

# Rochester Beacon Academy

Minnesota Charter School District #4238-07



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Per Minnesota Statute 124E.16 Subd. 2

October 24, 2024

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# BACKGROUND INFORMATION

## History

Rochester Beacon Academy (RBA), District #4238-07, proudly celebrated the successful completion of its eighth year of operation in 2023. Since opening its doors, RBA has been dedicated to serving students in grades six through twelve within the same building, providing a unique and supportive educational environment. This commitment to continuity has been a cornerstone of the RBA experience.

In its opening year, RBA made the strategic decision to begin with grades six through ten, recognizing that few students would transition schools in their final two years of high school. This careful planning allowed RBA to establish a strong foundation for growth. Year two saw the addition of eleventh grade as the tenth graders advanced, expanding the school's offerings to include grades six through eleven. By the third year, twelfth grade had been added, and on June 1, 2018, RBA marked a milestone with the graduation of its first class of nine students. This momentous occasion was a testament to the hard work and dedication of both the students and staff.

At the end of the 2018-2019 school year, RBA graduated its second class. As the school continued to thrive, the administration gave serious consideration to expanding its programs. A Transition Program was proposed, but the decision was made to wait an additional year to ensure its successful implementation.

The 2019-2020 school year brought unforeseen challenges with the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic. RBA quickly adapted, with students engaging in full-time distance learning for the entire fourth quarter. Despite the difficulties, the school community came together to hold a memorable graduation ceremony in the parking lot. The board made the careful decision to pause plans for the Transition Program during this time of uncertainty.

As the 2020-2021 school year drew to a close, the board approved the launch of a new Transition Program called SOAR. This program aimed to provide a supportive bridge for students entering post-secondary life. However, due to low enrollment, its start was unfortunately delayed. By the end of the 2021-2022 school year, RBA faced another challenge: the building that had been its home was sold. In a remarkable display of resilience, staff packed the entire school into four semi-trailers for storage during the final week, while the board swiftly secured a new location.

The transition to the new building was accompanied by a period of turmoil between the administration and the board, resulting in the resignation of the Executive Director. Yet, in the face of change, the board acted decisively, finalizing the new building just two weeks before

the start of the school year. RBA quickly settled into its new home, and a search for a new Executive Director was undertaken. By the end of September, a new ED was in place, providing stability during a time of transition. However, the challenges continued as the Special Education Director resigned just a week later.

Undeterred, RBA persevered and successfully launched its SOAR Transition Program. This achievement was a testament to the dedication of the staff and their unwavering commitment to the students. The 2022-2023 school year was focused on adapting to the new environment and establishing routines, laying the groundwork for a 2023-2024 school year filled with growth, opportunity, and a renewed sense of purpose. As RBA looks to the future, it remains dedicated to its mission of providing a supportive and inclusive educational community.

### **RBA Vision**

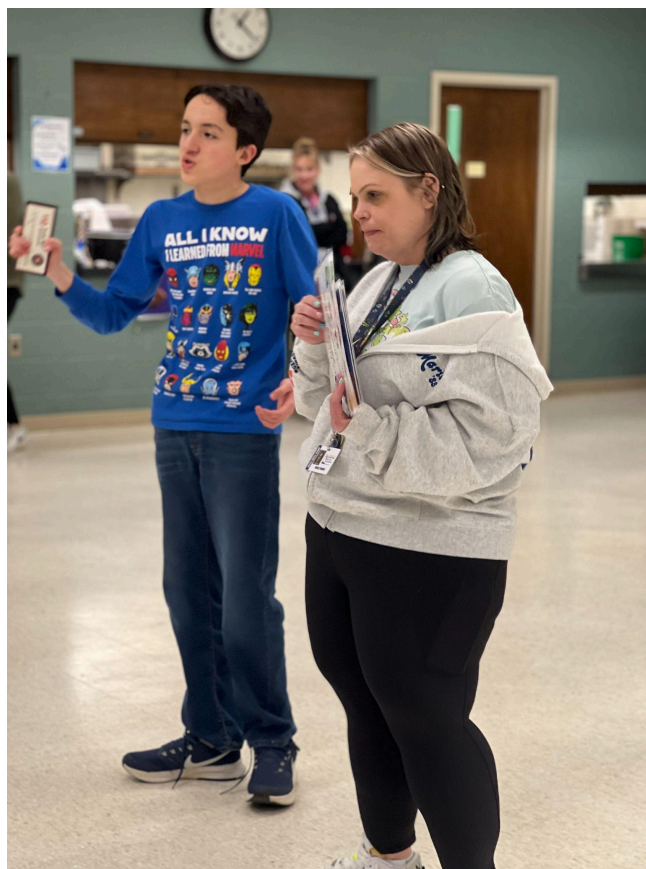
RBA's vision, as the premiere educator in southeast Minnesota for all students, utilizes highly structured techniques to assist students who have difficulties with organization, socialization and sensory differences while supporting students to make a successful transition into young adulthood, to live independently and maintain engagement in the community.

### **RBA Mission**

The Mission of Rochester Beacon Academy, with the cooperation of parents, is to provide a safe learning community in a secondary (6-12) setting; respecting the individual and differentiated needs of learners, empowering them to reach their full potential and join their community with success.

### **Purpose**

RBA provides an alternative learning environment for students who struggle in larger public school settings. This is achieved through smaller class sizes and increased adult support in each class. With 81% of the student population identified as having special needs, core classes are staffed with a general education teacher, a special education teacher, and a paraprofessional. This staffing model



ensures full inclusion with appropriate accommodations within the general education classroom.

In these unique classrooms, a team teaching approach is utilized, allowing both the content and special education teachers to leverage their strengths, thereby enhancing student achievement. A key component of RBA's success is its focus on a social skills curriculum, implemented throughout the school day to create a safe and welcoming environment for all students. Many students come from backgrounds where they faced challenges such as bullying and exclusion, which affected their ability and willingness to learn. Additionally, many students have diagnoses such as anxiety and depression, impacting their ability to attend a typical public school successfully. Consequently, some students had not been attending school, and some parents opted for homeschooling.

To address the growing need for social skills development, RBA employs a School Counselor, a Master Social Worker, and a Behavior Strategist. Parents and students consistently report that RBA feels like a safe place where students belong. RBA also emphasizes the importance of organizational skills, which are crucial for workforce and career readiness. Students play an active role in the school community, helping to keep the campus clean and orderly, fostering a sense of pride in their community.



# SCHOOL AUTHORIZER

Rochester Beacon Academy has been authorized by the MN Guild of Public Charter Schools since January 1, 2014. The MN Guild is located at 323 Washington Ave N, Minneapolis, MN 55401.

Executive Director: Jim Zacchini, [jim.zacchini@guildschools.org](mailto:jim.zacchini@guildschools.org)

## **Guild Vision**

The Minnesota *Guild of Public* Charter Schools advances positive educational outcomes for students that lead to success in life.

## **Guild Mission**

The *Guild* advocates for teacher leadership, professional autonomy, and the creation of innovative schools for student engagement and the ownership of learning. The Guild strives to support students, families, and communities most affected by the achievement gap and low graduation rates.



# SCHOOL ENROLLMENT AND ATTRITION

## Process

Rochester Beacon Academy (RBA) capped total enrollment for the 2023-2024 school year at 105 students due to the transition into a smaller building. A lottery system is used for the initial selection process. (See Appendix A) Any student applying after enrollment is full will be placed on a waiting list on a first come, first served basis. During the 2023-2024 school year, RBA drew students from 5 surrounding school districts.

## History

Pre-pandemic monthly tours for potential enrollment were successful. However, mass tours were suspended during the pandemic, which caused tours to suffer and declining enrollment. Post-pandemic, RBA shifted to individual tours that are customized based on student and family needs.

We are now conducting regular tours again and believe this is largely due to the personalized time we give to each individual family. RBA's current focus is to fill the middle school grades and to continue to retain students who are currently enrolled.

## Student Attrition Rates

The attrition rate has not been predictable over the past four years. When reviewing student attrition data, the majority of student attrition is experienced in high school, specifically grades ten and eleven. The primary reasons revealed through surveys and phone calls, include smaller classroom sizes and more individualized support.

## Student Attrition

School Year	Total # of students enrolled on October 1	Total # of students enrolled at the End of Year	Attrition Rate %
2020-2021	110	124	+ 11%
2021-2022	96	116	+ 17%
2022-2023	85	94	+ 10%
2023-2024	95	100	+ 5%

## Student Retention

School Year	Total # of students eligible from the previous year to return for the new year	Total # of students who returned at the beginning of the Year	Retention Rate %
2020-2021	118	110	-7%
2021-2022	124	96	- 23%
2022-2023	116	85	- 17%
2023-2024	94	95	+ 10%

RBA supports students who may need extra assistance, resulting in students coming and going throughout the year to participate in residential programs or day treatment. Additionally, RBA acknowledges the decline in retention as 8th graders transition to high school, with the school often serving as a vital stepping stone in their educational journey..

## Enrollment by Grade Level

Grade	20-21 BOY	20-21 EOY	21-22 BOY	21-22 EOY	22-23 BOY	22-23 EOY	23-24 BOY	23-24 EOY
Grade 6	10	13	9	10	6	8	4	9
Grade 7	22	25	11	15	10	10	8	9
Grade 8	22	26	24	29	15	16	12	13
Grade 9	13	16	16	19	19	24	16	11
Grade 10	15	15	13	17	14	13	26	26
Grade 11	17	17	10	13	8	10	12	17
Grade 12	11	12	13	13	13	13	17	15
SOAR	-	-	-	-	(5)	(2)	(3)	(1)
PSEO	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	2
Total Enrollment	110	124	96	116	85	94	95	100

Beginning of Year (Oct. 1)  
EOY - End of Year



## Student Enrollment by Group

Subgroup	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
American Indian	0%	4%	0	0%
Asian	4%	8%	5%	4%
Black or African American	4%	7%	0%	3%
Hispanic or Latino	0%	0%	7%	10%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0%	0%	0%	0%
White	74%	70%	80%	69%
Two or More Races	18%	18%	8%	15%
ELL	0	0%	0%	0%
Free & Reduced	39%	41%	51%	52%
SPED	74%	92%	85%	81%



# GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

## **Board of Directors and Duties**

The Rochester Beacon Academy Board of Directors is responsible for the overall governance of the school. The Board is the primary decision-making body on matters concerning the development and implementation of school policies. Additionally, the Board provides communication with school staff regarding the direction of the school. This is accomplished through the adoption of policies that the Executive Director, staff, and committees follow on a day-to-day basis.

In 2023-2024, the Board of Directors adopted a Strategic Plan that included goals in the areas of trauma-informed practices, restorative justice, and enhancing communication. The goals of this Strategic Plan were to strengthen the foundation set forth by the new administration team.

RBA's Board has five committees: the Finance Committee, the Personnel Committee, the Policy Committee, the Strategic Continuous Improvement and Analysis Committee (SCIAC), and the Community Outreach and Grant Committee (COG). Each board member serves on a minimum of one committee. The Finance Committee meets each month one hour prior to the monthly scheduled board meeting. The Personnel Committee meets primarily in the spring of each year to conduct the Executive Director evaluation and as needed. The Policy Committee meets primarily in the summer of each year, ensuring annual compliance with policies and meeting as needed based on new legislation. SCIAC meets monthly to review school data, and COG meets monthly to plan events, review marketing strategies, and raise additional funds for RBA.

The management model provides a balance of efficiency and adequate staffing in all functions of school operations. The Rochester Beacon Academy Board of Directors provides oversight of the Executive Director, who is responsible for hiring and managing staff and faculty. The Executive Director is formally evaluated each year. The annual evaluation is based upon feedback from direct reports, board members, and the Executive Director's report. Goals are established based on evaluation results as well as the strategic and operational needs of RBA.

The Executive Director assumes overall responsibility for personnel, facilities, services, and programs of the school. This includes hiring; supervising and evaluating staff; collaborating with the Board of Directors, parents, and students; implementing policies and procedures;

ensuring safety and security; acting as an ex-officio to the Rochester Beacon Academy Board of Directors; and representing Rochester Beacon Academy with MN GUILD, the Minnesota Department of Education, and other outside organizations.

### **Election of Rochester Beacon Academy Board Members**

Board elections are run according to the Bylaws of Rochester Beacon Academy and in compliance with laws governing nonprofit charter school boards in the State of Minnesota. Individuals seeking to be a candidate for Board Director shall declare their intention in writing to the President of the Board not less than 30 days prior to the scheduled date of the election.

At least 30 days prior to the deadline for receipt of nominations, the Executive Director shall notify the parents and guardians of RBA students of the upcoming election and invite any interested persons to submit their nominations. Election of Directors shall be held annually during the month of May on a date and at times to be determined by the Board no later than the June board meeting preceding the election. Staff members employed at the school, including teachers providing instruction under an agreement with the school, members of the Board of Directors, and all parents or legal guardians of students enrolled in the school are eligible to vote on the election of new members of the school’s Board of Directors. Votes shall be tallied and publicized by a group made up of eligible voters. Newly elected Directors shall assume office on the first of July following their election.

### **Board Member Roster**

Director Name	Date Seated	Date Term Expires	Officer	Director Contact Information	Affiliation
Barringer, Todd	05/31/23	06/30/24		community.member12@rochesterbeaconacademy.org	Community
Gerads, Melissa	06/20/23	06/30/25		parent.member3@rochesterbeaconacademy.org	Parent
Gustafson, Kate	09/19/19	06/30/25	Board Chair	kate.gustafson@rochesterbeaconacademy.org	Teacher
Frank, Dean	10/28/22	06/30/26	Vice Chair	community.member11@rochesterbeaconacademy.org	Community
Rogers, Lori	01/19/23	06/30/24		lori.rogers@rochesterbeaconacademy.org	Teacher
Pruka, Christina	10/28/22	06/30/26	Treasurer, Secretary	parent.member2@rochesterbeaconacademy.org	Parent

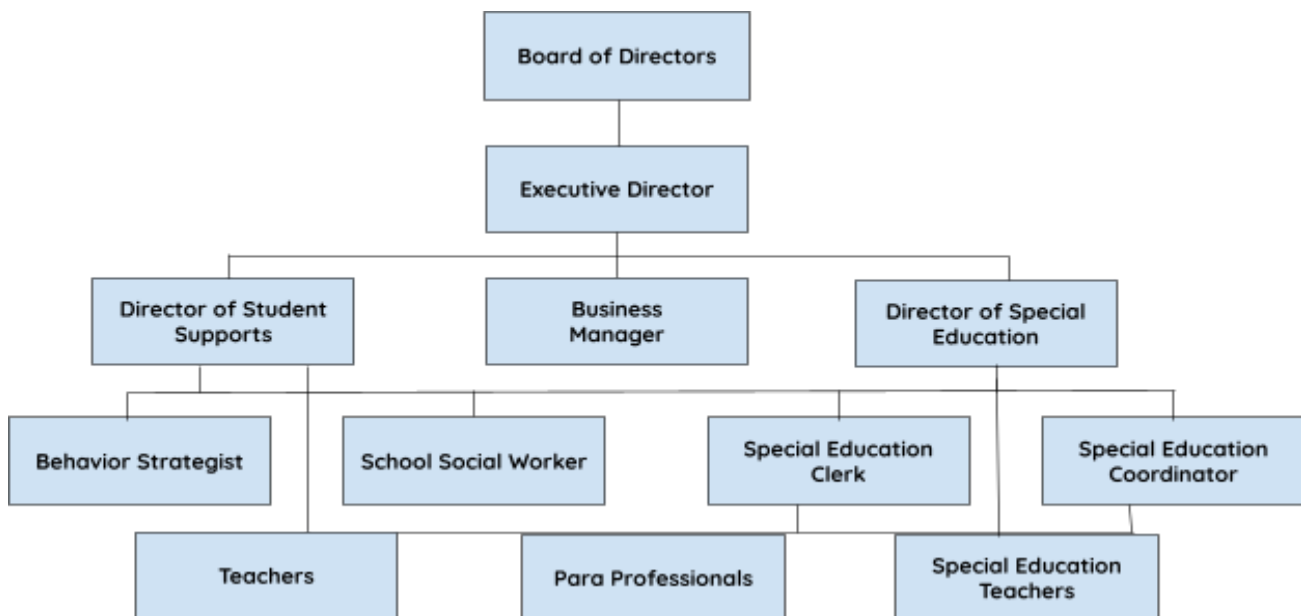
## Board Annual Training

According to Minnesota statute 124E.07 BOARD OF DIRECTORS.Subd. 7., every charter school Board Member shall attend annual training throughout the Member's term. All new Board Members shall attend initial training on the Board's role and responsibilities, employment policies and practices, and financial management. Included below is a list of the training each Board Member attended during the previous year. Annual training will take place once a year when new board members take their seats. Training topics will be decided upon by the Directors after completing and reviewing an annual Board assessment.

All newly elected and seated Board Members will begin training in the following areas within six months of being seated and will complete training within the first 12 months of duty.

- Board roles and responsibilities
- Employment policies and practices
- Financial management

## 2023-2024 Rochester Beacon Academy Organization Chart



## Staffing

Rochester Beacon Academy employed 34 staff members during the 2023-2024 academic year, of which 11 were teachers, 15 were paraprofessionals, two were support staff, and six were administrators.

Staff Member	Position	File Folder	Date Hired	Returned for FY25
Blume, Tatum	SpEd Teacher	#199810	08/24/2017	Y
Bonin, Megan	SpEd Teacher	#451690	08/15/2023	Y
Bruns, Beth	Director of Student Supports	#511573	08/16/2021	Y
Bruske, Elliana	SpEd Paraprofessional		08/22/2022	Y
Bruske, Vicki	Office Manager		06/03/2015	Y
Chase, Madison	SpEd Paraprofessional		09/23/2023	Y
Clobes, Lizzi	Art Teacher	#1027216	08/14/2017, 08/15/2023	Y
Conklyn, Cyris	SpEd Paraprofessional		02/13/2023	N
Courtney, Casey	Science Teacher	#471493	08/24/2023	Y
Eidem, Jori	SpEd Paraprofessional		10/04/2023	N
Gustafson, Kate	SpEd Teacher	#467478	08/14/2017	Y
Hargrett, Diona	SpEd Paraprofessional		10/09/2023	N
Kleckley, Jayson	SpEd Paraprofessional		10/02/2023	Y
LaFerriere, Traci	Business Manager		07/16/2021	Y
LaFleur, Dawn	SOAR Transition Teacher	#501303	08/15/2023	Y
McGeough, Greer	SpEd Paraprofessional		11/01/2022	Y
Mielke, Chris	SpEd Paraprofessional		03/14/2022	N
Miles, Micah	SpEd Paraprofessional		08/15/2023	N
Mitchell, CJ	Math Teacher	#1022435	08/22/2022	Y
Nelson, Carrie	Social Studies Teacher	#1012321	08/16/2021	Y
Nelson, Ellen	Language Arts Teacher	#472628	08/16/2021	Y

Staff Member	Position	File Folder	Date Hired	Returned for FY25
O'Byrne, Gracie	SpEd Paraprofessional		08/24/2023	N
Pederson, Michelle	SpEd Paraprofessional		03/04/2021	Y
Reiling, Niffy	Executive Director	#459952	09/23/2022	N
Rivera, Daniel	SpEd Paraprofessional		08/28/2023	N
Rogers, Lori	SpEd Math Teacher	#517890	08/22/2023	Y
Salfi, Brenna	SpEd Teacher	#454588	08/16/2016	Y
Seha, Rita	SpEd Paraprofessional		10/10/2023	Y
Stancomb, Annie	SpEd Paraprofessional Kitchen Manager		08/16/2021	Y
Terbeest, Danielle	SpEd Paraprofessional		08/15/2023	N
Vargas, Denisse	Behavior Strategist		09/14/2020	Y
Voeltz, Elisa	Special Education Clerk		08/19/2015	N
Voeltz, Neva	SpEd Paraprofessional		11/29/2022	Y
Volkart, Erin	Special Education Coordinator	#517643	04/12/2021	Y
Volkart, Samantha	SpEd Paraprofessional		12/16/2022	Y
Welch, Madison	SpEd Paraprofessional		10/03/2022	Y
Wilson, Karissa	School Social Worker	#490528	08/16/2021	Y

For the 2023-2024 academic school year, the student-to-teacher ratio was 5:1. Staff are selected using a three-step process comprised of written material review, staff and supervisor interviews, and Executive Director final review. Staff are formally evaluated three times per year. They are observed at least three times per year by administration.

### Staff Retention

Staff retention has remained stable since the 2022-2023 academic year. Rochester Beacon Academy developed and implemented a competitive compensation package to reflect the local public area school system.

	2021	2022	2023	2024
Percentage of Teachers Retained	44%	89%	67%	100%
Percentage of All staff Retained	51%	72%	77%	71%



### Professional Development

RBA believes in professional development training and works diligently to provide meaningful experience to all staff. Below is a list of the trainings offered prior to the start of the school year and throughout the year.

Training Topic	Audience
Handbook/Policies/RBA Structure	All Staff
Technology Training: JMC	New Staff, Voluntary
Mandated Reporting	All Staff
SPED Training (Procedure/Policies)	All Staff

Mental Health Training	All Staff
Seizure Training	All Staff
Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI)	Admin, SPED Teachers, Paraprofessionals
Behavior Management Systems	All Staff
Restorative Practices	All Staff
Trauma-Informed Practices	All Staff
Suicide Prevention	All Staff

### Professional Credentials of the Administration

Niffy Reiling has served as the Executive Director at Rochester Beacon Academy since October 2022. She has fourteen years of teaching experience and three years of experience in school administration. She holds a Minnesota principal license, a Bachelor’s Degree in Education with an area of focus of Social Studies, and a Master’s Degree in Education.

Beth Bruns started with Rochester Beacon Academy in August of 2021 as the Math Teacher. She currently serves as the Director of Student Supports and Special Education Case Manager. Before RBA, she taught for three years and worked as a special education paraprofessional. She has a Bachelor’s Degree in Psychology, a Master’s Degree in Business Administration, and a Charter School Leadership Certificate. She currently holds a Minnesota teaching license in Special Education. The Director of Student Supports does the following.

- Oversees the staff and student needs of the secondary (6-12) program.
- Reports to the Executive Director
- Supervises special education paraprofessionals and support staff
- Special Education Case Management
- Works with Business Manager





**School Director Evaluation Process**

The evaluation of the Executive Director is held annually. An evaluation took place in May of the 2023-2024 school year. As a result, the board did not renew Ms. Reiling’s agreement for the 2024-2025 school year.

**Administrative Professional Development Plans**

Training Topic	Audience
Handbook/Policies/RBA Structure	Administration
Technology Training: JMC	Office Manager
Title IX Training	Administration, Social Worker
SPED Training (Procedure/Policies)	Administration
Principal Evaluations hosted by MDE	Director of Student Supports, SPED Coordinator
Legislative Reviews hosted by MACS	Administration

**Professional Development Plan for Non-Licensed Administrator**

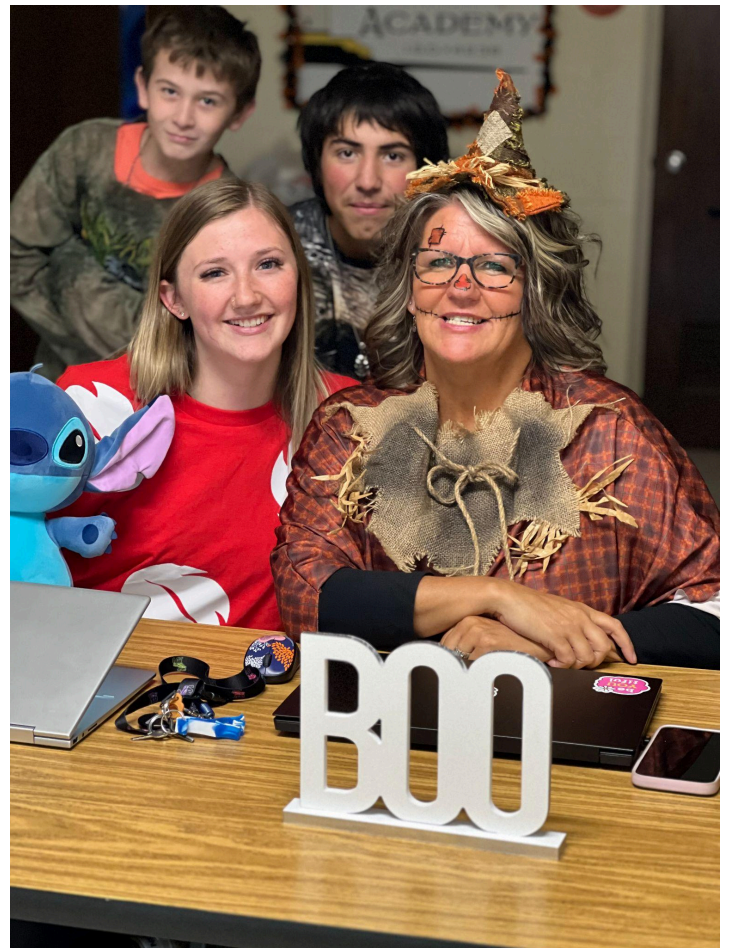
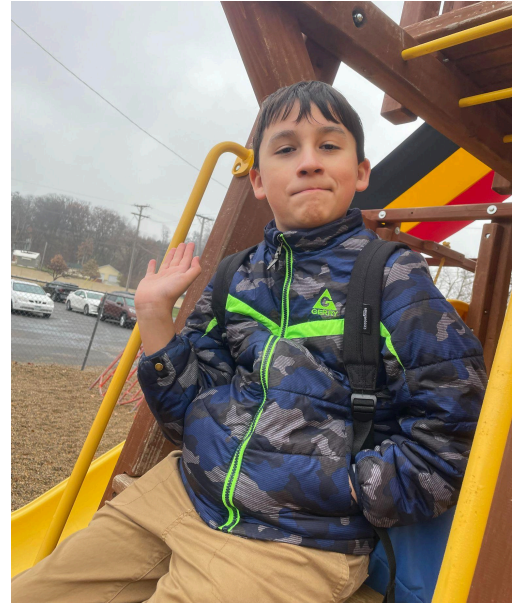
The board of directors and an individual who does not hold a valid administrative license and who serves in an administrative, supervisory, or instructional leadership position shall develop a professional development plan. Documentation of the implementation of the professional development plan of these persons shall be included in the school’s annual report.

The Professional Development Plan for Beth Bruns, Director of Student Supports was created in conjunction with the RBA Board of Directors and the Executive Director. It includes areas in the following;

- Instruction and assessment
- Human Resources and personnel management
- Legal and compliance management
- Effective Communication
- Community Relationships



- Financial Management specifically special education funding
- Mentorship and support from Minnesota Association of Charter Schools (MACS)
- Collaboration with RBA's legal service provider to explore and reflect on addressing situations throughout the school year.



# FINANCE

## Business Operations

Traci LaFerriere has been Rochester Beacon Academy’s Business Manager since January 2019. Traci works closely with the Executive Director, Special Education Director, and Office Manager to ensure all financial transactions are made and recorded in accordance with school policy and to maintain internal controls. A budget is approved by the school board prior to July 1 and a revision is approved in the spring. Financial reports are reviewed by the school board and finance committee monthly to ensure revenues and expenditures are within budgeted guidelines.

### Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2024 (unaudited data)

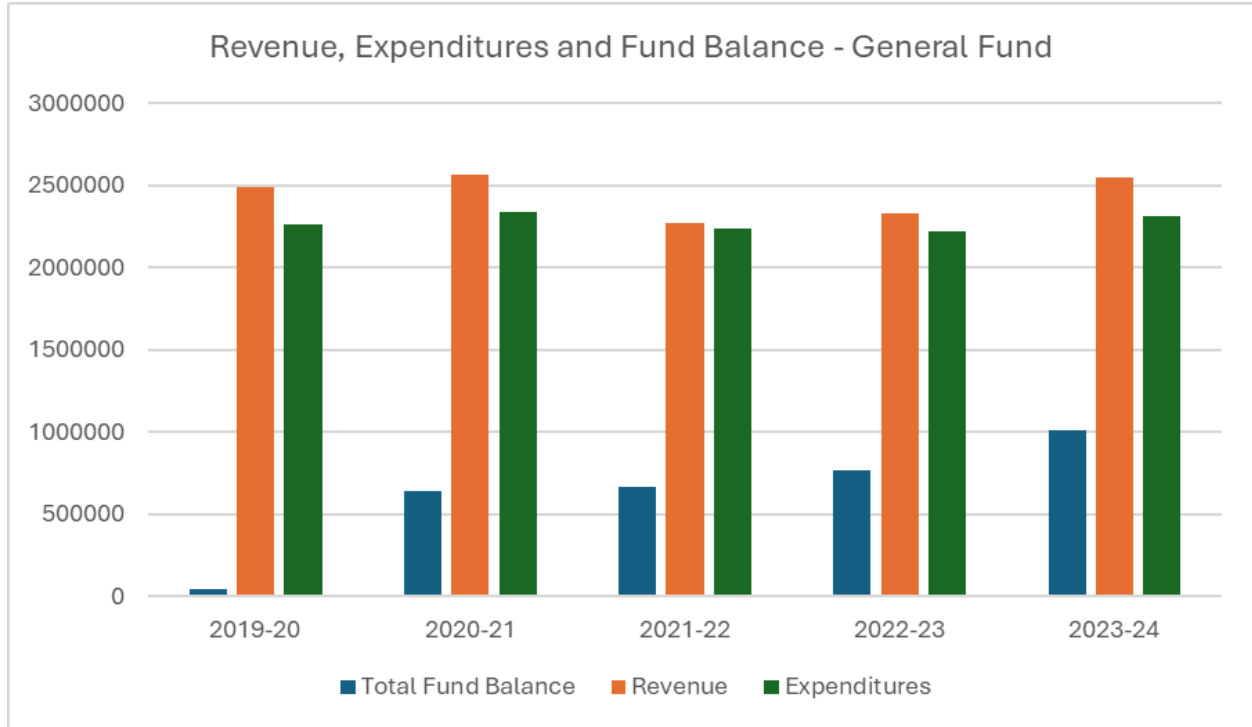
**Revenue \$2,572,982**

**Expenses \$2,333,749**

**Fund Balance \$1,006,712**

	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24
Fund Balance	45,104 2%	643,816 27.4%	663,881 29.6%	767,479 34.58%	\$1,006,712 43.56%

The 2023-24 school year ended with the general fund balance at 43.56% of general fund expenditures, representing a strong financial position. The above table represents combined fund balance including unassigned, restricted and nonspendable.



RBA is fiscally responsible. A review of the school’s past five years’ finances represented in the chart above shows the school’s commitment to growing and maintaining a strong fund balance. A complete copy of our audit is on file with the Executive Director and is available for review.



# ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

RBA uses a variety of assessment tools to drive instructional processes, including but not limited to, curriculum-based assessments (CBA), IXL, NWEA MAP testing, ACT testing, teacher observations, IRLA Reading Assessments, Individual Education Plan progress and standardized state testing (MCA Testing). RBA participated in the Fall NWEAs. The results are below. MCAs were completed and the results are below. Note in the spring of 2020 due to COVID-19, no results are reported for Spring of 2020. MCAs were administered in 2021; however, due to COVID-19 still being in full force, results were not reported as they historically have been. As such, you will see COVID written in for a data point.

<b>Goal 1: MCA Progress on Reading and Math</b>	<b>A. Reading Proficiency. Students in the Achievement Level “Decreased/ Does Not Meet Standard” Category (MDE Academic Progress) will decrease by 3 percent each year during the contract period starting in FY21. Grades 6,7,8 &amp; 10</b>  <b>B. Mathematics Proficiency Students in the Achievement Level “Decreased/ Does Not Meet Standard” Category (MDE Academic Progress) will decrease by 5 percent each year during the contract period starting in FY21.</b>			
<b>Contract Year</b>	FY21  Baseline (FY19)	FY22	FY23	FY24
<b>Goal Percentage A</b>	69.77%	66.77%	63.77%	60.77%
<b>Goal Percentage B</b>	77.27%	74.27%	71.27%	68.27%
<b>Actual % A</b>	56.5%	50%	56.1%	40.8%
<b>Actual % B</b>	66.7%	70%	80%	73.0%
<b>Goal (Met/Met)</b>	Met	Met/ DNM	DNM	Met
<b>School Comment</b>	The school has retained the same Tier 4 Language Arts Teacher over the past three school years. Additionally, we have added a Special Education Teacher to the classroom for early interventions. The			

	school's focus is building on the Tier 1 Math Teacher skills and strengths to improve overall scores. With the addition of shifting the Special Education Math Teacher from a Tier 2 to a Tier 4 through continued education.
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<b>Goal 2: NWEA Progress on Reading and Math</b>	<p><b>A. Annually, the percent of students who meet their expected growth projection for Reading on the NWEA test from Winter to Winter will go from 50% in the baseline year to 62% by the end of FY23.</b></p> <p><b>B. Annually, the percent of students who meet their expected growth projection for Math on the NWEA test from Winter to Winter will go from 50% in the baseline year to 62% by the end of FY23.</b></p>					
<b>Contract Year</b>	FY2019 Baseline	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24
<b>Goal Percentage A</b>	50%	COVID	54%	58%	62%	62%
<b>Goal Percentage B</b>	50%	COVID	54%	58%	62%	62%
<b>Annual % A</b>		COVID	46%	21%	N/A	45%
<b>Annual % B</b>		COVID	49%	50%	N/A	46%
<b>Goal (Met/Met)</b>		-	DNM	DNM	-	DNM
<b>School Comment</b>	Due to a change in Administration, the NWEAs were not administered in FY23. Of all students who took reading, there was a 24% growth increase from FY22 to FY24. RBA contributes this to a strong co-teaching model used in the classroom. Math is still an area that students struggle with and is a plan of focus on the years to come.					

<b>Goal 3: Closing the Achievement Gap</b>	<b>Closing the Reading Achievement Gap Annually, students taking the MCAs (MDE Academic Achievement Rate) will maintain a 3 point margin between all students and those students identified as special education.</b>				
<b>Contract Year</b>	FY2019 Baseline	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24
<b>Goal Percentage</b>	5.35%	3%	3%	3%	3%
<b>Annual %</b>		+3%	+17%	+14%	-24%
<b>Goal (Met/Met)</b>		Met	Met	Met	DNM
<b>School Comment</b>	RBA has a high percentage of students in special education. In previous years, special education students have exponentially achieved higher scores than general education students. However, during the 23-24 school year a 24% achievement gap occurred between general education and special education. Of the 48 students who tested, 6 were in general education and 42 were in special education.				

<b>Goal 4: Closing the Achievement Gap</b>	<b>Closing the Math Achievement Gap Annually, students taking the MCAs (MDE Academic Achievement Rate) will maintain a 3 point margin between all students and those students identified as special education.</b>				
<b>Contract Year</b>	FY2019 Baseline	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24
<b>Goal Percentage</b>	.07%	3%	3%	3%	3%
<b>Annual %</b>		+29%	+22%	+15%	+3%
<b>Goal (Met/Met)</b>		Met	Met	Met	Met
<b>School Comment</b>	The students in special education have been meeting standards and scoring higher than students in general education. The school's focus will be moving those who do not meet standards to partially met, met, and exceeds.				

<b>Goal 5: High School Graduation</b>	<b>90% of students, enrolled at RBA for at least two consecutive years, will graduate high school in four years, not including students on Individual Education Plans who are eligible to stay in school from ages 18-21 and enter a transition program.</b>					
<b>Contract Year</b>	FY2019 Baseline	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24
<b>Goal Percentage</b>	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%
<b>Annual % (Increase/ decrease)</b>	100%	100%	82%	100%	100%	100%
<b>Goal (Met/Met)</b>	Met	Met	DNM	Met	Met	Met
<b>School Comment</b>	Students enrolled at RBA for a consecutive period remain enrolled and are graduating on time. Additionally, RBA is in its second year of operation with the SOAR transition program					

<b>Goal 6: Family Satisfaction</b>	<b>Each year via a fall survey, families will respond with “agree” or “strongly agree” to each of the following two questions: (A) My child is welcomed at RBA (B) My child has found a “place” at RBA. From a baseline of 69% “agree/strongly agree”, each year’s survey results will show a 5% increase:</b>					
<b>Contract Year</b>	FY2019 Baseline	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24
<b>Goal Percentage A</b>	69%	74%	79%	84%	89%	94%
<b>Goal Percentage B</b>	69%	74%	79%	84%	89%	94%
<b>Annual % A</b>	69%	72.45%	76.07%	80%	93%	94%
<b>Annual % B</b>	69%	72.45%	76.07%	80%	81%	85%



<b>Goal (Met/Met)</b>		DNM	DNM	DNM	Met/DNM	Met/DNM
<b>School Comment</b>	Over the past three years, the school has had a high turnover in Administration. Regardless, students at RBA have continued to increase their feeling of being welcomed as well as finding their “place” at RBA.					

<b>Goal 7: Special Education Individual Education Plan (IEP) Progress</b>	<b>On an annual basis, 100% of students on IEPs, who have been at RBA for at least one year, will improve the number of IEP goals from 89% to 93%.</b>					
<b>Contract Year</b>	FY2019 Baseline	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24
<b>Goal Percentage</b>	89%	89%	90%	91%	92%	93%
<b>Annual % (Increase/decrease)</b>		90%	91%	92%	93%	91%
<b>Goal (Met/Met)</b>		Met	Met	Met	Met	DNM
<b>School Comment</b>	Over the years, RBA has had an ebb and flow with student enrollment. For some students, it takes time to feel comfortable and safe within the learning environment. Veteran students have worked hard to reach their yearly goals and show progress. There was a slight decrease in achievement last year, this could be partly due to the shortage of a special education teacher.					

<b>Goal 8: Finance</b>	<b>Fund Balance RBA’s fund balance will be 0% at the end of FY20 and will increase by 3% each fiscal year, as measured by the annual financial audit. RBA will not be in SOD over the term of the contract.</b>
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<b>Contract Year</b>	FY2019 Baseline	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24 (unaudited)
<b>Goal Percentage</b>	0%	0%	3%	6%	9%	12%
<b>Annual % (Increase/ decrease)</b>		2%	17.77%	32.95%	34.31%	41.67%
<b>Goal (Met/ Did Not Met)</b>		Met	Met	Met	Met	Met
<b>School Comment</b>	RBA has maintained and increased a positive fund balance since the charter contract began. A major accomplishment pre-contract as RBA was in statutory operating debt (SOD).					

<b>Goal 9: Post-Graduation</b>	<p><b>ALL students enrolled at RBA in grades 9-12 will develop a post-high school (college and career readiness) plan with the support and guidance of the school counselor during the first semester of 9th grade, or as soon as possible when enrolling after semester 1, 9th grade.</b></p> <p>A plan template will be formulated to be used for each student’s plan. With the school counselor, each student will complete the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using the prescribed template, develop a career and college readiness plan including goals</li> <li>• Annually discuss progress towards meeting the goals in their college and career readiness plan, and update the plan as needed</li> <li>• As graduation approaches, determine if they have met their college and career readiness goals</li> </ul> <p>Percentage of students who have an annually-reviewed post-high school plan in place with the school counselor:</p>					
<b>Contract Year</b>	FY2019 Baseline	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	
<b>Goal Percentage</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	

<b>Annual % (Increase/ decrease)</b>	100%	100%	81%	88%	90%
<b>Goal (Met/Met)</b>	Met	Met	DNM	DNM	DNM
<b>School Comment</b>	After the 2021-2022 school year, RBA lost its school counselor. In FY2023, the school hired a Director of Student Supports. A credit tracking system was developed and implemented giving students responsibility and accountability for academic progress. Additionally, a college and career readiness class was created for the Juniors and Seniors.				



# WORLD'S BEST WORKFORCE

## Annual Report

The annual report can be found here:

<https://www.rochesterbeaconacademy.org/page/3345>

## Annual Public Meeting

RBA held its annual public meeting on Wednesday, November 29, 2023.

## District Advisory Committee

District Advisory Committee Members	Role in District
Kate Gustafson	Board Chair, Teacher
Beth Bruns	Director of Student Supports
Carrie Nelson	Teacher Voice, Parent
Kaelan McGeough	Paraprofessional
Shelby Pitzer	Student, Student Council President
Ash Ornelas	Student, Student Council Vice Chair
Roseanne Kelly	Parent
Lindsay Zetsche	Parent

## Equitable Access to Excellent and Diverse Educators

*Describe your process for ensuring students of color, American Indian students and students from low-income families have equitable access to experienced, in-field, and effective teachers.*

As a charter school specializing in special education, we frequently have teachers with Tier 1 licenses, particularly in special education or teaching "out of field." To ensure all students receive appropriate teaching, we've implemented several strategies. Every Tier 1 licensed teacher participates in weekly mentorship meetings with Tier 3 or 4 licensed colleagues, and bi-weekly check-ins with administration provide further guidance. This year, 46% of our teaching staff are enrolled in continuing education programs to advance their licensure. As we settle into our new building and under new leadership, we're strengthening our professional learning communities (PLCs) to support ongoing growth.

*What strategies has the district initiated to improve student equitable access to experienced, in-field, and effective teachers?*

Our school board has historically developed recruitment strategies through community networking and advertising. This year, we've taken a significant step forward by partnering

with a local university, Winona State University (WSU). As this relationship evolves, we anticipate that our experienced teachers will mentor student teachers, ultimately leading to increased hiring of in-field licensed teachers. Additionally, we're supporting our current licensed teachers as they pursue graduate degrees in their areas of expertise, further strengthening our in-field teaching capacity.

*Describe your efforts to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of teachers in your district. Which racial and ethnic student groups are present in your district that are not yet represented in your licensed teacher staff? How many additional teachers of color and American Indian teachers would you need in order to reflect your student population?*

Our student body is currently comprised of 74% White, 5% Asian, 3% Black or African American, 1% American Indian or Alaskan, and 17% multiracial students. This diverse community is a strength of our school, and we are committed to ensuring that our staff reflects the variety of backgrounds and experiences of the students we serve. To achieve this, we recognize the need to actively explore and implement effective strategies for outreach and onboarding that will attract a diverse pool of talented professionals to our team.

While student demographics may naturally fluctuate over time, our dedication to fostering an inclusive environment and promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of our school community remains unwavering and at the forefront of our decision-making. We believe that a staff that mirrors the diversity of our students will enhance our ability to provide culturally responsive education and support, ultimately leading to more equitable outcomes for all.

*What strategies has the district initiated to increase and retain teachers of color and American Indian teachers in the district? What goal(s) are you pursuing?*

Rochester, Minnesota's diverse population, comprising predominantly White non-Hispanics, but also significant Black, Hispanic, Asian, and Mixed-race communities, highlights the necessity for an equally diverse teaching workforce. This is especially true for small charter schools aiming to cater to students' varied cultural backgrounds. Recruiting and retaining teachers of color and American Indian teachers becomes increasingly important in this context.

Community engagement is key to attracting a more diverse teaching pool. This means proactively reaching out to potential teachers within the community and making the profession more accessible and appealing to people of color and American Indians.

Fostering connections among teachers of color and providing clear career pathways, including professional development and advancement opportunities, helps retain them once hired. Equally important is training all existing staff, regardless of their background, on cultural competencies and the needs of students of color. This ensures every teacher can better support their students.

We prioritize staff growth and development, leveraging individual strengths to boost school morale and climate. Our mission is to build on our employees' strengths and foster collaboration. RBA's goal remains inclusivity; when staff are diverse, students feel more connected, and we thrive. With few applicants of color, we actively recruit future teachers from our own student and staff body.

The school board's strategic planning committee continually seeks new ways to promote our commitment to diversity. With over 80% of students qualifying for special education, we want them to see themselves in those who work closely with them. We actively strive for a diverse candidate pool to achieve this.

## GOALS AND RESULTS

### GOAL 1: Close the Achievement Gap(s) Between Student Groups

Goal	Result	Goal Status
Students in grades 6-11 <sup>th</sup> will take the MCA/MTAS to measure academic progress and to monitor if the achievement gap is closing.	Students in grades 6-11 <sup>th</sup> who took the Math and Science MCAs closed the achievement gap between general education and special education students. In Math, special education students met 9.8% more than general education. In Science, special education students met 18.8% more than general education. In Reading, there is a 27.3% gap.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On track (multi-year goal) <input type="checkbox"/> Not on track (multi-year goal) <input type="checkbox"/> Goal met (one-year goal) <input type="checkbox"/> Met all (multiple goals) <input type="checkbox"/> Met some (multiple goals) <input type="checkbox"/> Met none (multiple goals) <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to report

### Narrative

At RBA, we're committed to inclusive education. We track the progress of all general and special education students in grades 6-11 who take the Reading MCAs, aiming for a 3-point margin between the groups. Our structured approach - including team teaching, resource

rooms, and paraeducator support – has produced notable results. The achievement gap between special education and general education students has been a fascinating trend. Special education students have scored higher in math and reading for the past few years. In FY2024 the achievement gap in math narrowed to be within 3% proficiency. This same year a significant achievement gap occurred in reading. In part due to 48 students who tested, 6 were in general education and 42 were in special education. Additionally, tools like IXL help us measure progress and maintain our focus on inclusive success

**GOAL 2: All Students Career- and College-Ready by Graduation**

Goal	Result	Goal Status
<p>ALL students enrolled at RBA in grades 9-12 will develop a post-high school (college and career readiness) plan with the support and guidance of the school counselor during the first semester of 9th grade, or as soon as possible when enrolling after semester 1, 9th grade. A plan template will be formulated to be used for each student’s plan. With the school counselor, each student will complete the following: Using the prescribed template, develop a career and college readiness plan including goals. Annually discuss progress towards meeting the goals in their college and career readiness plan, and update the plan as needed as graduation approaches, determine if they have met their college and career readiness goals.</p>	<p>Of the 69 students enrolled at RBA in grades 9-12, 90% of students had an annual meeting with the student success team member.</p>	<p>Check one of the following:  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On track (multi-year goal)  <input type="checkbox"/> Not on track (multi-year goal)  <input type="checkbox"/> Goal met (one-year goal)  <input type="checkbox"/> Met all (multiple goals)  <input type="checkbox"/> Met some (multiple goals)  <input type="checkbox"/> Met none (multiple goals)  <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to report</p>

**Narrative**

- ❖ **Empowering Students for Success Beyond High School:** At RBA, we believe in preparing students for a bright future. That’s why we’ve implemented a

comprehensive college and career counseling program for all students in grades 9-12.

- ❖ **A Proactive Approach:** We start by meeting with each student at the beginning of the year to discuss their college and career aspirations. This initial meeting allows us to create a personalized plan tailored to their unique goals. As the year progresses, we check in again to ensure students are on track with their plans and make any necessary adjustments.
- ❖ **Supporting Students Every Step of the Way:** Our dedicated counselors are committed to helping students achieve their goals. This support includes guiding students through the college application process and providing resources for those seeking to enter the workforce directly after graduation. We divide our efforts by graduating class to ensure each student receives the attention they deserve.
- ❖ **Discovering Career Interests:** To help students identify potential career paths, we administer career interest assessments. Armed with these insights, students can research their top career choices and explore fields that align with their passions and strengths. Our work-based learning licensed teacher also connects students with opportunities in the community, providing invaluable real-world experience.
- ❖ **Data-Driven Approach:** We leverage a range of academic and behavioral data to inform our counseling efforts. Tools like IXL diagnostics, MCA, NWEA, and our own Restore Room data provide a comprehensive view of student progress. By tracking this data closely, we can intervene early and set students up for success beyond graduation.
- ❖ **Preparing Students for a Bright Future:** At RBA, we're committed to empowering students with the tools and guidance they need to thrive after high school. Through proactive counseling, career exploration, and data-driven support, we're helping shape the leaders of tomorrow.

**GOAL 3: All Students Graduate**

Goal	Result	Goal Status
90% of students enrolled at RBA for at least two consecutive years, will graduate high school in four years, not including students on Individual Education Plans who are eligible to stay in school from ages 18-21	All students enrolled at RBA for at least two consecutive years graduated. Of those students 29% went on to the 18-22 transition program.	Check one of the following: <input type="checkbox"/> On track (multi-year goal) <input type="checkbox"/> Not on track (multi-year goal) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal met (one-year goal) <input type="checkbox"/> Met all (multiple goals) <input type="checkbox"/> Met some (multiple goals) <input type="checkbox"/> Met none (multiple goals) <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to report



and enter a transition program.		
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**Narrative**

At RBA, our top priority is empowering every student to graduate and thrive in their community. We diligently support students in following their college and career readiness plans, ensuring they feel confident in their futures. We believe all students deserve the opportunity to earn their diplomas, and we work to address any credit gaps or deficiencies. Through weekly problem-solving team meetings, we keep students on the path to graduation. When students arrive at RBA, our counselors conduct thorough credit audits to set each student up for success. With additional support from our Learning Labs, Graduate Assistance Program (GAP), and What-I-Need (WIN) time, students have the tools they need to stay on track. We also instill in students the responsibility and accountability to proactively monitor their missing work and grades.



# INNOVATIVE PRACTICES AND FUTURE PLANS

RBA's primary organizational values consist of the following:

- ❖ Team teaching model for multiple classes with a general education and special education teacher
- ❖ Small class sizes of no more than 22 students
- ❖ Extra adult support (Paraeducators) keeping the ratio at or below 1:5
- ❖ Differentiated instruction based on individual student needs
- ❖ 45-minute class periods that allow for students to work on transitions with the support of multiple staff members
- ❖ Life skills instruction in areas such as organization, time management, and character development
- ❖ Study skills instruction to assist students in developing organizational strategies, breaking down assignments, and preparing for assessments
- ❖ Social skills curriculum taught to all staff and encompassed in all curriculums
- ❖ Transition classes that focus on life after graduation from high school



RBA staff are given multiple days per week to collaborate and participate in Professional Learning Communities. The purpose of those meetings is to discuss lesson plans, and modifications/accommodations, and to talk about how to best serve students.

For many of our students, their needs require us to problem-solve for and with them on a daily basis. As a result, RBA staff regularly collaborated and formed a problem-solving model that consisted of Problem-Solving Team (PST) meetings.

Our students work extensively with social-emotional curriculum and life skills. Students get experience writing resumes, practicing job interview skills, and learning how to be team players. Our main goal is for students to join their communities with success; therefore, we focus on soft skills and communication skills to ensure our students have the best opportunities for success.

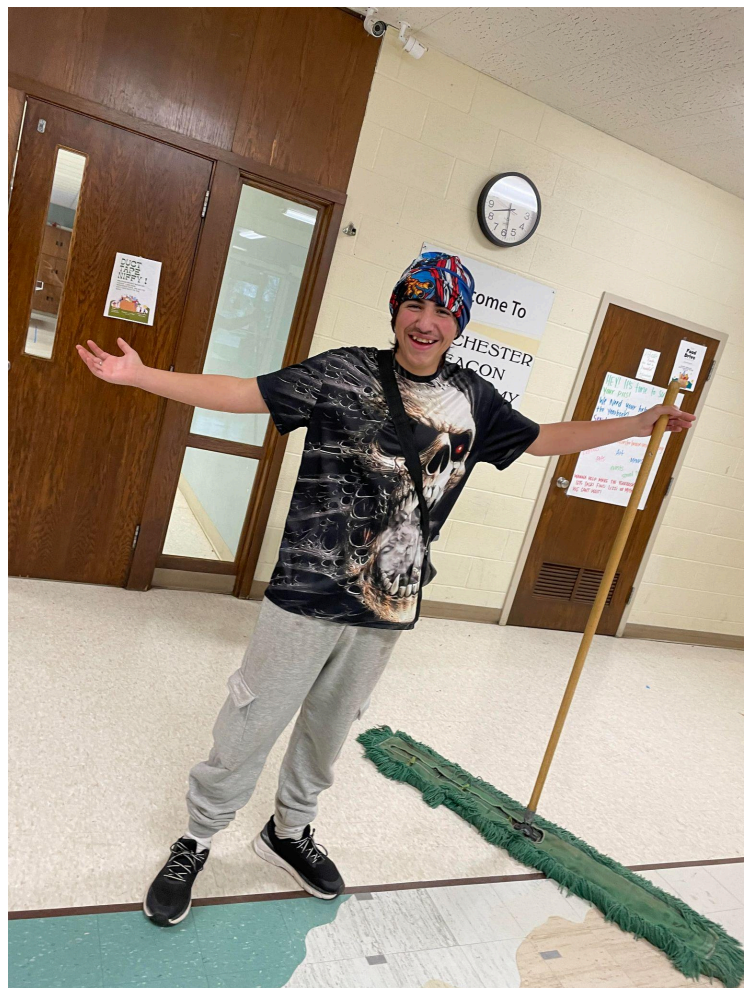
## Future Plans

Rochester Beacon Academy enrollment declined after the move into the new building. Since then, enrollment has stabilized and RBA is now growing and expanding in total enrollment.

The Rochester Beacon Academy Board of Directors has been exploring the options available to acquire more space and to develop a long-range growth plan.

Ultimately, RBA is planning for a full enrollment in the near future of 120+ students in grades 6 through grade 12, with the possibility of dividing sections. To accomplish that goal, we know that we would need to identify the physical space we would need. Additionally, we are working on reflecting, reviewing, and revising our structures, and course offerings, and rebranding our schools vision and mission. Our goal in the near future is to develop a new five-year plan involving the implementation of getting back to our foundation of small class sizes, expanding programs, and possible physical expansion of our facility, that sets the stage for full enrollment.

RBA's future aspirations include enhancing instructional methods and boosting reading and math proficiency. This will be achieved by hiring an instructional coach to better support licensed teachers. Additionally, RBA aims to strengthen relationships with local organizations in the Rochester area and to foster a community of bright, resilient young leaders.



Adopted: 01-18-2016

Revised: 06/28/2024

**ROCHESTER BEACON ACADEMY- RBA  
POLICY No. 500  
ADMISSIONS AND LOTTERY POLICY**

**I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to explain the application and enrollment process at RBA.

**II. POLICY STATEMENT**

This policy establishes guidelines for admission into RBA that are consistent with the admission requirements of Minnesota Statutes §124E.11.

**III. GENERAL ENROLLMENT PROVISIONS**

- A. RBA is a public school and pursuant to state law, must enroll an eligible Minnesota Resident student who submits a timely application, unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity of the program, class, grade level, or building. When that occurs, students will be accepted by lot and admitted as further described in this Policy.
- B. Before admitting a student by the lottery, RBA shall give preference for enrollment to siblings of an enrolled student and to a foster child of an enrolled student's parents. This preference does not apply until one of the siblings is actually enrolled.
- C. Before accepting students by the lottery, RBA may give preference to enrolling children of the school's staff before accepting other pupils by lot. Termination of employment prior to enrollment, will cause the loss of this preference.
- D. RBA shall not discriminate against or select any student based on race, color, ethnicity, sex, age, national origin, religion or creed, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, disability, intellectual ability, prior measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability, or for any other basis

that would be unlawful for a public or charter school.

- E. RBA shall not seek any information about any applicant that may be used to discriminate against the applicant in either school's policies or governing laws. This does not preclude the school from seeking such information for a lawful purpose about a student after the student has been enrolled.
- F. RBA will not distribute any services or goods of value to students, parents or guardians as an inducement, term, or condition of enrolling a student.

## **V. ENROLLMENT APPLICATION PROCEDURES & LOTTERY PROCESS**

- A. Interested families must submit fully completed applications to be considered for enrollment. The enrollment period is from January 1 to January 31, 11:59 PM. An application must be received by RBA no later than the end of the enrollment period (if this date falls on a weekend or holiday, the next business day will be the deadline date). The Board of Directors may change or adjust the deadline for applications for the next school year by resolution without changing this Policy.
- B. Once the application period is closed, if there are more applicants than spots available, all timely applicants will be placed on one of two lists by grade: (a) a preference list of students given preference by state law which notes the type of preference being given ("Preferential waiting list"), and (b) all other applicants ("General waiting list"). Both lists will be independently shuffled and offers of enrollment will be made to students in the order in which they are listed for each grade until classes are full, first exhausting the preference list ("Preferential waiting list"), and then proceeding to the non-preference ("General waiting list") applicants according to the following procedures:
  - 1. Siblings of currently enrolled students on the Preferential waiting list will be given first priority. If there are more sibling applicants than spots for a particular grade, the sibling applicants will be shuffled by lot each year and then offers of enrollment will be made in the order drawn.
  - 2. Second priority will be given to children of school staff on the Preferential waiting list. If there are more applicants than spots for a particular grade, the applicants will be shuffled by lot each year and then offers of enrollment will be made in the order drawn. If a staff member's employment is ended for any reason, the applicant moves to the end of the General waiting list.

3. Once all sibling applicants and children, including foster children, of school staff have been placed, other applicants will be offered enrollment in the order they were placed on the General waiting list as determined by the lottery.
- C. This lottery will be held no later than the first Monday after the student application deadline, sufficiently prior to the annual March 1 deadline for notifying the students' district of residence for transportation services.
  - D. If any application is received after the end of the open enrollment period, but before the next open enrollment period, and the maximum capacity of the program, class, grade level, or building is reached, the applicant will be placed at the end of the number General waiting list based on the date when the application was received by RBA.
  - E. If any student, whether enrolled or on the waiting list, cancels their application or withdraws from RBA, they shall lose their place. If they later re-apply, they shall be treated as a new applicant.
  - F. All applicants still on a waiting list at the beginning of the next enrollment period must submit a new application for enrollment and will be subject to the enrollment process described above. The waiting lists do not carry over from year to year.
  - G. Publication of the lottery policy, at a minimum, will be made public via the school's website.

**Legal References:** Minn. Stat. § 124E.11 (Charter Schools – Admission Requirements & Enrollment)  
Minn. Stat. §§ 123B.36-.37 (Authorized Fees; Prohibited Fees)