



**Marine Area Community School dba River Grove**  
**Annual Report 2019**

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## **Introduction**

Marine Area Community School dba River Grove is a public charter school serving 195 students in grades K through 6. River Grove offers an innovative place-based curriculum that emphasizes project-based and community-centered learning. The 2018-19 school year was our second in operation and we are proud to continue to build a unique educational experience for students in the St. Croix Valley area.

## **Mission**

River Grove's mission is to utilize the natural resources, history, arts, and civic stewardship of the community as a foundation for the study of language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, physical education, art and other curriculum subjects. The place-based learning environment will be student-centered, designed by teachers, and reinforced and supported by the local community.

## **School Description**

Marine Area Community School dba River Grove

District #4254

First Year of Operation: 2017-2018

Grades Served: Kindergarten through 6th

Enrollment Cap: 200 Students

Authorizer: The Minnesota Guild  
Cindy Murphy, Executive Director  
execdirectormnguild@gmail.com

## **School Calendar and Hours of Operation**

First Day of School: September 4, 2018

Last Day of School: May 31, 2019

River Grove is open for student instruction Monday-Friday from 8:30-3:30pm

This report outlines and details River Grove's governance, structures, academic program, accountability data and innovative practices.

### School Enrollment and Demographics

River Grove had an Average Daily Membership of 160.02 for the 2017-18 school year. Enrollment has increased to 184 students for the 2018-19 school year.

School Year	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	Enrollment Total	Average Daily Membership
2017-18	22	25	22	41	20	20	12	162	160.02
2018-19	30	24	25	24	46	17	18	184	183.43
2019-2020 (Oct 1)	27	33	28	24	27	43	12	194	194

School Year	Free and/or Reduced	Special Education %	District 834 Residents %
2017-18	9.2%	26%	84.5%
2018-19	7.1%	28%	87.5%
2019-2020 (Oct 1)	7%	29%	89%

## Student Attendance, Attrition & Mobility

### 2018-19 Student Attendance Data

Grade	Attendance Rate (17-18)	Attendance Rate (18-19)
K	93.3%	96%
1	97.5%	95.2%
2	94.8%	96.3%
3	96.7%	95.2%
4	95.1%	96.7%
5	96.5%	95.3%
6	96.7%	96.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>95.9%</b>	<b>96%</b>

### Student Attrition:

Grade	Students 18-19	Re-enrolled for 19-20	Rate
K	30	28	6.7%
1	24	24	0%
2	25	22	12%
3	24	22	8.4%
4	46	42	8.7%
5	17	12	35.3%
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>18-19: 9.7%</b> <b>(17-18: 11%)</b>

## **Innovative Practices**

**Place-Based Learning:** At River Grove, we believe that “our community is our curriculum”. For the 2018-19 school year we enhanced this initiative through various efforts.

Some highlights:

- The school created a partnership with the “Rivers are Alive” Program through the St. Croix River Association to enhance student knowledge of our area.
- Each class was given the opportunity to visit neighboring Warner Nature Center to learn about our area’s natural setting and environment.
- Every classroom was given the opportunity to learn about and explore our neighboring Minnesota Food Association/Big River Farm.
- A partnership was continued with Zephyr Theatre in Stillwater to provide students with a comprehensive music and theatre arts education.
- All classes were given an “Artist in Residence” experience by local artist, Karron Nottingham, who enriched our programming through collaborative large group art pieces.
- Students engaged in a “Winter Warm Up Challenge” through participation in winter recreation, including snowshoeing and cross country skiing, taught by a community expert.

In addition, a core component of the school’s placed based learning initiative was to carry on the legacy and important traditions of the closed Marine Elementary school. Two key traditions were the “6th Grade Buddy” program as well as the “6th Grade Play”. The play acts as a capstone to a student’s time in elementary school, strengthening self-confidence and readiness for the next academic stage.

Finally, 6th grade students attended a four night overnight camp/outdoor education experience at Camp Widjiwagan near Ely, MN. The school hopes to establish this as a tradition for each class at the beginning of their final year at River Grove.

**Project-Based Learning:** For the 2018-19 School Year project based learning continued to be a key focus. Each teacher created six-week mini capstone projects that synthesized learning. These projects were also created to be aligned to the placed-based components of River Grove’s mission. Classrooms would frequently implement community members and assets into their projects.

**1:1 Technology Initiative:** During the 2018-19 school year River Grove added four additional SMART boards to campus and 75 chromebooks, completing the school’s 1:1 initiative. The school also added Brain Pop, Mystery Science, iRead and Mindplay as technology based enrichment and intervention tools.

**Teacher-Powered Governance Model:** River Grove continued to develop its Teacher Powered Model. In the Summer of 2018, the Teachers decided to exercise their autonomy to select a site leader and revised the School Administrator role to include more authority over personal management, evaluation and instructional leadership. Additionally, the school joined the regional Teacher Powered network of peer schools and resources.

## **Staff Development & Evaluation**

**Staff Development Processes and Activities:** For the 2018-19 School Year each teacher created SMART goals and individualized professional development plans. During the summer of 2018, The School Administrator and three teachers attended the Staff Development for Educators National Conference to enhance their knowledge of project based learning and differentiation. During both summer and fall (MEA) inservice activities, community connections and project based learning were a focus. The teaching staff also got the opportunity to learn about programming provided by the St. Croix River Association, Washington County and Warner Nature Center, among others.

**Evaluation processes:** In 2018-19, the school implemented a comprehensive evaluation process led by the School Administrator in collaboration with the teaching team and the board. The evaluation provided assessments on all four of MDE's recommended performance domains: Planning and Preparation, Environment, Instruction and Professional. Teachers were assessed using a variety of tools including classroom walkthroughs, formal observations, self evaluations/reflections, student/parent/peer surveys and State (MCA) and Internal (NWEA) testing data. Adherence to the Mission and Vision of the school was a key component of the teacher evaluation. During the Spring, the teachers were presented with their evaluation and given an opportunity to reflect on their practice to create goals/individual professional development plan for the ensuing year.

The School Administrator was also given a formal review at the end of the 18-19 school year by the school's board chairs, who formed the evaluations based on staff survey data and soliciting opinions of other board members to identify areas of needed growth. As a result of the meeting the School Administrator created SMART goals and a professional development plan.

## **Academic Performance**

### **2018-19 Mathematics Goals:**

#### **Goal 1:**

“River Grove will show positive student growth measured by state accountability measures; the School will show a Growth Z Score of ‘0’ at the end of the first year and post a positive Z Score in all subsequent years during the contract period.”

**Progress to Date:** A Z score is no longer available by the MDE in this area. However, the school had a score of 39.7% students on track for success. Additionally, 29.3% of students scored in the medium growth level and 20.7% scored in the high growth level.

#### **Goal 2:**

“In cross-cohort performance, River Grove students who are continuously enrolled (1 October) will exceed MCA proficiency rates in reference to comparable schools. Year 1: same%; Year 2: 5%; Year 3: 7%; Year 4: 10%; Year 5: 12%”

**Progress to Date:** River Grove scored lower on MCA tests in Mathematics proficiency rates than comparable schools.

**River Grove MCA Scores (Grades 3-6):** Math: 32.4%

**Stonebridge Elem MCA Scores (Grades 3-5):** Math: 58.8%

**Summary:** In 18-19 the school continued its refinement of math instruction. Curriculum maps were created for all teachers to ensure alignment between grades. However, several positions (3rd grade, 5th grade) saw teacher turnover and new faculty members needed some time to adjust to campus. Additionally, the school had a test participation rate of 86.7% compared to the state average of 97.1%.

For 2019-2020 the school plans further work on curriculum alignment and differentiation. Teachers plan to utilize Freckle Math, Study Island and Kahn Academy as intervention tools. NWEA data will also be utilized to create intervention groups.

### **2018-19 Reading Goals:**

#### **Goal 1: Reading Growth**

“River Grove will show positive student growth measured by state accountability measures; the School will show a Growth Z Score of ‘0’ at the end of the first year and post a positive Z Score in all subsequent years during the contract period.”

**Progress to Date:** A Z score is no longer available by the MDE in this area. However, the school had a score of 54.4% students on track for success. Additionally, 29.8% of students scored in the medium growth level and 29.8% scored in the high growth level.

#### **Goal 2: Academic and Achievement-Proficiency, Reading**

“In cross-cohort performance, River Grove students who are continuously enrolled (1 October) will exceed MCA proficiency rates in reference to comparable schools. Year 1: same%; Year 2: 5%; Year 3: 7%; Year 4: 10%; Year 5: 12%. “

**Progress to Date:** River Grove scored lower on MCA tests in Reading proficiency rates than comparable schools.

**River Grove MCA Scores:** Reading: 51.5%

**Stonebridge Elem MCA Scores:**Reading: 61.7%

**Summary:** During the 2018-19 River Grove continues to develop its reading and literacy program. Curriculum Maps were created throughout the year to ensure grade level and standards alignment. NWEA data was utilized to perform targeted interventions. Mindplay software was a used intervention programs.

For 19-20 the school plans continued development of curriculum maps and targeted interventions. iRead software has been purchased for grades k-3 for use in interventions. The School also will be partnering with the Minnesota Reading Corp to assist students. Additionally, the school had a test participation rate of 86.7% compared to the state average of 97.1%

## **2018-19 Science Goal**

### **Goal 1: Academic Achievement-Proficiency, Science**

“In cross-cohort performance, River Grove students who are continuously enrolled (1 October) will exceed MCA proficiency rates in reference to comparable schools. Year 1: same%; Year 2: 5%; Year 3: 7%; Year 4: 10%; Year 5: 12%.”

**Progress to Date:** River Grove scored higher on MCA tests in Science proficiency rates than comparable schools.

**River Grove MCA Scores:** Science 64%

**Stonebridge Elem MCA Scores:** Science 52.2%

**Summary:** During the 2018-19 school year, a significant amount of time was spent during summer inservice creating curriculum maps to ensure the school’s instruction and planning aligned closely with Minnesota State Standards. Additionally, Science curriculum (McGraw Hill) was purchased during the school year. Project-Based learning approaches were also refined, especially in the area of science. Finally, Mystery Science was a tool implemented during the school year.

## **2018-19 Teacher Satisfaction and Confidence Goal**

“Annually, 90 percent of teachers will post that they agree or strongly agree that the School fosters a professional environment that encourages innovation and creativity through professional autonomy and collaboration for the benefit of improved student achievement.”

**Progress to Date:** In a survey distributed to teaching staff members in the spring of 2019, 100 percent of teachers strongly agree that the school fosters a professional environment that encourages innovation and creativity through professional autonomy and collaboration for the benefit of improved student achievement.

**Summary:** The school made efforts to give the teaching time collaborative planning before and during the 18-19 school year. PLC’s were frequently held and each teacher got to visit a peer’s classroom multiple times. Teacher will also give access to the Regional Teacher Powered Network.

## Student/Parent Satisfaction

### Background:

In the Spring of 2019 River Grove distributed an electronic survey to parents in order to solicit feedback on their satisfaction so far as well as ask for opinions on how we can improve. These surveys were anonymous and not required, however, the school received 73 independent submissions. This survey data was shared with teachers and staff as part of our school-wide growth planning.

### Overall Satisfaction (1 lowest-10 highest):

My family and I are satisfied with River Grove overall
<b>SY18 8.51 SY19 8.37</b>

### Performance Data:

River Grove's mission to utilize the resources of the community as the foundation for *place-based* learning is being fulfilled	River Grove's mission to utilize the resources of the community as the foundation for *project-based* learning is being fulfilled	My academic expectations for my child/ren are being met	My child receives the social and behavioral support he/she needs at school in order to be successful
Strongly Agree:25% Agree:44% Neutral: 19% Disagree: 8% Strongly Disagree:3% <b>SY 18: 7.72/10</b>	Strongly Agree:38% Agree:23% Neutral: 17% Disagree: 13% Strongly Disagree:8% <b>SY 18: 7.55/10</b>	Strongly Agree:33% Agree:33% Neutral: 14% Disagree: 13% Strongly Disagree:7% <b>SY 18: 8.22/10</b>	Strongly Agree:38% Agree:43% Neutral: 10% Disagree: 10% Strongly Disagree:4% <b>SY 18: 8.77/10</b>

My child is safe, respected, appreciated, and in a place that nurtures his/her growth and learning	The communication about the class as a whole with and from my child/ren's teacher is good	The communication about specifically my child/ren with and from my child/ren's teacher is good	The communication with and from the school office is good
<b>Strongly Agree:34%</b> <b>Agree:49%</b> <b>Neutral: 11%</b> <b>Disagree: 5%</b> <b>Strongly Disagree:0%</b> <b>SY 18: 8.98/10</b>	<b>Strongly Agree:43%</b> <b>Agree:29%</b> <b>Neutral: 16%</b> <b>Disagree: 9%</b> <b>Strongly Disagree:2%</b> <b>SY 18: 8.45/10</b>	<b>Strongly Agree:43%</b> <b>Agree:30%</b> <b>Neutral: 11%</b> <b>Disagree: 16%</b> <b>Strongly Disagree:0%</b> <b>SY 18: 8.21/10</b>	<b>Strongly Agree:53%</b> <b>Agree:26%</b> <b>Neutral: 11%</b> <b>Disagree: 5%</b> <b>Strongly Disagree:4%</b> <b>SY 18: 9.15/10</b>

**Additional Questions**

**Communication:**

1. The school office communicates well about urgent events such as snow days

**Strongly Agree:66%**

**Agree:29%**

**Neutral: 5%**

**Disagree: 0%**

**Strongly Disagree:0%**

**Food Service:**

1. Does your child eat school lunch?

SY 19:

No: 25%

**Yes, frequently or often:45%**

Yes, occasionally: 30%

SY 18:

No: 28%

**Yes, frequently or often:37%**

Yes, occasionally: 35%

2. Satisfaction with the food provided:

**Strongly Agree:11%**

**Agree:36%**

**Neutral: 42%**

**Disagree: 8%**

**Strongly Disagree:2%**

**SY 18:5.97/10**

3.The cost of lunch is fair:

**Strongly Agree:12.3%**

**Agree: 27.4%**

**Neutral: 54%**

**Disagree: 8%**

**Strongly Disagree:3%**

**Transportation:**

1.Does your child ride the bus to River Grove?

**67% Yes, frequently/daily**

**16% Yes, occasionally**

**24% No, never**

2. Level of satisfaction with Bus Transportation service?

**Very Satisfied:36%**

**Satisfied:25%**

**Neutral: 34%**

**Unsatisfied:4%**

**Very Unsatisfied: 1%**

**Word of Mouth:**

1.How likely are you to recommend River Grove to a friend or neighbor?

**Very Likely:73%**

**Somewhat Likely:10%**

**Unlikely 10%**

**Very Unlikely:7%**

## Staffing 2018-19 School Year

### **Student to Teacher Ratio**

In the 2018-19 school year, River Grove employed 12.5 FTE licensed teachers to serve 184 students in grades K-6. This included 3 special education teachers. Excluding special education teachers, the 2018-19 student to teacher ratio was 19.26:1 (19.26 students to 1 classroom teacher). Including special education teachers, the student to teacher ratio was 14.7:1 (14.7 students to 1 teacher).

### **Teacher Retention:**

River Grove retained 72% of teachers for the 19-20 school year. Improving this statistic will be an area of focus for the 19-20 school year.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Assignment</b>	<b>File Folder Number</b>	<b>Returning for 2019-20 School Year</b>	<b>Not Returning 2019-20 School Year</b>	<b>New Hire for 2019-20 School Year</b>
Jessica Hansen	Kindergarten	412108	X		
Elizabeth Bingham	Kindergarten	508964	X		
Jackie Henschen	1st Grade	389007	X		
Erin Diedrich	1st Grade	471756			X
Renee Anderson	2nd Grade	326907	X		
Wendy Cole	3rd Grade	365506			X
Mandy Lindemann	3rd Grade	489292		X	
Jody Dick	4rd Grade	473141	X		
Luke Hallbeck	4th Grade	493871		X	
Annie Beck	4th Grade	484105			X
Janel Koenig	5th Grade	495946		X	
Emily Geffert	5th Grade	491559			X
Adam Johnson	6th Grade	475055	X		
Molly Kaliher	Special Ed	352637	X		
Heidi Dettmann	Special Ed	500511	X		
Robin Walcheski	Special Ed	455167	X		
Michelle Vrambout	Special Ed	513289	X		
Karla Krick	Physical Ed	206601		X	
Katie Bruns	Physical Ed	1001006			X

## **Governance and Management**

River Grove’s board elections are held in May of each school year. The election is completed prior to each school year end with new members seated in July.

### **Election Results**

Four candidates ran for three open seats on the River Grove Board of Directors. Elections took place in May 2019. River Grove was pleased to add the following three board members:

Marcy Ost, Parent

Bre DeCorsey, Parent

Angie Hong, Parent

### **Current Board Roster:**

<b>Member’s Name*</b>	<b>Effective Start Date*</b>	<b>Current Term Expiration Date*</b>	<b>Officer Role*</b>	<b>Email Address</b>
Angie Hong (Parent)	7/1/2019	6/30/2022	Secretary	ahong@marineareaschool.org
Lisa Dochniak (Community Member)	6/12/2016	6/30/2020	Member	ldochniak@marineareaschool.org
Breanna DeCorsey	7/1/2019	6/30/2022	Member	bdecorsey@marineareaschool.org
Jackie Henschen Licensed Teacher: #389007	10/14/2017	6/30/2020	Member	jhenschen@marineareaschool.org
Jessica Hansen Licensed Teacher: #412108	07/1/2018	6/30/2021	Vice Chair	jhansen@marineareaschool.org
Dan Miller (Parent)	07/1/2018	6/30/2021	Board Chair	dmiller@marineareaschool.org
Marcella Ost (Parent)	7/1/2019	6/30./2022	Treasurer	most@marineareaschool.org

**Board Member Training**

Throughout the course of the year board members completed various training on a variety of subjects. Board Members Hansen, Henschen and Miller attended trainings on Governance and Charter School Employment through the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools. Board members members also received finance training through the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools and/or The Anton Group.

**Academic Excellence Committee:** The board created an Academic Excellence committee during the 2018-19 school year to provide oversight into the academic practices and mission of the school. The committee assisted the School Director in the creation of the Teacher Evaluation Tool and with Professional Development opportunities.

**Strategic Plan:**

The River Grove Board will be conducting a significant strategy planning process during the 2019-2020 school year to develop a 3-5 year comprehensive plan. Topics will include facilities, educational programming, partnerships and parent/community engagement efforts.

## Finances

During its second year the school continued on a path of financial stability. River Grove was again aided by Federal Charter School Program (CSP) Funds. These funds helped pay for needed curriculum and operational resources for the year. The school plans to carry forward some of these funds for use in the early part of fiscal year 2020.

The school changed how it provided transportation services, deciding to lease its own buses and hire our own drivers and fleet staff. This decision was made in part to try to reduce our transportation cost, one of the larger financial line items, but with the additional benefit of autonomy and control of service. The school's final transportation cost for the 2018-19 school year was \$219,395 in comparison to an estimated expense of \$211,000 for using a third-party transportation service. However, the estimated expense for using a third party did not take into account field trip costs, so overall the school saved financially and the level of service received much praise from parents.

Additionally, the school had an initial adopted budgeted enrollment of 190 students. The school finished with an AMD (Average Daily Membership) of 183.43. This is an approximately \$50,000-\$60,000 difference in anticipated funding. However, despite this challenge, the school was able to end the year with a total fund balance of **\$146,500 (6.5%)** an increase of \$74,899.. The school was aided by \$80,776 in donations from the PTO and generous community.