

Watershed High School • Minneapolis, Minnesota
Annual Report - 2009

1. School mission statement

The mission of Watershed High School is to nurture the intellect, stimulate the will, and embrace the creative potential of youth in a balanced environment that engenders reverence, respect, and responsibility for nature and the needs of others.

The school began to use *Community, Creativity and Service* as a planning and marketing tool during the 2008-2009 school year.

2. Program successes and best practices

J-Term. Watershed offered its first J-Term (January Term) in 2008-2009. This was a twelve day period between the first and second semesters, in which students focused on one or two classes at a time. Among the inaugural offerings: (a) a full-length play, written by a member of the class of 2011, performed as part of the annual Medieval Feast at the end of J-Term; (b) a field trip to Puerto Rico in which students studied Spanish language and culture; (c) a field trip to Philadelphia Community Farm, in which students worked on the farm and wrote about it; (d) a science course, “How Things Work,” (e) History Day project (half days); (f) theater production support (half days).

Student and staff satisfaction were high, according to class polls. Watershed will offer a J-Term again this school year.

The Watershed alternative. While Watershed is not an Alternative Learning Center (ALC), we do have many students seeking educational alternatives. We pride ourselves on supporting our students’ continued progress towards graduation, for example (see chart on the class of 2009, below). We accomplish this by offering multiple forms of authentic assessment, such as service learning, field trips, and Socratic discussion.

During 2008-2009, we significantly increased our service learning by having students regularly work in classes at two nearby elementary schools, Stonebridge School & Southside Family School. This was in addition to our annual food drive in the fall, service at Philadelphia Community Farm, working in the school (two students put in regular shifts at the reception desk), and helping with the annual Medieval Feast.

In addition to field trips to the Guthrie and Children’s Theater, Watershed in 08-09 continued to offer its popular field trip class, “Belly of the Beast.” This elective was created several years ago, in order to connect students with real life experiences and key players in the wider world. The class asks three questions of the CEOs and other leaders it visits: (a) What do you do for a living; (b) Why do you do it? (c) What training is needed?

Senior Year. “Watershed is a great place for seniors,” commented an alumna last year. Indeed, Watershed takes pride in providing a capstone year for its oldest students. Here’s why. To graduate from Watershed, seniors must complete a senior project, an “over and above” for-credit learning experience done on students’ own time, presented to the entire school community, and evaluated by a team of faculty. Senior project examples for 2008-2009 included original music compositions, photographic portfolios, teaching a cooking class, glassblowing, building a drum set, and creating text and art for a manga-style graphic book. In addition, all seniors participated in the senior play, theater being an integral part of the Watershed experience. Finally, the year culminated with a reflective senior trip to the Black Hills of South Dakota.

Watershed seniors took initiative and showed leadership primarily through the Watershed Forum, our counterpart to a student council. As a result, the Forum will continue each year.

See the table below for statistics on the class of 2009.

Watershed’s Class of 2009

Number of students	Time at WHS	# Graduated – 2009 • %	# in college or service 09-10 • %	# working, other, or unknown	# returned for 5 th year
6	0-1 years	5 • 83%	3 • 60%	2	1
8	1-2 years	4 • 50%	2 • 50%	2	4
2	2-3 years	2 • 100%	2 • 100%	4	0
12	3-4 years	10 • 83%	4 • 40%	6	2
28		21 • 75%	11 • 52%	14	7

Notes

1. Watershed has long been a second home for many students; hence, we show many transfers over the years. This year’s senior class of 28 compares with 30 in the class of 2008.
2. The overall graduation rate of 75% compares with 80% last year. Two members of the class of 07-08 were graduated during 08-09 and do not appear in either year’s calculations. Two other members of the class of 07-08 continued their education here and in PSEO, nearing graduation as of this writing.
3. The overall percentage of 52% in college or service this year compares with 63% last year. Of the 11 students in college or service, ten are in college and one in the U.S. Marines.

Other awards:

At the end of the 2008-2009 school year, the junior class had 17 students; the sophomore class had 27; and the freshman class, 19.

Other successes during 2008-2009

Charter renewal: Our charter agreement with our sponsor, Adler Institute, was renewed in 2008.

Finance. According to the 2008 financial audit, Watershed exited Statutory Operating Deficit (SOD) June 30, 2008. This was accomplished through cost-cutting, improved administration and board oversight, fundraising, and long-term refinancing of existing debt. Audit results for 2009 indicate another year in surplus, again due to the measures instituted in 2007-2008.

School site change. Watershed searched for and located a new site during the 08-09 school year. This search was made possible by many hundreds of volunteer and staff hours.

Enrollment. Watershed's enrollment in 08-09 was up 14% from 07-08. This growth stemmed from improved word of mouth, a variety of advertising, monthly open houses, and outreach to partner schools in the K-8 school community. Watershed's openness to the home school community, PSEO, and online options increases student options and opportunities during their years here.

Student information system transition. During 2007-2008, Watershed began a transition from Pearson Centerpoint to PowerSchool. While this didn't involve dollar costs, it challenged the staff to plan how the new system can work for us and begin learning to use it. All staff learned how to use PowerSchool during 08-09; we expect continued learning in 09-10.

Increased Staff Capacity. Watershed increased its capacity to serve its students during 08-09. First, most of the staff completed another year at Watershed, continuing a positive trend of increased retention. In addition, the school added a licensed social worker to meet the needs of both general education and special education students.

3. Program challenges, 2008-2009

Finance: While the school exited Statutory Operating Deficit (SOD) and balanced its budget in 08-09, the weak economy, lack of funding increases from the state, and the sharp increase in deferred payments (from 10% to 27%) will challenge Watershed in 09-10. The school intends to take out a line of credit to manage the additional 17% in deferred payments. Our reserves are low, since we're still repaying long-term debt taken out in 2007 to address previous financial problems. In addition, the school incurred approximately \$40,000 in one-time moving and building costs.

Identity and mission: Watershed began as a private, Waldorf school in 1996. It converted to a public charter school in 2002. All of the founders and staff members with Waldorf training have retired or moved on. In addition, anecdotal data indicated that Waldorf is not a concept or brand well known in public school circles. The board and faculty vigorously discussed which Waldorf elements still remain, as well as what we do in non-Waldorf terms. For marketing purposes, we emphasized our rich, liberal arts curriculum; a focus on creativity, strong community service; and a caring, accepting faculty and student body.

During 2009-2010, Watershed will work with its authorizer, Adler Institute, to rearticulate its mission and vision.

Staff turnover: While staff turnover decreased in 08-09, the challenge of orienting, integrating and supporting staff continued. The school accomplished this through weekly faculty meetings as well as frequent informal discussions.

Technology: Continuing budget constraints limited our capacity to integrate technology into our curriculum as much staff wanted. Hardware, more than staff skill, is the main limiting factor.

Site Search. Watershed was notified by its landlord in 2008 that our lease would not be renewed for 2009-2010. Accordingly, the school set up a site search committee which met almost weekly for more than six months. The committee, thanks to its collective expertise and the contribution of many hundreds of volunteer hours, succeeded in locating a new home for Watershed in 2009. This led to the challenge of moving during the summer and settling into the new space in the fall of 2009.

4. 2008-2009 Academic Accountability Data

See the chart below to compare Watershed students with Minneapolis Public Schools and Minnesota. Keep in mind that our numbers are very small. For example, one student out of 11 passed the math MCA. (From the state's perspective, student counts qualifying for growth measurement across 2008-2009 in this subject were too few to report for Watershed.) Approximately 80% of WHS students in 2008-2009 were from Minneapolis.

Passing Rates, 2008-2009

	Watershed %	Minneapolis %	Minnesota %
MCA Reading	68	51	72
MCA Math	9	27	46
MCA Science	35	27	46

While we still have work to do to ensure that all students are proficient, we have made gains in all subjects over last year. Our students tested 1.4% better in math, 4.37% better in reading, and 4.78% better in science over our 2007/2008 scores.

In addition to tracking our performance on state MCAs, Watershed teachers also use a variety of assessments, including teacher observations and teacher-designed quizzes and tests. The school has begun to investigate using the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress, but hasn't yet adopted them.

5. Other school accountability measures

Improve Student Participation

Watershed's goal for 2008-2009 was that students are regularly in class and engaged in learning activities. Assessments include attendance, graduation and passing rates, engagement in class,

and participation in sports, other extra-curricular activities, and community service. Attendance rates have been increasing the past two years and we seek to continue this trend.

For example, the passing rate for sophomores in 2008-2009 was 74%.

This goal derived from parent feedback, teacher observations, and a student focus group. All stakeholders agreed that we can and should increase our expectations for behavior and academic performance.

In addition to improving academic participation, Watershed will increase its extra-curricular offerings as well, recognizing that students engaging in meaningful activity beyond the classroom are likely to improve their perspective during school hours as well. The athletics program has added several new sports in the past year to increase active opportunities. The theater department plans to increase its off campus by visiting partner schools and participating in one-act play contests. Watershed will continue Food Drive and Farm Day as service learning opportunities and will add volunteering, mentoring and tutoring at neighborhood elementary schools as an option as well.

Watershed plans to employ its new information system, PowerSchool, to assess participation rates. Following is a table of projections for 2008-2009:

<i>Exceptional</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Satisfactory</i>	<i>Unsatisfactory</i>
Graduation Rate			
100% in June	95% 1-3 additional students completing during summer	95%	90%>
Attendance			
90% Every Day Every Class	85%	80%	79%>
Participation			
80% Class Engagement Work Completed	50-79%	35-49%	35%>
Passing Rates			
90%	80%	70%	70%>

Increase Enrollment

Based on goals set last year, our results were more than satisfactory. We increased our Average Daily Membership by 14% and our headcount even more than that. However, we remain concerned about student transience, as many students came or left during the year. To address this in the future, the school has appointed a lead teacher as enrollment coordinator. As such, she coordinates not only the paper flow but also the orientation for each new student.

Goal Setting—Have all students set goals

The fourth major Watershed goal for 2008-2009 was to have all students develop, structure and achieve student-oriented goals. Sponsors (class advisors) provided ideas for goals using a rubric which included academic, personal, physical, social and vocational categories. Students will formalize these goals during the first weeks of school, or within two weeks of enrollment, and they will revisit them on a regular basis during class meetings. In addition to discussions with sponsors, students will also monitor the progress of their goals during October and March conferences, at the semester break and finally, at the end of the year.

Student-developed goals encourage students to clarify, conceptualize and quantify their dreams, while strengthening communication and relationships among students, sponsors and families. Student feedback indicated that they want goal setting to continue each year.

Parental Involvement

Parents are involved at Watershed through the School Board (see section 3 on Governance), Community Council, committees and events. The Community Council sponsored a Welcome Back evening in August, 2008; approximately half the families attended. The Council also held monthly meetings, with attendance ranging from four to 20; and an end of the year spaghetti supper.

Parents are significant members of the school's Advancement Committee. This committee is dedicated to advancing the mission of Watershed High School, specifically to aid the financial viability of the school; sustain and increase enrollment; and raise community awareness and support of the school.

To meet those goals, the Advancement Committee was involved in the Welcome Back social (along with Community Council), the Annual Fund campaign, the Medieval Feast & Silent Auction, and the spring plant sale. The largest of these events is the Medieval Feast & Silent Auction event, held January 30-31, 2009. This community event involved more than 30 parent and community volunteers.

Anecdotal evidence from parents indicated moderate satisfaction with Watershed High School in most respects.

6. Student/school goals for the 2009-2010 school year

Overview

During the 2008-09 academic year, student engagement was one of the school's goals. Over the course of the year, faculty measured engagement using several diagnostics, including graduation rates, attendance, classroom achievement and overall academic participation. Although the goal was reviewed on a quarterly basis, it was generally agreed the school continued to struggle to engage students in both academic and extra-curricular activities.

As the faculty discussed core-values over the summer as part of a process to review Watershed's mission, student and community engagement was repeatedly acknowledged as one of the school's central values. As such, the faculty is continuing its focus on engagement through a series of related goals for the 2009-10 academic year. Each of this year's goals, which include

service, community-building events, behavior, attendance and academic achievement, are designed to increase student engagement. The goals are described in greater detail below and include benchmarks to allow the faculty to assess progress toward increased engagement throughout the year.

In addition to the goals centered on engagement, the faculty is continuing two other goals from the 2008-09 academic year, enrollment and student goal setting. With a move across town, enrollment is now part of our lease agreement. Watershed has re-introduced the position of enrollment coordinator to facilitate the enrollment process and to recruit students and families throughout the year. Based on student reports of success, Watershed will continue to employ sponsor relationships and class meetings to establish and review yearly goals with students.

Behavior

As both a public and private school, Watershed has traditionally boasted a welcoming, engaging and supportive community. Nearly all students comment on the community environment based on relationships with classmates and faculty as the primary incentive for attending the school. As a school that relies upon the health of the learning environment to support stable enrollment, Watershed is especially sensitive to behavioral disturbances. Generally, the school experiences an inverse relationship between behavioral disturbances and student engagement, whether academically or socially. As such, one of the tenants of this year's overarching goal of increased engagement is an improved response to behavior issues. In addition to the proposed programs, initiatives and committees outlined below, Watershed has re-established the Dean position, which is intended to respond to classroom and campus problems, initiate parent conferences and develop and implement behavior, attendance and/or academic contracts.

The measures below are all intended communicate expectations for behavior that supports the community and the learning environment, promotes recognition of individuals that exemplify our principles and responds to students whose behavior deteriorates our environment. Each of these approaches will be measured on whether they occur, as well as their frequency.

- The Watershed Forum will develop a student survey that measures students' perceptions of behavior and the learning environment.
- The survey will be distributed and conducted during class meetings in September, January and May. The Watershed Forum and Faculty will review results during subsequent class meetings.
- The Watershed Forum will develop school expectations for behavior in the classroom, hallways, bathrooms and at lunch.
- The expectations will be posted throughout the school
- A behavior orientation will follow enrollment – This includes due process for students with IEPs or 504s, a description of behavior expectations and an overview of the student handbook (i.e. – off-campus, behavior flowchart, etc)
- Child Find meetings are held bi-monthly and Student Study meetings monthly – Results are reported to the faculty
- Behavior contracts have a clear structure and enforceable consequences. - Sidenote
- At least two months of Professional Development discussions during faculty meetings focus on Classroom Management and Behavior.
- Behavior Documentation report data is collected, analyzed and discussed monthly at faculty meetings

- A Watershed Community Award is distributed publicly on a bi-annual basis to students that exhibit behavior that positively influences the Watershed Community. Students nominate individuals (along with an anecdote) – Faculty select (Awards may be given on festival days as well)
- Positive behavior is acknowledged on a small-scale by the Watershed Forum

Attendance

Attendance is an indicator and link to engagement and academic success. Students cannot hope to be successful at a class they do not attend. We have in place a system that holds parents and students accountable when used by the staff of Watershed consistently. Our goal is to use this system effectively to raise the attendance rate by 5% over last year's level which was 52% when counting only students without tardies.

Benchmarks:

- Students raise the attendance rate to 57% over last year's level
- Teachers take attendance at the beginning of every class 100% of the time
- Teachers will, 95% of the time, acknowledge/check in with students who missed class the previous day.
- Watershed will educate families and students about appropriate and legal excused absences.

As apart of our attendance system, the appropriate person will collect 1st hour attendance and call families regarding absences by 2nd hour. the appropriate person will aggregate the data taken by teachers and act in a timely fashion regarding three or five day meetings. Holding students and families accountable is dependent on a timely response from the school. Also the school recognizes that families may need to be educated about the proper and legal reasons for excusing an absence for a student.

Service Hours

Watershed High School will total at least 20 hours per pupil unit (per June 15, 2010 ADM) of community service for FY2010. This will be tracked by a system to be developed by the Service Team. Ben Timko will be responsible for tracking and reporting.

Student Led Service Projects

Watershed High School will plan, implement, and report on at least two new student led service projects in FY2010. These may be initiated by the Student Forum. This will be tracked by a system to be developed by the Service Team. Ben Timko will be responsible for tracking and reporting.

Faculty Led Service Learning Project

Each faculty member will plan, implement, and report on at least one service learning project in FY2010. This will be tracked by a system to be developed by the Service Team. Ben Timko will be responsible for tracking and reporting.

Q-Comp

Watershed intends to study Q-Comp during the 2009-2010 school year, with the goal of joining the program in the fall of 2010.

Extended year

Now that Watershed is in its own building, it intends to develop an extended year program. The focus will be on Watershed students seeking enrichment or credit recovery during the summer. In addition to benefiting students, a summer school program will make use of valuable school facilities that would otherwise lie idle.

7. Authorizer Information

Watershed High School is authorized (sponsored) by Adler Graduate School, based in Richfield, Minnesota. The original charter was in 2002. It was renewed in 2005 and again in 2008. The 2008 renewal was noteworthy because it included an in-depth site visit in June, 2008. The Adler Institute report provided a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis, used by the Watershed faculty in planning for the 08-09 school year.

For 2009-2010, Adler Institute is increasing its involvement with and supervision of Watershed. The most recent initiative involves Adler graduate students in management consulting and organizational leadership—themselves supervised by Adler faculty—working with Watershed staff and board throughout the year.

For more information about Adler Graduate School, go to www.alfredadler.edu.

8. Governance

General board elections take place each October. The board exercised its power under its by-laws to replace a member who resigned in August, 2008, and again in May, 2009. See below.

Board members for the 2008-2009 school year

Name	Board Position	Group (if teacher, file folder #)	Phone Number	E-Mail Address	Board Attendance
Keith Dunder	Co-Chair	Parent	763-464-9723	dunde001@umn.edu	Term ended October 2008
LeAnne Mfaligundi	Member, Secretary	Parent	612-272-4341	mfali001@umn.edu	Elected October 2008
Endel Kallas	Chair	Parent	612-501-6607	eakallas@gmail.com	Current; term ends October 2009
Nell Ubbelohde	Member; Community Council Chair	Parent	612-251-9758	nellmorningstar@yahoo.com	Current; term ends October 2009
Matt McElrath	Member, Faculty Co-Chair	436417	612-871-4363	matt.mcelrath@gmail.com	Elected October 2009
Mark McGarraugh	Member, Teacher	438298	612-871-4363	markmcgarraugh@yahoo.com	Elected October 2008; resigned March 2009
Kristin	Member, Teacher	444397	612-871-	kaitchison@watershedhs.org	Chosen in May

Aitchison			4363		2009 to replace McGarraugh
Christina Beck	Member, Faculty Co-Chair	334509	612-871-4363	cbeck@watershedhs.org	Resigned March 2009
Ben Timko	Member, Teacher	438647	612-871-4363	btimko@watershedhs.org	Chosen in May 2009 to replace Beck
Maggie Rozycki	Member, Teacher	391580	612-871-4363	mrozycki@watershedhs.org	Term ended October 2008
Rachel Koniar	Member, Teacher	424352	612-871-4363	rkoniar@watershedhs.org	Elected in October 2008
Philip Grant	<i>Ex-officio</i>	Director	612-871-4363	pgrant@watershedhs.org	Current

Notes: For 2008-2009, Paul Peterson served as Treasurer, though he was not a voting member of the board. Leanne Mfalgundi replaced Endel Kallas as Secretary during the 2008-2009 school year. Matt McElrath was elected by the faculty in June 2008 as faculty chair and therefore assumed a board position. Rachel Koniar was first elected as a board member, then became a faculty chair by vote of the faculty in June 2009.

The board's current size is four teachers and three parent members. Plans are underway to amend the by-laws and add a community member.

The board meets each month throughout the year, normally on the third Thursday of the month. Meeting times are posted on the school website and in the weekly school newsletter, and all meetings are open to the public. Minutes for the meetings are kept at the school office. They are available to anyone requesting to see them.

2008-09 Major Board Initiatives and Accomplishments

In the September 2008 board meeting, improved "Transparency & Accountability" were highlighted as major board goals for the school year. This was immediately followed by participation in a board communications and effectiveness survey sponsored by a U of M graduate school student.

In October the board mandated the formation of a Site Search Committee to address the identification of site alternatives for the 2009-2010 school year. This committee launched a two track process to both identify site alternatives and address the review of the school's vision, mission, and core values and align board, faculty, and administrative leadership and develop identified operational improvements as appropriate. This site evaluation process culminated in June 2009 with the commitment and lease signing for the former Crises Nursery site. Efforts to review and realign the vision, mission, and core values and develop needed improvements are ongoing.

In January, the board launched an initiative to address leadership evaluation and development. Tom Klein, a parent and leading member of the Site Committee, was engaged as a consultant to initiate and guide this process, starting with the Board Retreat which was held at the "Bridging"

site in Bloomington. The day included team building exercises and distribution of an updated “Board Book” assembled and distributed in both electronic and printed media.

A formal evaluation of Administrative and Faculty Co-Chairs began in June of 2009.

Looking forward, key Board initiatives for 2009-2010 include:

- Overseeing the continued development and alignment of vision, mission, and core values with operational and strategic leadership.
- Ongoing development of leadership skills and more frequent performance evaluations and review
- Continued review and structuring of essential policy and practice.
- Updating our by-laws and operations to comply with the revised Charter School laws.
- Newly required board training
- Further clarification of a renewed governance model and delegation of authority
- Extending accountability with the review and development of revised performance measures and processes.
- Renewed effort to address a cohesive strategic plan.

Additional board related outcomes under consideration for the action plan include:

- Board Member Job Descriptions
- Revised statements of Board Member and Officers Duties & Responsibilities
- A revised Administrative Lead Job Description
- An expanded formal Board Calendar
- Formal statement of Committee Mandates
- Specific Development plans for board members (Governance Training and skills development planning)

9. Watershed Teaching Staff Information, 2008-2009

Teacher Name	File Folder	Assignment	Status
Kristin Aitchison	444397	Theater	Returned for 09-10
Steve Andrews	298568	Special Education	Returned for 09-10
Christina Beck	334509	English	Did not return for 09-10
Ellen Bielejeski	264875	Math	Began in February 2009; did not return for 09-10
Paul Janowicz	221074	Math	Resigned January 2009.
Kimberly Johnson	421358	Spanish & ELL	Did not return for 09-10
Rachel Koniar	424352	Art	Returned for 09-10
Matt McElrath	436417	Social Studies	Returned for 09-10
Mark McGarraugh	998885	Social Studies	Returned for 09-10
Margaret Rozycki	391580	Art/Social Studies	Returned for 09-10
Ben Timko	438647	Science	Returned for 09-10

Note: Watershed's teacher retention rate increased in 08-09 from the previous year, to 64%. The previous year, it was approximately 30%. It may be that increased financial and organizational stability contributed to the increased retention rate.

10. School admissions

Watershed High School admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its education policies, admissions, and athletic or other school-administered programs.

Watershed uses a one-page enrollment form (see attached). After students enroll, they and their families fill out additional paperwork to complete registration and satisfy reporting requirements. Two of the information forms are attached. All forms are on our website, <http://www.watershedhs.org/>

12. Please include a copy of the state report card for your school. Found at:
<http://education.state.mn.us/ReportCard2005/>

13. School's current Non-Profit Status. Found at:
<http://www.ag.state.mn.us/Charities/CharitySearch.asp>

Attachments:

Enrollment Form
Student Introduction Form
Family Questionnaire