



**STUDENT HANDBOOK
2008-2009**

(801) 302-9579
2920 West 14010 South
Bluffdale, Utah 84065
www.north-staracademy.com

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Purpose/Structure

Mission and Vision

North Star Academy exists to **ENGAGE** and **INSPIRE** students to achieve their highest potential through a **SAFE, CHALLENGING,** and **INDIVIDUALIZED** learning environment.

A **SAFE** environment is one free of bullying, teasing, and/or harsh criticism. This allows an individual to build confidence as he/she is free to explore and try new things. New and innovative ideas will only surface when individuals are allowed to try and experiment. In our society we need leaders who have learned the skills necessary to think and solve problems in creative ways. To create this safe environment we will foster a policy of zero tolerance for teasing, taunting, bullying and threats. Parents and students will sign a behavior contract that clearly identifies behavior expectations and consequences. Students, teachers, administrators, and parents will be expected to work together in an environment of mutual respect. As a school we will participate in the nationally recognized **Character Counts** program, which promotes the development of 6 pillars of character; trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. This program will help students learn social skills, problem solving, and conflict resolution. By giving students clear behavior expectations and appropriate and effective tools they will learn to treat each other with kindness and respect. They will develop the confidence and skills needed to succeed in life when they are confronted with problems and conflict.

A **CHALLENGING** environment is one where all materials, programs, and procedures have been shown, through research, to improve student learning. At NSA all the programs and curriculum that will be used are founded in research. Competence develops when a learning environment is challenging and an individual is given an opportunity to grow and improve. With proper direction and motivation, individuals usually attain the level of greatness that is expected of them. To help each student reach his/her potential, greatness will be expected of all students. This will be accomplished by utilizing **The School Wide Enrichment Model (SEM)**. Students will be productive when given a foundation of knowledge and skills and the freedom to experiment and apply this information to the real world. The School Wide Enrichment Model emphasizes the application of knowledge and skills. This application involves participation in Enrichment Clusters, which produce products or services for the real

world. When knowledge and skills are relevant to the student he/she will integrate into his/her life.

An **INDIVIDUALIZED** learning environment is one that allows students to progress at their own ability level, and provides them with opportunities to pursue personal interests. This will be accomplished by curriculum modification, which includes ability grouping, and enrichment learning. All students will create a Total Talent Portfolio (TTP) that will help them identify their strengths, interests, and learning styles. These portfolios will also assist in the development of personal responsibility by having students set goals and assess personal progress. This promotes personal responsibility for learning and development.

Curriculum/Programs

Utah State Core

The Utah State Core Curriculum will serve as the minimum basis for academic requirements for advancement. All other curriculum used at North Star Academy will be aligned to the state core.

Core Knowledge

The Core Knowledge Sequence is a solid, specific, shared core curriculum that helps children establish strong foundations of knowledge grade by grade. It is based on research done by a team of parents, teachers, scientists, professional curriculum organizations and experts from the Core Knowledge Advisory Board. Core Knowledge provides a good blend of arts, history, science, math, language arts and other fundamental basics necessary to be considered “culturally literate.”

Saxon Math

Saxon Math is a research-based math program that systematically distributes instruction, practice and assessment throughout the academic year as opposed to concentrating, or massing, the instruction, practice and assessment of related concepts into a short period of time -- usually within a unit or chapter. *Saxon Math*'s unique approach to math instruction ensures that students not only gain but also retain essential math skills.

Language Arts

A specific phonics, spelling and grammar curriculum through Fountas and Pinnell will provide teachers with a resource for specific instruction that is correlated to the books at each students reading level.

School Wide Enrichment Model

North Star Academy is philosophically founded upon the School-wide Enrichment Model developed by Dr. Joseph Renzulli of the National Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development. Through extensive research and working with children, Dr. Renzulli found that all children benefit from hands-on, student-driven, and interest-based activities which are the basis for North Star Academy's exciting Enrichment Program. These types of activities assist each child in developing critical thinking skills and the ability to work cooperatively while increasing the child's positive self-concept.

Each student has completed an interest survey. Enrichment Clusters based on the top student and teacher interests will be created. An Enrichment Cluster is essentially a group of students working cooperatively "with adults to produce or deliver an authentic product or service to a real-world audience." (Renzulli 296)

Features of an Enrichment Cluster

1. All activity is directed toward the production of a product or a service.
2. All students and teachers are involved in addition to parent and community volunteers.
3. Students are grouped across grade levels by interest areas.
4. There are no predetermined lesson or unit plans.
5. The real-life methods of professional investigators are used to pursue product and service development.

These are the ideal features of an Enrichment Cluster and North Star Academy will continually be striving and adapting their enrichment program to achieve these goals.

The Enrichment Cluster program provides numerous volunteer opportunities for students' families and friends to work with both the students and teachers in a meaningful way. Each student will have the opportunity to select Enrichment Clusters correlating to his/her personal interests in which to participate during 2008-2009 school year. Enrichment Cluster activities will occur each Friday afternoon during school hours. Following the completion of an Enrichment Cluster, meaning a real or genuine product or service has been produced or provided, the students will have an opportunity to demonstrate their work at a school sponsored Student Showcase.

Board of Trustees

North Star Academy is a public school chartered under the Utah State Board of Education. The North Star Board of Trustees is a non-profit board of parents established to oversee the implementation of the charter as approved by the USOE Board. They are responsible for the following:

- Undertake responsibility for starting up and creating the charter school.
- Sign any documents pertaining to the legal operation of the school and fulfill all other legal obligations.
- Hire and dismiss the administrator- who may not be one of its members.
- Define school curriculum and policy
- Oversee and advise the Parent Teacher Organization to ensure that the school's purpose, vision and core policy continue the vision of the school as presented in the charter.
- Consider recommendations of administrator regarding changes in staffing, program or curriculum.
- When necessary, address student and faculty appeals and/or disciplinary issues.
- Monitor school budget through monthly or quarterly reports.
- Determine the annual budget with the administrator.
- Oversee reporting of school performance to the state.

Board Replacement

In order to ensure the success of a charter school, a Board of Trustees with a common purpose is established to make policy and carry out the vision of the Charter. As vacancies become available on the Board of Trustees members of that board will present names of potential replacements. Generally these will be parents who have been highly involved with the school, who understand and uphold the schools mission and charter. After reviewing candidate's qualifications and experience the board will vote to approve a replacement. The Parent Representative will be elected by a vote of the parents and will serve a two year term.

Board of Trustees Members

General questions for the North Star Academy Board of Trustees can be addressed by email at board@north-staracademy.com or by calling the school at 302-9579 and leaving a message for any of the board members on their voicemail.

Trudy Sorenson - President/Financial Officer
trudy@north-staracademy.com

Wendy Lambert - Vice President
wendy@north-staracademy.com

David Petersen - Chief Tech. Officer
dave@north-staracademy.com

Pam Van Wagoner - Secretary
pam@north-staracademy.com

Dana Smith - Parent Representative
dsmith@north-staracademy.com

Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) consists of all parents/guardians of the students enrolled at North Star Academy. This board will be instrumental in providing parents with an opportunity to be involved with their children's education. All parents are invited to play an active role in this organization.

The PTO Board is comprised of 5 members that are parents of children attending the school. The PTO Board will also have 3 advisory members consisting of the administrator, one elementary teacher, and one middle school teacher.

The PTO Board will be determined by a general election of the Parent Teacher Organization (each family receiving one vote), and will be elected to the following positions on the board: President, Elementary Vice President, Middle School Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Both the Elementary Vice President and the Middle School Vice President must have students in those respective grades.

In the event that any member of the PTO Board resigns, or is unable to perform the required duties, a special election of the PTO Board will be held to fill any vacancies.

PTO Board Members

Natalie Hall President nhall@north-staracademy.com
Carla Brower Middle School VP

Jody Rowser Elementary VP
Renee Kevern Secretary
Monica Cloward Treasurer

Schedule

Daily Schedule

8:29 am	First Bell
8:30 am	Tardy Bell
11:20 am	AM-Kindergarten Dismissal
11:26 am	Middle School Lunch
12:00 pm	PM-Kindergarten Begins
12:10 pm	Elementary Lunch
2:52 pm	Dismissal

Recess

Students are expected to participate in outdoor activities including recess with the class. Teachers use this time for collaboration/preparation, and indoor supervision is not available. Consideration will be given to students who have a medical excuse with a doctor's or parent's note. Please dress students properly for varying weather conditions (hats may be worn outside). In addition, students may bring a nutritious snack to be eaten at recess.

Elementary Class Schedule (times are approximate)

8:30 - 8:40	Opening in Homeroom
8:40 - 9:45	Math
9:45 - 12:05	Language Arts, Library Rotation
12:10 - 12:50	1 st & 4 th lunch / recess
12:17 - 12:57	2 nd & 5 th lunch / recess
12:25 - 1:05	3 rd & 6 th lunch / recess
12:05 - 2:52	Science, Social Studies, Art, Music, PE, Technology

Middle School Schedule

A Day		B Day	
1 st period	8:30-9:50	5 th period	8:30-9:50
Advisory	9:54-10:14	Advisory	9:54-10:14
2 nd period	10:18-11:38	6 th period	10:18-11:38
Lunch	11:38-12:04	Lunch	11:38-12:04
3 rd period	12:08-1:28	7 th period	12:08-1:28
4 th period	1:32-2:52	8 th period	1:32-2:52

Middle School fees should be paid as soon as possible, preferably prior to the start of school. Fees may be waived in accordance with state regulations. For information on fee waivers, contact the school administration.

Textbooks

All basic texts are loaned to students for their use during the school year. Textbooks are very expensive. Please talk with your student about taking good care of these books. The students are responsible for the condition of returned books and will be assessed a replacement fee if damage is incurred or book are lost.

Parent Responsibilities/Procedures

Drop-Off/Pick-Up

Parents are responsible for safely transporting students to and from school. Parents are encouraged to carpool, when possible, to reduce traffic.

Parent Volunteers

Research has shown that students perform better when parents/guardians are involved in their education. At the bi-annual parent-teacher conference, parents will be required to set personal goals relative to their participation in their children's education personally and the student's learning environment collectively. This allows each parent to select goals that are within his/her comfort and ability level. It will also allow for creativity based on individual experience, talents and abilities. Our hope is to inspire parents to choose to participate in helping their child reach his/her potential. We would request 20 hours of volunteer time per family each year. Many of the opportunities for involvement will be communicated to parents through the school web site, postings at school and/or school newsletters. Parents will be encouraged to volunteer in a variety of volunteer tasks that may be performed at home, off hours, or on weekends. Parents can have input in the school through yearly surveys and serving on committees.

All parent volunteers are encouraged to follow the student dress code when at the school. Parent volunteers working directly with students may be subject to a personal background check.

Immunization Requirement

In compliance with state law and in consideration of the safety of all students, immunizations must be kept current. A 5-day notice will be given when an update is needed. Failure to comply will result in immediate dismissal from school. An immunization waiver may be obtained from the Utah Health Department.

School Visits

Parents and guardians are encouraged to visit the school frequently and take an active role in the education of their children. Arrangements to visit a classroom may be made by contacting the teacher to set up a convenient time. All non-employee adults must check in at the school office and pick up a visitor's badge upon entering the building. Teachers may not conduct private conferences with parents during instructional time unless a prior arrangement with the teacher has been made.

Students are not allowed to bring visiting children, either friends or relatives, to school with them.

Forgot Something?

If your student forgot something at home and you are delivering it to the school, please leave it with the front office. We will make sure the item is given to your child in a timely manner.

Birthdays

Treats and favors for children's birthdays are not permitted. Many parents object to their children eating sweets or other food that may interfere with family diets or health considerations. Other parents feel too much pressure to provide treats when financial limitations make it difficult to do so. Teachers will recognize these special occasions with their students in other ways that do not use food.

Labeling

Please label all clothing, lunchboxes, and backpacks. The time you take to do this will allow the school to immediately return the item to the owner. Clothing left in the Lost & Found will be donated to a charity or worthy cause after Fall Break, after Winter Break, after Spring Break, and after the last day of school.

School Communications

Parents can expect communication from the school every Wednesday in the form of an email. All families should register their email on the North Star's website at www.north-staracademy.com. Printed communication will be made available to those who do not have access to email.

Student Attendance Policy

North Star Academy firmly believes that consistent attendance teaches students responsibility. Students learn the value of being punctual and prepared. Frequent absences result in a loss of continuity of instruction. Also, frequent absences and tardiness prove disruptive for students, teachers, and staff. Excessive unexcused absences may lead to a student's permanent dismissal from the school.

Parents are expected to take a proactive role in ensuring their children attend school. We recommend families plan their vacation schedule around the existing school calendar, which is included in the student handbook. Health appointments should take place outside of school hours and, when possible, parents should notify the school in advance of any absence. Parents and students are responsible for obtaining homework or assignments for the time period which the student is absent.

Attendance Requirements: Students are allowed a maximum of 10 unexcused absences per year.

Excused Absences: Oral or written communication from the student's parents/guardian must be received within one business day of the absence in order for the absence to be excused. In the event of multiple consecutive absences, written communication must be received within 1 business day of the student's return to school. In the event a student has 10 consecutive unexcused absences, the student will be automatically dismissed from the school in accordance with State Law.

In the event of an unforeseeable illness or emergency, the school should be contacted as soon as realistically possible.

Make-up Work: Make-up work is permitted for students who have "excused" absences. The classroom teacher will provide the student or the parent/guardian with any make-up work upon request. Make-up

work must be completed within a reasonable time frame as determined by the teacher in order to receive full credit.

Tardiness: A student is tardy if he or she is not in the assigned classroom when the late bell rings. In general, tardiness will be handled on an individual basis with the teacher. If a student is chronically tardy then the student may be referred to the administration. Elementary students are allowed 5 tardies per quarter. Middle school students are allowed 3 tardies per class each quarter.

Notification of Absences and Tardies: In the event a student is absent, parents/guardians will be notified by phone on the day of the absence. Parents and students are responsible for tracking the total number of absences and tardies. Parents will be notified when their students reaches the 5th absence of the year and again on the 9th absence of the year. Parents of elementary students will be notified when their child is tardy for the 4th time during a given quarter. Parents of Middle School students will be notified if their child is tardy for the 2nd time in a class for the given quarter. If the maximum limit for attendance or tardiness is reached, the school administrator will attempt to schedule a meeting with the parents to review the situation and will outline the appropriate corrective action.

Grounds for an Appeal: Students who feel they have valid reasons that all, or part, of their absences and/or tardies are a result of extraordinary circumstances may provide a written request to the administrator to review their case.

Check-in/Check-out

If a child is checking in or out, a parent/guardian must sign the appropriate sheet in the office. School personnel must make personal contact with the parent/guardian before the child can leave. A child will not be released from school to anyone but the legal guardian or designated adult by the parent/guardian on the emergency form.

Dress Code Policy

The purpose of North Star Academy's Dress Code policy is to improve the learning environment by:

1. Ensuring clothing is modest and non-offensive.
2. Reducing peer pressure and emphasis on brand name clothing.
3. Minimizing health and safety concerns.
4. Reflecting a "real world" professional work dress code.
5. Developing consistency to reduce conflicts and questions of enforcement.

POLICY

Please Note:

Dress code items not specifically covered below but considered inappropriate or contrary to the purpose of the dress code policy are subject to review and interpretation by the administrator and/or Board of Trustees.

Tops

Students may wear any *solid colored polo shirt* that meets the following requirements:

1. is unadorned - defined as NO: writing, lace, ruffles, sequins or decorative embroidery, a small graphic or adornment (less than 1 inch square) is acceptable.
2. has sleeves and covers the shoulders (may be short or long sleeves)
3. is not too tight, sheer or otherwise revealing
4. is free from tears, frays, or holes and not excessively worn
5. is long enough to be tucked in when bending over
6. has the collar folded down
7. is free from incidental trim, except on the inside collar and on button lining

Students may wear a long or short sleeved unadorned solid white t-shirt, tank top, or turtle neck underneath the polo shirt. Students may wear an unadorned solid navy blue sweater or sweatshirt (no hoodies) over the polo shirt. No other layering on top of the polo shirt is permitted. North Star Academy's embroidered logo is permitted on the polo shirts, sweaters, or sweatshirts.

Bottoms

Students may wear any *solid tan, navy blue, or black* pants, capris, shorts, skorts, or skirts that meet the following requirements:

1. is not denim, nylon, sweat, leather, or vinyl material
2. goes to the knee or longer
3. is unadorned - defined as NO: writing, lace, ruffles, sequins, or
4. decorative embroidery, except on back pockets
5. has no incidental trim
6. is not too sheer, tight, or otherwise revealing
7. is free from tears, frays, or holes and is not excessively worn

Girls may wear inconspicuous shorts under skirts. No clothing or layering that shows is permitted.

Shoes

Students may wear any shoes that have a strap or some sort of a back on the shoe so that it doesn't slip off the feet. Students may not wear:

1. Slippers
2. Shoes with wheels

Hair

Students may wear their hair in any way that is not so extreme in style or color so as to distract from a learning environment

Accessories

Body piercing jewelry will be limited to earrings. Students may wear jewelry that is appropriate for school and is not a distraction. Any socks may be worn under long pants. If socks or tights are worn with capris, shorts, skorts, or skirts; the socks must be white, black or navy blue. Students may wear an adorned *solid brown or black* belt (no sashes) to be worn in the pant belt loops. Hats may not be worn in the building. Accessories may not be distracting and must be appropriate to a learning environment.

Coats

Students may wear any style of coat that is not offensive and is appropriate to a learning environment. Coats may not be worn during class time.

Other Attire

Students may choose other attire such as backpacks, purses, etc. that is not offensive and is appropriate to a learning environment. These items are to be left in lockers and/or designated areas during school hours.

Homework Policy

Homework has three major purposes:

1. To teach personal responsibility and time management skills.
2. To keep parents informed about what their children are studying.
3. To provide additional academic growth and development.

Although regular homework is an important part of the academic program at North Star Academy, we also value student involvement in extra curricular activities as well as time spent with family. It is expected that classroom teachers will assign homework that allows students these opportunities. The following times are provided as guidelines and are not intended to be absolutes. For example, major projects may require more time than the maximum amount. Understand that all students work at a different pace and that time spent towards completion of a task may vary. Homework guidelines do not include reading requirements as set forth by teachers.

GRADE	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM
Kindergarten	15 Minutes	30 Minutes
1 st	20 Minutes	45 Minutes
2 nd	20 Minutes	45 Minutes
3 rd	20 Minutes	45 Minutes
4 th	20 Minutes	45 Minutes
5 th	30 Minutes	60 Minutes
6 th	30 Minutes	60 Minutes
7 th	30 Minutes	90 Minutes
8 th	30 Minutes	90 Minutes
9 th	30 Minutes	90 Minutes

The parent's are responsible to:

1. Provide a time and place free from distraction for the student to work.
2. Sign any worksheets or homework logs that the teacher may send home.
3. Monitor student work and provide additional support as needed. Communicate concerns and work closely with the teachers if problems occur.

School Wide Discipline Plan

Purpose:

The purpose of the North Star Academy Discipline Plan is to support the mission and charter of North Star Academy in providing students, staff, and visitors with a **safe, challenging, and individualized** learning environment. Primarily a **safe** environment is one that is free from teasing, bullying, and threats where each individual is treated with respect. This plan also addresses the importance of **challenging** students by creating high expectations that prepare them for the future and allow them to apply what is being learned in class to “real world” situations. In addition this plan allows for **individualization** by adapting consequences to the needs and unique circumstances of each student.

Behavior Expectations:

North Star Academy has chosen to use the nationally recognized Character Counts Program, which emphasizes the 6 Pillars of Character. This program will help students learn social skills, problem solving, and conflict resolution. By giving students clear behavior expectations and appropriate and effective tools they will learn to treat each other with kindness and respect. They will develop the confidence and skills needed to succeed in life when they are confronted with problems and conflict. As such, students and staff are expected to behave in a manner that coincides with the 6 Pillars of Character, which are as follows:

1. **Trustworthiness:** Be honest • Don't deceive, cheat or steal • Be reliable — do what you say you'll do • Have the courage to do the right thing • Build a good reputation • Be loyal — stand by your family, friends and country
2. **Respect:** Treat others with respect; follow the Golden Rule • Be tolerant of differences • Use good manners, not bad language • Be considerate of the feelings of others • Don't threaten, hit or hurt anyone • Deal peacefully with anger, insults and disagreements
3. **Responsibility:** Do what you are supposed to do • Persevere: keep on trying! • Always do your best • Use self-control • Be self-disciplined • Think before you act — consider the consequences • Be accountable for your choices
4. **Fairness:** Play by the rules • Take turns and share • Be open-minded; listen to others • Don't take advantage of others • Don't blame others carelessly

5. **Caring:** Be kind • Be compassionate and show you care • Express gratitude • Forgive others • Help people in need
6. **Citizenship:** Do your share to make your school and community better • Cooperate • Get involved in community affairs • Stay informed; vote • Be a good neighbor • Obey laws and rules • Respect authority • Protect the environment

Classroom teachers will develop their own management system that fits the needs of their students and their teaching style. This information will be shared with parents at the beginning of the school year. Parents should be aware of these expectations and expect to become involved when a pattern of inappropriate behavior exists.

General School Rules:

1. Be polite and courteous with adults and all students.
2. Keep hands and feet to your self at all times.
3. Stay on the supervised school grounds during school hours, except with permission from a parent, guardian, or teacher.
4. Use proper language and polite words with others.
5. Walk bikes and scooters on sidewalks and while on school grounds.
6. No skateboards or roller-blades will be allowed.
7. No snowballs.
8. Cell phones must remain turned off and in the student's locker at all times.
9. No gum will be allowed.
10. Clear water bottles can be brought to class, if it does not cause any distractions.
11. Bringing weapons into the school or onto the school grounds is illegal. Likewise any play/look-a-like weapons are not allowed and should be left at home.
12. Students should take care of school property and use equipment as it is intended.
13. Any form of criminal behavior that places any person in danger is prohibited.
14. Middle school students may not bring backpacks, purses, or other similar items into the classroom. These items should remain in the students' lockers.

Teachers will refer students to the administration for a pattern of behavior that is disruptive to the classroom environment. Additionally, serious

student misconduct involving violent or criminal behavior such as, but not limited to, the following will be referred to the administrator:

1. Weapons (Carrying, intent to cause injury, or intimidation with weapon, firearm, knife, or other object, which is capable of producing death or serious bodily harm.)
2. Assault (Fighting...may or may not result in physical injury.)
3. Assault to an adult.
4. Possession, use or sale of drugs.
5. Severely disruptive and dangerous behavior that infringes on the educational rights of others.
6. Overt gang activity – Wearing, making gestures that symbolize gang membership or engaging in any gang related activities.
7. Improper behavior at extra-curricular events such as school sponsored evening events, before and after school enrichment activities, etc.
8. Throwing objects in or out of school that can cause bodily injury or damage to property including snowballs.
9. Stealing or Vandalism (Includes attempting to steal private or school property, causing damage to such property.)
10. Defiance of School Authority (Open, willful or continued disobedience; use of profanity, vulgarity, obscenities, rudeness or insults toward staff members.)
11. Harassment/Discrimination (Engaging in verbal abuse, i.e. name calling, threatening to harm on the basis of ethnicity, religion, culture, national origin, gender, or handicapping disability.)
12. Intentional misuse/abuse of the internet as explained in the Student Acceptable Computer Use Agreement.

Intervention:

When an office referral has been made and consequences are initiated, parents will be contacted. Intervention will be based on the seriousness of the behavior and may include:

- *Love and Logic Discussion
- *Principal conference with teacher and student
- *Call to parent or guardian
- *Contract
- *Missed recesses (number of days)
- *Missed lunches and number of days
- *In school suspension: Time spent
- *Suspension from school: Time or days
- *Parent conference with student, principal and teacher

*Completion of written assignment

*School service or cleanup # of days and/or hours

North Star Academy Staff

Principal	Mike Bennett	mbennett@north-staracademy.com
Office Manager	Melissa Morgensen	mmorgensen@north-staracademy.com
Secretary	Connie Butterfield	cbutterfield@north-staracademy.com
Secretary	Natalie Blaser	nblaser@north-staracademy.com
Special Ed	Kathie Hermansen	khermansen@north-staracademy.com
Counselor	Lisa Hardy	lhardy@north-staracademy.com
Media	Wendy Burkhart	wburkhart@north-staracademy.com
Elem. Cur. Spec.	Shana Absey	sabsey@north-staracademy.com
Elem Music	Crystal Griffiths	cgriffths@north-staracademy.com
Speech Therapist	Carin Hadley	chadley@north-staracademy.com
SEM Specialist	Stacy LeCates	slacates@north-staracademy.com

Elementary

Kindergarten	Jenni Brown	jbrown@north-staracademy.com
1 st Grade	Heather Wartman	hwartman@north-staracademy.com
1 st Grade	Mary Chai	mchai@north-staracademy.com
2 nd Grade	Bethany Ryan	bryan@north-staracademy.com
2 nd Grade	Teresa Peterson	tpeterson@north-staracademy.com
3 rd Grade	Tana Archer	tarcher@north-staracademy.com
3 rd Grade	Megan Allen	mallen@north-staracademy.com
4 th Grade	Bethany Merkling	bmerkling@north-staracademy.com
4 th Grade	Katie Huffaker	khuffaker@north-staracademy.com
5 th Grade	Crystal Nielsen	cnielsen@north-staracademy.com
5 th Grade	Shelby Shaver	sshaver@north-staracademy.com
6 th Grade	Emma Hocking-Ramirez	ehocking-ramirez@north-staracademy.com
6 th Grade	Star Hulet	shulet@north-staracademy.com

Middle School

Math	Alyson Murdock	amurdock@north-staracademy.com
Math	Maricela Johnson	mjohnson@north-staracademy.com
English	Tiffany Stoddard	tstoddard@north-staracademy.com
Tech/CTE	Troy Fernley	tfernley@north-staracademy.com
Art	Betsey Braun	bbraun@north-staracademy.com
Health /PE	Lindsey Plas	lplas@north-staracademy.com
History	Ali Cole	acole@north-staracademy.com
Science	Erin Hemingway	ehemingway@north-staracademy.com
Spanish	LeAnn Nisson	lnisson@north-staracademy.com
Music	Sara Butt	sbutt@north-staracademy.com