

VERMILION COUNTRY SCHOOL

PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL DISTRICT #4207

SCHOOL YEAR 24-25 (FY25)
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

September 2013

MISSION AND VISION

Mission: Developing successful adults with skills to enrich their communities and the environment.

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

Actions: Collaborate, Discover, Reflect, Find Your Place.

AUTHORIZER INFORMATION

In June 2023, the Osprey Wilds Charter School Division recommended the Osprey Wilds Board of Directors renew the charter contract of Vermilion Country School for a full term of five years (July 1, 2023-June 30, 2028), giving the school authority to provide instruction to students in grades 7-12 in the manner set forth in its Application for Charter Reauthorization.

The authorizing mission of Osprey Wilds 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 Osprey Wilds 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. Student Enrollment & Demographics

STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Student enrollment increased from FY22 to FY23. The school is attracting a large number of new students across grades 8-11 who are excited about the school's learning environment, environmental education programming, and small school atmosphere.

In future years, VCS will look to increase awareness of our program among 5th & 6th grade students in Tower, Ely, Virginia, and the surrounding area, with a goal of increasing our 7th grade enrollment.

Number of Students Enrolled	**2021-22**	**2022-23**	**2023-24**	**2024-25**	**2025-2026 (estimate)**
7th Grade	3	9	5	7	5
8th Grade	8	5	14	12	6
9th Grade	8	10	10	15	17
10th Grade	9	8	15	12	17
11th Grade	6	10	9	17	12
12th Grade	9	8	13	5	17
Total	35	50	66	68	74
Total ADM (Average Daily Membership) for year	**31.83**	**48.13**	**58.41**	**60.15**	**72**

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. In FY23, we anticipate possible increases in special education qualifying students.

Demographic Trends	**2021-22**	**2022-23**	**2023-24**	**2024-25**	**25-26**
Total Enrollment	35	50	66	60	72
Special Education	8	11	13	22	28
English Learners	0	0	0	0	0
Free/Reduced Priced Lunch	27	27	33	44	47
Black, Not of Hispanic Origin	0	0	2	3	1
Hispanic/Latino	0	0	1	8	8
Asian/Pacific Islander	0	0	0	1	1
American Indian/Alaskan Native	11	10	13	16	22

White, Not of Hispanic Origin	27	25	37	43	40
Two or more races				8	14

3. Student Attendance, Attrition & Mobility

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Overall in 2023-24, Student mobility declined and retention improved, while overall regular attendance rates declined. Our overall goal for students is to increase credit progress toward graduation, and that goal was met even with declined attendance rates overall.

Student attendance rates declined in the 2023-24 school year as compared to the three previous school years. Consistent attendance is a measure of the number of students who attend school on a regular basis and are not frequently absent. Overall, when looking at longitudinal trends for individual students, we find that attendance at VCS for students is greatly improved when compared with attendance patterns at that student's previous district.

A student is considered "consistently attending" if they attend more than 90 percent of the days in an enrollment year. We continue working with families and students to increase consistent attendance individually and across demographic groups.

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-2024	2024-2025
Consistent Attendance Percentage	16.7%	82.31%	85.17%	74.06%	88.84%

STUDENT ATTRITION

We are seeing increased student retention and attraction of new students who tend to stay enrolled over the last three years. From the FY23 to the FY25 school year, We added new students prior to the year beginning, and have continued to enroll students through October 2025.

From our 35 students enrolled Oct 1 of 2023, 31 of them were also enrolled Oct 1 of 2024. From our 66 (53 non seniors) continuously enrolled 7th-11th students enrolled in spring 2024, we returned 49 in the fall of 2024.

Percentage of students* who were continuously enrolled between October 1 of the 2023-24 school year and October 1 of the 2024-25 school year.	**88.57%**

**Do not include graduating students or those who have completed your school program, i.e., if your school is K-6, do not include students who have completed 6th grade.*

Percentage of students* who continued enrollment in the school from Spring 2024 to October 1, 2024	**92.45%**

**Do not include graduating students or those who have completed your school program, i.e., if your school is K-6, do not include students who have completed 6th grade.*

STUDENT MOBILITY

	Summer Transfers In	Number of students on Oct. 1	Mid-year Transfers In	Mid-year Transfers Out	Total Mid-year Transfers	Mobility Index* *(as a percent)*
2019-20		39	8	11	19	49%
2020-21		38	10	5	15	40%
2021-22		29	13	7	20	69%
2022-23		36	19	8	27	57%
2023-24	4	51	18	2	20	39%
2024-25	6	54	16	2	18	33%

*Total mid-year transfers (in and out) divided by number of students on October 1.

For FY25, we had a low number of students transfer out mid-year, accounting for our lowest mobility index in the past 5 years.

4. Implementation of Primary and Additional Statutory Purposes

& Innovative Practices and Implementation

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. Vermilion Country School is a State Approved Alternative Program for project-based learning.

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 approach to community based in cultural responsiveness, positive behavior supports, 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 and communicated by an online portal for students and parents to access.
- Weekly school-wide team-building activities to strengthen emotional security and inter dependence 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 intentional 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

Innovative Practices and Implementation

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 capitalize on these opportunities and design program elements to use these resources to the benefit of the students. Specifically, our educators find ways to meet student learning outcomes by meeting student needs for a student-centered learning experience. This includes student schedules, approach to academic goal setting and work engagement, and identifying strengths of the student on which to build future success.

Service Learning

Community service is a key element in both the vision and the mission of VCS. We seek meaningful connections 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. Students see the need in their communities for support and help to address real problems that affect their lives and families.

Utilization of community-based assets

The work of our small rural school 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 such as 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 Superior National Forest; MN North College. The school takes full advantage of all of these for students to develop an understanding of their community - social structure, history, economy, music, art, and ecology.



PERSONAL/INDIVIDUAL LEARNING PLANS

Each student at VCS sets goals for themselves to achieve over the course of the school year. These goals are reinforced by their Advisor and their classroom teachers. Others may also be a part of this team depending on the student's need; paraprofessionals and special education paraprofessionals who work closely with the student, special education teachers, and even 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, Individualized Learning Plan's (ILP's) expectations have been expanded to include Reading Plans, Writing Plans, short- and long-term goals, testing results (NWEA, MCA) with plans to address areas of strength and weaknesses, and fitness plans. In the 2023-2024 school year, Vermilion Country School began a strategic focus on deepening innovative practices in response to our unique student population and the potential talents, strengths, and areas of growth for our students individually and as a whole. That focus has been a guiding principle since the 23-24 school year.

Key Successes from the Past School Year

The 2024-2025 school year marked a period of significant growth and stabilization for our school community. We achieved critical compliance milestones outlined in Exhibit S of our 2023-2028 contract, demonstrating our commitment to meeting contractual obligations and educational standards. Perhaps most notably, we established a healthy fiscal foundation that positions the school on a clear path toward achieving a 20% fund balance, a cornerstone of long-term financial sustainability. Our focus on programmatic stability, financial health, and solid student outcomes created a strong foundation for continued improvement and growth.

Key Challenges from the Past School Year

The past year presented distinct challenges as we worked to serve an increasingly diverse student population with varying learning needs. A primary challenge emerged in supporting our hybrid learners within the online program, requiring us to initiate an intensive set of supports and interventions tailored to this unique learning environment. Accommodating the wide spectrum of

student needs—from academic requirements to engagement styles—demanded innovative thinking and careful resource allocation. These challenges underscored the importance of flexibility and responsiveness in our programming while maintaining educational quality across all delivery models.

Our Plan to Address These Challenges

To address these challenges systematically, we implemented a comprehensive monitoring system that tracks student engagement and outcomes through multiple measures, including attendance, work completion, and satisfactory academic growth. We assess student progress through both internal formative and summative assessments as well as standardized academic assessments such as NWEA and MCA. Recognizing that sustainable solutions require collective input and ownership, we gathered extensive teacher team feedback and formally adopted the structures of Teacher Powered Schools. This strategic decision addresses a key historical vulnerability: staff turnover and lack of program consistency that persisted throughout our first thirteen years. Looking ahead, we are revising our student programming to provide increased clarity and fidelity of implementation for hybrid students, ensuring they receive an experience comparable in quality and structure to our seated students.

Strategic Plan Highlights

Our current three-year plan, covering 2023-2026, centers on three interconnected priorities: programmatic stability, financial sustainability, and strong student outcomes. The 2024-2025 school year represented a turning point as we reached important compliance milestones and built the fiscal infrastructure necessary for long-term success. Building on these achievements, the school is positioned to develop a comprehensive five-year strategic plan during the 2025-2026 school year. This upcoming planning process will leverage the stability and momentum we have created, allowing us to set ambitious yet achievable goals that will guide our work and define our success for years to come.

5. Educational Approach & Curriculum

Philosophy

At Vermilion Country School, we encourage students to articulate their passions, while we leverage their interests to fit curriculum content. This is particularly important for students who have had negative experiences in school and are turned off to traditional learning. When students' curiosity is activated, teaching and learning flow naturally and become fun! Fun environments increase opening up a student's mind to trying new things and making new connections. As educators, our role is to tap into this natural drive and help direct it towards healthy and positive paths.

At Vermilion Country School, equal attention is paid to a balance of priorities: intellectual, physical, emotional, and social. Students today are graduating into a turbulent world, where a hurricane of change, unpredictable futures, and disruption to professional and academic paths are now the norm. In addition to overcoming academic challenges, we also strive to help students engage and develop their strengths to lead, and really live and enjoy, a purposeful life.

Students have opportunities to build their resources, develop new skills, and discover their talents. These experiences encourage self-reflective behavior and strengthen relationships to

family and the wider community. Living these principles inspires hope and leads to promising futures rich with dignity, purpose, and life and career options.

Strategies

Special instructional time, with targeted teaching to missing skills, is set aside each day for students who are working below grade level in both math and language arts. Individualized credit recovery options are available for high school students who are missing credits needed for graduation, and for junior high students who are building skills to be ready for high school achievement.

Special Education in the FY25 school year consisted of two full time special education teachers and five paraprofessionals. There were 22 special education students for most of the year. We also engaged Indigo Special Education services to support our team and learners through both Special Education director services and Special Education Coordinator services.



Environmental Education at Vermilion Country School

Environmental Education (EE) is a core value and defining feature of Vermilion Country School (VCS). Rooted in the school's mission to "develop successful adults with skills to enrich their communities and the environment," EE at VCS integrates academic learning with authentic, place-based experiences that connect students directly to the natural and social systems that shape their region. By engaging in environmental inquiry, students develop critical thinking, civic awareness, and personal responsibility—skills essential for both lifelong learning and sustainable community development.

During the 2024–2025 school year, VCS students centered their Environmental Education project on the study of copper sulfide mining in northern Minnesota. This topic was chosen for its relevance to the Iron Range region and its complex intersections between economy, environment, and culture. Students researched the scientific, economic, and political dimensions of mining, drawing from local sources, public testimony, and environmental impact data. They explored potential economic benefits such as employment and regional investment, while also examining the environmental risks, including water contamination, habitat loss, and long-term ecological impact. (Our student work was featured in the local paper here: https://www.timberjay.com/stories/students-take-a-deeper-look-at-sulfide-mining,23083)



Through guided discussions, field investigations, and independent research, students were encouraged to think critically rather than be led toward a single conclusion. The project emphasized respectful dialogue, evidence-based reasoning, and recognition of multiple perspectives—including those of tribal communities, environmental advocates, and mining industry representatives. Students ultimately developed and articulated their own informed judgments about copper sulfide mining, expressing a range of thoughtful opinions that reflected both personal values and community realities.

The experience exemplified how Environmental Education at VCS goes beyond traditional classroom learning. It engages students in real-world issues, fosters a sense of place and stewardship, and empowers them to act as informed citizens capable of balancing environmental sustainability with social and economic needs. By encouraging curiosity, analysis, and civic engagement, VCS continues to prepare students to contribute meaningfully to both their communities and the broader natural world.



The nuts and bolts of school calendar and credits

The school year consisted of 169 days. VCS has no English Learner program or students needing services. We are prepared to respond to the needs of any future English Language Learners with a SIOP (Sheltered Instructional Observational Protocol) model for academic instruction.

In the 2024-2025 school year, VCS required 21.5 credits for high school graduation. This was a shift approved by the school board in October 2023, to match MN state academic

requirements for graduation, and to clear the path for our graduating seniors to most efficiently achieve their goals. The credits were approved to match state requirements, including:

- 3 credits Math
- 4 credits Language Arts
- 3 credits Science
- 3.5 credits Social Studies
- 1 credit in Fine Arts
- 1 credit in PE/Health
- 6 credits in Electives

6. Academic Performance and Outcomes

Academic goals align with Comprehensive Achievement and Civic Readiness Plan

Our academic performance and student outcomes will be reported below in table format for the 2024-25 school year. The areas reported align with our Comprehensive Achievement and Civic Readiness (CACR) goals, and our Authorizer Contract goals identified in Exhibit G of our 2023-2028 charter school agreement.

In general for FY25, we see strengths in the areas of Individual Learning plan goals (ILP), as well as academic growth of students in reading (as measured by MCA and NWEA). Our graduating students also demonstrated notable success, including 60% earning college credits before graduating from high school.

We see opportunities for improvement in Mathematics achievement and growth, as well as Reading achievement overall. We also are planning interventions to find improvement in participation among students in the standardized tests and assessments that help us measure and support student learning. (Note data provided on p. 10-24 corresponds to CACR goals on p. 34.)

The data tables below on pp. 10-24 are the specific results for contractual goals from our FY25 school year. These tables show comparative tables for state results, as well as results at comparable alternative schools throughout the state. These academic reports for FY25 will be used in our accountability with our authorizer toward our overall goals for student academic growth and achievement. For further analysis of these academic results, see the CACR strategic plan starting on page 34.

Vermilion Country School FY25 Academic Outcomes

Indicator 1: Mission Related

Measure 1.1 Performance Data:

ILP Goals

Vermilion Country School	Number of Students	Number of Students who met their ILP Goals	Percent of Students who met their ILP Goals
FY23	48	34	70.8%
FY24	63	48	76.2%
FY25	68	53	77.9%
Aggregate	179	135	75.4%

Data Source: Data provided to OW by school

Indicator 3: Reading Growth

Measure 3.1 North Star Progress:

Reading: North Star Academic Progress -- All Students (Meeting enrollment criteria)

Vermilion Country School	Count whose reading achievement level improved	Count tested	Percent of Students whose achievement level improved
FY23	13	23	56.5%
FY24	14	21	66.7%
FY25	16	22	72.7%
Aggregate	43	66	65.2%

Source: Data provided to OW by school

Reading: North Star Academic Progress -- All Students (Meeting enrollment criteria)

State of Minnesota	Count whose reading achievement level improved	Count tested	Percent of Students whose achievement level improved
FY23	51,212	284,046	18.0%
FY24			
FY25			
Aggregate	51,212	284,046	18.0%

Source: MDE Data Center

Measure 3.2 North Star Progress:

Reading: North Star Academic Progress -- All Students (Meeting enrollment criteria)

Vermilion Country School	Count whose reading achievement level decreased or stayed "does not meet standards"	Count tested	Percent of Students whose achievement level stayed "does not meet" or decreased
FY23	10	23	43.5%
FY24	7	21	33.3%
FY25	20	22	90.9%
Aggregate	37	66	56.1%

Source: Data provided to OW by school

Reading: North Star Academic Progress -- All Students (Meeting enrollment criteria)

State of Minnesota	Count whose reading achievement level decreased or stayed "does not meet standards"	Count tested	Percent of Students whose achievement level stayed "does not meet" or decreased
FY23	113,661	284,046	40.0%
FY24			
FY25			
Aggregate	113,661	284,046	40.0%

Source: MDE Data Center

Measure 3.3 Performance Data:

NWEA Reading – Grades 7-11

Vermilion Country School	Count Meeting Growth Target	Count Tested in Fall and Spring	Percent Meeting Growth Target
FY23	9	28	32.1%
FY24	9	15	60.0%
FY25	15	30	50.0%
Aggregate	33	73	45.2%

Data Source: Data provided to OW by school

Indicator 4: Math Growth

Measure 4.1 North Star Progress:

Math: North Star Academic Progress -- All Students (Meeting enrollment criteria)

Vermilion Country School	Count whose achievement level improved	Count tested	Percent of Students whose achievement level improved
FY23	9	22	40.9%
FY24	8	16	50.0%
FY25	11	27	40.7%
Aggregate	28	65	43.1%

Source: Data provided to OW by school

Math: North Star Academic Progress -- All Students (Meeting enrollment criteria)

State of Minnesota	Count whose achievement level improved	Count tested	Percent of Students whose achievement level improved
FY23	41,951	282,652	14.8%
FY24			
FY25			
Aggregate	41,951	282,652	14.8%

Source: MDE Data Center

Measure 4.2 North Star Progress:

Math: North Star Academic Progress -- All Students (Meeting enrollment criteria)

Vermilion Country School	Count whose achievement level decreased or stayed "does not meet standards"	Count tested	Percent of Students whose achievement level stayed "does not meet" or decreased
FY23	13	22	59.1%
FY24	8	16	50.0%
FY25	27	27	100.0%
Aggregate	48	65	73.8%

Source: Data provided to OW by school

Math: North Star Academic Progress -- All Students (Meeting enrollment criteria)

State of Minnesota	Count whose achievement level decreased or stayed "does not meet standards"	Count tested	Percent of Students whose achievement level stayed "does not meet" or decreased
FY23	123,370	282,652	43.6%
FY24			
FY25			
Aggregate	123,370	282,652	43.6%

Source: MDE Data Center

Measure 4.3 Performance Data:

NWEA Math – Grades 7-11

Vermilion Country School	Count Meeting Growth Target	Count Tested in Fall and Spring	Percent Meeting Growth Target
FY23	11	28	39.3%
FY24	6	11	54.5%
FY25	5	15	33.3%
Aggregate	22	54	40.7%

Data Source: Data provided to OW by school

Indicator 5: Reading Proficiency

Measures 5.1-5.2 Performance Data:

Reading: All State Accountability Tests – All Students (Enrolled October 1; Grades 7-8, 10)

Vermilion Country School	Exceeds	Meets	Partially Meets	Does Not Meet	Total	Proficiency Index
Baseline (FY22)						34.4
FY23	4	5	4	10	23	47.8
FY24	2	4	4	11	21	38.1
FY25		2	7	11	20	27.5
Aggregate	6	11	15	32	64	38.3

Data Source: Data provided to OWS by school

Alternative Schools in the State of Minnesota	Exceeds	Meets	Partially Meets	Does Not Meet	Total	Proficiency Index
FY23	24	121	175	391	711	32.7
FY24	22	94	142	380	638	29.3
FY25						
Aggregate	46	215	317	771	1,349	31.1

Source: MDE Data Center

Measure 5.3 Performance Data:

Reading: All State Accountability Tests – FRP (Enrolled October 1; Grades 7-8, 10)

Vermilion Country School	Exceeds	Meets	Partially Meets	Does Not Meet	Total	Proficiency Index
Baseline (FY15-17)	3	15	13	17	48	51
FY23	2	2	7	17	28	26.8
FY24	2	3	3	9	17	38.2
FY25		2	6	8	16	31.3
Aggregate	4	7	16	34	61	31.1

Data Source: Data provided to OW by school

** Data not disclosed for sample sizes less than 10.*

Alternative Schools in the State of Minnesota	Exceeds	Meets	Partially Meets	Does Not Meet	Total	Proficiency Index
FY23	14	86	134	311	545	30.6
FY24	12	63	103	303	481	26.3
FY25						
Aggregate	26	149	237	614	1,026	28.6

Source: MDE Data Center

Measure 5.4 Performance Data:

Reading: All State Accountability Tests – Special Education (Enrolled October 1; Grades 7-8, 10)

Vermilion Country School	Exceeds	Meets	Partially Meets	Does Not Meet	Total	Proficiency Index
FY23	*	*	*	*	*	25.0
FY24	*	*	*	*	*	41.7
FY25		2	4	4	10	40.0
Aggregate	0	3	4	9	16	31.3

Data Source: Data provided to OW by school

** Data not disclosed for sample sizes less than 10.*

Alternative Schools in the State of Minnesota	Exceeds	Meets	Partially Meets	Does Not Meet	Total	Proficiency Index
FY23	4	11	20	98	133	18.8
FY24	2	17	22	92	133	22.6
FY25						
Aggregate	6	28	42	190	266	20.7

Source: MDE Data Center

Indicator 6: Math Proficiency

Measures 6.1-6.2 Performance Data:

Math: All State Accountability Tests – All Students (Enrolled October 1; Grades 7-8, 11)

Vermilion Country School	Exceeds	Meets	Partially Meets	Does Not Meet	Total	Proficiency Index
Baseline (FY22)						15
FY23	0	2	11	9	22	34.1
FY24	0	1	7	8	16	28.1
FY25			1	13	14	3.6
Aggregate	0	3	19	30	52	24.0

Data Source: Data provided to OW by school

Alternative Schools in the State of Minnesota	Exceeds	Meets	Partially Meets	Does Not Meet	Total	Proficiency Index
FY23	4	29	138	974	1,145	8.9
FY24	2	24	106	946	1,078	7.3
FY25						
Aggregate	6	53	244	1,920	2,223	8.1

Source: MDE Data Center

Measure 6.3 Performance Data:

Math: All State Accountability Tests – FRP (Enrolled October 1; Grades 7-8, 11)

Vermilion Country School	Exceeds	Meets	Partially Meets	Does Not Meet	Total	Proficiency Index
FY23	0	2	11	9	22	34.1
FY24	0	1	4	7	12	25.0
FY25			1	11	12	4.2
Aggregate	0	3	16	27	46	23.9

Data Source: Data provided to OW by school

** Data not disclosed for sample sizes less than 10.*

Alternative Schools in the State of Minnesota	Exceeds	Meets	Partially Meets	Does Not Meet	Total	Proficiency Index
FY23	3	21	93	727	844	8.4
FY24	2	10	61	693	766	5.5
FY25						
Aggregate	5	31	154	1,420	1,610	7.0

Source: MDE Data Center

Measure 6.4 Performance Data:

Math: All State Accountability Tests – Special Education (Enrolled October 1; Grades 7-8, 11)

Vermilion Country School	Exceeds	Meets	Partially Meets	Does Not Meet	Total	Proficiency Index
FY23	*	*	*	*	*	14.3
FY24	*	*	*	*	*	20.0
FY25			1	6	7	7.1
Aggregate	0	1	2	9	12	16.7

Data Source: Data provided to OW by school

** Data not disclosed for sample sizes less than 10.*

Alternative Schools in the	Exceeds	Meets	Partially Meets	Does Not Meet	Total	Proficiency Index

State of Minnesota						
FY23	0	1	17	194	212	4.5
FY24	1	1	11	166	179	4.2
FY25						
Aggregate	1	2	28	360	391	4.3

Source: MDE Data Center

Indicator 7: Science Proficiency

Measures 7.1-7.2 Performance Data:

Science: All State Accountability Tests – All Students (Enrolled October 1; Grades 8 & HS)

Vermilion Country School	Exceeds	Meets	Partially Meets	Does Not Meet	Total	Proficiency Index
Baseline (FY22)						7.1
FY23	*	*	*	*	*	0.0
FY24	*	*	*	*	*	40.0
FY25			1	6	7	7.1
Aggregate	0	7	2	12	21	38.1

Data Source: Data provided to OW by school

Alternative Schools in the State of Minnesota	Exceeds	Meets	Partially Meets	Does Not Meet	Total	Proficiency Index
FY23	5	118	276	940	1,339	19.5
FY24	11	105	263	854	1,233	20.1
FY25						
Aggregate	16	223	539	1,794	2,572	19.8

Source: MDE Data Center

Measure 7.3 Performance Data:

Science: All State Accountability Tests – FRP (Enrolled October 1; Grades 8 & HS)

Vermilion Country School	Exceeds	Meets	Partially Meets	Does Not Meet	Total	Proficiency Index
FY23	*	*	*	*	*	

FY24	*	*	*	*	*	40.9
FY25			1	4	5	10.0
Aggregate	0	4	1	6	11	40.9

Data Source: Data provided to OW by school

** Data not disclosed for sample sizes less than 10.*

Alternative Schools in the State of Minnesota	Exceeds	Meets	Partially Meets	Does Not Meet	Total	Proficiency Index
FY23	2	73	192	688	955	17.9
FY24	7	56	163	630	856	16.9
FY25						
Aggregate	9	129	355	1,318	1,811	17.4

Source: MDE Data Center

Measure 7.4 Performance Data:

Science: All State Accountability Tests – Special Education (Enrolled October 1; Grades 8 & HS)

Vermilion Country School	Exceeds	Meets	Partially Meets	Does Not Meet	Total	Proficiency Index
FY23	*	*	*	*	*	
FY24	*	*	*	*	*	15.0
FY25			1	2	3	16.7
Aggregate	*	*	*	*	*	15.0

Data Source: Data provided to OW by school

** Data not disclosed for sample sizes less than 10.*

Alternative Schools in the State of Minnesota	Exceeds	Meets	Partially Meets	Does Not Meet	Total	Proficiency Index
FY23	1	14	32	188	235	13.2
FY24	4	20	37	177	238	17.9
FY25						
Aggregate	5	34	69	365	473	15.5

Source: MDE Data Center

Indicator 9: Post Secondary Readiness

Measure 9.1 Performance Data:

7-Year Graduation Rate

Vermilion Country School	Graduated	Continuing	Dropped Out	Unknown	Total	Graduation Rate
Baseline (FY22)						82.4%
FY23	*	*	*	*	*	87.5%
FY24	13	0	0	0		
FY25	4	1	0	0		
FY26						
FY27						
Aggregate	*	*	*	*	*	87.5%

Data Source: Data provided to OW by school

** Data not disclosed for sample sizes less than 10.*

Alternative Schools in the State of Minnesota	Graduated	Continuing	Dropped Out	Unknown	Total	Graduation Rate
FY23	4,277	1,324	6	1,249	6,856	62.4%
FY24						
FY25						
FY26						
FY27						
Aggregate	4,277	1,324	6	1,249	6,856	62.4%

Source: MDE Data Center

Measure 9.2 Performance Data:

College/Career Readiness Exams – ACT, ACCUPLACER, ASVAB, Keyworks, Compass

Vermilion Country School	Number of Graduating Students	Number of Graduating Students Earning College Credit	Percent of Graduating Students Earning College Credit
FY23	*	*	12.5%
FY24	*	*	15.4%
FY25	5	2	
Aggregate	21	3	14.3%

Source: Requested data provided to OW by school

** Data not disclosed for sample sizes less than 10.*

Measure 9.3 Performance Data:

Vermilion Country School	Number of Graduating Students Accepted into Post-Secondary Option (college/university, military, apprenticeship, post-secondary training program) Number of Graduating Students	Number of Graduating Students	Percent of Graduating Students Accepted into Post-Secondary Option (college/university, military, apprenticeship, post-secondary training program)
FY23	*	*	50.0%
FY24	*	*	53.8%
FY25	5	5	
Aggregate	11	21	52.4%

Source: Requested data provided to OW by school

** Data not disclosed for sample sizes less than 10.*

Measure 9.4 Performance Data: College/Career Readiness - Individual Learning Plans

Vermilion Country School	Number of Graduating Students who meet 100% of their career readiness goals section of their Individual Learning Plans	Number of Graduating Students	Percent of Graduating Students who meet 100% of their career readiness goals section of their Individual Learning Plans
FY23	*	*	87.5%
FY24	*	*	92.3%
FY25	5	5	
Aggregate	19	21	90.5%

Source: Requested data provided to OW by school

** Data not disclosed for sample sizes less than 10.*

Indicator 10: Attendance

Measure 10.1 Performance Data:

Vermilion Country School	Count Consistently Attending	Total	Annual Consistent Attendance Rate
FY22	13	34	38.2%
FY23	24	54	44.4%
FY24	23	63	36.5%
FY25			
Average	60	151	39.7%

Source: Requested data provided to OW by school

Alternative Schools in the State of Minnesota	Count Consistently Attending	Total	Annual Consistent Attendance Rate
FY23	2396	9916	24.2%
FY24			
FY25			
Average	2396	9916	24.2%

7. Governance, Organization & Board Information

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

During the FY25 school year, the board consisted of three community members, one teacher, and one parent.

Miranda Kainz resigned her parent position after a busy year of service in February 2025. The school board thanks Miranda for her input and dedication to the school.
Teacher Marjory Wood served another year, and after moving away to New Mexico for retirement, resigned from the board effective July 1, 2025 . Marjory served previously on the board as a community member in 2013 through 2016.

The board is a non-majority board, that means the board retains a balance between the three types of board members, and no single type necessarily holds a majority of seats. The board operates striving for a consensus for all decisions. The school board follows all MN state statute for open meeting law and requirements for charter school boards. The board elections are held at the annual meeting each year. The board is responsible for oversight in areas of management, educational programming, and staffing to create a sustainable organization.

Board Members 2024-2025

Member Name	Board Position	Affiliation	Most Current Date Elected	Most Current Date Seated	Term End Date
Jodi Summit	Chair	Community Member	2/21/2025	3/1/2025	3/1/2028
Marit Kringstad	Secretary	Community Member	2/1/2024	3/1/2024	3/1/2026
Marjory Wood	Treasurer	Teacher	2/21/2025	3/1/2025	7/1/2026
Sarah Wallert-Ramponi	Vice Chair	Parent	2/1/2024	3/1/2022	3/1/2026
Miranda Kainz	Member	Parent	2/1/2023	3/1/2023	3/1/2026 (resigned 2/28/2025
Jen McDonough	Member	Parent	3/19/2025	3/19/2025	3/1/2027
Sam O'Brien	Ex-Officio	Ex-Officio	NA	NA	NA

Initial Board Training Information

The initial board-member training program for the Vermilion Country School (VCS) board aligns with the requirements of Minnesota statute (Minn. Stat. § 124E.07 Subd. 7) and incorporates

modules from online training resources (mncharterboard.com) to ensure preparation, competence and compliance.

New Vermilion Country School Board members complete an on-boarding training sequence prior to the very start of their term: this includes modules on the board's role and responsibilities, the open meeting law, and data practices law — in compliance with the statute's requirement that new members complete those topics before beginning their term.

Within the first twelve months of service, new board members complete additional training covering employment policies and practices (Chapter 181), public school funding and financial management, and the board's oversight role in student success, achievement and performance — again consistent with statute.

Annual Board Training Information

All board members engage in **annual ongoing training**, grounded in an annual needs assessment of both individual members and the full board. Topics include budgeting, financial health, governance-management relationships, student support services, strategic planning, board recruitment and elections, charter school law and legal liability. The training provider (such as Minnesota Charter Board's online modules) certifies completion and VCS maintains documentation of each member's training and reports training activities annually. MN statute 124E.07

By leveraging the Minnesota Charter Board's modular online training platform, VCS ensures each board member is • oriented to their fiduciary, legal, governance and operational obligations • supported in continuous development • and in full compliance with Minnesota law, which strengthens board competence, supports effective oversight of the school's mission and student success.

Board Training and Development

Vermilion Country School board members have all attended the required initial board member training. Vermilion Country School board members also started using the free resources through Osprey Wilds board training as well as MNcharterboard.org trainings to meet training needs.

Initial Training

Provide information on the initial training required by statute completed by each current board member. A possible table format is provided below (add rows as necessary).

Initial Training				
Board Member Name	**Original Date Seated**	**Board's Role & Responsibilities**	**Employment Policies & Practices**	**Financial Management**
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
Jen McDonough	3/19/2025	7/29/2015 MACS (with Blue Sky Online)	7/29/2015 MACS (with Blue Sky Online)	10/26/2015 MACS (with Blue Sky Online)
Marit Kringstad	3/30/18	1/15/20 CharterSource	1/15/20 CharterSource	1/15/20 CharterSource
Sue Beaton	8/30/21	2/8/22 Osprey Wilds	2/8/22 Osprey Wilds	2/24/22 Osprey Wilds
Sarah Ramponi	8/30/21	Feb. 2022 Osprey Wilds	Feb. 2022 Osprey Wilds	Feb. 2022 Osprey Wilds

Miranda Kainz	3/23	Nov 2023, MNCharterboard	Nov 2023, MNCharterboard	August 2023, MNcharterboard
Marjory Wood	5/24	10/26/13 MSBA	10/26/13 MSBA	10/26/13 MSBA

Annual Training

Annual Training – FY25				
Board Member Name	**October 2, 2024 Data Privacy Training (MN Charterboard)**	**January 23rd, 2025 governance and charter contract**	**Apr 30th, 2025 HR and Personnel protocols**	**May 22, 2025 Finance and Budget Training overview**
Jodi Summit	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Jen McDonough	n/a	n/a	Yes	Yes
Marit Kringstad	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Sarah Wallert-Ramponi	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Miranda Kainz	Yes	Yes	n/a	n/a
Marjory Wood	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Annual Assessment of Board Performance

Beginning June 25, 2025, the Vermilion Country School (VCS) Board of Directors started to implement an annual self-assessment process to evaluate and strengthen board performance, consistent with Minnesota Statute §124E.07 Subd. 7(g). This process ensures that the board remains effective, transparent, and accountable in advancing the school's mission and fulfilling its statutory responsibilities.

The self-assessment this year included both individual and collective reflection on the board's governance practices, decision-making, oversight of financial and academic performance, adherence to open meeting and data practices laws, and commitment to equity and student outcomes. Each board member completed a structured survey and participated in a facilitated discussion designed to identify strengths, areas for improvement, and progress on strategic priorities.

In future years, starting FY26 and beyond, we will develop a formal assessment tool that will align with a self-evaluation framework to match the National Charter School Resource Center's governance rubrics, ensuring that best practices are incorporated into the process. Results will continue to be reviewed in a public board meeting, and a summary of key findings and action steps will be documented in the board minutes to demonstrate compliance with state requirements.

Our board will utilize meetings in FY26 to compare board operations against goals in exhibit S of our charter contract. Based on the results, the board will maintain a continuous targeted improvement plan that may include professional development in governance, finance, or policy, as well as adjustments to board operations or communication protocols. Follow-up on the improvement plan will be included in subsequent meetings to track progress throughout the year.

Through this cycle of reflection, action, and review, the VCS Board demonstrates its commitment to effective governance and continuous improvement. The annual self-assessment process strengthens accountability, enhances leadership capacity, and ensures that the board remains fully aligned with the school's mission to develop successful adults with the skills to enrich their communities and the environment.

Professional development training of administrator

LIST OF ADMINISTRATORS/QUALIFICATIONS

School Executive Director:
Sam O'Brien,
Licensed Teacher FF #444810
Previous Experience: April 2014 through June 2021 Director of Great River School #4105-07
December 2022 to current: Director of Vermilion Country School #4207-07

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 all employees, develops the school budget, ensures that funds received are properly accounted for, works with our school business manager to coordinate the annual audit.

Competency Based Professional Development Plan
Verified and completed for the 2024-2025 (FY25) school year:

Mr O'Brien completed professional development in student interventions and expanded student support, as well as outdoor education training and development. Mr O'Brien completed 25 hours of training in wilderness first aid (16 hours) through longleaf wilderness medicine, and experiential learning practice and education (10 hours) through the Traditional Ways gathering. Certificates were earned in each area.

Mr O'Brien also participated in professional development through SEL workshops and DBT in schools trainings to increase facility and competency in implementing Social Emotional Learning strategies that improve student engagement and learning.

Future plans for professional development and competency based training:

In the 2025-26 school year, Mr O'Brien will continue to collaborate with a professional school administration coach to review management strategies for small teams working with populations that have experienced high levels of adverse childhood experiences.

Also, Mr O'Brien will pursue competency-based training in mental health interventions in the area of adolescent trauma and human development. Mr O'Brien will utilize the formal mental health training in alignment with Vermilion Country School's responsibility to respond meaningfully to student needs. The competency based mental health training will support Mr O'Brien in facilitating a learning environment that appropriately uses research based interventions to support students in learning coping skills and self- regulation strategies.

Staffing

Our school staff teaches both in and out of their licensed area, as part of our innovative, small school model. Our paraprofessional staff is essential for both providing special education and general education support, as well as providing other educational opportunities for our students. We also have support staff (provided by outside agencies) who work with our students on a regular basis, including mental health services,

VERMILION COUNTRY SCHOOL		**2024-2025 STAFFING**		
Name	**File #**	**License and Assignment**	**25-26 Status***	**Comments**
Amy Hendrickson	359254	Mathematics; Physical Sciences (Physics and Chem) CCDP allowance for PE, Visual Art, and Social studies	R	Returning in 25-26 as special education teacher
Nick Gerritsen	488193	Communication Arts/Literature; CCDP allowance for PE, Social Studies, Visual Art	R	Returning in 25-26 as Literature teacher and Literacy coordinator
Jackie Ridings	1033871	Social Studies	R	Returning in 25-26 as special education teacher
Benji Blumenstock	1036750	Special Education	R	Returning in 25-26 as special education teacher
Sam O'Brien	444810	Visual Art	R	.6 FTE during the school year is allotted to student interventions for academics and behavioral goal planning

* R = Returning, NR = Not Returning

FY25 Teacher Professional Development Activities:

Professional Development for FY25 focused on classroom culture building through restitution practices (as outlined by Diane Gossen through the *Real Restitution* program) as well as SEL toolkit implementation as guided by outside facilitator Julie Young Burns. VCS staff also engaged in workshops related to building practices for Teacher Powered Schools (TPS) delivered by Paula Zwicke. We also engaged in mental health awareness, suicide prevention, and DBT in schools orientation for staff.

We engaged in indigenous education awareness activities, including the initiation of a partnership with Bois Forte Cultural Museum and Heritage Center.

Teacher Retention:
Our licensed teachers returned in the fall of 2025, and VCS also successfully added 3 new licensed teaching staff positions. Here we will simply report on teacher retention from FY23 to FY24

Percentage of Licensed Teachers from FY24 Not returning in FY25 (2 out of 4 licensed teachers not returning)	**0%**

2024-25 Non-Licensed Staff			
Name	**Assignment**	**25-26 Status***	**Comments**
Kathryn Nesteroff	Special Education Paraprofessional	R	
Amy Heglin	Special Education Paraprofessional and Transportation driver		
Nikki Nappa	Special Education Paraprofessional and Food Service	R	
Hunter Oliver	Special Education Paraprofessional	R	
Rebecca Gawboy	Special Education Paraprofessional	R	Returning as Indigenous Community Organizer

* R = Returning, NR = Not Returning

8.Finances

or questions regarding school finances and for complete financials for FY25 and/or an organizational budget for FY25, contact:

Name: Jodi Summit
Position: Board Chair
Phone: 218-753-1246
Email: jsummit@vermilioncountry.org

Pam Zahn (Business Manager) and Region 1 (a nonprofit regional cooperative) provided accounting services for VCS for the FY25 school year.

Abdo Solutions provides auditing services for the school. As of October 2025, ABDO has submitted an audited UFARS file to MDE, and will complete our fiscal year audit for submission on schedule for 12/31/2025. The full financial audit will be posted publicly with board materials in a board meeting in December 2025.

Below is the revenue and expenditures report as submitted to MDE and posted on the MN Department of Education website. The revenue and expenditure comparison shows FY25 as compared to FY24. We are proud that our FY25 fund balance reflects a reserve that has met and exceeded our 20% goal for a reserve. This is a marked improvement and growth over the past three school years.

This increase of reserve totals $455,520 (as accounted for in the FY25 audit conducted October 2025). This reserve is the result of strategic planning and engaging in additional revenue sources to appropriately support our student programming. Also significant is our total expenditures increase from $1,074,810 in FY24 to $1,656,889 in FY25.

DISTRICT NBR-TYPE 4207-07 — MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION — UFR02042070725
DISTRICT NAME: Vermilion Country School — 2024-2025 REVENUE COMPARISON — RUN DATE 10/17/25
ECSU 03 ESV REGION 2 — UNAUDITED DATA AS OF 10/17/25

SOURCE	DESCRIPTION	2023-2024	2024-2025	% DIFFERENCE
	LOCAL SOURCES			
092	INTEREST EARNINGS	245.85	24,717.41	9,953.86
096	GIFT/BEQUEST-LOCAL	2,105.25	1,445.34	31.35-
099	MISC LOCAL REVENUE	1,445.04	150,150.58	10,290.76
	LOCAL TOTAL	3,796.14	176,313.33	4,544.54
	STATE SOURCES			
201	ENDOW FUND APPORTION	2,995.93	3,943.69	31.63
211	GENERAL ED AID	659,862.99	646,940.04	1.96-
300	STATE AIDS & GRANTS	134,142.34	131,590.99	1.90-
317	LTFM STATE AID	9,206.65	9,233.32	0.29
360	SPEC EDUCATION AID	290,773.75	655,481.50	125.43
369	MISC STATE REVENUE	10,353.98	13,928.06	34.52
	STATE TOTAL	1,107,335.64	1,461,117.60	31.95
	FEDERAL SOURCES			
400	FEDERAL AIDS & GRANT	63,926.98	160,613.78	151.25
405	FED AID THRU OTHER	6,266.53	3,397.97	45.78-
471	SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM	2,471.50	2,908.64	17.69
472	FREE/REDUCED LUNCH	13,353.05	17,492.77	31.00
473	COMMODITY CASH PROG	1,601.65	1,050.78	34.39-
476	SCHOOL BREAKFAST	9,249.25	12,645.03	36.71
500	FED DIRECT AID&GRANT	16,019.00	16,793.00	4.83
	FEDERAL TOTAL	112,887.96	214,901.97	90.37
	LOCAL, STATE & FED TOTAL REV	1,224,019.74	1,852,332.90	51.33

Revenue:

A primary increase in revenue is found in source 360 – Special Education Aid. Our special education team and our MTSS protocols worked diligently to provide necessary support and services in FY25, correlating to the increased revenue were increased expenditures in student supports as identified in Individualized Education Plans (IEP's). Other increases are generally correspondent to our increase in enrollment.

DISTRICT NBR-TYPE 4207-07 | MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION | UFR02042070725
DISTRICT NAME: Vermilion Country School | 2024-2025 EXPENDITURE COMPARISON | RUN DATE 10/17/25
ECSU 03 ESV REGION 2 | UNAUDITED DATA AS OF 10/17/25

DESCRIPTION	2023-2024	2024-2025	% DIFFERENCE
CATEGORY - FUNDS 1,2,8			
DISTRICT & SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION	35,604.67	56,819.50	59.58
DISTRICT SUPPORT SERVICES	90,141.10	119,501.69	32.57
REGULAR INSTRUCTION	86,855.79	200,553.59	130.90
VOCATIONAL INSTRUCTION			
SPECIAL EDUCATION INSTRUCTION	515,013.96	839,130.78	62.93
INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES	22,314.97	21,746.17	2.55-
PUPIL SUPPORT SERVICES	56,560.33	66,822.53	18.14
OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE	42,810.75	51,677.48	20.71
FOOD SERVICE			
PUPIL TRANSPORTAION	107,309.37	129,410.32	20.60
OTHER OPERATING PROGRAMS	19,835.92	11,119.06	43.94-
CURRENT OPERATING EXPENDITURES	976,446.86	1,496,781.12	53.29
CAPITAL OUTLAY - FUNDS 1,2,8	98,363.24	160,107.76	62.77
COMMUNITY SERVICE FUND 04			
BUILDING CONSTRUCTION FUND 06			
DEBT SERVICE FUND 07			
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	1,074,810.10	1,656,888.88	54.16

Expenditures:
The greatest single line increase in expenditures is found in the Special Education instruction and Regular Instruction. Also, our total expenditures in FY25 were 1.656M compared to 1.852M in revenues. We were close stewards of our expenditures in FY25, and will use our newfound financial resources to invest in increased student support.

9.Communication, Community Outreach

As a Minnesota Charter School, we actively reach out to families seeking an educational alternative, especially those whose students may feel disconnected from traditional school options. Outreach focuses on clear communication about the school's project-based learning model, individualized supports, and inclusive environment.

VCS partners with local organizations, tribal education departments, and community events to connect with families, including members of the Bois Forte Anishinaabe community. The school disseminates information through local media, social service networks, and youth programs to reach low-income families, students of color, as well as any students at risk of academic failure.

Enrollment materials and outreach communications are accessible, welcoming, and representative of the needs of students and families on the Iron Range. This intentional approach ensures all families understand the opportunities available at VCS and supports equitable access to a safe, student-centered learning environment where every learner can thrive and prepare for success in school, community, and future life paths.

Community Survey

The SY24–25 stakeholder survey results demonstrate strong affirmation from students, families, and staff that Vermilion Country School continues to fulfill its mission as a flexible, dynamic learning environment that supports both academic growth and student wellbeing. Across stakeholder groups, respondents highlighted the school's individualized approach, commitment to student success, and safe, student-centered culture as defining strengths of the VCS experience.

The school in 2024-25 utilized a survey format in a likert scale of 5: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree. The scale is a useful way to gauge the strength of opinions and responses to our questions about experiences of academics, social/emotional support, and safety at the school.

The survey was administered to students, guardians, school board and staff at the end of the school year. The questions for each of the three surveys were the same, and the surveys were anonymous. The questions of the survey are listed below in bold. Each bold question was formatted for respondents to choose one of the 5 options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree.

4 required statements for response -, each with a 5 point likert scale:

1. **Vermilion Country School provides a high quality education for students**
    a. *Specific comments on a high quality education?*
2. **Vermilion Country School provides a safe learning environment for all students**
    a. *Specific comments on providing a safe learning environment?*
3. **Vermilion Country School supports students to reach their individual potential**
    a. *Specific comments on supporting students to reach their full potential?*
4. **Vermilion Country School communicates effectively with me and the community**
    a. *Specific comments on communicating effectively?*

And, in an optional open format - 2 questions for open response:

5. *Is there anything you'd like to suggest, request, or plan for VCS next year that isn't mentioned above? (Optional)*
6. *If you'd like us to reach out - leave your contact info here! (Optional)*

The format and responses allow us to see if there is any place where respondents "strongly agree" which would indicate a high degree of support and positive experiences - this helps indicate strengths of the program that we can build on. Likewise, any area that received a "strongly disagree" would indicate an area that is causing an extremely or consistently negaive experience, and we can focus on solutions to those areas immediately. The comments to each response help give context and specifics to the positive feedback or negative critiques, and help the survey become a tool for constructive feedback and consistent improvement.

Summary and Analysis of Community survey results

STUDENTS

Student responses were especially positive, with 83% agreeing that VCS provides a learning environment where they can grow academically and feel supported as individuals. (83% of students "agree" or "strongly agree" with the statement "Vermilion Country School provides a high quality education for students")

92% of students "agree" or "strongly agree" with the statement that "Vermilion Country School provides a safe learning environment for all students" (Two other respondents were neutral - two students disagreed with the statement.) In our follow up during survey administration, we provided students also with anonymous paths to request action for specific items regarding personal or community safety - talking to a school social worker, or a mental health provider, or reporting an issue anonymously to staff or the school director. We had 5 students engage in this process to address 3 specific social issues (online provoking or harassment outside of school) and we believe these are the reasons for the student survey responses. We continually monitor the community and offer these methods of reporting specifically so we can address and respond to any issues of concern that students bring forward.

Students noted that the school's hybrid scheduling options, smaller class sizes, and responsive instruction help them stay on track while experiencing reduced stress and improved engagement. Many students emphasized the value of the strong relationships they build with teachers and support staff, describing VCS as a place where they feel known, respected, and encouraged to learn in ways that work best for them. This alignment between school design and student needs remains central to the school's success, and SY24–25 results confirm that students continue to experience VCS as a safe and welcoming space for personal and academic development.

FAMILIES & GUARDIANS

Families expressed similarly high confidence, with 91% agreeing that Vermilion Country School provides an environment well-matched to their child's needs. (91% of families "agree" or "strongly agree" with the statement "Vermilion Country School provides a high quality education for students")

96% of families "agree" or "strongly agree" with the statement that "Vermilion Country School provides a safe learning environment for all students" (Other respondents were neutral - no parents disagreed with the statement.)

Parents described VCS as a place where their children can access flexible learning pathways, receive individualized support, and benefit from an emotionally safe and consistent school culture. Many families positively referenced the school's alternative schedule options, supportive staff, and

real-world learning experiences, including environmental education projects and community-based activities.

At the same time, parents also identified one key area for improvement: 34% noted that general communication—particularly around school events, field trips, and timely reminders—could be strengthened. (34% of families "disagree" with the statement "Vermilion Country School communicates effectively with me and the community")

Families expressed appreciation for the school's responsiveness and small-community feel and indicated that enhanced, proactive communication structures would further support their connection to the school and their ability to help students prepare for special opportunities.

STAFF

Staff responses reflected the highest level of agreement across stakeholder groups, with more than 90% affirming that Vermilion Country School provides a safe, flexible, and academically supportive environment for students. 100% of staff indicated that VCS provides a safe learning environment for students.

Staff highlighted the school's strong collaborative culture, student-centered practices, and the shared commitment to meeting diverse learner needs. Many staff praised the ways VCS encourages creative problem-solving, relationship-building, and individualized approaches to teaching and support.

Staff also identified key opportunities for continued growth, especially related to establishing repeatable structures and professional training that reinforce consistency across classrooms and programs. Respondents noted that clearer processes and ongoing skill development would help ensure that staff feel equipped and aligned in their work with students. This feedback underscores the school's commitment to continuous improvement and reflects a staff culture that values both innovation and accountability.

Overall, the SY24–25 survey results affirm Vermilion Country School's strengths as a flexible, supportive, and dynamic learning environment where students thrive. They also provide clear, actionable insights—particularly regarding communication practices and staff development structures—that will guide the school's planning as it continues to refine and strengthen its approach to serving students and families.

10. Overall Operational Performance *(Authorizer Exhibit P)*

Osprey Wilds Charter School Division provides oversight and accountability for Vermilion Country School in areas of performance that includes: academics, Environmental Education, Finances, and Operations. Exhibit P is the section of our contractual agreement with Osprey Wilds that includes these areas and summaries of the areas of performance. The areas are generally reported on in other sections of this annual report.

One area that is helpful for short and long term planning is the performance summaries that are a part of our regular accountability to Osprey Wilds. Our most recent report for overall performance is shared here, delivered to the school in April 2025 based on academic outcomes from FY24.

Summary of Indicator Points

Indicator	Points Possible	Points Earned	Performance Ranking	Percent Earned Through FY24	Percent Earned Through FY23
1: Mission Related Outcomes	16	8	Approaches	50%	50%
2: English Language Learners	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
3: Reading Growth	13	6.5	Approaches	50%	21.9%
4: Math Growth	13	7	Approaches	50%	50.0%
5: Reading Proficiency	10	11	Exceeds	110%	120%
6: Math Proficiency	10	15	Exceeds	150%	150.0%
7: Science Proficiency (and Growth)	8	11	Exceeds	138%	63%
8: Other Proficiency or Growth	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
9: Post-Secondary Readiness	20	24	Exceeds	120%	110.0%
10: Attendance	4	6	Exceeds	N/A	N/A
Overall	94	88.0	Eligible for Renewal	94%	76.56%

School Operations Overview

Vermilion Country School operates as a public charter school serving students in grades 7-12 and up to age 21 from a renovated building at 1 Enterprise Drive in Tower, Minnesota. Our school provides a safe, supportive learning environment that emphasizes individualized education, project-based learning, and environmental stewardship for students from communities including Tower, Soudan, Embarrass, Ely, Winton, Aurora, Hoyt Lakes, Nett Lake, Eveleth, Virginia and Hibbing. We provide an individualized program for each student by learning about the motivations, talents, and experiences of the student, and finding ways to prepare the student to engage in curriculum and learning activities in a way that matches the strengths of the student.

We offer an in-person learning program that offers classes on a regular block schedule of 75-90 minutes, allowing students to engage in the learning process and complete their assignments and follow up work in class while the teacher is there to help with comprehension and review of their work.

We also offer an online learning program that emphasizes coaching and in-person instruction and support intensives on a regular weekly basis for students. This hybrid program allows students to access an extremely flexible schedule and still benefit from focused in-person instruction and support from licensed professional educators. This allows students to succeed in settings that may not be possible in a traditional classroom schedule - having part time employment, working in a family business, or taking part in caring for elders or younger siblings while still completing their academic work on a non-traditional schedule through our hybrid program with online access to curriculum and instruction.

Facilities and Safety

The school occupies a thoughtfully renovated former manufacturing building, transformed into a learning space that includes a shop, small gym, weight room, commercial kitchen, and 7 classroom

learning spaces as well as a large gathering and eating area.. This facility provides modern classrooms, collaborative learning spaces, and areas designed specifically for our hybrid learning model. Our commitment to student safety extends throughout all aspects of our operations, with comprehensive policies governing health protocols, emergency procedures, and daily operations detailed in our parent-student handbook.

****Food Service and Transportation****

Vermilion Country School provides nutritional support through our food service program, with 63% of our students qualifying as economically disadvantaged and eligible for free and reduced meal programs. Our on-site nutrition coordinator ensures students have access to healthy breakfast and lunch options daily. Our special education team, licensed teachers, and nutrition coordinator involve student learning in the menu and planning of meals, encouraging students to engage in ownership of the state-compliant and federally-compliant nutrition program meal preparation. The school operates transportation services with dedicated staff of trained drivers who safely transport students from across our rural service area, addressing the unique challenges of serving communities spread across St. Louis County.

****Educational Support Services & Special Education****

Our approach to special education and student support services reflects our foundational belief that every student is on their own unique path and timeline. Each student works with a teacher-advisor who oversees approximately 15 students in an advisory structure, ensuring personalized attention and support. We utilize JMC and Google Classroom as our learning management systems, allowing students to complete individualized projects while meeting all Minnesota Academic Standards for high school graduation. Our Student Success Services team works collaboratively to ensure appropriate accommodations and interventions are in place for all learners. Our Special Education team assures that students are served with the highest quality of integrated learning as accommodations and modifications to the learning experience are made with careful consideration to include all students in the learning environment. Our approach creates an equitable learning community that students report as being effective and supportive.

****Discipline and Community Engagement****

Consistent with our student-centered philosophy, Vermilion Country School employs a restorative justice model for discipline. This approach focuses on repairing harm, building relationships, and helping students develop accountability rather than relying solely on punitive measures. Our discipline approach aligns with our broader commitment to developing academically, socially, and emotionally mature young adults.

Parent and community engagement remains central to our mission. We host student conferences, maintain open communication channels through our website and email, and celebrate student achievement through our annual Expo Day, where students showcase their project-based learning accomplishments and develop critical public speaking skills.

****Staffing and Background Policies****

Our team of approximately 15 staff members includes full-time teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, support staff, and bus drivers. All hiring practices and background check procedures comply with Minnesota Department of Education requirements and charter school regulations, ensuring that every staff member, board member, and volunteer working with students meets rigorous safety standards. Our recent adoption of Teacher Powered Schools structures demonstrates our commitment to collaborative decision-making and professional empowerment, addressing historical challenges with staff turnover and program consistency.

11. Future Plans

Over the next five years, Vermilion Country School (VCS) will focus on strategic growth and stability while continuing to serve students who benefit from flexible, high-support learning environments. The school will strengthen and expand its successful hybrid and alternate schedule programs, ensuring continued access to high-quality instruction for students needing alternative pathways. VCS will also enhance recruitment and retention of classroom-based students in grades 7 and 8 by offering academically rigorous, project-based learning experiences that challenge and engage early secondary learners. Financial stability remains a priority, particularly in sustaining the school's high-intervention programming for students requiring intensive academic, behavioral, and emotional support. Finally, VCS will assess the feasibility of securing an alternate or new facility in the city of Tower, Minnesota, to improve access, learning environments, and long-term operational capacity. These initiatives will ensure VCS remains a dynamic, student-centered model for personalized education.

12. Academic Goals: Strategic plans for growth and achievement

Comprehensive Achievement and Civic Readiness (CACR) Strategic Plan

Adopted by the School Board at a Public Meeting on [October 23rd, 2025]

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Minnesota's Comprehensive Achievement and Civic Readiness (CACR) law requires each school board to adopt a comprehensive, long-term strategic plan that is designed to support and improve teaching and learning while striving for comprehensive achievement and civic readiness. The plan must be approved by the Board of Directors at a public meeting. In addition to the strategic plan provided on the following pages, statute requires that the charter school must also:

- *Create a district advisory committee with broad community representation to guide planning and review of curriculum and instruction.*
- *Establish a site team to develop strategies and practices for improving instruction, curriculum, cultural competencies, and student achievement.*
- *Annually report to the public a review of student achievement goals, strategies, and progress toward comprehensive achievement and civic readiness.*
- *Survey students, families, and community members periodically to assess their connection to and satisfaction with the school.*

I. Introduction

VCS serves students from 7th grade through age 21 in a safe, supportive environment that emphasizes academic, social, and emotional growth. The school recognises that every student follows their own unique path and timeline toward reaching their full potential; staff meet students where they are and guide them to take the next steps in their development.

At its core, VCS's mission is: "Developing successful adults with skills to enrich their communities and the environment." This reflects a commitment not just to meeting academic standards — the school ensures students meet the Minnesota Academic Standards for high school graduation. Also, Vermilion Country works with students to prepare young people to contribute civically and environmentally: to enrich their communities and connect to and care for the environment. Our academic goals specifically engage students to develop the skills necessary to become lifelong

learners. Our goal that aligns most specifically with a lifelong commitment to learning includes our ILP practice of individualized goal setting (*Indicator 1: Measure 1.1: the aggregate percentage of students that successfully meet their Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) goals in the year will be at least 80%).*

VCS's Student Success Services extend this mission into practice by attending to students' broader needs: transportation, health, nutrition, and special services; the school provides interventions in academics (reading/math) as well as mental health services in partnership with regional providers to support both achievement and readiness for life beyond school.

In summary, VCS is a small, student-centered charter school where each young person receives individualized support to achieve academically, grow personally, and become an empowered, engaged adult ready to contribute to community and environment.

II. District and School Site Goals and Benchmarks

Vermilion Country School has clear academic goals and measurable benchmarks for instruction and student achievement. Our goals align with our commitment to our students and our contract with our authorizer. (Academic goals for authorizer are found in Exhibit G of our charter contract - included at the end of this annual report as an addendum.)

Our goals address all student groups identified in law, including:

- *students by race/ethnicity*
- *students who are English learners*
- *students eligible for free or reduced price lunch (FRL qualifying)*
- *students currently or previously in foster care*

As a note for FY24, our academic goals for subgroups only report on students in the FRL qualifying group, as other subgroups have a size below 20 students. This small subgroup size makes reporting information potentially identifiable for personal information about individual students.

These goals should be aligned with Exhibit G (Academic and Academic-related Goals) of the charter contract. Note that results to date during our contract period are all shown in the addendum Academic Results from FY24, and our current FY25 reporting is found on pp.10-26 of this annual report. These FY25 reports are compared to state and comparable-alternative-school data statewide to identify how our school achievement compares to similar student populations across the state of Minnesota.

At Vermilion Country School, our academic goals align with the CACR goals described in statute. Those CACR goals are shown in bold below.

Our specific goals are described here, indicating how our school is working to:

- ***close the academic achievement gap among all racial and ethnic groups of students***
    - *How?*
        - We have specific initiatives to build curriculum and learning opportunities that support indigenous students experience at school as supportive and welcoming for *all* students. Note that while we do not currently have an academic goal published that targets indigenous students at VCS, it is because the group of students at our school is smaller and disaggregating their data would compromise student privacy. We will continue to work

with our AIPAC (American Indian Parent Advisory Committee) to establish goals and support that are meaningful to our students and parent community, regardless of their heritage.
        - Specific partnerships and investments of school attention in building meaningful partnerships and relationships with the Bois Forte tribe and resources such as the Bois Forte Heritage Center and Cultural Museum provide our students with access to culturally affirming and locally relevant resources to support their learning and lifelong education.
- ***close the academic achievement gap between students living in poverty and students not living in poverty***
    - *How?*
        - *The following goals target achievement for students who qualify for Free/Reduced Priced Lunch - demonstrating our commitment to focus on supporting students in a group who have historically achieved at lower rates:*
            - *Indicator 5: Measure 5.3: the school's aggregate proficiency index score on the MCA reading assessment for students in the Free/Reduced Priced Lunch subgroup in grades 7-8 and 10 will be greater than that of the aggregate of alternative schools in Minnesota for the same grades (7-8 & 10).*
            - Indicator 6; Measure 6.3: the school's aggregate proficiency index score on the MCA math assessment for students in the Free/Reduced Priced Lunch subgroup in grades 6-8 and 11 will be greater than that of the aggregate of alternative schools in Minnesota for the same grades (6-8 & 11).
            - Indicator 7: Measure 7.3: the school's aggregate proficiency index score on the MCA science assessment for students (grades 8, HS) in the Free/Reduced Priced Lunch subgroup will be greater than that of the aggregate of alternative schools in Minnesota for the same grades (grades 8, HS).
- ***have all students attain career and college readiness before graduating from high school***
    - *How?*
        - *The following goals focus on college and career readiness for students - demonstrating our commitment at Vermilion Country School to support our young adults to work toward a meaningful transition from High School to either economic independence or higher education:*
            - *Indicator 9: Measure 9.2:the aggregate percentage of graduates that earn at least one college credit prior to graduation will be at least 20%.*
            - *Indicator 9: Measure 9.3: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%.*
            - *Indicator 9: Measure 9.4: the aggregate percentage of graduating students who meet 100% of their career readiness goals section of their Individual Learning Plans prior to graduation will be at least 80%.*
- ***have all students graduate from high school***
    - *How?*
        - *We focus on supporting students to graduate, and support students to stay persistent in pursuing graduation and diploma if a 4 year diploma is not their path.*

- *Indicator 9: Measure 9.1: the school's aggregate 7-year graduation rate will be at least 67.0%.*

- ***prepare students to be lifelong learners***
  - *How?*
    - *VCS provides an educational environment that encourages students to develop their individual pathway to graduation and intellectual abilities based around their passions and interests, and their life experiences.*
      - *Indicator 1: Measure 1.1: the aggregate percentage of students that successfully meet their Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) goals in the year will be at least 80%.*

III. Assessing Student Progress and Instructional Strengths

Vermilion Country School commits to:

- *Assess each student's progress toward state and local academic standards.*
- *Identify students for gifted and talented programs and provide accelerated instruction when appropriate.*
- *Identify the strengths and weaknesses of instruction and curriculum to ensure all students are prepared for college, careers, and civic life.*

Academic Assessments Used:
Vermilion Country School uses a combination of state and local assessments to measure student progress, including:

- Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs) in reading, math, and science.
- NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) three times per year for Math and Reading.
- Local standards-based assessments, such as unit and benchmark assessments.
- Formative classroom assessments and teacher-created performance tasks.

Gifted/Talented Identification Process:
Students are identified for gifted and talented programming using multiple criteria, including:

- Academic performance on state and local assessments (e.g., MCA and MAP data).
- Teacher and family referrals, based on observations of advanced learning needs.
- Review of student work, portfolios, and problem-solving abilities.

To learn more, please see our Procedures for the Academic Acceleration of Gifted and Talented Students, posted here: www.vermilioncountry.org/policy

Description of Accelerated Instruction:
The school provides accelerated learning opportunities through flexible grouping, enrichment clusters, project-based learning, and grade-level advancement as appropriate. Students identified as gifted and talented receive personalized learning plans to ensure they are challenged and supported.

Instructional Strengths & Student Needs Review:
The academic leadership team reviews student data twice per quarter to evaluate instructional effectiveness. As a compliment to our MTSS process, our team reviews student engagement and comparative assessment data to see if there are any patterns that would be appropriately

addressed by accelerated or increased academic challenge. Strengths and weaknesses in curriculum and instruction are identified through data analysis, classroom observations, and staff input. The goal is to ensure all students are on track for college, career, and civic readiness.

IV. Curriculum and Instruction Review System

Vermilion Country School regularly reviews the quality and effectiveness of instruction and curriculum. This system for review takes into account:

- *Best practices and proven strategies.*
- *Student outcomes.*
- *Whether students have access to effective teachers, including teachers from underrepresented populations that reflect student diversity.*
- *School leader evaluations*
- *Teacher evaluations (per Minn. Stat. § 122A.40, subd. 8).*

Measures to Assess Instruction:

Instruction is evaluated through:

- Student performance data and growth indicators, as set by meetings between the school director and each educator, to identify a relevant individual learning goal for the teachers as professionals who are continually deepening and improving their practice.
- Teacher evaluations aligned with Minn. Stat. § 122A.40, subd. 8.
- Peer observations and instructional coaching cycles.
- Feedback from students and families on the relevance and inclusivity of instruction through surveys twice per year.

Practices to Evaluate Curriculum:
Curriculum effectiveness is reviewed annually using:

- Alignment checks with Minnesota Academic Standards and benchmarks.
- Review of instructional materials for cultural accuracy, rigor, and inclusivity.
- Examination of student performance trends and achievement gaps.
- Collaboration with teachers to identify best practices and necessary adjustments.
- Feedback from students and community on impact and effectiveness of our strategies and curriculum models.

Minnesota Statute 120B.35, subdivision 3, paragraph (b), clause (2), requires all schools (including Vermilion Country School) to report student growth and achievement data broken down by specific student categories. These categories are aligned with the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, including race, ethnicity, and specific heritage groups. Included in this reporting is a local assessment of our students and their access to effective teachers who reflect the identity and experiences of our students - in particular students who may be members of under-represented groups having licensed teachers who are also members of the under-represented groups. The function of this analysis is to understand and recognize that students who have supportive teachers succeed at a higher rate, and that teachers who share identifying qualities with student heritage can have access to a unique relationship of support for students.

Our school is a small staff (5 licensed educators in 24-25) and we seek to recruit licensed teachers who reflect our student population - including recruitment of American Indian teachers through partnerships with our local Bois Forte tribal contacts, as well as posting and recruitment among the

Ojibwe Language programs at Bemidji State, Fon Du Lac, and UMN. Our students all have access to all of our educators, and in FY25, 20% of our licensed teaching staff identified as American Indian.

V. Strategies for Improving Instruction and Student Achievement

Improving instruction and student achievement is central to Vermilion Country School's mission. This section outlines the strategies our school will use to strengthen teaching practices, enhance curriculum, and ensure that every student, regardless of background, has equitable access to high-quality learning opportunities.

These strategies are data-driven, culturally responsive, and designed to support both academic growth and social-emotional development, with particular attention to the language development and academic success of English learners while meeting the needs of all students. *Specifically, at Vermilion Country School, this includes attention to student family dynamics, heritage, and relationship to school for the student, their guardians, and how the student and their family system view school as an applicable and meaningful part of their lives. Our work as educators includes convincing students and families that school is a relevant and useful tool in their lives to meet personal and community goals.*

While our rural Northern MN location does not have a high population of English Language Learners, we do engage in other ways in which our families and students often benefit from our school making an effort to "translate" school expectations and opportunities into relevant real-life connections for students. Whether this is connecting our students to career and technical opportunities early in adolescence, or engaging in Ojibwe language classes and normalizing Anishinaabemowin language usage by all students, creating a welcoming and expansive learning environment is our goal.

Strategies include:

- Expand multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) to provide early intervention for struggling learners.
- Implement ongoing, job-embedded professional development focusing on culturally responsive teaching strategies and differentiated instruction.
- Be ready as educators to use Sheltered Instruction Protocol (SIOP) strategies to Strengthen English learner (EL) supports, including targeted English language development and, where feasible, native language support.
- Increase opportunities for experiential and project-based learning that connects academic content to real-world applications.
- Use data from assessments and progress monitoring to adjust instruction and provide targeted enrichment or remediation.

VI. Equitable Distribution of Teachers

As a small learning environment of 60-75 students, and one school site, Teacher assignments are reviewed annually and teachers work as a collaborative team to meet student needs. Vermilion Country school does not have the same barriers to equity as a district with multiple sites and disparate needs across site communities. Our student demographic information, and classroom-level performance outcomes are routinely analyzed by our entire teaching team and reviewed in relation to instruction in order to ensure equitable engagement of effective educators with each of our students.

Current Status of Teacher Assignment:
As of Fy24, Vermilion Country School employs a team of 7 licensed teachers, 43% of whom have five or more years of teaching experience, and 14% who identify as racially or ethnically diverse, doing our best to employ adults who reflect our community and the student body's diversity (46% students of color). A review of 2024–25 teacher assignment data shows that students from low-income families (73% of total enrollment) are not disproportionately taught by first-year or out-of-field teachers. No evidence of inequitable distribution of experienced teachers was found; however, the school is targeting a goal to increase the recruitment of indigenous educators by 2027 to better reflect the student population.

Improvement Strategies and Timeline:

- Enhance recruitment efforts to attract diverse and highly qualified candidates.
- Provide mentorship and coaching programs for early-career teachers to strengthen instructional quality.
- Continue to train our current educators on creating an accessible and supportive learning environment for all students.

VII. Education Effectiveness Practices

Vermilion Country School implements practices with the goal to:

- ***Combine high-quality, rigorous, accurate, antiracist, and culturally sustaining instruction, curriculum, and technology.***
    - *Examples at Vermilion Country School include data-driven instructional practices, sharing schoolwide data with all educators as an instructional team; job-embedded professional development, teacher evaluation system, multi-tiered systems of support, intervention, progress monitoring, Read Act implementation, social-emotional learning, and project based learning*

- ***Create learning and work environments that respect, affirm, and integrate the cultural and community strengths of all students, families, and staff.***
    - *Examples at Vermilion Country School include classroom curriculum and practices that reflect the value of student cultural backgrounds in our advisory curriculum, core class curriculum, and engagement with families and students, as well as school-wide practices (for instance: providing professional development for staff on culturally responsive and sustaining practices specific to indigenous students, and/or students with intersectional identities that are historical barriers to academic inclusion)*
    - *Examples at Vermilion Country School for staff include opportunities for shared leadership and organizational commitment through a Teacher-Powered-School model, as well as recognizing and valuing the cultural strengths of staff by welcoming input and leadership for staff meeting focus and topics, as well as professional learning and reflection, inclusive and accessible language and communication norms, continuous improvement and accountability , and a model of open and welcome feedback as we all commit to a continuous improvement model.*
- ***Build a collaborative professional culture that supports and retains qualified, racially and ethnically diverse staff who are effective with diverse student populations.***
    - *We have been actively developing our Teacher Powered School model since 2023, and engage all staff in committees and meaningful leadership structures for decisions and recommendations: how the school hires and maintains teachers, recruitment and onboarding practices, mentorship and peer support, job-embedded professional development, teacher evaluation system, collaborative decision-making, workload equity, policies or initiatives focused on well-being and belonging.*

Instructional and Curriculum Practices at Vermilion country School:

- Implement evidence-based instructional strategies, such as explicit teaching of academic vocabulary, collaborative learning, and culturally relevant pedagogy.
- Use technology to support personalized learning and real-time progress monitoring through google classroom accessibility for all students, as well as personalized learning projects that engage students at their appropriate next stage of learning.
- Review existing curriculum for bias, omissions, or stereotypes and replace materials with accurate, inclusive content.
- Align content with students' cultural experiences by incorporating texts, authors, and historical figures from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds.
- Use high-level, critical thinking tasks that connect academic concepts to real-world social issues.
- Engage students in problem-based learning that addresses local or global challenges, encouraging civic responsibility and empathy.
- Create safe spaces for dialogue about prejudice, the negative impacts of racism, identiry race, and equity, ensuring students see these conversations as integral to learning.
- Validate students' home languages and cultures by integrating them into lessons - including indigenous students and the immigrant history of the Iron Range.
- Train teachers on inclusive pedagogy, culturally sustaining practices, and how to recognize implicit bias in teaching and materials.
- Provide teachers with diverse curricular resources and time to collaborate on lesson redesigns.

At Vermilion Country School, We Adopt:

Culturally Sustaining Practices for Students and Families:

- Incorporate students' cultural backgrounds and home languages into lessons and school events.
- Host multicultural family engagement nights and community dialogues.
- Create opportunities for students to share their cultural traditions and perspectives within the classroom.

Culturally Sustaining Practices for Staff:

- Offer professional development on implicit bias, cultural awareness, and antiracist practices.
- Establish individual professional development paths that support educators to find affinity groups and mentorship programs for staff from underrepresented backgrounds.
- Recognize and celebrate the cultural strengths and contributions of all staff.

Strategies to Build a Collaborative Professional Culture:

- Implement professional learning communities (PLCs) to promote collaboration and shared problem-solving.
- Conduct regular climate surveys to gather feedback and improve staff well-being.
- Encourage teacher leadership and shared decision-making in school improvement initiatives.

Recruitment and Retention Strategies:

- Develop partnerships with teacher preparation programs that prioritize diverse candidate pipelines.
- Provide competitive compensation and recognition programs for outstanding teaching.
- Offer leadership development opportunities and pathways for advancement for staff of color and other underrepresented groups.

VIII. Annual Implementation Budget

Include an annual budget to support continued implementation of the CACR plan.

FY 25 Budget Summary:

- Staffing:
  - $200,554 - Regular Instruction
  - $839,131 - Special Education Instruction (including ADSIS programs)
  - $21,746 - Instructional Support Services
  - $66,823 - Pupil Support Services
- Professional Development:
  - $27,138 - Staff training in SEL tools for intervention, Teacher Powered School models for shared sustainable leadership
- Curriculum/Instructional Materials:
  - 33,571 - Instructional supplies
- Program Support:
  - $119,501 - program support services

IX. Materials, Practices, and Curriculum

Provide a list of recommended and required resources, sample curricula, and teaching practices for Grades K-12 that reflect Minnesota's diversity accurately.

Required Curricular Materials and Sources:

- Core instructional materials aligned with Minnesota Academic Standards:
    - Locally developed curriculum by licensed teachers that utilizes MN state standards and NGSS science standards. This allows our local educators to implement curriculum that presents materials which are personally relevant to students and that reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of the student body.

Other Resources Available to Teachers:

- Online instructional platforms with culturally diverse content libraries.
- Access to professional instructional coaches and data analysis tools, through NWEA professional development networks, Social/Emotional learning strategies, and .

Professional Development on Instructional Skills:

- Training in differentiated instruction, MTSS, restorative practices, and project-based learning.
- Ongoing coaching and workshops focused on antiracist and culturally sustaining pedagogy.

X. Plan Review and Continuous Improvement

Outline how the CACR Strategic Plan will be reviewed annually and updated. Please note that CACR statute requires that schools create an advisory committee that reflects the diversity of the school to ensure active community participation in planning and improving instruction and curriculum.

Annual Review Date(s): 06/02/2026

Responsible Team or Committee: MTSS Team & Academic Content Team

Process for Board Review and Community Engagement: Presentation of CACR plan at spring conferences and Board election events, as well as AIPAC spring 2026 meeting, Board review at June 2026 meeting for revision/amendment.