

Part I – Eligibility Certification

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The public school has met their state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) using the most recent accountability results available for the year prior to nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) for the year in which they are nominated (2015-2016) and be certified by the state representative. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2010 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, or 2015.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2015-2016) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 7 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 3 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools

11 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
 - Suburban
 - Small city or town in a rural area
 - Rural
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2015 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	3	2	5
K	51	35	86
1	51	40	91
2	38	46	84
3	50	53	103
4	51	49	100
5	64	52	116
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	308	277	585

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 19 % Asian
 - 12 % Black or African American
 - 5 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 63 % White
 - 0 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2014 – 2015 school year: 13%

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	33
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	45
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	78
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	617
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.126
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	13

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 7%
40 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Hindi, Kannada, Korean, Malayalam, Nepali, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, Vietnamese

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 24%
Total number students who qualify: 142
8. Students receiving special education services: 7%
44 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- 5 Autism
- 2 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 1 Emotional Disturbance
- 0 Hearing Impairment
- 0 Mental Retardation
- 3 Multiple Disabilities
- 3 Orthopedic Impairment
- 4 Other Health Impaired
- 14 Specific Learning Disability
- 7 Speech or Language Impairment
- 0 Traumatic Brain Injury
- 0 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
- 5 Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 3
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers	25
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	16
Paraprofessionals	18
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 23:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
Daily student attendance	96%	97%	97%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**
Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2015.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.
Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2006

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

The Mission of Birchview Elementary School is to ensure a world-class education that prepares each and every student to thrive today and excel tomorrow in an ever-changing global society.

16. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

PART III – SUMMARY

Birchview Elementary School is a part of Wayzata Public Schools, located in the western suburbs of Minneapolis, Minnesota which serves all or part of the communities of Corcoran, Maple Grove, Medicine Lake, Medina, Minnetonka, Orono, Plymouth and Wayzata.

Birchview was built in 1969 and is located in Plymouth, Minnesota. Approximately 585 students in grades K – 5 attend the school. Birchview has rich and diverse student population. Approximately 1% of students are American Indian, 17% are Asian/Pacific, 5% are Hispanic, 12% are black, 63% are white, 7% are English Language Learners, 7% receive special education services and 24% qualify for free/reduced lunches.

The Birchview experience provides a strong foundation for learning for all students. From the beginning of kindergarten, students learn the wide variety of skills necessary for success in school and out of school. There is a focus on foundational skills in reading, math, science, and social studies. We recognize the importance of the arts, fitness and health, Spanish and technology on our students' ability to think creatively, globally, and in a healthy manner. The integration of technology assists in the personalization of education, creating more interactive lessons, and developing skills that are becoming increasingly important for success in today's work force, such as digital literacy, communication and collaboration. Our staff works with all students to help them excel. To accomplish this, they use ongoing formative assessments and work in Professional Learning Communities (PLCS) to analyze student data to address individual needs.

Through a committed partnership between staff, parents and community members, Birchview Elementary provides a strong sense of connection to the school that encourages learning. Grade-level team and school-wide efforts to provide quality instruction are enhanced through a collaborative exchange with the University of Minnesota. The learning of students and staff are always a focus at Birchview Elementary.

In recent years we have augmented our focus on learning. The traditional topics of reading, math, science, social studies, health, etc. continue to be a priority, but we realize that many students who struggle in these areas, shine in others. To play to a larger breadth of student strengths, we have incorporated STEM activities and have started to adopt the maker movement. Student now get time to tinker, experiment, design, fail, redesign and, ultimately, succeed in solving problems with electronics, building materials, robotics and other real-world tools.

Birchview also has a strong tradition of a rich community and personal relationships. Architecturally, we are a pod-based school; four classrooms are housed within one larger room. One can walk into the pod and immediately see what is happening in all four classrooms. Teachers can see what their peers are teaching. Some half walls are in place between the rooms so students can't necessarily see what is happening, but they can hear what is happening in the other rooms. This architecture has played a role in building our close-knit community. Teachers at each grade level know all the students, teachers collaborate on a more frequent basis and students get to interact with peers from four classes instead of just their own class. Over time, this has brought our whole community closer because it is the culture of the building.

Birchview Elementary was recognized as a 2006 Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education. This was a significant achievement for us. To celebrate, we held an event with families, students, school board members, community members, several elected officials at the local, state and federal level and a representative from the U.S. Department of Education. Although the presentation and reception were wonderful, the real impact of winning the award was having our staff and students' excellent work recognized in a very meaningful way. In essence, the award validated what the community was already feeling about the school. We proudly displayed the flag and plaque for several years afterwards, giving students and staff alike a sense of pride in belonging to the Birchview community.

Birchview is proud of its volunteer parent organization that works closely with the school to provide many wonderful experiences for the students. Parents also provide enrichment experiences through the reading programs, Kids' College (an annual event where parents provide classes on a wide variety of career options)

and monthly family activities. In addition to its academic program, Birchview offers Home Base, a school-age child care program available for parents from 6:30 a.m. until 6 p.m. at the school.

At Birchview, the staff, our academic program, school events and activities, and our partnerships with parents are all focused on helping students develop in all areas of their lives, so that they are prepared to thrive today and excel tomorrow in an ever-changing global society.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Birchview students experience a core curriculum that is content rich, rigorous and personalized. The curriculum reflects the interests and expectations of our community and is aligned to “best practices” and the State of Minnesota Academic Content Standards that include the Language Arts Common Core Standards. Students build foundational skills through a variety of learning experiences including direct teacher instruction, cooperative group work and problem-based/project-based learning. Highly developed intervention services along with a gifted and talented program provide for students who are performing below or above grade level expectations. Teachers have access to all types of technology and educational apps to support the learning process.

1. Reading/English Language Arts Birchview offers a balanced approach to literacy with classroom teachers providing core instruction for all students. The curriculum presents explicit, systematic, high-quality instruction focused on five pillars of literacy that have been identified by the National Reading Panel as critical elements of learning to read. The five pillars of literacy are: Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary Development and Reading Comprehension. We use the Lucy Calkins’ Units of Study curriculum, which complements the reading curriculum and provides high-quality writing instruction. The Units of Study curriculum ensures all elementary students have the opportunity to develop writing skills in opinion, informative/explanatory and narrative writing.

2. Mathematics The goal of Birchview’s math program is to deepen the students’ overall problem solving skills and to provide the foundations of mathematical processes and reasoning. Birchview uses the Everyday Mathematics program. The program is organized by six mathematical content strands and six mathematical themes. The content strands are: operations; numeration and order; patterns; functions and algebra; data and chance; measurement and references; frames and geometry. The mathematical themes are: algorithmic and procedural thinking; estimation and number sense; mental arithmetic skills; and problem solving. The strands and themes are addressed throughout all grades level of the program in a manner that builds and extends concept understanding. Teachers first introduce topics to students using manipulatives. Topics are further examined in verbal, pictorial, symbolic and abstract ways. We have learned that using different approaches strengthens student understanding, builds confidence and accommodates different learning styles and abilities. Students practice their skills using a broad variety of approaches that include individual practice, cooperative groups and games. Students communicate their ideas both verbally and in writing. Supplemental Reading and Math Supports Birchview offers supports both for students who are below grade level and those who are above grade level. Through a fine-tuned assessment system, we identify students who are in need of remedial services. Interventionists and classroom teachers collaborate on a frequent basis to make sure that instruction both inside and outside of the classroom is connected and the right students are receiving the right supports at the right time. This is true for our intervention programming as well as our gifted and talented programming.

3. Science The purpose of the science curriculum is to ensure that all students develop scientific literacy. The program is a set of units of study that have been collaboratively developed and appropriately assigned to grade levels to provides a content-rich and hands-on learning experience. These standards are broken into four main areas: history and nature of science, life science, earth science and physical science. Each grade level has a required number of units that must be taught, with additional ones that may be embedded into other curricular areas. We subscribe to the hands-on learning approach provided through Foss Science Curriculum. At each grade level students learn biology through studying living organisms such as insects and crayfish; experiment with physics using balance and motion, levers and pulleys and variables; and across grade levels they get opportunities to learn about astronomy, engineering, environmental science and chemistry.

4. Social Studies/History The purpose of the social studies program is to lay the foundation for global citizenship. Students acquire a greater understanding of different cultures from around the world as they study the self, the community and the world. Kindergarteners study themselves and the world; first graders

study their family and families of the world; second graders study their community and communities of the world, including an understanding of the past; third graders learn about ancient civilizations; fourth grade studies the geography of North America; and fifth graders study United States history. These units are explored through examining primary and secondary sources, field trips to local historical sites and art/engineering lessons on designing cities.

5. Pre-School Program The early learning program utilizes the Early Childhood Indicators of Progress as the curriculum framework for their preschool programs. These areas include approaches to learning, creativity and the arts, social and emotional development, language and literacy development, cognitive development, and physical and motor development. The early childhood standards are aligned with the K – 3 academic standards to ensure school readiness.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Arts (visual and/or performing):

The arts program at Birchview includes both visual arts and music. The visual arts introduce students to the elements of art including line, color, shape, texture and form. Students study cultural and historical forms and traditions of the visual arts and are given the opportunity to create works of art that communicate ideas, using at least three different mediums.

General music concepts are introduced to our students through the vocal music program. Students demonstrate an understanding of the elements of music such as melody, rhythm, harmony, dynamics and form as well as characteristics of music from other cultures and time periods. Students demonstrate the ability to sing from a repertoire of songs individually and in a group, improvise, compose and play simple rhythms on classroom instruments and read and write music using a system of notation. Assessments are developmentally appropriate and are used to measure student progress in achieving grade-level expectations.

Physical Education/Health/Nutrition:

A variety of age- appropriate themes form the basis for the physical education and health program at Birchview. The health curriculum covers such topics as family, nutrition, human development, body systems, safety, mental health and well-being, and consumer health. The physical education program is focused on activities and learning opportunities of fitness, body images, skills development and team play.

Foreign Language:

All fourth and fifth grade students at Birchview study the Spanish language and Latino cultures. The initial experience in second language learning emphasizes spoken language and vocabulary building. Spanish is taught in a manner that reflects the way students acquire their first language by responding with actions, rhymes, songs, storytelling and games, building the foundation for more advanced language.

Birchview students also can extend their study of Spanish through a unique learning partnership with a language provider, called Que Tal. Que Tal provides daily instruction before school for students in grades K -5. What makes the program unique is that students can start learning a second language as early as kindergarten and they will learn Spanish from teachers who are native speakers and are passionate about teaching. The students also learn about the culture and history of Spanish-speaking countries.

Technology:

The purpose of the technology program at Birchview is to develop creative and innovative learners. The standards for student learning include digital citizenship, operations and concepts, communication and collaboration, information management and critical thinking. Students have access to a wide range of opportunities to learn about and use technology. The use of technology is embedded into all content areas and students daily have access to iPads, laptops and computer labs. Students learn basic operations such as keyboarding, word processing, drawing/painting capabilities, spreadsheets, Internet usage and safety, research tools and basic multimedia programs. Once basic skills have been mastered, students are able to use technology for projects and other learning activities.

Other Learning Opportunities Media and Library - The library/media learning experience provides all

students with an introduction to books, magazines and other literature. A licensed media specialist provides library and media instruction for all students. Students learn how to identify and select appropriate print and electronic resources.

STEM Day and Genius Hour:

Each year we offer STEM Day – a school-wide day of problem- solving, designing and learning about careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Each classroom has a community expert come in to speak about their work in the STEM field. Students then have to solve challenges that incorporate deep levels of problem solving and creative thinking.

Many grade levels have also incorporated genius hour in their academic week. Recognizing the vast research and practice around giving students choice in their learning has increased engagement and excitement around the learning process.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

The instructional methods and intervention services at Birchview are designed to meet the diverse and individual learning needs of each and every student. Teachers use data and work together in teams to plan instruction and to evaluate lessons. A school-wide system of interventions is in place to support student learning.

Birchview has adopted the WIN (What I Need) model of scheduling. This involves setting aside one hour each day to meet the individual needs of all students. Students who are in need of special education services, reading or math intervention, English as a Second Language or gifted and talented services receive the support they need during this time. Students who do not receive these supports remain in the classroom and the classroom teacher provides instruction that meets their individual needs. In essence, all teachers are interventionists for this hour of the day. This has created an understanding across the student body that it is okay that everyone learns differently and at different rates. Classrooms are intact the remainder of the day so that grade-level standards can be delivered without the interruption of students leaving for, or returning from, other classes.

Instruction:

Quality first-time instruction forms the foundation of Birchview’s instructional program. Teachers are well-versed in the use of instructional strategies and are adept at identifying student learning needs and selecting the appropriate instructional strategy. Common instructional strategies include the use of advanced organizers; anticipation guides; key word prediction; read, talk, write; key word notes, imitation writing, word taxonomies, literature circles, writers workshop, cognitively guided instruction, individual work, cooperative groups, flexible groups; problem-based learning and project-based learning. Instruction and activities are differentiated based on student needs and teacher expectations.

Intervention:

Birchview Elementary uses a multi-tiered system of support for students beginning with additional instruction by the classroom teacher and progressing to more focused instruction, both in increased time and in decreased student-to-instructor ratio. As part of the intervention program, students are assessed at regular times during the school year using local common assessments and benchmark assessments. PLCS and other collaborative teams review student progress and plan intervention services based on the data. The Birchview staff also provides special education services for students with disabilities and English language services for students who have English as their second language. These services use specially designed instruction by a licensed special education or English language instructor.

4. Assessment for Instruction and Learning and Sharing Assessment Results:

The systematic administration and communication of assessment results is an important step in the teaching and learning process. Birchview teachers use assessment data to review lesson plans and to evaluate student learning. The teachers have access to a robust system that includes agreed upon assessments, technology to collect real-time student assessment results, a data warehouse to store and access assessment data, and a

communication plan to share achievement results with staff, students and families.

Birchview teachers use a balanced assessment system to measure student learning. Student progress is assessed and evaluated through the use of the four assessment types: screeners; diagnostics; progress monitoring; and outcome-based assessment. The data is used at the individual student level to determine instructional support and/or advanced course work; at the classroom level to monitor progress toward goals and to identify common areas of strengths and areas for improvement; at the building level by the principal and site leadership teams to set building goals, develop improvement plans and to monitor progress toward achieving identified goals; and at the district level, by leadership teams to evaluate progress on goals, to set priorities and to allocate resources. If achievement gaps exist between student groups, additional supports are provided. Teachers also use data to develop culturally aware instructional practices to meet individual learners' needs.

Teachers meet in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) weekly to review data and to plan instruction, learning experiences and intervention services. The student response system allows teachers to seek and gather immediate feedback to engage students and to monitor learning progress. Once collected, the data can be easily uploaded into our data warehouse to be dis-aggregated and analyzed by PLCs and other teacher teams. In addition, Birchview staff meets regularly with intervention staff to ensure instructional alignment and to plan for instructional changes for students struggling with grade level content. These meetings are devised to support the teacher as much as the student and often serve as another opportunity to develop interventions. These meetings ensure that all staff supporting the student is in alignment in their instructional approach and methodology, which limits possible learning gaps and confusion for the student.

Parents, students and the community are kept informed on student academic progress in a variety of ways. Students and parents have 24/7 access to student grades and assessment results via the parent portal on our student management system. The assessment results are shared with students so that they are aware of their progress and can set personal learning goals. Results are shared with parents at parent/teacher conferences. Report cards are sent home at the end of each quarter. The community is informed of student academic progress by the Annual Report on Teaching and Learning, which is sent in the fall of each year to every household in the community.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

The entire staff at Birchview is committed to creating a positive school environment that supports the academic, social and emotional growth of each and every student. The staff at Birchview believes that students are more likely to be motivated and engaged when they see value in what they are learning, believe that engaging in specific behaviors will bring about a desired outcome, believe they can be successful and sense that the learning environment is supportive. We have several actions to bring this belief to actuality: personalized learning, academic choice, Positive Behavioral Intervention of Support (PBIS) and the power of relationship.

We are part of Wayzata Public Schools' "MyWay" initiative. My Way is the name of the long-term effort underway to make sure that each and every one of our students is prepared to thrive today and excel tomorrow in an ever-changing global society. The initiative began by putting digital learning devices (iPads) in the hands of students to increase student learning and engagement. At its core, the overriding goal of MyWay is to complement our current work with another tool and approach to help us provide a world-class and personalized student learning experience.

We offer academic choice in several ways. Our WIN Program sets aside one hour of each day to meet the individual needs of each student. During this time, students are making choices around the areas they feel they need the most practice. Teachers offer multiple options to practice academic skills in core content areas. In addition, many classrooms offer a "genius hour" where students have more extensive academic choice.

Although Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is not directly academic, it gives us a framework in which to create a positive environment that supports students' academic, social, and emotional growth. With clear expectations around behaviors, students are freed up to focus on growth on academics.

We also have a school culture that creates an environment where teachers feel valued and supported. Practices that support this environment include monthly staff luncheons, a sunshine committee that supports staff going through difficult times and architecture that encourages both formal and informal collaboration. We have a leadership structure that includes teachers from each grade level, and major decisions are filtered through this team and the staff as a whole. In addition, each staff meeting begins with sharing where our core values of Compassion, Commitment, Curiosity and Community have been spotted around the building.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

A strong partnership with our families and community members is important to us. Our students benefit when we all work together. The staff at Birchview uses a variety of strategies to better know our families and to engage them and the greater community in the school experience.

Information about school and classroom activities is posted on our school website and shared through weekly newsletters, classroom folders and electronically through email, Twitter and Facebook. Students also produce a weekly TV news program to highlight special school events and accomplishments. Parents have access to academic information through our online grade-book program.

Parents are a key component to creating our strong community. The formal leadership structure for parents to be involved in school leadership is the Parent/Teacher Association (PTA). The PTA serves in an advisory role to administration and the building leadership team. At monthly meetings, PTA members and the principal discuss the direction of the school and plan for school improvement.

The PTA also organizes many events that support student learning that include field trips, a fun run, the

book fair and classroom celebrations. In addition, the PTA hosts events for the entire community which include our back to school open house, concerts, bingo night, community service night, movie nights and multiple other events throughout the year that create opportunities for teachers, parents and students to interact with one another outside of the classroom.

3. Professional Development:

The purpose of our professional development plan is to build teacher capacity and to support continuous learning, so that we are able to achieve our student learning goals. The plan is aligned to our building goals and reflects best practices in teacher professional learning.

Birchview has a professional development committee that facilitates and monitors professional development activities and manages the funds allocated to our school. Our professional development plan is driven by our school goals, which are tied to our student achievement expectations. Each year at the annual data retreat, our site leadership team reviews our assessment data, sets building goals and develops a professional development plan. The goals and plan are shared with all staff during fall workshop activities.

All staff members have opportunities to participate in a variety of on-site and off-site professional learning experiences. On-site activities are sponsored and organized by the professional development committee and all teachers are expected to participate. To meet the unique learning needs of teachers, we also support personalized professional development. Teachers who are interested in additional learning experiences, beyond those offered at the site, may submit a request for funds to the professional development committee. All requests must align to building goals and student achievement outcomes.

As part of our performance review process, teachers are expected to develop at least one professional development goal. Individual goals are tied to our school professional development plan and student achievement goals. The teacher reviews his or her goal with the building principal at the start of the school year. The goal is revisited during the year to monitor progress toward completion.

In addition, each school submits an annual report to the district committee and the State Department of Education, specifying what professional development has been accomplished, how it related to student achievement and if it was successful.

Most recently our focus for professional development has been on effective professional learning communities, using data to make instructional decisions, reading strategies, using technology to support and enhance student learning and cultural-awareness and competency.

Each year the staff completes a survey to provide feedback on professional development activities. The data collected is reviewed by the professional development committee and is used to plan future professional development opportunities.

4. School Leadership:

Leadership is a shared responsibility at Birchview. Although the principal oversees the operations of the entire school, it is important to understand that leadership is shared across multiple roles throughout the building.

The main leadership group is the Birchview Leadership Team (BLT). The BLT works on key building initiatives in an effort to improve student achievement, engagement and aspirations. Initiatives include, but are not limited to, student achievement goals, staff development, budgets/finances, building procedures and other building-level initiatives. Meeting minutes are published after meetings and emailed to the staff.

All school-wide educational practices at Birchview Elementary School fall under the scope of the BLT. At times, the BLT is the decision-making body of the school. At other times, the BLT is in an advisory role to the principal. Still other times, the BLT members decide to include the entire staff on decisions. The BLT is

comprised of a representative from each grade level and a representative from each of the specialist, intervention and special education teams along with the staff development representative and the building principal.

However, other teams and individuals lead in a variety of ways. We have a Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) team that works closely with our discipline data to identify trends, needs and next steps in our programming. The PBIS team offers leadership, support and professional development as we continue to implement the PBIS framework.

There are also many examples of building staff providing leadership in their area of expertise. Our literacy coach runs weekly Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings that include the intervention team and grade level teams. This leadership has supported staff in defining precise interventions for students and implementing components of Multi-tiered System on Supports (MTSS). Our achievement interventionist has recently started an equity team.

The Vision 21 (gifted and talented) teacher leads STEM and Maker Space activities, which has contributed to creating an environment that encourages students to explore and excel in science, technology, math and engineering.

Teachers also get multiple opportunities to lead in curriculum reviews, building the district calendar, piloting curriculum and can participate in a myriad of other district decisions ranging from teaching and learning to contractual decisions; from hiring staff to serving as teachers on special assignment.

The principal of Birchview believes that his role is to make everyone across the school successful. Through empowering staff, the principal hopes teachers and paraprofessionals are able to play to their strengths, be creative in their approaches and feel safe taking risks in meeting students' needs.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

We have made Birchview a safe place for students to be – safe in a personal sense and safe to take risks in their learning without terribly painful consequences. Learning is about taking risks – trying a new book that might be too hard or trying to solve a math problem when you are unsure of how to start. It is even taking a risk trying to make a new friend when you haven't always had success in the past.

For example, we have become a (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) PBIS school. PBIS is our school-wide program to teach common expectations around the building. Using our core values of Community, Compassion, Curiosity and Commitment, we have established expectations for hallways, classrooms, the cafeteria, the playground, bathrooms and other areas around the school. When students know what to expect, and what is expected from them, they are better able to be successful. Safety and security is part of that. If one student is consistently held to these expectations, they know that other students will be as well. In the last two years, we have seen a dramatic shift in the way students follow our school-wide expectations.

Similarly, instituting practices such as WIN Time (as mentioned above), flexible classroom instruction, Genius Hour and STEM Day have helped students feel safe to be the learner they are. When a student struggles, there is support in place for them. When the culture of your building is about understanding strengths and knowing supports are in place, students thrive.