

Rochester Beacon Academy

Minnesota Charter School District #4238-07



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Per Minnesota Statute 124E.16 Subd. 2

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Table of Contents

Background Information	
History.....	2
Mission.....	3
Vision	3
Statement of Purposes	3-4
Authorizer	
Mission.....	5
Vision.....	5
Student Enrollment and Attrition	
Yearly Enrollment Trends	6
Attrition and Retention	6-7
Enrollment by Grade	7
Enrollment by Group	8
Governance and Management	
Board of Directors and Duties.....	9-10
Board Election Process	10
Board Member Roster	10
Board Annual Training	11
2023-2024 RBA Organization Chart	11
Staffing	12-13
Staff Retention	13-14
Professional Development	14-15
Professional Credentials of Administration	15
School Director Evaluation Process	16
Administrative Professional Development Plans	16
Professional Development Plan for Non-Licensed Administrator	16-17
Finances	
Business Operations	18
Fiscal Year Ending	18
General Fund Balance	19
Academic Performance	
Charter Goals for Authorizer	20-26
2023-2024 World’s Best Workforce (WBWF) Summary and Achievement	27-32
Innovative Practices and Future Plans	33-35

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. 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.

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 to ensure its successful implementation. The following years brought unforeseen challenges with the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Despite difficulties, the RBA board approved the launch of a new Transition Program called SOAR to begin fall of 2022. This program aimed to provide a supportive bridge for students entering post-secondary life.

At 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

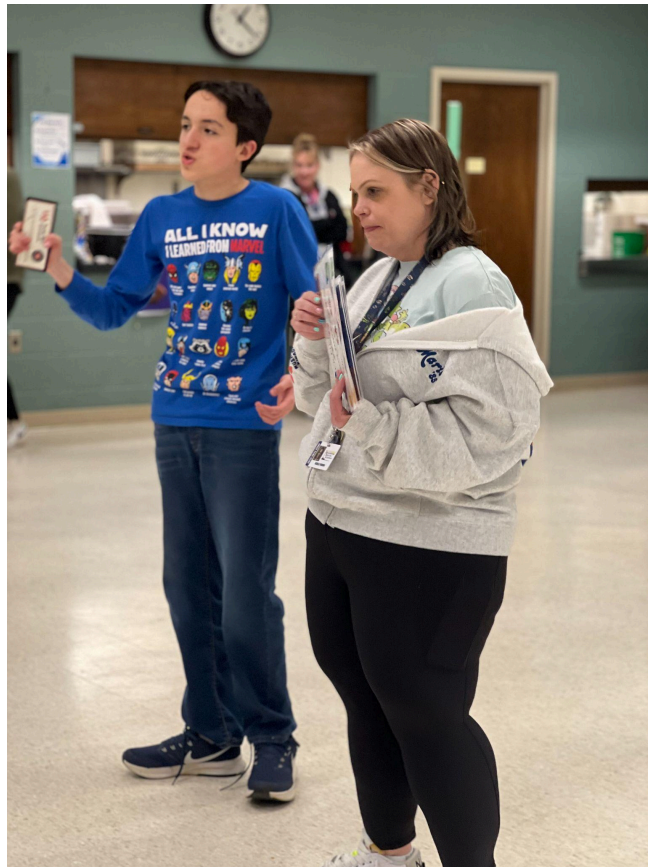
RBA's vision, as the premiere educator in southeast Minnesota for all students, utilizes highly structured techniques to assist students who have difficulties with organization, socialization and sensory differences while supporting students to make a successful transition into young adulthood, to live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

The primary purpose stated in Rochester Beacon Academy 5-year (FY20-FY25) Charter School Contract with their authorizer MN GUILD is to provide an educational program for its students in order to improve all pupil learning and all student achievement; and the secondary purpose of the School's educational program is to increase learning opportunities for all pupils. New legislation (124E.01(a)) was passed in 2024 that states, "The primary purpose of charter schools is changed to: improve the learning, achievement, and success of all students."



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 Minnesota 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

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. 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.

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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	+ 6%

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	94	+ 0%

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

In 1991, the Minnesota Legislature passed a law allowing the creation of charter schools. Each charter school is governed by a publicly elected board of directors, which is legally responsible for the school's operation under Minnesota Statute 124.07. The board is accountable to the school's community and provides oversight by establishing the school's mission, vision, and goals.

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,	10/28/22	06/30/26	Vice Chair	community.member11@roc	Community

Dean				hesterbeaconacademy.org	
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

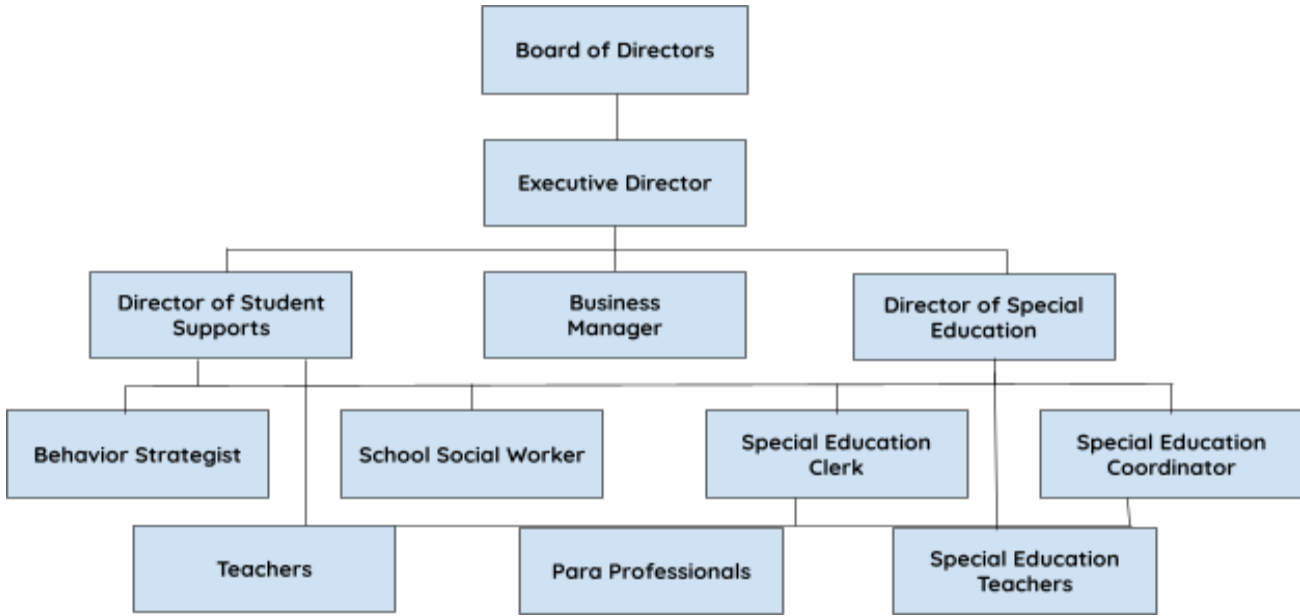
According to Minnesota statute 124E.07 BOARD OF DIRECTORS.Subd. 7., every charter school Board Member shall attend annual training throughout the Member’s term. All new Board Members shall attend initial training on the Board’s role and responsibilities, employment policies and practices, and financial 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.

Director Name	Date Seated	Trainings and Completion
Barringer, Todd	05/31/23	Charter Source: New Board Member Training. In progress.
Gerads, Melissa	06/20/23	Charter Source: New Board Member Training completed 08/10/23.
Gustafson, Kate	09/19/19	Charter Source:Employment Law, Charter School Budget Basics, and New Board Member Basics completed 12/19/19 and 05/16/23. Annual Board Retreat 05/20/23.
Frank, Dean	10/28/22	Charter Source: New Board Member Training completed 01/05/24. Annual Board Retreat 05/20/23
Rogers, Lori	01/19/23	Charter Source: New Board Member Training completes 03/25/24. Annual Board Retreat 05/20/23.
Pruka, Christina	10/28/22	Charter Source: New Board Member Training completed 04/30/2023. Annual Board Retreat 05/20/23.

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

Staff Member	Position	File Folder	Date Hired	Returned for FY25
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
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

Staff Member	Position	File Folder	Date Hired	Returned for FY25
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
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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 in Social Studies, and a Master’s Degree in Education.

Beth Bruns started with Rochester Beacon Academy in August of 2021 as the Math Teacher. This school year she served 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 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

Goals for the ED are derived from the previous year’s evaluation. In conjunction with the personnel committee, the goals are addressed and monitored throughout the school year. The evaluation of the Executive Director is held annually. An evaluation took place in May of the 2023-2024 school year. Ms. Reiling did not return the following academic school year.

Administrative Professional Development Plans

Training Topic	Audience
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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.

Ms. Bruns development plan focuses on several key areas critical to the ongoing success and growth of RBA.. In the area of Instruction and Assessment, Ms. Bruns became the District Assessment Coordinator where she focused on student learning outcomes and the

reinforcement of data-driven instructional strategies and differentiated approaches. By implementing effective assessment tools and regularly reviewing student data, the plan ensured teaching practices were adapted to meet the needs of all students, including those with special education needs. This approach not only strengthens instructional effectiveness but also is used to support other teachers, helps track progress, and adjust methods to ensure RBA students are on track to meet academic goals.

Another central aspect of the development plan is Human Resources and Personnel Management. Ms. Bruns emphasized the importance of recruiting and retaining highly qualified staff, while fostering an environment that supports professional growth and collaboration. The plan included the development of a robust performance evaluation system, professional development opportunities, and mentoring programs for new teachers. This approach was designed to ensure that RBA's staff is not only skilled and knowledgeable but also motivated and supported in their roles.

In terms of Legal and Compliance Management, the plan prioritizes regular audits and the

updating of school policies to ensure RBA remains in full compliance with state and federal laws, including

special education requirements. Ms. Bruns worked closely with the schools legal service provider to ensure that all aspects of school governance, student rights, and staff regulations were met, providing a strong foundation for the school's operations.

Effective Communication was another cornerstone of Ms. Bruns' plan, with a focus on transparent, timely communication with all stakeholders, including students, parents, staff, and the broader community.



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.

Financial Summary

Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2024

Revenue \$2,555,052

Expenses \$2,293,523

Fund Balance \$1,006,712

Food Service Fund

Total revenues were \$473 as compared to \$22,769 of expenditures.

Total expenditures of \$22,769 exceeded the budgeted amount of \$21,734 by \$1,035.

Ended the year with net change in fund balance and ending fund balance of \$0 after a transfer of \$22,769 from general fund.

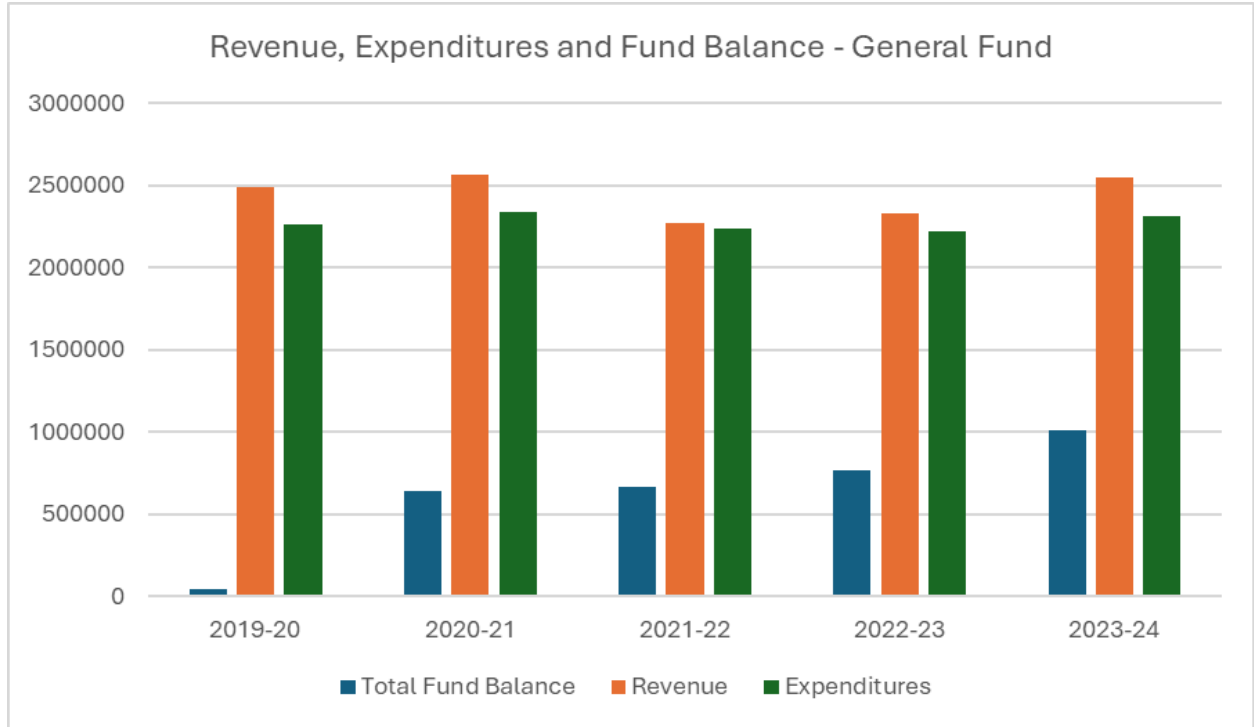
Total Governmental Activities

Net Position ended at deficit of \$(664,566)

Total revenues were \$2,542,910 as compared to \$2,102,795 of expenditures.

	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.

Goal 1: MCA Progress on Reading and Math	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 & 10 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.			
Contract Year	FY21 Baseline (FY19)	FY22	FY23	FY24
Goal Percentage A	69.77%	66.77%	63.77%	60.77%
Goal Percentage B	77.27%	74.27%	71.27%	68.27%
Actual % A	56.5%	50%	56.1%	40.8%
Actual % B	66.7%	70%	80%	73.0%
Goal (Met/Met)	Met	Met/ DNM	DNM	Met
School Comment	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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Goal 2: NWEA Progress on Reading and Math	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>					
Contract Year	FY2019 Baseline	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24
Goal Percentage A	50%	COVID	54%	58%	62%	62%
Goal Percentage B	50%	COVID	54%	58%	62%	62%
Annual % A		COVID	46%	21%	N/A	45%
Annual % B		COVID	49%	50%	N/A	46%
Goal (Met/Met)		-	DNM	DNM	-	DNM
School Comment	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.					

Goal 3: Closing the Achievement Gap	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.				
Contract Year	FY2019 Baseline	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24
Goal Percentage	5.35%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Annual %		+3%	+17%	+14%	-24%
Goal (Met/Met)		Met	Met	Met	DNM
School Comment	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.				

Goal 4: Closing the Achievement Gap	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.				
Contract Year	FY2019 Baseline	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24
Goal Percentage	.07%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Annual %		+29%	+22%	+15%	+3%
Goal (Met/Met)		Met	Met	Met	Met
School Comment	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.				

Goal 5: High School Graduation	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.					
Contract Year	FY2019 Baseline	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24
Goal Percentage	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%
Annual % (Increase/ decrease)	100%	100%	82%	100%	100%	100%
Goal (Met/Met)	Met	Met	DNM	Met	Met	Met
School Comment	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					

Goal 6: Family Satisfaction	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:					
Contract Year	FY2019 Baseline	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24
Goal Percentage A	69%	74%	79%	84%	89%	94%
Goal Percentage B	69%	74%	79%	84%	89%	94%
Annual % A	69%	72.45%	76.07%	80%	93%	94%
Annual % B	69%	72.45%	76.07%	80%	81%	85%

Goal (Met/Met)		DNM	DNM	DNM	Met/DNM	Met/DNM
School Comment	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.					

Goal 7: Special Education Individual Education Plan (IEP) Progress	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%.					
Contract Year	FY2019 Baseline	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24
Goal Percentage	89%	89%	90%	91%	92%	93%
Annual % (Increase/decrease)		90%	91%	92%	93%	91%
Goal (Met/Met)		Met	Met	Met	Met	DNM
School Comment	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.					

Goal 8: Finance	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.
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Contract Year	FY2019 Baseline	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24 (unaudited)
Goal Percentage	0%	0%	3%	6%	9%	12%
Annual % (Increase/decrease)		2%	17.77%	32.95%	34.31%	41.67%
Goal (Met/ Did Not Met)		Met	Met	Met	Met	Met
School Comment	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).					

Goal 9: Post-Graduation	<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.</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"> • 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>Percentage of students who have an annually-reviewed post-high school plan in place with the school counselor:</p>					
Contract Year	FY2019 Baseline	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	
Goal Percentage	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Annual % (Increase/ decrease)	100%	100%	81%	88%	90%
Goal (Met/Met)	Met	Met	DNM	DNM	DNM
School Comment	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 I 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 th will take the MCA/MTAS to measure academic progress and to monitor if the achievement gap is closing.	Students in grades 6-11 th 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.



PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

An authorizer's primary responsibility is to ensure that a charter school fulfills the terms outlined in its performance contract, or "charter." This includes approving, monitoring, evaluating, renewing, and, if necessary, closing schools that fail to meet contractual obligations. The overarching goal of charter schools in Minnesota is to enhance student learning and achievement (Minn. Stat. 124E.01, subd. 1 [2022]). Through rigorous oversight, authorizers ensure that charter schools are held accountable for achieving this goal.

RBA is tracking progress across four key performance indicators over its contract. (FY20-FY25)

Math Strategies: In FY21, RBA implemented two key strategies to improve math scores: the utilization of IXL, an online program used to assess and develop personalized action plans to target skills that are least proficient and enhancing students' ability to use and connect mathematical representations. Since then, RBA has closed the mathematical achievement gap by 2-3 grade levels.

Reading: To support students struggling in reading, RBA added a Level III Learning Disabilities (LD) classroom. In FY21, students were tested using the IRLA (Individual Reading Level Assessment) to measure progress and monitor growth. Reading interventions were put in place incorporating small-group instruction, use of technology, explicit phonics instruction, and student choice in reading materials. Of all students who took the NWEA district assessment in reading, there was a 24% growth increase from FY22 to FY24. RBA contributes this to a strong co-teaching model used in the classroom

MCAs Growth: RBA made significant growth on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs) in Reading over the past four years. Of the students who took the test the number of students who 'did not meet' decreased by 15.7%. The district anticipates continued improvement in scores and puts emphasis on mathematics. With testing participation an expectation it makes all students accountable for their performance.

Finances: Please refer to the financial report for detailed information on RBA's financial status.

These indicators reflect RBA's commitment to continuous improvement and accountability in its mission to enhance student achievement.

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.

