

THE
**Riveredge
School**

theriveredgeschool.org
Saukville, Wisconsin

Jan 24, 2023

Open letter to the Community, regarding future location of the Riveredge Outdoor Learning Elementary School

On Friday, Jan. 13th, 2023, the Riveredge Outdoor Learning Elementary School (ROLES) Governance Council shared the news that our school will be moving to a new home after June 30th, 2024. We know that this raised a variety of emotions, and questions. All of which our Governance Council will begin addressing at the upcoming Parent Forum on January 30th, 2023 from 6:30pm - 8pm at the Northern Ozaukee School District's Library (401 Highland Dr, Fredonia, WI 53021.)

The purpose of this letter is to share with the greater ROLES community more information about all the transitions taking place, and to highlight the many opportunities that exist for you to get involved, as our Governance Council (GC) begins planning for our next home.

Background on the partnership between ROLES and the Riveredge Nature Center:

The ROLES facilities use agreement with Riveredge Nature Center (RNC) was crafted at the same time as all our other founding partner agreements and our school implementation grant. The five year long facilities use agreement went into effect the year our school opened its doors and has always had an end date of June 30, 2024. Every year, the representatives from Riveredge Outdoor Learning Elementary School (ROLES) Governance Council (GC) and Riveredge Nature Center (RNC) board meet to discuss the facilities use contract to evaluate what's working for each organization, identify areas for improvement and to discuss wish list items for the future.

For the first time since the inception of this partnership, we've identified a few areas of concern for our organizations regarding the cohabitation part of our partnership. Over the last four years we've both grown considerably, undergone leadership changes, weathered a pandemic, and are both facing the realities of being nonprofits maneuvering through a tough economy. Additionally, RNC and ROLES have aspirational goals for the future that are difficult to align as we both strive to meet our individual organizational missions. While the areas of concern are by no means catastrophic in nature, over time they will hinder both organizations' long-term growth.

It is with this in mind, that a mutual decision has been made to relocate our public, tuition-free outdoor learning charter school to a new location and not extend the Facilities Use portion of our partnership allowing the contract to sunset effective June 30, 2024. This is not a decision that the ROLES Governance Council or RNC Board of Directors made lightly. There were several conversations between our organizations, and the GC also engaged our partners NOSD, CESA6 and WRCCS in the process. While this was not something our founders anticipated

happening just five years after our launch, one could argue that they also would not have anticipated how successful the school would be in such a short amount of time.

Our Outdoor Learning Charter School Exceeds Expectations

We've grown rapidly while nimbly making changes that have resulted in outstanding school performance as reflected in the recent [Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction \(DPI\) report card](#) that awarded ROLES with a rating of four stars and "exceeds expectations" designation. In each of the areas set forth by the DPI, ROLES performed at a high level and met all performance requirements with sound operations, financial stability, and continuous improvement in student learning outcomes. Additionally, our [school model](#) has been nationally recognized, and we continue to be an educational delivery model that others seek to emulate within their own communities. Our school leaders respond to inquiries weekly.

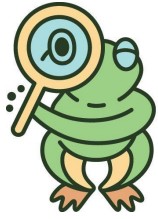
The strength of our partnerships makes our school unique

Our partnerships with [Northern Ozaukee School District](#), [CESA 6](#) and [WRCCS](#) continue to be strong, and they are all supportive of our relocation plans and this transition. Finding a new site that can better accommodate our long-term needs is in the very best interest of ROLES. Please rest assured that our leadership remains steadfast in its commitment to our school community, and it is our intention to continue to deliver the same exceptional educational experience now and for years to come. Our Governance Council appreciates the strong partnership we have shared with the Riveredge Nature Center, as our neighbor for the last four years. We look forward to continuing our relationship with the Riveredge Board of Directors and their staff, as our school continues to grow and evolve in the future.

Grateful to Community for supporting our school

We have brought this news to your attention now, because it is important for us (Governance Council) to engage the full community as soon as possible, in order to help us find our new forever home. While the physical move takes place in June 2024, the work starts now. Remember, we've worked within this timeline before having only one year at the start of our DPI Implementation grant to finalize every aspect of our school from staffing to building physical spaces. This time, we just need to focus efforts on a location for our model to continue to thrive in. We are grateful to our exceptional school community (families, parents, students, teachers, PTO, educational partners and community members) for your continued dedication to our public, tuition-free outdoor learning charter school and our three pillars (i.e. inquire-based, nature-based and community-based) of educational excellence. We hope that you will be as generous in the next year as you have been over the last five years.

In conclusion, our Governance Council is confident that a location change will not be the end of ROLES. It's simply an evolution. Our district, our board, and our staff are behind us 100%, and we hope you will be too. Together we will find a great place to thrive, and school will carry on with all the same work we do currently -- and hopefully we can even find a space with room to grow, as we know so many of you would like to see us do.



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How you can get involved now:

We encourage you to submit your questions, and insights via email to our Governance Council Secretary, Brian Fortney at bfortney@nosd.edu. Please do this by 5pm Wednesday Jan 25th, 2023. It is important that parents and community members direct all feedback to the Governance Council and **not** ROLES staff. Our Governance Council is reviewing and compiling all submitted feedback to help inform the content of the Parent Forum, and to help inform our future site location.

Sign up for our newsletter: To stay informed about all things ROLES and our future site location, please sign up for our new community newsletter. We will use this electronic newsletter to share relevant happenings, decisions and opportunities for you to be involved.

[Sign Up Here](#)

Attend the Parent Forum on January 30th, 2023 from 6:30pm - 8pm at the Northern Ozaukee Library (401 Highland Dr, Fredonia, WI 53021.)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy Levash". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Amy Levash, Governance Council President

