

ENDAZHI-NITAAWIGING

The Place Where It Grows

PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL



ANNUAL REPORT

SCHOOL YEAR 2023-24

WORLD'S BEST WORKFORCE & ANNUAL REPORT

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1. Introduction

The Board of Directors is humbled to offer Endazhi-Nitaawiging's second annual report to our community, our partners and the state of Minnesota. It offers a chance for reflection, growth and gratitude following our second full year of operation.

The 2023-24 school year was a year of growth. We began addressing many of the challenges we faced in our opening year. We moved into a new, permanent building built for our school community by the Red Lake Nation. We stabilized our administrative team – Sylvia Fred began and ended the years as school leader, and under her leadership the school has made a point of bringing together a team of educators and support staff committed to the school's vision and mission. Together, they started to lay the groundwork of systems and culture that will help make the school the fulfillment of a generations' long dream of sovereign educational excellence committed to restoring Ojibwe language and culture. Although Endazhi-Nitaawiging still has a long journey to complete before we have fulfilled that dream, we have traveled an enormous distance from where we were when ended our first year.

As we look back, we must express our gratitude to the Red Lake Nation, for their belief in our vision and their ongoing support, to our partners, Osprey Wilds and the NACA Inspired Schools Networks, and especially to our staff, students and community, who have put their faith and trust in our Endazhi-Nitaawiging.

Now, as we begin our third full year of operation, we are even stronger. As a circle of educators, students and families we are committed to grow with Endazhi-Nitaawiging. This means that we will continue learning. It also means that we will make a concerted effort to improve from last year's startup experience in specific ways. We will, for instance:

- ...build on our recognized accomplishments in the field of culturally restorative land-based learners.
- ...deepen our commitment to student wellness by expanding our commitment to land-based learning, Anishinaabe horse knowledge and other restorative practices.
- ...establish basic academic routines, beginning with an annual assessment program that incorporates [NWEA MAP Growth](#), [Minnesota's academic standards assessments](#), and teacher developed assessments of wellness and Ojibwe language acquisition.
- ...stabilize our relations with staff by grounding them in positive professional development experiences that breathe with our school's vision, mission and values.
- ...create reliable operations systems.
- ...develop more regular Board development routines with the support of our partners at Osprey Wilds.

As a school, as a community of educators, students and families, Endazhi-Nitaawiging has a long journey. As in this first year, next year there will be ends and beginnings. There will be struggle and joy. In the many years to come, we look forward to submitting further annual reports that will make up our patient record of all these things as we move forward.

On behalf of our dedicated community,

Naomi Long, Treasurer

Hieu Nguyen, Director

Jeffrey Lagou, Director

Daniel Jorgenson, Director (Teacher Representative)

Endazhi-Nitaawiging 2024 Annual Report

2. School Information

CONTACT INFORMATION

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GRADES SERVED

K-7

YEAR OPENED

Fall 2022

OVERVIEW

Located in Northern Minnesota and serving kindergarten through 6th graders, Endazhi-Nitaawiging Charter School aims to strengthen the Red Lake Nation by providing our children with an education grounded in Ojibwe values that is academically rigorous and celebrates Indigenous culture. Our school is preparing students to receive so much more than an ordinary education. We pride ourselves on creating a unique, exciting environment that embraces all types of learners and promotes growth both academically and personally. Students and families are also welcomed into a dynamic and supportive community.

At the heart of Ojibwe culture is the connection between individuals and Mother Earth.

Anishinaabeg (Indigenous people) did not separate themselves from the land; our Mother Earth's connection is the umbilical cord to our existence. Indigenized education is the restoration of who we are to the places we call home.

OUR SECOND YEAR

Endazhi-Nitaawiging opened its doors in Fall 2022 with an ambitious mission: to prepare each student for college with an enhanced knowledge of the Ojibwe language, culture, leadership, and environmental stewardship. Our first year was one of excitement and struggle. Our second was one of stabilization and growth. Last fall, in November, we moved into our permanent home – a new school facility built with the support of the Red Lake Nation. It will anchor our students, our faculty and our community for years to come. In addition to this significant milestone, the school community took important steps called for in our Strategic Plan that strengthen Endazhi-Nitaawiging's academic programs and school operations:

- recommitted to the school wellness program, incorporating Annashinaabe
- hired a Curriculum Developer, who began developing a rigorous and thorough set of instructional materials grounded in the Ojibwe language and culture, and began professional development of the school staff in those instructional materials and the academic language they employ.

- established basic academic routines, beginning with an annual assessment program that incorporates NWEA MAP Growth, Minnesota’s academic standards assessments, and teacher developed assessments of wellness and Ojibwe language acquisition.
- stabilized our relations with staff by grounding them in positive professional development experiences that breathe with our school’s vision, mission and values.
- created reliable operations systems.
- developed more regular Board development routines with the support of our partners at Osprey Wilds.

MISSION AND VISION

Our Mission

...to prepare each student for college with an enhanced knowledge of the Ojibwe language, culture, leadership, and environmental stewardship.

Our Vision

...to create confident leaders grounded in their true inherent identities and to ensure that they are academically, socially, and spiritually prepared to positively change the community and world.

Our Core Values

The educational philosophy and school culture of Endazhi-Nitaawiging will be grounded in the Seven Values that inform the school’s Vision and Mission: manaaji’idiwin (respect) nibwaakaawin (wisdom), zoongide’ewin (courage), enigok izhichigewin (commitment), mashkawi’ayaawin (resilience), bagosendamowin (hope), and niigaaniziwin (leadership). It is through this lens of Ojibwe language and culture that students will learn western academic subjects (literacy and math, science and social studies, art and music, physical education, and health). Endazhi-Nitaawiging will also serve a restorative purpose, integrating social and emotional wellness and land-based learning into each school day in order to reconnect students and families with Maamaanaan Akiing, or in English, the Mother Earth.

AUTHORIZER INFORMATION

Endazhi-Nitaawiging is proud to partner with its authorizer, Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center. Osprey Wilds and Endazhi-Nitaawiging share a committed belief that we must educate a generation of young people who will grow up to hold a holistic understanding of the environment and the responsibilities of citizenship. Osprey Wilds has played an active role nurturing our school since it opened in 2022. With their support we have grown and are in a better position to thrive.

The authorizing mission of Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center is to ensure quality academic and environmental literacy outcomes for students in Minnesota by conducting effective oversight and evaluation of its authorized schools, providing strategic support to schools, and making informed and merit-based decisions about its portfolio of charter schools.

The authorizing vision of Osprey Wilds is to authorize a portfolio of high performing charter schools that instill a connection and commitment to the environment in their school communities, while working towards a healthy planet where all people live in balance with the Earth.

Erin Anderson, Director of Charter School Authorizing
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ospreywilds.org/charter-school-division/

3. Implementation of Primary and Additional Statutory Purposes

The primary purpose of Endazhi-Nitaawiging is to improve all student learning and achievement. With this Annual Report, Endazhi-Nitaawiging is reporting on its implementation of this primary purpose.

Our commitment is to offer each student an education grounded in their true inherent identities to ensure they are academically, socially, and spiritually prepared to change for the better our community and world. Where traditional western schools are deficit-oriented, at Endazhi-Nitaawiging, teachers, and staff will be committed to realizing the unique gifts of all students. Our smaller class sizes focus on student wellness, encouragement of intellectual curiosity, and a wide range of hands-on experiences that will support academic performance for all students. We believe this stance will be especially important for our Native American student population, students identified as disabled, as well as students with other special needs such as those who are highly mobile or homeless, low income, or English-learners.

We will use State required measures to assess student learning and performance in keeping with all Minnesota requirements. We plan on a set of specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timely (SMART) goals that align with State standards including goals for Academic Performance, Individualized Student Performance in expectations for 1 year's growth on NWEA MAP and 3rd Grade MCA Using NWEA MAP, Individualized Student Attendance, Individualized Student Re enrollment, Student Satisfaction, and Family Satisfaction. The Head of School and the Board of Directors will develop a school performance dashboard that aligns with the school's contractual goals with its authorizer and includes student attendance and grade completion, student achievement and growth on a comprehensive battery of assessments including NWEA MAP, and the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs) and Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS) in reading, mathematics, and science (annual assessments required by the State of Minnesota). In addition, the Head of School will also make annual updates to the Endazhi-Nitaawiging Board of Directors and the Red Lake Tribal Council.

Endazhi-Nitaawiging will evaluate our progress through routine planning and continuous improvement practices, including those described by the Minnesota Department of Education. That process will be anchored by a strategic plan and goals, approved by the Board of Directors and developed by the Head of School in collaboration with school staff, families, and members of the community. The Board and the Head of School will develop a portfolio that combines western measures of academic performance with innovative Indigenized measures of student well-being, culturally relevant and responsive family and

student satisfaction surveys, and student progress learning spoken and written Ojibwe.

Student wellness will be measured using a “Wellness Wheel,” originally developed by NACA, that we will adapt to meet the Red Lake community’s specific needs. We will also measure the wellness of students, families, and school culture by asking our families and students to complete annual satisfaction surveys, to be adapted from NACA’s annual school environment survey. An assessment of spoken Ojibwe language will be designed by our Head of School and faculty, with the support of Ojibwe language experts, local elders, and knowledge keepers. We will also work alongside our colleagues within the NISN network of schools that have already created and implemented their own Indigenous language assessments for Indigenous languages such as Lakota and Keres.

Additionally, Endazhi-Nitaawiging will fulfill the following other statutory purposes:

- Increase learning opportunities for all pupils.
- Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods.
- Measure learning outcomes and create different and innovative forms of measuring outcomes. Establish new forms of accountability for schools.
- Create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site.

Endazhi-Nitaawiging will report its implementation of this (these) additional purpose(s) in its annual report.

Increase learning opportunities for all pupils.

No other school in the area offers a culturally sustaining and revitalizing educational program. We will provide a comprehensive and thoroughly Indigenized course of study that unifies: 1) a sound education that exceeds the Minnesota Academic Standards, 2) integration of Ojibwe language and culture, 3) daily focus on student wellness, 4) land-based learning, and 5) environmental education experiences. Our educational approach is innovative for our area and will transform the way our community perceives the education system; everything our students do will be learned through an Indigenous lens.

Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods.

Our teachers will integrate Ojibwe language and culture into instructional practices in the classroom. We will challenge every educator at the school to develop a thoroughly Indigenized pedagogy: a way of teaching that reflects Ojibwe ways of knowing and that employs the Ojibwe language as the medium of instruction whenever possible.

Measure learning outcomes and create different and innovative forms of measuring outcomes.

In addition to measuring student achievement in the State-mandated content areas, we will measure personal well-being, student and family satisfaction, and oral and written skills in Ojibwemowin. As the school prepares to open, the Head of school will work with staff members, national experts and partners, area educators, and local elders, and knowledge keepers to devise innovative tools that measure student progress in these areas. Our colleagues in the NACA Inspired Schools Network (NISN), a nationally recognized leader in furthering an Indigenous education approach, will support us as we develop a

Wellness Wheel based on their model to measure student well-being. NISN will also help us adapt their unique school environment survey, which anonymously gathers perceptual data from students, families, and staff. We will look to other schools committed to teaching Ojibwe language and culture for leading examples of oral and written language assessments.

Establish new forms of accountability for schools.

Twenty years ago, the Red Lake Nation established an Accountability Decree. Endazhi-Nitaawiging is committed to the spirit of this community-based Accountability Decree, and will use it to guide us as we work to support academic excellence, prosperity, independence, environmental knowledge, cultural truth, and strength for the Red Lake Nation. We recognize the importance of Minnesota’s school accountability system, and will augment it with concurrent systems that enable us to honor the Decree.

Create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site.

We cannot envision an innovative school like Endazhi-Nitaawiging without also seeing how our school will create new professional opportunities for teachers. Teachers will develop, implement, and improve our educational program as they begin to reassemble the pieces of the Red Lake Nation that have been shattered by the colonial experience. Our faculty will learn to develop Indigenized pedagogies and integrate land-based learning and environmental learning experiences into instruction. They will participate in ongoing professional development to aid in this work, and in doing so, they will build a deeper understanding of our culture and join the next generation of Ojibwe knowledge keepers.

4. Student Enrollment & Demographics

STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Since its opening in the 2022-23 school year, Endazhi-Nitaawiging has been serving the communities in and surrounding the Red Lake Nation. In our first year of operation, we enrolled students from kindergarten to fifth grade. We plan on adding a grade each year until the school is a K-8 program. In the 2023-24 school year we added sixth grade. In 2024-25, we added seventh grade.

Our student body is similar to that of the region, which is the same as Minnesota’s Red Lake School District, the school district in which we are located.

For the grade level enrollment, we used Endazhi-Nitaawiging’s End of Year Attendance List.

Number of Students Enrolled	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Preschool or PreK	NA	NA	NA	NA
Kindergarten	NA	NA	7	17
1st Grade	NA	NA	14	15
2nd Grade	NA	NA	10	18
3rd Grade	NA	NA	8	11
4th Grade	NA	NA	9	12

5th Grade	NA	NA	7	8
6th Grade	NA	NA	NA	7
7th Grade	NA	NA	NA	NA
8th Grade	NA	NA	NA	NA
9th Grade	NA	NA	NA	NA
10th Grade	NA	NA	NA	NA
11th Grade	NA	NA	NA	NA
12th Grade	NA	NA	NA	NA
Total			54	88
Total ADM (Average Daily Membership) for year				

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

[This demographic data is taken from the Minnesota Report Card.](#)

Demographic Trends	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Total Enrollment	NA	73	90
Special Education	NA	3	11
English Learners	NA	0	
Free/Reduced Priced Lunch	NA	55	76
Black, not of Hispanic Origin	NA	0	
Hispanic/Latino	NA	0	
Asian/Pacific Islander	NA	0	
American Indian/Alaskan Native	NA	72	87
Other Indigenous Peoples			2
White, not of Hispanic Origin	NA	0	
Two or more races		1	1

5. Student Attendance, Attrition & Mobility

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Using the End of the Year Attendance list, our student attendance rate was 81.9 percent in 2022-23. The 54 students enrolled at the time that report was prepared were enrolled a total of 8124 days, and absent a total of 1455 days.

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Consistent Attendance	NA	81.9	

Students attended 95 percent or more of the days they were enrolled. Forty-seven students attended 90 percent or more of the days they were enrolled.

Using this baseline data, Endazhi-Nitaawiging will measure future changes in enrollment and attendance, including student re-enrollment, student attrition and student mobility rates.

6. Educational Approach & Curriculum | Innovative Practices & Implementation

Key Success and Challenges

In 2023-24, Endazhi-Nitaawiging took significant strides to develop and organize its approach to the teaching and learning of Ojibwe Language and Culture.

We secured several curriculum sets, giving us some rich options for implementation. Ojibwe language instruction is a very demanding profession. Understanding it well enough to be re-presented in a way that resonates with Ojibwe ways of knowing, let alone translating it to be authentically grounded within said ways of knowing, is very time demanding. We are lucky to have some that are culturally aligned, but the task of translation is ever present.

- Ojibwe Seasonal Lesson Plans (developed by Bdote Learning Center, distributed through Midwest Indigenous Immersion Network)
- Lessons of Our Land (Indian Land Tenure Foundation)
- Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom
- School Garden Lesson Plans
- Reclaiming Sacred Tobacco Curriculum
- Culture-Based Arts Integration Curriculum
- Native Skywatchers Curriculum (physical, spiral bound, needs to be scanned)
- Native Arts Curriculum (physical, spiral bound, laminated, needs to be scanned)

Because these curricula come from many sources, we have to align them across many sets of standards, including: MDE standard codes, Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS Three Dimensional Learning), National Agricultural Literacy Outcomes, National Education Content Standards, and Common Core Connections. By tracking the documented alignment with each of these models, a more comprehensive view of what students are learning can be taken away, and outdated standards codes may be more easily updated (for instance, from MDE's old science standards to NGSS). Our curriculum developer, Alex Kmett, has been cataloging lesson plans and the standards that they are aligned to in a [spreadsheet](#) so that teachers can easily navigate to finding a lesson plan that fits their needs. As teachers report back on which lesson plans they utilize and/or create their own, we will continue to expand upon and update our school's [curriculum framework](#) that we began developing in 2022.

[Ojibwe Language Arts \(OLA\) Scope and Sequence](#) – We have a robust scope and sequence document that maps out the grade levels that various grammatical aspects of Ojibwe language are introduced, expanded on, and eventually mastered. It has not yet reached such a granular level as to be broken out week by week for each grade level with associated lesson plans. Because there is not a large pool of credentialed proficient speaker applicants for immersion education (an issue seen in Ojibwe language-medium education across the entire Great Lakes region), full implementation of the Scope and Sequence is part of a long term plan while we work to build capacity through expanded staffing and utilization of educational opportunities to increase staff language proficiency.¹

¹ Hermes, M. (2007). Moving Toward the Language: Reflections on Teaching in an Indigenous-Immersion School. *Journal of American Indian Education* (46)1.

This academic year, staff utilized [The Global Seal of Biliteracy's Self Assessment](#) quizzes, which are based on National Council of State Supervisors for Languages-American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages (NCSSFL-ACTFL) proficiency levels, to assess their own Ojibwe language proficiency. However, the "can-do" statements that the quizzes utilize are awkward, and the results do not seem as accurate as they could be. The scores are estimated based on participants' self-reported ability to engage in a wide variety of linguistic tasks and a variety of factors can skew the data, so it is important to note that the *scores are not definitive*, but can at least give a glimpse of the linguistic environment of the school and some baseline data. 9 of 21 staff members provided data. 5 of 6 teachers provided data. 4 of 15 other staff (including admin, specials, paras, cultural support) provided data. Of those who participated, the average overall score was ~46 ("Intermediate Low" proficiency) when totalling data related to Interpretive Viewing or Listening, Interpretive Reading, Interpersonal Listening and Speaking, Interpersonal Reading/Writing, Presentational Speaking, and Presentational Writing. Elders who speak the language as their first language are excused from self-reporting their language proficiency.

Our Curriculum Developer, Alex Kmett, has provided many [resources for teachers](#) to build their own language proficiency and to aid in their instruction. Resources are organized to include Elder Audio recordings, Grammar Resources, Lyric Translations, [Resources for Parents](#) (introductory level materials), Syllabics, Vocabulary Lists (many related to our school's seasonal cultural activities), and more. Permission from Rand Valentine has been secured for our school to use his Western Ojibwe Dictionary (WOD) program in any way that benefits Endazhi-Nitaawiging, and Alex provided a demonstration for staff in Spring 2024 on how WOD can be used.

Key Pedagogical Approaches: Colonization and Education

At Endazhi-Nitaawiging, we imagine a school transformed by a commitment to provide the families and children of the Red Lake Nation a culturally sustaining and revitalizing education. We will prepare students for success by offering them an education that puts them on the path to college and career readiness and restores their understanding of who they are as an Indigenous people. This means we will meet all [Minnesota Academic Standards](#). It also means that we must surpass Minnesota's basic expectations and implement a culturally sustaining and revitalizing educational program. Our students will receive a far more comprehensive education than they would if they attended a traditional western elementary or middle school.

The Anishinaabe culture has been shattered by centuries of colonization.² For this reason, when our children go to school, they rarely, if ever, see themselves reflected in the hallways and classrooms, curriculum or textbooks, the playground or during extracurricular activities. The result is students who are disengaged learners. Additionally, many of our children, even from a young age, experience traumatic events not addressed in a school setting, further exacerbating their learning ability.

Colonization took away our peoples' traditional ways of education. As generations of Red Lake Tribal members were sent to boarding schools, or taught in westernized public schools, we found ourselves without a complete understanding of how we learned our Ojibwe language and cultural values. As a

² [McCarty, T., & Lee, T. \(2014\). Critical Culturally Sustaining/Revitalizing Pedagogy and Indigenous Education Sovereignty. *Harvard Educational Review*, 84\(1\), 101-124.](#) McCarty and Lee argue that schools can play a successful role reclaiming Indigenous culture and language when their educational practices are based in indigenous culture, culturally relevant and culturally responsive, and when they are supported by regular community based accountability.

result, few remain who learned to speak our language at home as their first language or have been raised in a household with a thorough understanding of our ways of understanding the world and our place in it as a people. If we do learn our language, it is in school as a second language.

The ultimate goal of the educational program at Endazhi-Nitaawiging is to create a school where our students can see themselves in all that they are learning. We are committed to the belief that, by seeing themselves in every aspect of their school, our students will be more deeply engaged in their education. To accomplish this, we will need to foster a learning environment for young people grounded in Anishinaabe culture that focuses not just on instruction in academics but also on social-emotional well-being. Doing so will result in increased learning opportunities for all pupils. At Endazhi-Nitaawiging our students will succeed because at our school everyone -- educators and staff, students and their families - will be committed to collecting and reassembling the pieces of our culture.

Educational Philosophy and School Culture

The educational philosophy and school culture at Endazhi-Nitaawiging are grounded in the Seven Values that inform the school's Vision and Mission: *manaaji'idiwin* (respect) *nibwaakaawin* (wisdom), *zoongide'ewin* (courage), *enigok izhichigewin* (commitment), *mashkawi'ayaawin* (resilience), *bagosendamowin* (hope), and *niigaaniziwin* (leadership). This is much more than a commitment to traditional western academic success, more than a commitment to academic mastery of Ojibwe language or an historic understanding of the Anishinaabe people. We will teach our students to enjoy that natural curiosity about the world and to love learning about their place in the world. We will work with our students and their families on social and emotional wellness, integrating into our daily schedule. Our purpose as a school is to help all of our students learn their true inherent identities through a lens of Ojibwe language and culture and to build on a sense of who we are as a revitalized and thriving Red Lake community.

Anishinaabe culture understands that people should be at one with *Maamaanaan Akiing*, or in English, the Mother Earth. We are living beings who should thrive in harmony with the world around them and the plants and animals that populate it. We see no difference between the people and the land. Western living has severed our ties with *Maamaanaan Akiing* and taught us to live apart from it. At Endazhi-Nitaawiging, we will seek to restore that relationship through land-based learning which will be a part of every school day, offered not only with our students, but also to members of the Red Lake community more broadly. We will plug our students and the community back into *Maamaanaan Akiing*. Then the western academic subjects -- literacy and math, science and social studies, art and music, physical education and health -- will all take on new meaning.

An Education Program Integrating Land-Based Learning and Environmental Education

To make this happen we must totally transform the school experience. At Endazhi-Nitaawiging, we envision an educational program that serves this important restorative purpose.

Endazhi-Nitaawiging began as an elementary school, admitting young ones from kindergarten to fifth grade in fall 2022. Each fall after that we will add a grade until we run through the eighth grade. Although we ultimately envision that Endazhi-Nitaawiging will be a high school, one where kindergarteners can see themselves earning a diploma and going on successfully to college and career, during the life of our first charter, we will not reach that point. In the final year of this charter, the Endazhi-Nitaawiging Board of Directors will decide whether the school will continue growing to include the high school grades through

a charter extension. We project an average of fifteen students per grade, with a higher number of students in lower grades. For a table that summarizes our projected enrollment, see Section VIII, Financial Management.

Our school is the sister organization of the Waasabiik Ojibwemotaadiwin Immersion Program, a school for three and four year olds where children learn the Ojibwe language and culture. Although we will recruit more than half our students from other sources, the Waasabiik Ojibwemotaadiwin Immersion Program will serve as a primary source for each year's kindergarten cohort and as the foundation for our school's language and cultural education program.

Our students will be organized into homerooms that combine traditional western grade level age groupings with a clan structure adapted from Anishinaabe culture. The clan structure teaches our people basic relationships and responsibilities to each other and the earth. That clan structure is complicated and sacred, so at Endazhi-Nitaawiging, we will adapt it for the school's purposes, organizing our students into five groups aligned with basic elements: Earth, Wind, Water, Fire and Love. Each clan has its own thematic focus:

- **Earth-** Environmental stewardship: taking care of Mother Earth
- **Wind-** Sustainable renewable energy advocates: climate change knowledge and local impacts
- **Water-** Water is life, water protectors: watershed knowledge, natural springs, and water beings
- **Fire-** Spiritual knowledge keepers: care for life paths, ancestral knowledge, localizing relations
- **Love-** Kinship enforcers: will practice skills, to connect and keep family and community together

Because these different clans teach different relationships and responsibilities, we will rotate them so students have a holistic understanding of their obligations to each other and the world around them.

School Year

The school year and school day at Endazhi-Nitaawiging is thoroughly Indigenized, organized so our students and staff are able to live our school's Seven Values. Students attend 163 days. [The calendar is posted here, on the school's website.](#)

Our school year takes into account Anishinaabe and Red Lake understandings of the changing seasons and what our people do at different times in the year. Our calendar is tied to our land and its creatures, our families and broader community. It is an important aspect how we teach respect for the environment, sustainability and a healthy planet. Through this approach, our students, their families and our community develop a deeper understanding of their shared relationship with Maamaanaan Akiing, or mother earth.

The school calendar will also serve as a curricular framework, organizing how we will teach traditional western subjects such as science, social studies, health, physical education, art and music. As you can see in the table below,

At Endazhi-Nitaawiging, we believe that you do not teach culture; you use culture to teach. The best way to understand how our education program will work is by example. Consider the unique way our students will learn a typical western concept like water quality. Our lake, the Red Lake, is the life's blood of the seven clans of the Red Lake Ojibwe people. Our stories teach us to be in a close respectful relationship with mother earth, to take care of her. After generations of western style education we nearly fished the lake out, which would have crushed our identity as a people. When we teach science, we will also teach

the importance of our Lake to our people. We will restore the connection between our students, our people and our Lake, feeding our spirit, bringing our spirit back to our people. They will learn traditional understandings of waterways, fishing, ethnobotany. This will transform our students' scientific understanding. They will understand water quality in a totally different way.

At Endazhi-Nitaawiging, we understand ourselves to be obligated to support the unique genius of every individual student who enrolls in our school. We will engage each and every learner, meeting them where they come to us to take them as far as they can go. Our teachers will be expected to know each of their students as a learner and to encourage them to be curious and challenge them to excel. Although we want our teachers and staff to enjoy good work/life balance, we also will expect them to be there for students when they need a teacher to help them master a skill or to get guidance as they confront academic or personal challenges. Our school day and calendar is designed with this understanding in mind.

School Day

Students at Endazhi-Nitaawiging experience a school day designed to bring our Indigenized educational program to life for our students. Every day, students learn western subjects, such as literacy, niiyogaabo@redlakecharterschool.com mathematics and science, along with Ojibwe language and ways of knowing and understanding. Every day is infused with Indigenized practices like smudging, song and meditation that promote wellness, social-emotional learning and focus. Beyond those Indigenous practices, the western subjects will be thoroughly Indigenized. This means rather than learning about American History from the point of a colonizer, we will teach American History from the point-of-view of Native nations. Rather than limiting instruction in traditional western subjects like math, science, social studies, art and music to the classroom, we teach that all the places where these content areas are present in cultural practices such as harvesting rice, making maple sugar, and our thirteen-month calendar. We are firm believers in the Indigenous genius that exists among our people, which is reflected in the curriculum we will develop.

Special Education and English Language Learners

We know that some students need more time to keep pace, whether because due to personal reasons they were not able to keep up or because they found a subject difficult to understand. Teachers will individualize instruction and offer homework that will help students practice skills, but sometimes that is not enough.

In the data we sent to the Minnesota Report Card, we reported three special education students and no English learners.

The special education students at Endazhi-Nitaawiging are fully integrated into the academic program at our school every day, so they can benefit from the full experience of our school's unique approach to teaching and learning. We meet the needs of our special education students through a balance of contract and full time Endazhi-Nitaawiging staff. Through contract we employ an experienced special education director. That contract also brings with it the necessary student services expertise to administer IEPs. We also have a full time staff member committed to supporting our special education services on a day to day basis as they work with their fellow students in the mainstream academic environment at Endazhi-Nitaawiging.

7. Academic Performance: Goals & Benchmarks | Educational Effectiveness: Assessment & Evaluation

Analysis pending availability of data.

The 2022-23 school year was Endazhi-Nitaawiging’s first year of operation, so the assessment data collected this year is our baseline, the data from which we will measure progress. The year was characterized by excitement, struggles and growth. We experienced a higher than expected staff turnover and struggled to establish a proper assessment routine so there are gaps in some of the data, especially those measures not required by the state of Minnesota. We acknowledge that there is data missing from this report and are committed not only to improve our assessment practices in the 2023-24 school year, but also using that data to inform the work we do improving academic outcomes for our students.

PROGRESS ON OSPREY WILDS CONTRACTUAL ACADEMIC GOALS & WBWF ALIGNMENT

Indicator 1: Mission Related Outcomes

School Goal: Over the period of the contract, students at Endazhi-Nitaawiging will demonstrate proficiency in Ojibwe language acquisition.

Measure 1.1 [CCR] – 5 Points: From FY23-26 the aggregate percentage of students in grades K-8 who demonstrate grade level Ojibwe proficiency on a curriculum based assessment will be at least 50%.

Measure 1.2 [CCR] – 5 Points: From FY23-26, the aggregate percentage of students in grades K-8 who meet their individual Wellness Wheel goals annually will be at least 50%.

Key Measures & Results for this Goal: We spent last year and this summer working to develop a sound measure of Ojibwe language proficiency. We will collect and report baseline data in the 2023-24 school year and report change from that baseline in the years that follow.

Indicator 2: English Language Learners

Goal: Endazhi-Nitaawiging does not have a contractual goal for English language learners because it does not serve a significant population of English Learners.

Key Measures & Results for this Goal: Not applicable.

Indicator 3: Reading Growth

Goal: Over the period of the contract, Endazhi-Nitaawiging students will demonstrate growth in reading as measured by state assessments and nationally normed assessments.

WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal: Reading Well by 3rd Grade [RG3]: All students in third grade

achieve grade-level literacy and Achievement Gap Closure [AGC]: All racial and economic achievement gaps between students are closed.

Key Measures & Results for this Goal:

Measure 3.1 [CCR] – 1 Point: In aggregate, from FY23-FY26, the overall percentage of students whose achievement level on the statewide assessments for reading (as measured by North Star Academic Progress) improved on statewide assessments is equal to or greater than the state.

Measure 3.2 [CCR] – 2 Points: In aggregate, from FY23-FY26, the overall percentage of students whose achievement level decreased or stayed "does not meet standards" on statewide assessments for reading (as measured by North Star Academic Progress) is equal to or less than the state.

Measure 3.2 [CCR] – 2 Points: In aggregate, from FY23-FY26, the overall percentage of students whose achievement level decreased or stayed "does not meet standards" on statewide assessments for reading (as measured by North Star Academic Progress) is equal to or less than the state.

Measure 3.4 [AGC] – 5 Points: In aggregate, from FY23-FY27 at least 50 percent of below grade level students in grades K-8 will achieve at least 1.2 years of expected growth as measured by fall to fall NWEA expected growth.

Results: In the 2022-23 school year 30.4 percent of our students were proficient in reading based on the MCAs. We will measure growth from that baseline beginning the 2023-24 school year.

Indicator 4: Math Growth

Goal: Over the period of the contract, Endazhi-Nitaawiging students will demonstrate growth in math as measured by state assessments and nationally normed assessments.

WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal: Achievement Gap Closure [AGC]: All racial and economic achievement gaps between students are closed.

Key Measures & Results for this Goal:

Measure 4.1 [CCR] – 1 Point: In aggregate, from FY23-FY26, the overall percentage of students whose achievement level on the statewide assessments for reading (as measured by North Star Academic Progress) improved on statewide assessments is equal to or greater than the state.

Measure 4.2 [CCR] – 2 Points: In aggregate, from FY23-FY26, the overall percentage of students whose achievement level decreased or stayed "does not meet standards" on statewide assessments for reading (as measured by North Star Academic Progress) is equal to or less than the state.

Measure 4.3 [CCR] – 12 Points: From FY23 to FY27, the aggregate percentage of students in grades K-8 who meet their fall to fall NWEA expected growth target will be at least 50%.

Measure 4.4 [AGC] – 5 Points: In aggregate, from FY23-FY27 at least 50 percent of below grade level students in grades K-8 will achieve at least 1.2 years of expected growth as measured by fall to fall NWEA

expected growth.

Results: in the 2022-23 school year 4.8 percent of our students were proficient in math based on the MCAs. We will measure growth from that baseline beginning the 2023-24 school year.

Indicator 5: Reading Proficiency

Goal: Over the period of the contract, Endazhi-Nitaawiging students will demonstrate proficiency in reading as measured by state assessments..

WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal: Reading Well by 3rd Grade [RG3]: All students in third grade achieve grade-level literacy and Achievement Gap Closure [AGC]: All racial and economic achievement gaps between students are closed.

Key Measures & Results for this Goal:

Measure 5.1 [RG3] – 2 Points: From FY23-26, the school’s aggregate proficiency index score for American Indian or Alaska Native students in grade 3 will be equal to or greater than that of the state for the same grade and same student group.

Measure 5.2 [RG3] – 2 Points: From FY23-26, the school’s aggregate proficiency index score for students in grade 3 will be equal to or greater than that of the local district (ISD 38 – Red Lake School District) for the same grade.

Measure 5.3 [CCR] – 2 Points: In aggregate, from FY23-26 the school’s aggregate proficiency index score for American Indian or Alaska Native students grades 4-8 will be equal to or greater than that of the state for the same grades and same student group.

Measure 5.4 [CCR] – 2 Points: In aggregate, from FY23-26 the school’s aggregate proficiency index score for all students grades 4-8 will be equal to or greater than that of the local district (ISD 38 – Red Lake School District) for the same grades.

Measure 5.5 [AGC] – 2 Points: In aggregate, from FY23-26 the school’s aggregate proficiency index score for students in the Special Education group will be equal to or greater than that of the state for the same grades and same student group.

Measure 5.6 [AGC] – 2 Points: In aggregate, from FY23-26 the school’s aggregate proficiency index score for students in the Special Education group will be equal to or greater than that of the local district (ISD 38 – Red Lake School District) for the same grades.

Measure 5.7 [RG3] – 3 Points: From FY23-26 the aggregate percentage of students in grades K-2 who are proficient in reading will be at least 50% as measured by NWEA MAP spring administration.

Results: In the 2022-23 school year 30.4 percent of our students were proficient in reading based on the MCAs. We will measure growth from that baseline beginning the 2023-24 school year. We did not administer the NWEA in the 2022-23 school year, so we will collect baseline data in the 2023-24 school year and measure progress from that baseline beginning in the 2024-25 school year.

Indicator 6: Math Proficiency

Goal: Over the period of the contract, Endazhi-Nitaawiging students will demonstrate proficiency in math as measured by state assessment.

WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal: Achievement Gap Closure [AGC]: All racial and economic achievement gaps between students are closed.

Key Measures & Results for this Goal:

Measure 6.1 [CCR] – 2 Points: In aggregate, from FY23-26 the school’s aggregate proficiency index score for American Indian or Alaska Native students will be equal to or greater than that of the state for the same grades and same student group.

Measure 6.2 [CCR] – 4 Points: In aggregate, from FY23-26 the school’s aggregate proficiency index score for all students will be equal to or greater than that of the local district (ISD 38 – Red Lake School District) for the same grades.

Measure 6.3 [AGC] – 2 Points: In aggregate, from FY23-26 the school’s aggregate proficiency index score for students in the Special Education group will be equal to or greater than that of the state for the same grades and same student group.

Measure 6.4 [AGC] – 2 Points: In aggregate, from FY23-26 the school’s aggregate proficiency index score for students in the Special Education group will be equal to or greater than that of the local district (ISD 38 – Red Lake School District) for the same grades

Measure 6.5 [CCR] – 3 Points: From FY23-26 the aggregate percentage of students in grades K-2 who are proficient in math will be at least 50% as measured by NWEA MAP spring administration.

Results: In the 2022-23 school year 4.8 percent of our students were proficient in math based on the MCAs. We will measure growth from that baseline beginning the 2023-24 school year. We did not administer the NWEA in the 2022-23 school year, so we will collect baseline data in the 2023-24 school year and measure progress from that baseline beginning in the 2024-25 school year.

Indicator 7: Science Proficiency (and Growth)

Goal: Over the period of the contract, Endazhi-Nitaawiging students will demonstrate proficiency in science as measured by state assessments.

WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal: Achievement Gap Closure [AGC]: All racial and economic achievement gaps between students are closed.

Key Measures & Results for this Goal:

Measure 7.1 [CCR] – 2 Points: In aggregate, from FY23-26 the school’s aggregate proficiency index score

for American Indian or Alaska Native students will be equal to or greater than that of the state for the same grades and same student group.

Measure 7.2 [CCR] – 4 Points: In aggregate, from FY23-26 the school’s aggregate proficiency index score for all students will be equal to or greater than that of the local district (ISD 38 – Red Lake School District) for the same grades.

Measure 7.3 [AGC] – 2 Points: In aggregate, from FY23-26 the school’s aggregate proficiency index score for students in the Special Education group will be equal to or greater than that of the state for the same grades and same student group.

Measure 7.4 [AGC] – 2 Points: In aggregate, from FY23-26 the school’s aggregate proficiency index score for students in the Special Education group will be equal to or greater than that of the local district (ISD 38 – Red Lake School District) for the same grades.

Results: At the time of this report, we did not have science assessment data using the state assessment. If it is available, we will organize it and use it as baseline data from which we will measure growth beginning in the 2023-24 school year. Otherwise, we will collect baseline data in the 2023-24 school year and measure progress from that baseline beginning in the 2024-25 school year.

Indicator 8: Proficiency or Growth in Other Curricular Areas or Educational Programs

Goal: Over the period of the contract, students enrolled at Endazhi-Nitaawiging will demonstrate readiness for kindergarten as measured by early childhood screening

WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal: Ready for Kindergarten [R4K]: All students are ready for kindergarten.

Key Measures & Results for this Goal:

Measure 8.1 [R4K] – 5 Points: From FY23-27, the aggregate percentage of students who complete early childhood screening prior to the first day of school will be at least 90%. Results: At the time of this report, we did not have kindergarten readiness data. If it is available, we will organize it and use it as baseline data from which we will measure growth beginning in the 2023-24 school year. Otherwise, we will collect baseline data in the 2023-24 school year and measure progress from that baseline beginning in the 2024-25 school year.

Indicator 9: Post Secondary Readiness

Goal: Endazhi-Nitaawiging does not serve students above grade five. It does not have a contractual goal in this indicator area as it does not serve high school students.

WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal:

Key Measures & Results for this Goal: Not applicable,
Endazhi-Nitaawiging 2024 Annual Report

Indicator 10: Attendance

Goal: Over the period of the contract, Endazhi-Nitaawiging students will attend the school at high rates.

WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal: *Identify the WBWF goal areas that are addressed by this contractual goal.*

Key Measures & Results for this Goal:

Measure 10.1 – 1 Point: From FY23 to FY26 the average of the school’s annual consistent attendance rates will be equal to or greater than the state.

Measure 10.2 – 4 Points: From FY23 to FY26 the average of the school’s annual consistent attendance rates will be equal to or greater than the local district (ISD 38 – Red Lake School District).

Results: We did not meet either of these contractual goals.

Educational Effectiveness

2022-23 was a year of learning how to become a more effective educational program. Our vision, mission and educational philosophy are challenging, and although our staff did their best to meet the challenge, we struggled as a school at some rudimentary functions of schooling, especially assessing student progress, from assessment administration, to organizing the data and working with it to inform discussion on improvement.

We do, however, have a deliberate process for improvement in place, and relied on it through the school year. As a part of the NACA Inspired Schools Network, we participate in an annual school review process, where their staff, along with leaders from other network schools and recognized national experts engage in a thoughtful examination of data as well as organization-wide inquiry. It serves as a structured opportunity to step back, reflect and look ahead to the coming years. [The report from that process can be found at this link.](#)

At Endazhi-Nitaawiging, we have coupled that process with a strategic planning process led by Emergence LLC. They are skillful process managers who are familiar with working in Indigenized settings like our school, and they work with leaders to develop well crafted, realistic and ambitious plans for the future. [Their report can be found at this link.](#)

As a result of the work we did with NISN and Emergence, Endazhi-Nitawiging overhauled its approach to professional development for the staff. We held a month long session in August before school began to build strong and collaborative team culture, commitment to the school’s unique vision, mission and philosophy, and, maybe most important, to develop relevant and restorative teaching and learning materials grounded in the school’s core values and the language and culture of the Red Lake Nation. We also developed a month-by-month professional development calendar that is guiding our staff development through the coming year. [November’s calendar is attached as an example.](#)

8. Q Comp Annual Report

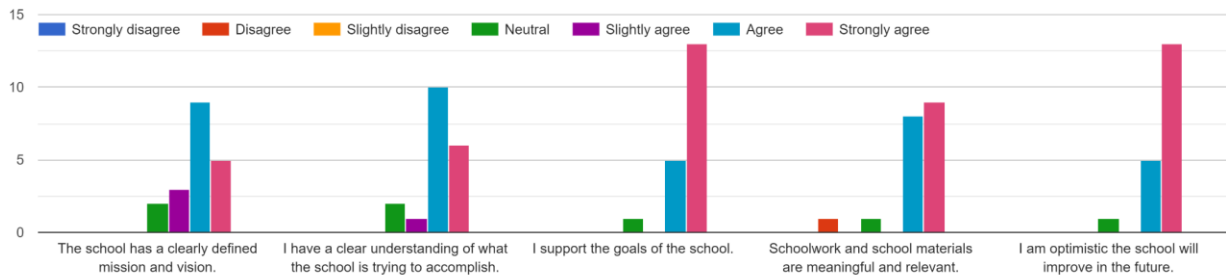
Endazhi-Nitaawiging does not participate in QComp.

9. Student & Parent Satisfaction

At Endazhi-Nitaawiging, we are committed to making sure our community, especially our families and students share our school’s unique vision, mission and values. The only way to know this is through active and ongoing engagement. We learned a great deal from families last year, most significantly from a survey of all of our families.

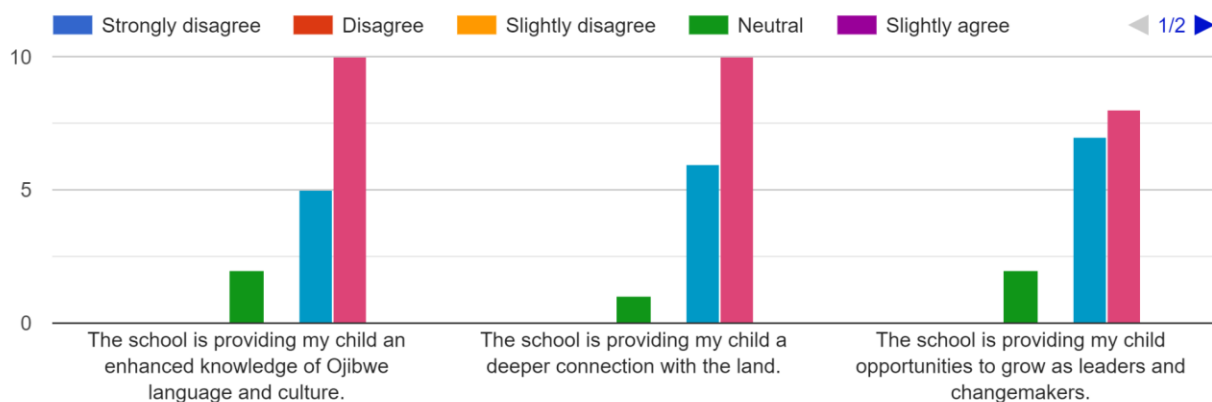
In May, 2023, we issued a survey to our families and received a relatively robust response equal to approximately 37 percent of the families enrolled. Their answers were powerful, but honest, especially when considering the challenges the school faced in the 2022-23 school year. Consider the responses in the graph below.

Please answer the following questions about the school.



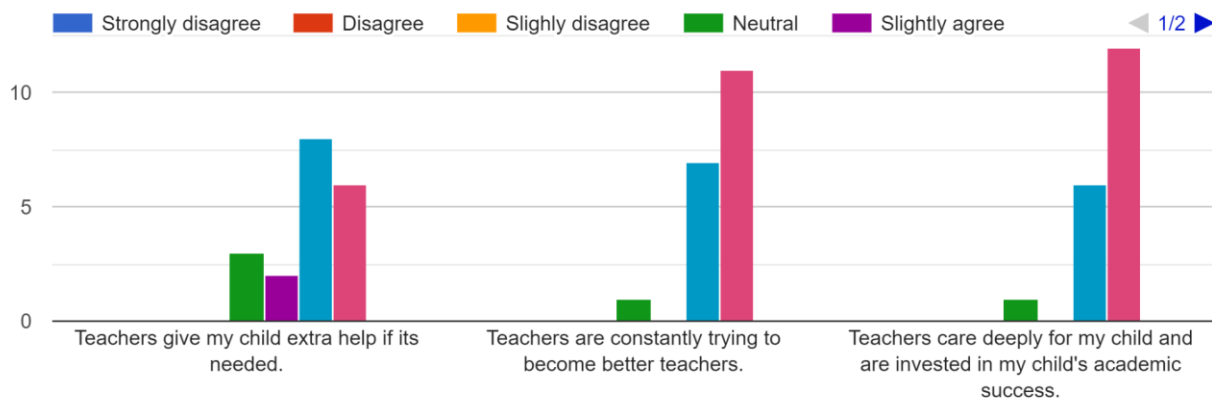
Families clearly support the schools goals and are optimistic about the future. But their views of schoolwork and what we were trying to accomplish last year. This feedback was a little tough, but it made us stronger as we looked forward to next year. We clearly have a faithful base of families in our community who believe in what we do. We need to work with them and their students to honor their faith.

Please answer the following questions about the mission and vision.



This second set of graphs offers similar insight. It is clear that our families think their students are learning Ojibwe language and culture, as well as benefiting from the land-based learning experience. But they are more mixed in their views about whether students are learning to be leaders or getting the instructional support they need.

Please answer the following questions about your experience with your child's teacher.



This kind of feedback was essential for us as we entered into our strategic planning process, and we intend to replicate the practice this year and in the future.

10. Environmental Education

At Endazhi-Nitaawiging, our commitment to environmental education is essential, not only to how we see ourselves as a school, but also how we will do our part to sustain and revitalize Anishinaabe and Ojibwe culture in the Red Lake Nation. The Red Lake Nation contains vast untouched lands of rich biological diversity, thick forest, aquatic ecosystems, and many wildlife species. We understand this land to be a place of learning for our students, families and staff. We are vision and mission committed to foster land-based pedagogies in an expansive location which includes maple trees for syrup-making, habitats where students and faculties can gather traditional medicines, and plots of land dedicated to farming traditional crops.

In the 2023-2024 school year, we implemented the school's Environmental Literacy Plan (ELP), which is spread across five Performance Indicators (PIs): 1) Awareness, 2) Knowledge, 3) Attitudes, 4) Skills, 5) Action. Although the school engages in outdoor learning activities tied to traditional Ojibwe seasonal life year round, the ELP is designed to track data tied to Osprey Wilds' PIs. Teachers were responsible for implementing an environmental education lesson plan that is aligned to their assigned Performance Indicator and approved by Osprey Wilds. This data is only a snapshot of these particular lessons, and it should be recognized that students at Endazhi-Nitaawiging regularly engage in Ojibwe seasonal activities that foster Traditional Ecological Knowledge while further developing student's awareness and knowledge of human and natural systems and processes, and appreciation and concern for the environment, problem thinking and critical thinking skills as it relates to the environment and human life, and capacity to work individually and collaboratively toward sustaining and healthy natural environment. We feel that this approach to integrating land-based culturally and linguistically sustaining curriculum is crucial, because "if we do not create a generation of people attached to the land and committed to living out our culturally inherent ways of coming to know, we risk losing what it means to be [Anishinaabe] within our own thought systems."³

- Performance Indicator 1: Awareness, Kindergarten through Grade 1
 - Achieved through a Nature Walk and Observation.
 - >80% of students met teacher expectations.
- Performance Indicator 2: Knowledge, Grade 2
 - Achieved through a Native Plants Garden Project.
 - 18 of 18 students (100%) met teacher expectations, 3 exceeded.
- Performance Indicator 3: Attitudes, Grade 3
 - Achieved through an Environmental Art Project with two SMART Goals.
 - 12 of 12 students (100%) met teacher expectations for SMART Goal 1.
 - 8 of 12 students (65%) met teacher expectations for SMART Goal 2 (absenteeism).
- Performance Indicator 4: Skills, Grade 4
 - Achieved through a Garden Design Project with two goals.
 - 13 of 14 students (92%) met teacher expectations for Goal 1.

³ Simpson, L. (2014). Land as pedagogy: Nishnaabeg intelligence and rebellious transformation. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, and Society*. (3)3. p. 13.

- 11 of 14 students (78%) met teacher expectations for Goal 2.
 - Performance Indicator 5: Action, Grades 5 through 6
 - Achieved through the “Ogimaawi Environmental Leadership Development Experience.”
 - 15 of 16 students (93.75%) exceeded teacher expectations.
 - 1 student didn’t participate due to the nature of their IEP.
 - 12 Grade 4 students also participated and exceeded teacher expectations.
 - 168.75% expected participation

Environmental education should not be confined as a subject in a classroom. It will live as an integral part of daily student experience. We intend to restore the bond between children and Mother Earth, focusing on land-based learning. Land-based learning is an Indigenized and environmentally-focused instruction method that uses the natural world as both teacher and classroom. Land-based learning restores the kinship ties between plants, humans, and animals, all of which are related in our culture. We will join the portfolio of schools authorized by Osprey Wilds as a leading example of how environmental education is integral to student learning.

In 2023-24, the students, staff and families engaged extensively in land-based, environmental learning, and at this time of reflection we see this as one area where, as a school, we strived well to meet our school’s ambitious vision and mission. Our school calendar was grounded in seasonal land-based activities designed to restore the connections between students, staff and an Indigenized understanding of the world we share. These activities included:

- Lake Ceremony
- Sugar Bush gathering
- Snow Snake Tournament
- a march for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women
- deer harvest
- tree planting
- Buffalo processing with Arlo & Lisa Iron Cloud, Nate Johnson, and Red Lake Dept of Agriculture
- Ricing
- Cleaning fish
- Drum making
- Trapping, snaring with Darwin Sumner
- Snow Snakes
- Sugar Bush
- Traditional horse teachings with Sasha Beaulieu
- Ogimaawi Environmental Leadership Development Experience at Ponemah Fasting Camp
- Garden (mostly in summer, some indoor Spring seed starting), 40-60 students in the summer,
- Garden in a Box grant, Petra Neadeau grant, community seeds, Darwin Sumner’s role, donation of strawberry, blueberry, juneberry, and plum from Tallie Large and Nikki Crowe.

Staff report that students find land-based, environmental learning exciting. It taps into their basic curiosity to learn more about things they have always known about the world around them. Staff reports a change in their diet, especially an increase in their appreciation for vegetables.

In their 2022-23 school review, the NACA Inspired Schools Network, identified land-based, environmental learning as one of Endazhi-Nitaawiging’s strengths, saying “Endazhi-Nitaawiging really gets this right. They are an example for all of the schools in our network to emulate.”

Last year the students and staff at Endazhi-Nitaawiging began school yard planning with Trust for Public Land tied to curriculum, student-involved processes. This is a major effort – led by students and staff – to expand the resources for land-based, environmental education by designing their school grounds so they are dedicated explicitly for these purposes. In 2023-24

11. Governance & Management

Includes Annual Board Training & Administrator Professional Development Report(s)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors at Endazhi-Nitaawiging is composed of six directors, including three officers, a chair, a treasurer and a secretary, as well as the statutorily required teacher representative. At the time this report was written, the teacher representative seat remained vacant because the faculty had not yet decided on a single member to represent them.

The Board has evolved from the school’s original circle of founders, and now includes an equal number of three founders and two members who replaced founders when they stepped down. As the school grows and develops Directors will hold three year terms.

The table below identifies all positions, as well as the members as of May 2024.

Member Name	Board Position	Date Elected	Date Seated	Term End Date	Email Address
Rochelle Johnson	President	Founding Member 24	January 2023	May 2024	rochelle@paulbunyan.net
Elizabeth White	Secretary	Founding Member	November 2021	May 2024	sahkatay@redlakecharterschool.com
Naomi Long	Treasurer	Seated in January 2023	November 2021	May 2025	kwadook@redlakecharterschool.com
Jeffrey Lagou	Director	Founding Member	November 2021	May 2025	miskomakwalagou@redlakecharterschool.com
Hieu Nguyen	Director	Seated in November 2022	November 2022	May 2025	hieu@redlakecharterschool.com
Vacant	Teacher Director				

Board Training and Development

In 2023-24 Endazhi-Nitaawiging had stable board representation in all positions, except at the end of the year when . All Board members had begun the year having completed required training in 2022-23. They did not understand that they were to continue required training in 2023-24. All board members will complete all required training as they go forward in the 2024-25 school year.

Below is a table summarizing the current Board’s training experience based on records supplied by Osprey Wilds.

MANAGEMENT

In 2023-24, Endazhi-Nitaawiging established a solid operational foundation. Sylvia Fred completed a full year as head of school, and continued on in that role as the school entered its third year. Ms.Fred is responsible for daily school leadership and her consistency in that role is a powerful asset for the school and its community. Ms. Fred has made it a priority to assemble an administrative and operations team around her. As Endazhi-Nitaawiging begins the 2024-25 school she added Alisha Gerhart, Business Support. She brings business experience and an understanding of working in the Red Lake community to their roles, and will add much needed support around leadership to move Endazhi-Nitaawiging forward as a financially solvent, well functioning enterprise.

The leadership team also includes Nathaniel Taylor and Daniel Jorgenson, who serves as the school’s Executive Director and Founder. Mr Taylor is also responsible for inspiring the school’s commitment to learning and restoring the Ojibwe language and culture in our school community. Although we desire the school to be less hierarchical than westernized schools, we learned last year that we need role players who fulfill basic requirements and who provide direction and make the decisions that an entire staff may not be willing or able to do. Mr. Jorgenson is a teacher leader, and supports the school and supports the school by organizing assessment and data management activities.

Ms Fred does not hold a Minnesota School Administrative License. She is engaged in the required professional development experience through our partner the NACA Inspired Schools Network, where she and Mr. Taylor are fellows in their Growing Together Fellowship. The Growing Together Fellowship offers school leaders a two year development experience during which they work with other school leaders to learn the skills and knowledge to lead thriving Indigenized schools serving predominantly Native American youth in a variety of settings.

12. Staffing

At Endazhi-Nitaawiging, we are committed to forming a circle of adults committed to our vision, mission and values. This calls for educators and staff who are willing to work with each other, with our community and with our families and students to learn, live and restore the language and culture of the Red Lake Nation.

In the 2023-24 school year, we took important steps to solidify our staff circle. We have added additional partnerships and curriculum opportunities for staff to become more engaged with the Ojibwe language and culture and to engrain those teachings into their classrooms...

Employee Name	License File #	Assignment	License Status	Comments
Brenda Councillor	1031154	Para	Forfeited	

Kristin Ferris	339451	Special Education	Licensed (exp. 6/30/2026) Learning Disabilities, Developmental Disabilities, Emotional Behavior Disorders (K-12); English/Language Arts (7-12)
Alexandra Johnson	1021018	Kindergarten	Eminence Credential (exp. 6/30/2025) American Indian Language & Culture (K-12)
Daniel Jorgenson	1021015	Media	Eminence Credential (exp. 6/30/2025) American Indian Language & Culture (K-12)
Petra Neadeau	467927	Third Grade	Licensed (exp. 6/30/2027) Social Studies (5-12)
Brooke Simon	500277	First Grade	Licensed (exp. 6/20/2028) K-6 Elementary Education, B-Grade 3
Wendy Jourdain	No File Found	Second Grade	
Fawn Beaulieu	No File Found	Fourth Grade	
Christina Rivera	507194	Fifth and Sixth Grade	Licensed (exp. 6/20/2028) K-6 Elementary Education, 5-12 Communication Arts/Literature
Cecily St Cyr	1031153	Art	Eminence Credential (exp. 6/30/2027) American Indian Language & Culture (K-12)
Natalie Welle	1033622	Special Education	Licensed (exp. 6/30/2025) Emotional Behavior Disorders (K-12)

* R = Returning, NR = Not Returning

13. Operational Performance

In 2023-24, Endazhi-Nitaawiging established a solid operational foundation. Sylvia Fred completed a full year as head of school, and continued on in that role as the school entered its third year. With her consistent leadership she has begun to organize an administrative and operations team around her. As Endazhi-Nitaawiging begins the 2024-25 school she added Liz White, Director of Operations, and Alisha Gerhart, Business Support. Both bring business experience and an understanding of working in the Red Lake community to their roles, and will add much needed support around leadership to move Endazhi-Nitaawiging forward as a financially solvent, well functioning enterprise.

Fundraising: Endazhi-Nitaawiging, with the support of our grant writing partner, the Grant Plant, raised more than \$500,000 from a wide range of funders including a \$200,000 federal Charter School Programs (CSP) grant, \$100,000 from the Red Lake Tribe, \$100,000 from NDN Collective, \$86,000 from the New Schools Venture Fund, \$80,000 from the NACA Inspired Schools Network, and another \$200,000 in smaller grants from other philanthropic organizations. Several of these grants, like that from NDN Collective, include additional funds for the 2023024 school year and beyond.

Facility: Endazhi-Nitaawiging moved into our permanent facility in the 2023-2024 school year. This allowed us to provide a safe and secure facility for our students to learn. We developed our first school garden in the 2023-2024 school year located near our south exit doors to our facility which provides additional learning opportunities for our children and families

Student Transportation: Our partners in Red Lake School District #38 provided transportation to our students.

Food Services: Our partners in Red Lake School District #38 provided school service to our students.

Financial Management: Although we had to release our first financial service contractor early in the year, we began working with School Management Services and have stabilized those services.

14. Finances

Pending final financial reporting.

School Management Services provides financial management for Endazhi-Nitaawiging. For questions regarding school finances and for complete financials for 2022-23 and/or an organizational budget for 2023-24, contact:

Name: Todd Netzke
 Position: President, School Management Services
 Phone: (507) 254-6215
 Email: tnetzke@schoolmanagementservices.org

Information presented below is derived from preliminary audit figures. The full financial audit will be completed and presented to the Minnesota Department of Education and Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center no later than December 31, 2023.

FY23 Finances	Fund 1	Fund 2	Fund 4
Total Revenues	1,276,726		
Total Expenditures	1,304,078		
Net Income	(27,353)		
Total Fund Balance	88,151		

Overview

Upon completion of the 2022-23 school year, Endazhi-Nitaawiging was in sound financial condition.

Net Surplus or Deficit and Fund Balance

Brief narrative on FY24 net surplus or deficit and impact on fund balance. Discussion on fund balance level and ongoing fund balance goal.

Although Total Expenditures exceeded Total Revenues; it is anticipated that with the additional administrative staff and operational staff joining the organization for the 2024-2025 School Year there will be additional capacity to seek operating grants and other operating funds. The total net position at the end of the year remains positive. It is the goal of the organization to continue to grow the fund balance to insulate from financial risks that may arise in the future and to plan for future maintenance and repairs for the facilities that will be required for future generations to continue to enjoy these facilities.

World's Best Workforce Annual Budget

Approximately 7% of staff time are allocated to professional development and lesson planning and resource preparation. Additionally, for the next year 2023-2024 there will be a curriculum developer on staff to aid in assessing and improving curriculum implemented within the school to better improve student outcomes.

15. Future Plans

Endazhi-Nitaawiging opened its doors in Fall 2022 with an ambitious mission: to prepare each student for college with an enhanced knowledge of the Ojibwe language, culture, leadership, and environmental stewardship. Our first two years have been ones of excitement and struggle, one when we established ourselves as a nonprofit organization, we received and opened our modular buildings, and we saw community interest exceed our projected enrollment in both years. It was also one when we have seen more staff turnover than we would, when grappled with the difficulties of developing an Indigenized curriculum for our students, and one when we had difficulty establishing the assessment routines called for in our charter contract. Ultimately, we had to regroup ourselves in our founding vision centered on students.

But with each new year, we take stock of what we have accomplished, the challenges we have faced and, through rigorous reflection and strategic planning, we then chart a future path. We worked with our partners at the NACA Inspired Schools Network to conduct a rigorous school review – a step back process that takes a close look at what we are doing and offers counsel on how we can get stronger as a school. They collect data, as well as interview our staff members, conduct focus groups with students and families. They organize the data, identify key learnings, and then make recommendations on what we can do as a school. [The report can be found here.](#)

Working forward from the school review, this summer we held a retreat at the direction of Emergence LLC. The plan helped us regroup and gather strategic focus for the next year and beyond. [That plan can be found here.](#)

Following the course charted in those two foundation documents, and based on our experience in the 2023-24 school year we have identified the following concrete steps for organizational growth:

In the 2024-25 school year we will:

- 1.) Invite the NISN to conduct a School Review every spring. This will ensure that the entire staff participates in a rigorous process of self assessment that will help us create a shared goals for the coming year.
- 2.) Invite Emergence LLC or another independent third party to work with the Board and the Head of

School to revisit our strategic plan every other year. This work will include both assessing progress and adjusting the school's strategic priorities so we are even better prepared to improve as we pursue our ambitious vision and mission.

- 3.) Calendar required training for our Board of Directors so they can conveniently complete required sessions before or after each monthly meeting.
- 4.) Clarify the roles and responsibilities for all employees.
- 5.) Identify an assessment specialist whose role will include (a) implementing Endazhi-Nitaawiging's assessment calendar and (b) manage all assessment related data.
- 6.) Hire a Director of Academic Programs to oversee all teaching and learning functions at Endazhi-Nitaawiging.

In fall 2025 we will grow by another grade. Our seventh graders will become eighth graders. We will continue to add a grade a year until we are fully grown out to the eighth grade in the 2025-26 school year. We look forward to the work, no matter how challenging it may be, and we are grateful for the continuing support of our staff, families and partners as they join us in our efforts.