his or her ability, yet in accordance with state standards when possible.

School Governance

The board of directors of the school is responsible for the formation, adoption, and review of policy; creating and adopting the annual fiscal budget in conjunction with the school's administrator and the business manager; monitoring the overall progress and health of the school; and for directing, supporting, and evaluating the administrative team in the overall management of the school and its programs.

The board of directors is compliant with charter school law-124E as it pertains to the "makeup" of the board; which no longer requires a teacher-based majority. The board holds an annual election in **May** of each for the purpose of electing candidates to serve three-year terms; recently changed in the bylaws from the former term length of two years. The directors are not compensated financially. In the event a member of the board resigns or is removed from the board, a new member may be appointed for the remainder of the vacated term. The board of directors may, from time-to-time, increase or decrease the size of the board, but must continue to meet the legislated requirements pertaining to board member makeup. The increase in directors may occur either from an election or by appointment as stipulated in the bylaws. The current board consists of 7 directors. The principal/executive director participates at board meetings as an ex-officio, non-voting member. The board of directors typically schedules meetings to occur once per month and all meetings are held at the school, with the recent exception related to the Covid 19 pandemic, which has compelled the board to hold virtual meetings for the safety of those who attend. The annual schedule of meetings is determined by each new board at the first monthly meeting in July of each year.

The board of directors holds its Annual Meeting in **May** of each year. On the day of the Annual Meeting, members of the corporation, as defined in the bylaws, are able to vote for candidates to serve as board members for three-year terms. The votes are tabulated and reported during The Annual Meeting. Other agenda items may include the designation of the school's official depository; an annual financial report; a year-ending administrative report; a review and amendment of the school's by-laws- the Annual Meeting is the only meeting of the year for the directors to make a change to the corporate by-laws.

Purposes of the Chartered School

New Heights first opened in 1993 as one of the original, pioneering charter schools and as the nation's first K-12 charter school. Although charter schools are still thought of as "alternatives" to the traditional education sector, some argue charters have lost much of the flexibility they were originally intended to have. However, The primary purposes of charter schools remain in effect; they include: *improving all pupil learning; improving all student achievement; increasing learning opportunities for all pupils; encouraging the use of different and innovative teaching practices; measuring learning outcomes and creating different and innovative forms of measuring outcomes; establishing new forms of accountability for schools; and creating new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site.*

Throughout this document, evidence of each should be demonstrated. As one of the first charter schools in the nation, New Heights has been creatively meeting each of the aforementioned purposes, thus creating new opportunities for students and teachers to creatively and experimentally contribute to the advancement of the field of education.

2021-2022 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Board Member	Role/Office	Date Seated	Length of Term
Jodi Wegge	Parent/ Director	May 2021	June 2024
Samantha Taylor	Parent/ President	May 2016	June 2023
Lorraine Busta	Parent/ Vice President	May 2016	June 2022
Christie Hogan	Teacher/Assistant Secretary	May 2018	June 2023
Kathleen Chamberland	Teacher/Secretary	May 2021	June 2024
Jennifer VanDyke	Parent/Director	May 2021	June 2024
Michael Stahlmann	Community Member	July 1997	June 2022

*BOARD OF DIRECTORS TRAINING Corresponding with Charter School Law:

*Charter school board members who do not begin the required training within six months of being seated and complete it within 12 months of being seated will be ineligible to serve on the board. The three required areas are: 1) Financial Matters, 2) Board Governance and 3) Employment Matters. All current board members have completed required training within the first 12 months of being seated.

School Management and Operations

New Heights School has a traditional hierarchy of management beginning with the school's Superintendent/Principal/Executive Director. Thomas Kearney has been with New Heights since August of 1995, but began his administration as an interim-leader in September of 1996. He holds a Superintendent of Schools license, as well as a K-12 Principal's license in the state of Minnesota. The principal is primarily responsible for ensuring that the teachers and students have the appropriate materials and learning environment needed to ensure a safe and successful school experience. The principal, in conjunction with the approval of the board of directors, is responsible for all staffing at the school. This is beneficial in the sense that all staff members deciding to accept employment offers from the principal have at least some level of shared vision with the leader of the school at the time of hire; the mission and vision are discussed in great detail throughout the hiring process. This shared vision should ideally result in fewer professional conflicts and more harmony/synergy amongst staff.

The principal is responsible for ensuring that each employee understands and meets the expectations of each respective position. This is done, in part, through frequent observation, participation in professional learning committees (PLC), and, in part, through two-way communication between the principal and each teacher/employee. Each employee meets frequently/periodically with the principal to discuss key aspects of his or her position and areas of responsibility, and also to develop a plan, if necessary, for the employee to improve or correct behaviors/practices put in place and designed to ultimately lead to optimal performance/production of the employee. The school has developed a comprehensive teacher evaluation plan and uses a very specific rubric when evaluating teachers for effectiveness.

The principal works closely with the board of directors to ensure that the school has appropriate policies in place. It is the joint responsibility of the principal and the board to ensure effective dissemination of school policies to families and staff members, and to ensure that all members of the school are aware of and adhere to the school's policies.

The principal is responsible for ensuring the general maintenance of the school facility. The school building is a leased property, but, as the tenant, the principal must make sure that all essential utilities and systems are operating safely. The principal communicates frequently with the school's landlord on all issues that need attention and ensures that the facility meets governmental compliance expectations.

The school's principal works with various staff members who also serve as members of the administrative team-demonstrating that many aspects of the school support a teacher/employee-led model. This includes **the office manager**, who also serves as the primary reporter on matters such as: records administration and maintenance for students and staff; student enrollment (MARSS), staff (STARS), assurances of various types, and other such elements of reporting required by the MDE. The principal and the office manager work closely together on issues such as forecasting future enrollment; policy development and dissemination; writing, revising and disseminating staff and student/family handbooks;

communication between school and home; creating an annual calendar to recommend to the board of directors for adoption; and other issues that occur on either daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, or on an annual basis. The principal and office manager have worked effectively together for the past 28 years.

The school's guidance counselor/school counselor works closely with the principal in establishing criteria for graduation; ensuring that all students meet the requirements for graduation as established by both the school and by the MDE; and establishing a class schedule for the students to follow each year. The guidance/school counselor is also responsible for monitoring the academic progress of each student enrolled at the school and for assisting students to obtain the necessary components/credit that may be needed to graduate. The guidance/school counselor also assists students and families in developing post-secondary plans and may even assist in the college or technical school application process upon request.

The **District Area Testing Coordinator**, or **DAC**, is responsible for the administration of all standardized testing that occurs throughout the year. This includes test setup; arranging a schedule/calendar of tests; ensuring that all required elements are in place to properly administer the tests; and ensuring that all staff members are aware of the standards required for students at all levels. The DAC works closely with the principal and the guidance/school counselor to ensure that all testing is administered properly and that the results of the testing are appropriately reviewed and analyzed. The DAC compiles and organizes all data so that the school's leadership team and affected staff can make informed decisions regarding improving levels of academic achievement for all students.

The bookkeeper is a member of the school's administrative team. The bookkeeper is responsible for working closely with the principal and the board of directors to prepare and monitor an appropriate annual budget. The bookkeeper is responsible for the accounting of the school's financial matters. The bookkeeper must make available all relevant information pertaining to the school's financial health to anyone who may inquire about it, but especially to the principal and the board of directors so that together they may make sound financial decisions on behalf of the school.

The bookkeeper must account for all funds received and held by the school.

The bookkeeper must reconcile all accounts (monthly) held by the school.

The bookkeeper works to assist in preparing the school's annual financial audit.

The bookkeeper monitors the school's assets and cash flow on an ongoing basis and makes recommendations to the school principal and to the board of directors.

New Heights holds a contract with an independent entity which serves as the **special education director** for the school. This position is required because the school serves students who have disabilities and IEPs, but the size of the school only requires a part-time staff/director to meet compliance. The special education director ensures that all aspects relevant to meeting

the needs of special education students are in place. The special education director works closely with the principal and special education team to ensure that the school is compliant with all laws regulating special education and ensures that due process procedures are followed.

The school's administrative team has worked closely with one another for many years. This longevity allows for the school's business to flow smoothly with few obstacles in the way of providing families with a solid educational experience. The administrative team has developed an excellent reputation in the realm of charter schools as being compliant, professional and efficient.

*New Heights has been a recipient of **The School Finance Award** for 10 of the past 11 school years and has received the award again for 2022.

Authorizer Information

For more than 18 years, Stillwater Area Schools (ISD 834) served as the sponsor of New Heights School. The Stillwater district was actually the first public school district to sponsor a charter school in the state of Minnesota and was thus the first in the United States, as charter schools were first legislated in the state of Minnesota. However, the relationship came to a sad and abrupt end as a result of the change in legislation requiring charters to transition from "sponsors" to "authorizers;" which significantly raised the rigor and accountability of the charter school accountability-partners in the state of Minnesota. In April of 2012, New Heights's application requesting a change in authorizer was approved, and so began a new relationship with **Innovative Quality Schools**; a single purpose authorizer. In October of 2014, New Heights submitted a new request for a change of authorizer to the commissioner of education after realizing the school and IQS were not working toward the same purposes. In the spring of 2015, the school's request for CIA was approved and New Heights began its relationship with The Minnesota Guild for Charter Schools; another "single purpose authorizer." Single purpose authorizers are simply that; organizations whose sole purpose is to support and authorize charter schools and to ensure and report on matters of compliance, innovation, and achievement. New Heights recently completed its first 5-year contract with The Guild in 2020 and has since entered into a new 3-year contract with The Guild.

The current authorizer liaison to New Heights is:
Minnesota Guild for Charter Schools
Lynn Nordgren
323 Washington Ave N Minneapolis MN 55401
email: executivedirectormnguild@gmail.com

School Admissions, Enrollment and Attrition

The enrollment at New Heights has proven to be quite stable throughout the school's 28-year history; experiencing only a few years of "low" enrollment numbers. New Heights typically enrolls approximately 140-155 students per year and typically generates approximately 125-140 ADM. It may appear that the school has a high level of transience/mobility. This activity could

be resulting from the number of special-needs children enrolling at the school, or it could also be relative to the high number of impoverished children enrolled-most likely it is a combination of the two. The ADM for the 2022 school year was approximately **111**, which was a decrease of 2 students from the prior year, although the actual enrollment was higher than the prior year.

The demographics at New Heights are not typical of the aggregate population in the Stillwater area in two key categories; students with learning or behavioral disabilities/disorders and students eligible for free or reduced-price meals-FRP. New Heights has tended to serve significantly higher percentages of students in those two subgroups as compared against the local district since the school's inception in 1993; most likely because students representative of the two subgroups perceive that they are not having their needs met or perceive that they are not being "heard" within a district setting. Although there are several underlying factors, the high concentration of students with disabilities and students living in poverty tends to have a profound impact on the school's overall levels of academic achievement; which will be addressed later in the report.

Program Successes and Best Practices

During the charter school's twenty-nine-year history, New Heights has initiated many program changes to properly meet the needs of the ever-changing student population. Currently, New Heights serves students in all grades K-12. The elementary section serves students in grades K-5 in multi-age classrooms; primarily due to the small population and need to combine grades for fiscal reasons. The K-1 classroom hosts up to 20 students, and, depending on the class size, may also occasionally utilize a paraprofessional or a high-level volunteer to offer more support to students who need it. The teacher makes use of a 2-year rotating curriculum, which is standards-based, so that students enrolled at New Heights may learn all of the same core skills and concepts that would be offered and required at any Minnesota public school over the same 2-year span. The teachers of all grades and levels make use of differentiation strategies to accommodate for individual differences of the students in the classes. For some unidentified reason, the majority of our students who have entered kindergarten over the past few years did not attend preschool, making it an additional challenge for the teacher to help the students' progress through the state-prescribed standards within the prescribed time frame.

Students in grades 2-5 also attend school in two multi-age classrooms 2-3 and 4-5 respectively; class sizes are capped at 25, but rarely have reached the cap. They also experience a 2-year rotating curriculum, and they too learn in accordance with the Minnesota state standards prescribed for students in each respective grade. In addition to home-class, these students are offered small-group reading and math instruction, largely based on ability rather than arbitrarily by age/grade as districts tend to do; the majority of the school's students tend to enroll below grade level, which may have been a reason for the enrollment in the first place. They also receive **physical education** every day; **special education** for all students meeting eligibility criteria; and **speech and language** services for eligible students. Enrichment opportunities are offered to all K-5 grade students. Offerings include enrichment-based learning opportunities which occur on a rotating basis in **music, art, character education & social curriculum**, and **Yoga Calm**.

For students in all grades K-5 qualifying/eligible for additional support, a special education teacher/case manager serves as a member of the elementary team, as well as a speech and language pathologist, physical education teacher, school counselor, and various members of the secondary teaching faculty; particularly those licensed in math, language arts and reading.

During the 2021-22 school year, the K-5 elementary section of the school hosted approximately 34 students. This number allowed for small class sizes and flexibility in meeting the individual and collective needs of all students.

The 6-12 grade section (secondary) follows a traditional schedule. There are six class periods per day, each meeting for 55 minutes. Students are provided with a schedule of courses designed to meet or exceed the state standards in each required discipline. Class sizes are limited to 25, but there were no classes at capacity during the year, although the 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th grades continued to grow at a higher rate than the other classes.

Teachers are challenged to provide differentiation of instruction in each class they teach due to the wide range of abilities and needs within any given class; especially given the structure of the high school, which typically groups the students by grade. Students take such classes as math; language arts; physical education; social studies; science; career exploration; health; and some students may choose to take specialty on-line classes when appropriate. Students eligible for special education services are assigned a case manager and have access to a well-appointed resource room; may have assignments modified; and may be eligible to receive a variety of other modifications to the school day as determined by the IEP team and documented in Individualized Education Plans.

A new program was implemented during the 2019-20 school year called Life Skills and remained in place for 2020-21 as well as 2021-22. Life Skills was put in place to offer an opportunity for 6th graders to receive more guidance to learn what it means to transition to secondary school life. For the first time in their school lives, these students would be transitioning to a different class each hour and would have 6 different classes/teachers per day. The staff assumes that some of the students may be ready for this experience, but others aren't as ready.

Part of the class time was spent simply helping the students to make the adjustment by teaching and modeling expectations. Expectations of secondary students were explained and questions were answered. Of particular note was the belief that students need to learn how to organize their life and budget their time accordingly. The Life Skills teacher spent a great deal of time working with the secondary staff to understand what concepts would be most beneficial to the 6th grade. These students learned to make use of a school planner as well as the JMC Family Access App to track all class assignments and course grades. While every student did not become proficient in this sense, all of the students at least began the process of becoming more aware of how to independently access information regarding their own progress. There is reason to be optimistic moving forward that Life Skills is a strong support mechanism, especially for the youngest group of secondary students of New Heights.

Why Choose New Heights?

Students choose to enroll at New Heights School for many reasons. At the time of exploration, children often express an interest in finding a smaller, more personalized program designed to focus on individual needs when compared to a larger school system, which may not be able to offer such personalization simply due to the sheer size of some district schools. Students may also express a desire to have closer relationships with and more accessibility to their teachers, which can make it more likely for them to ask for assistance when needed.

At New Heights, students typically attend classes with the same staff year-after-year. This has proven to be a huge benefit since the students are able to learn the classroom expectations and norms of each of their teachers early in their New Heights experience and then know exactly what is expected of them year-after-year. These perennial relationships are also a benefit to the teachers as they are better able to design and prepare lessons and create programming more authentically for their students based on their personal, longitudinal knowledge of individual abilities, tendencies, and learning styles of each of their students. This is especially true with special education students who are eligible to receive various modifications and accommodations to the regular curriculum. Obviously, most teachers of large district schools would probably admit that they would benefit from the level of baseline knowledge about their students that New Heights' teachers have. Teaching the same students term-after-term and year-after-year provides the teachers with an awesome opportunity to measure growth and impact to their students over a longer period of time because lessons can be tailored and adjusted to meet the true needs of individual students in classes at any given time. Teachers in larger systems simply can't do that because they lack the longitudinal data needed to do it, or simply because teachers in large school systems are teaching to the masses and aren't able to adjust the curriculum in the way teachers in small schools can. At New Heights, teachers can see the true impact they have made with their students over time; teachers don't teach to the curriculum, they teach to the students' needs.

Recently, we have come to understand that some students today have a new need; a need for a smaller and calmer school. New Heights is the smallest and arguably the calmest school in the area. Students who have battled the overcrowded hallways and classrooms of local district schools have expressed a desire to enroll in and attend a smaller, less hectic version of the public system; New Heights. At informational meetings, typically held during an actual school day, families can't help but notice how much calmer and structured New Heights seems compared to the schools they may be currently attending. As families tour through the school they note that students are in the classrooms while hallways are quiet and free of unnecessary noise and distractions prevalent in larger schools. It is clear that the smaller environment offers a potentially less stressful and less hectic day for the majority of students who enroll. The calmer environment allows students to focus more of their energy on learning and problem solving, while less energy is needed for the social issues so prevalent in the larger school systems today; including having to fit in the school's social schema. For those seeking a smaller, calmer school, they often look no further than New Heights.

***Academic Performance**

Due to Covid 19 pandemic, we are unable to provide MCA data because the tests were not administered. Instead, we offer the following charts to illustrate MCA Proficiency data from New Heights School for the last 4 testing cycles prior to 2020. *Values rounded to the nearest whole number.

MCA Reading	Proficiency	MCA Math	Proficiency
2016	23%	2016	8%
2017	30%	2017	19%
2018	23%	2018	16%
2019	31%	2019	24%
2020	NM	2020	NM
2021	NM	2021	NM
2022	22.6%	2022	11.3%

The administration and teaching staff at New Heights have long recognized the need to make continuous improvement to rates of academic achievement and rates of proficiency of our students on the MCA tests; however, when compared to statewide statistics, especially FRP and Sped, our students seem to be similar. Historically, there have been several factors consistently contributing to the sub-standard proficiency data, including the small cell sizes inherent at the school, which allows for inflated highs and lows in any given year; the disproportionate number of transient students who enroll at the school; the high percentage of enrolled students who have diagnosed learning disabilities; as well as the effect of negative and stressful school experiences had by our students in schools prior to enrolling at New Heights, which contributes to negative attitudes about school for some students. Also, a high percentage of students who enroll at New Heights tend to lack the basic and requisite skills in reading and mathematics typically expected of students of respective ages, which is likely a reason some of them change schools in the first place; poor academic performance. These requisite skills,

although often lacking, are paramount in developing the higher-order problem solving skills considered rudimentary and necessary in successfully navigating the MCA exams. The teaching staff and administration are analyzing the MCA results from past few years and were planning on working to make significant improvement in both math and reading again in 2020-21, although it is worth noting that at the time this same time a year ago, the Covid 19 pandemic forced the school back into Distance Learning for all students during 2nd quarter and many of them remained in distance learning through the end of the year. Because of the issues surrounding Covid and students opting to remain at home or entire school systems continuing on with full distance learning activities, MCA exams were not given, but more importantly, many students were less engaged or not engaged at all in schoolwork. In many cases, students have lost ground academically.

When comparing recent trends of the school to other local systems, as well as to the state average in reading and math performance, you can see math continues to be a perennial struggle, despite many changes to pedagogy, curriculum, staffing, support, data analysis, and classroom management strategies. This lack of “improvement” could possibly be rooted in the fact that the student population tends to fluctuate more than is desired. This constantly fluctuating population certainly has an impact on momentum, as some students who have been making improvement may leave the school and new struggling learners take their place. Aggregated test scores from one year to the next may not be a good comparison as the student population may have changed by as much as 40% from one test cycle to the next. Additionally, some of our most struggling students have deficits which are hard to overcome, especially in the short span of one year. In 2018-19, our most recently completed test cycle aside from 2022, we did have more students reaching expected-growth levels than we did in recent years; an indication that the school’s efforts seemed to be moving in the right direction. We will use 2022 as a new baseline to build on.

Future Plans/Innovative Practices

Any future plans of a school or district should obviously include the addition of programming designed to enhance the “best” of what is currently available. Although there are many features of New Heights worthy of recognition and praise, there are also areas that simply need to be improved upon and those are the areas everyone seems to be focused on. For example, an unintended benefit of being required to place students on distance learning due to Covid 19 is that the staff had to quickly learn how to reach their students via a digital platform. The school’s administration had been wanting to explore ways to offer a digital curriculum for years, but was slow to move since there was no requirement to do so. The pandemic made offering a digital platform essential. Although there is still a lot of room for improvement, the school and staff made great strides in learning to teach through Google Classroom. As the school moves forward, it seems that Google Classroom will play a huge role, especially for students who benefit from the use of technology, or those students who tend to fall behind and need additional time and resources to get caught up. The administration and the teachers all learned a lot about themselves, at least in terms of their ability to react to adverse circumstances in a positive way.

New Heights continues to work together as a staff through our professional learning committees (PLC's). These PLC's were created for the purpose of providing teachers with an opportunity to learn, share and collaborate with one another on improving in all areas of lesson planning, classroom instruction, standards alignment, classroom management, and data recording and analysis, as well as learning to effectively react to the data. The PLC's have focused on data collection and analysis with the goal of learning more about what students in the classroom are actually learning and how effectively teachers are teaching. In order to understand more about what is actually being learned in the classroom by students, teachers have been working on the formation and widespread use of formative assessments and summative assessments (FAs and SAs); tools designed to show exactly what lessons students are learning, as well as which areas students are struggling in. Once teachers began to fully understand how to create and make the best use of FAs and SAs, they became better at assessing how and when to adjust classroom practices so that all students are able to demonstrate growth. The use of FAs and SAs is now a common practice among all teaching staff members.

For many years our staff has been learning about The **Gradual Release of Responsibility** strategy-GRR and making use of it within the classroom. This strategy promotes the concept of the teacher spending less time in direct instruction while providing students with more time to work on assignments in class and to take more responsibility for their own learning as opposed to more traditional classes where the teachers dominate the space, lecture to students, and then send out piles of homework for the students to do alone. The GRR model says teachers become more of a guide or facilitator of instruction rather than a dispenser of information. This makes class time more meaningful for the student as they are able to work on assignments and have the support of the teacher when needed. The students can become effective agents in their own education rather than passive passengers in the teacher's classroom.

Teachers understand the power of goal setting with students. The staff has come to understand that students may be willing to do the work in class, but they often struggle with connecting the significance of the work with successes earned outside of the classroom. Teachers are learning to help students set appropriate learning goals designed to increase the level of student engagement within the learning process. Prior to Covid, students were demonstrating that, when included in the process of establishing meaningful learning goals, they are much more engaged and interested in the process from beginning to end. Goal setting has been a major point of emphasis since the 2015-16 school year and will be even more instrumental in the current school year through a newly designed Advisory program in the 6-12 grades.

Additionally, the staff understands that the school needs to demonstrate that students are learning, but at higher levels than recent trends have indicated. The staff is seeking out professional development opportunities that can assist in helping them to understand more about how to reach and impact the types of students served at New Heights. The staff is learning more about different mindsets students may have which may support and restrict learning. Knowing that these mindsets exist and understanding how to help students develop a **growth-mindset** may be instrumental in raising the achievement levels of all of our students over time. The staff is truly united in school-wide improvement efforts and we are optimistic and determined to help our students improve.

Finally, the administration and staff recognize that students of today need something very different than students needed 20 years ago, yet many facets of education remain locked in the old methods and practices of generations gone by. The pandemic has created an opportunity to reconnect with our current students and start to understand that who they are and what they need are both very different than during pre-pandemic times. Terms like social-emotional needs and trauma-informed needs are becoming ubiquitous in educational circles. Schools like New Heights are going to have to make some drastic changes if we are going to reach our students where they need it most. We will be researching ways to do this in the future.

Teacher Staffing Information

New Heights School employed 17 personnel during the 2021-22 school year. Aside from the licensed teachers noted below, New Heights had five personnel in administration and support staff including: Principal, Bookkeeper, Office Manager, part-time seasonal Health Office Attendant, part-time seasonal Special Education due process secretary, and part-time seasonal food service

Name	Licensed Area	Assignment	Status	FF#
Stephanie Bagwell	5-12 Communication Arts/Literature	6-12 English	R	1008075
Angie Bohnert	K-12 DD/LD	Special Education 6-12	N	460693
Mary J Carlson	K-12 EBD	Special Education 6-12	R	412661
Emma Cotner	Mathematics 5-12	Math Instructor 5-12	R	470102
Joey Dokken	Visual Arts K-12	6-12 Art	N	510965
Andrea Ek-Pangerl	5-8 Science 9-12 Life Sciences 9-12 Chemistry	6-12 Science	R	509744

Jennifer Geil	K-6 Elementary Education	Elementary 4-5	R	492522
Christie Hogan	K-6 Elementary Education	Elementary 2-3	R	455906
Kathleen Johnson	K-6 Elementary Education 5-8 Mathematics	5-8 Math Elementary Reading	R	508060
Abigail Lindquist	B-Grade 3	Ele. Ed. K-1	N	494205
Annah Massmann	School Counselor	Guidance Counselor	R	502314
Kirk Nelson	K-12 P.E. 7-12 Health	Phy Ed, Health K-12	R	378824
Melody Rich	Learning Disabilities	K-8 Special Education	R	100324 8
Nick Tapio	Social Studies	Social Studies 6-12	R	488892

*R =Returned from Prior Year(s)

*N = New 2021-2022

Student Attrition:

Throughout the 2021-22 school year, 134 students were enrolled, some new and some returning. Under normal circumstances, some students or their families arrive at the conclusion that perhaps New Heights wasn't the fit they had hoped for. Once they come to that conclusion, they will either return to their former environments or they will try another alternative. The situation for this year was completely different due to several factors, but to funnel them down into one category, Covid 19 was the likely reason- or was at least a contributing factor In all of the withdrawals except for one case. The difficulty of having to move between hybrid, distance learning, and full-time was complicated for some students. Additionally, other safety protocols, including mask mandates in schools, proved to be more than some students could mentally or emotionally handle. New Heights enrolled 34 new students on or after the first day of school and 32 withdrew. We understand why students are enrolling at the school, but it is clear we need to gain a clearer understanding of why families are withdrawing. It seems the pandemic has a lot to do with this new trend.

Progress Toward Authorizer Contract Goals:

***Several of the school's authorizer contract goals are based on testing data that could not be compiled due to complications resulting from the pandemic. Many of the goals required testing that was not administered, including the MCA tests. NM may appear in the cells as "Not Measurable."**

Accountability Goal 1; 3rd Grade Reading:

The percentage of students in grades 1-3 meeting "projected-growth" in reading, as measured by the NWEA/MAP (spring to spring) assessment, will increase from a baseline of 43% to 1.5% in year 1; 2.5% in year 2; and 3.5% in year 3.

Baseline	FY21	FY22	FY23
43%	44.5%	47%	50.5%
Percentage Realized:	NM	35%	

Rationale: Aligned to the 3rd grade literacy goal (WBWF)

Many of our students enroll without having had preschool, or have not made the "normal" benchmarks prior to enrolling at New Heights; simply meaning they enroll behind expected levels on average. Additionally, New Heights has become a popular choice for families who may have students diagnosed with disabilities 40% or who may be living in poverty 50% or more annually, simply meaning we tend to have a higher concentration of students who perform low

on standardized tests. As our population tends to need more support, the percentage of students not proficient or who test below expected levels tends to be higher. We believe that we can slowly increase the percentage of students performing at “expected growth” over time. The longer the students have been enrolled, the gaps should decrease by higher rates.

Accountability Goal 2; MCA Reading:

Students in grades 3-8 and who are continuously enrolled (October 1st) for two consecutive years, will demonstrate a reduction on the MCA Reading of “Does not meet” and “Partially meets,” from a baseline of 72%. *Year one reduction of -1.5%; Year two reduction of 2.5%; Year three reduction of -3.5%.*

Baseline	FY21	FY22	FY23
72%	70.5%	67.5%	63.5%
Percentage Realized:	NM	66%	

Rationale: As students continue to be enrolled at New Heights, several things contribute to better academic outcomes. We believe that students who remain at the school choose to return because the culture of the school suits them. They also must feel that the teachers know them and understand their needs. This is likely true because teachers, over time, will form relationships with students that result in adjustments to curriculum to authentically meet the needs of the students more appropriately each year. As the school and students continue to adjust to each other, academic achievement levels tend to rise over time. Students should be able to increase MCA performance over a 3 year period when compared against baseline, entry level data.

Accountability Goal 3; MCA Math:

Students in grades 3-8 and who are continuously enrolled (October 1st) for two consecutive years, will demonstrate a reduction on the MCA Math of “Does not meet” and “Partially meets,” from a baseline of 79% . Year one reduction of -1.5%; Year two reduction of -2.5%; year three reduction of -3.5%.

Baseline	FY21	FY22	FY23
79%	77.5%	75%	71.5%
Percentage Realized:	NM	85.7%	

Rationale: As students continue to be enrolled at New Heights, several things contribute to better academic outcomes. We believe that students who remain at the school choose to return because the culture of the school suits them. They also must feel that the teachers know them and understand their needs. This is likely true because teachers, over time, will form relationships with students that result in adjustments to curriculum to authentically meet the needs of the students more appropriately each year. As the school and students continue to adjust to each other, academic achievement levels tend to rise over time. Students should be able to increase MCA performance over a 3 year period when compared against baseline, entry level data.

Accountability Goal 4; Graduation Rates.

Annually, students who have been continuously (as of October 1st of the student’s first year) and enrolled for 3 out of 4 years will graduate at a minimum average rate of 80%.

Baseline	FY21	FY22	FY23
80%	80%	80%	80%
Percentage Realized:	7/7 100%	2/2 100%	

Rationale-- Students enrolled for 4 years will be provided wrap-around support and guidance to obtain what they need to successfully graduate.

Accountability Goal 5; Attendance Rate:

According to EOY Marss Data, the school will **Maintain** an aggregated average daily attendance rate of 90% or higher for continuously enrolled (Oct. 1-end of year) students in each of the contract years 1-3.

Year	FY21	FY22	FY23
Goal:	90%+	90%+	90%+
Percentage Realized:	92.28%	87.03	

Rationale: The school works to ensure that all students enrolled attend school at a rate of at least 90% to be in accordance with the state’s expectations for compulsory attendance, but more so to ensure that students are at school engaged in learning and maximizing their opportunities to reach their full potential. They can not reach their full potential if they miss learning opportunities. Whereas there will also be a handful of families who, for whatever reason, can not conform to attendance expectations, the vast majority will demonstrate high levels of attendance, thus the school’s average rate of attendance will be more than 90% for all years.

Accountability Goal 6; Parent/Student Satisfaction/Safety Survey:

Goal A: Annually, a minimum of 80% of parents/guardians surveyed will indicate a level of 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the learning opportunities and the school program, as indicated on end-of-year parent surveys.

Goal B: Students will report feeling "safe" in the school environment through various forms of documented surveys.

Year	FY21	FY22	FY23
Goal A	80%	80%	80%
Percentage Realized:	100%	82%	
Goal B	81%	84%	

Rationale: Students are less likely to do well in school if the school isn't perceived to be a safe place. New Heights strives to offer an extremely safe school experience and we believe the students continue to choose the school largely because of the safe school culture found throughout.

Students in grades 4-12 will take paper surveys administered in class by the school's counselor. Students in grades K-3 will have teacher led discussions with discernable answers as reported by the teachers . *End of year implies that the survey will be administered during the 4th quarter. And 80% of students are able to express that they believe the school is a safe place. The school's administration feels it needs to work on helping students understand the concept of "safety" in both physical and mental senses.

NEW HEIGHTS SCHOOLS, INC.

Statement of Revenue, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balances
Budget and Actual
General Fund
Year Ended June 30, 2022

	<u>Original and Final Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Over (Under) Final Budget</u>
Revenue			
Federal sources	\$ 161,000	\$ 236,093	\$ 75,093
State sources	1,557,395	1,496,808	(60,587)
Local sources			
Other	11,375	13,718	2,343
Total revenue	<u>1,729,770</u>	<u>1,746,619</u>	<u>16,849</u>
Expenditures			
Current			
Administration	169,799	175,433	5,634
District support services	165,490	167,136	1,646
Elementary and secondary regular instruction	619,150	634,790	15,640
Special education instruction	367,904	376,701	8,797
Instructional support services	-	100	100
Pupil support services	55,589	51,578	(4,011)
Sites and buildings	79,060	157,359	78,299
Fiscal and other fixed cost programs	12,200	13,542	1,342
Debt service			
Principal	93,642	93,642	-
Interest and fiscal charges	124,837	121,602	(3,235)
Total expenditures	<u>1,687,671</u>	<u>1,791,883</u>	<u>104,212</u>
Net change in fund balances	<u>\$ 42,099</u>	<u>(45,264)</u>	<u>\$ (87,363)</u>
Fund balances			
Beginning of year		<u>449,833</u>	
End of year		<u>\$ 404,569</u>	

NEW HEIGHTS SCHOOLS, INC.

Statement of Revenue, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balances
 Governmental Funds
 Year Ended June 30, 2022
 (With Partial Comparative Information for the Year Ended June 30, 2021)

	General Fund	Nonmajor Fund	Total Governmental Funds	
			2022	2021
Revenue				
Federal sources	\$ 236,093	\$ 72,347	\$ 308,440	\$ 141,196
State sources	1,496,808	968	1,497,776	1,415,155
Local sources				
Other	13,718	1,692	15,410	17,980
Total revenue	<u>1,746,619</u>	<u>75,007</u>	<u>1,821,626</u>	<u>1,574,331</u>
Expenditures				
Current				
Administration	175,433	—	175,433	170,557
District support services	167,136	—	167,136	170,662
Elementary and secondary regular instruction	634,790	—	634,790	458,877
Special education instruction	376,701	—	376,701	286,087
Instructional support services	100	—	100	37,732
Pupil support services	51,578	—	51,578	16,905
Sites and buildings	157,359	—	157,359	274,935
Fiscal and other fixed cost programs	13,542	—	13,542	13,237
Food service	—	51,161	51,161	16,846
Capital outlay	—	17,375	17,375	—
Debt service				
Principal	93,642	—	93,642	—
Interest and fiscal charges	121,602	—	121,602	—
Total expenditures	<u>1,791,883</u>	<u>68,536</u>	<u>1,860,419</u>	<u>1,445,838</u>
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenditures	(45,264)	6,471	(38,793)	128,493
Other financing sources				
PPP loan	—	—	—	172,610
Sale of capital assets	—	700	700	—
Total other financing sources	<u>—</u>	<u>700</u>	<u>700</u>	<u>172,610</u>
Net change in fund balances	(45,264)	7,171	(38,093)	301,103
Fund balances				
Beginning of year	<u>449,833</u>	<u>14,262</u>	<u>464,095</u>	<u>162,992</u>
End of year	<u>\$ 404,569</u>	<u>\$ 21,433</u>	<u>\$ 426,002</u>	<u>\$ 464,095</u>

NEW HEIGHTS SCHOOLS, INC.

General Fund
Comparative Balance Sheet
as of June 30, 2022 and 2021

	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>
Assets		
Cash and temporary investments	\$ 362,537	\$ 391,686
Receivables		
Accounts	289	-
Due from other governmental units	219,676	193,039
Prepaid items	<u>9,662</u>	<u>17,190</u>
Total assets	<u>\$ 592,164</u>	<u>\$ 601,915</u>
Liabilities		
Salaries and benefits payable	\$ 154,244	\$ 122,518
Accounts and contracts payable	4,649	6,774
Due to other governmental units	<u>28,702</u>	<u>22,790</u>
Total liabilities	187,595	152,082
Fund balances		
Nonspendable for prepaid items	9,662	17,190
Assigned for playground improvements	14,362	9,329
Unassigned	<u>380,545</u>	<u>423,314</u>
Total fund balances	<u>404,569</u>	<u>449,833</u>
Total liabilities and fund balances	<u>\$ 592,164</u>	<u>\$ 601,915</u>

NEW HEIGHTS SCHOOLS, INC.

Food Service Special Revenue Fund
Comparative Balance Sheet
as of June 30, 2022 and 2021

	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>
Assets		
Cash and temporary investments	\$ 15,337	\$ 17,181
Receivables		
Due from other governmental units	6,612	418
Prepaid items	<u>417</u>	<u>—</u>
Total assets	<u>\$ 22,366</u>	<u>\$ 17,599</u>
Liabilities		
Accounts and contracts payable	\$ 9	\$ 2,413
Unearned revenue	<u>924</u>	<u>924</u>
Total liabilities	933	3,337
Fund balances		
Nonspendable for prepaid items	417	—
Restricted for food service	<u>21,016</u>	<u>14,262</u>
Total fund balances	<u>21,433</u>	<u>14,262</u>
Total liabilities and fund balances	<u>\$ 22,366</u>	<u>\$ 17,599</u>

Financial Summary

For most of its existence, New Heights has shown to be very fiscally responsible, as evidenced by each of the official annual audit reports; particularly in years with lower than expected enrollment. The past two years, despite issues that coincide with the pandemic, the school was able to make substantial improvement to the fund balance. As demonstrated by the FY 2022 audit, the end of year fund balance was \$404,569.

Any comments, questions, or concerns about the contents of this report should be directed to the school's principal, Thomas Kearney, at:

New Heights School
614 West Mulberry Street
Stillwater, MN 55082
Phone: 651-439-1962

E-mail: tkearney@newheightsschool.org Website: www.newheightsschool.com