

U.S. Department of Education
2020 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [X] Title I [] Charter [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Mrs. Sara Olson
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Elm Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 15W201 60Th Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Burr Ridge State IL Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 60527-6982

County Dupage County

Telephone (630) 861-4000 Fax (630) 655-9734

Web site/URL https://www.d181.org/schools/elm-school E-mail solson@d181.org

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Dr. Hector Garcia E-mail hgarcia@d181.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Hinsdale CCSD 181 Tel. (630) 861-4922

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Ms Margaret Kleber
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

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. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2020 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. 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.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2014 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, or 2019.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
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 (2019-2020) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools)

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

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)
 Suburban
 Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2019 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	14	17	31
1	25	17	42
2	33	21	54
3	20	33	53
4	26	32	58
5	19	31	50
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	137	151	288

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 31.7 % Asian
 - 1.7 % Black or African American
 - 7.9 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 49.5 % White
 - 9.2 % 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 2018 - 2019 school year: 3%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain:

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, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	2
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	6
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	8
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	294
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.03
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):

Arabic, Urdu, Swedish, Greek, Hindi, Spanish, Gujarati, Madarin (Chinese), Japanese, Korean, Shanghai (Chinese), Lithuanian, Farsi (Persian), Telugu, Czech, Cantonese (Chinese)

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 11 %
32 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 2 %

Total number students who qualify: 6

8. Students receiving special education services: 10 %

29 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.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>2</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>5</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>14</u> Developmental Delay | <u>5</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>21</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 2

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	12
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	10
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	3
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	6

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 14:1

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

Required Information	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	95%	94%	95%	96%	96%
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 2019.

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.

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

To provide a premier educational experience that teaches students to be critical thinkers and enables them to achieve their full potential academically, socially, and emotionally.

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

Elm School is one of seven elementary schools that resides within the boundaries of Community Consolidated School District 181. It also happens to be the only elementary school within 181 located in the Village of Burr Ridge, Illinois. Tucked between several larger western suburbs of Chicago, the Village of Burr Ridge has a population of just over 10,000 people.

Despite being one of the smallest schools in the district, Elm is unique in that it has the largest number of English as Second-Language Learners. In fact, there are over sixteen different languages spoken within the building. This element of diversity is one of the most notable things about Elm and it shapes the culture of the building. Elm stakeholders refer to their community as a “Family,” and there is a genuine warmth, sincerity and love amongst students, parents, staff, and community members.

Elm’s family celebrates many traditions new and old; starting with the first day of school! Upon arrival, we commence by saying the Pledge of Allegiance together on the front lawn. After singing the school song, we commemorate the moment with an all-school photo that is hung in the halls of the building. Parents are invited to join us and many clear their calendars in order to do so. In November, another of Elm’s cherished traditions is the Veterans’ Day assembly where the school honors veterans from the community and pays tribute to their service. Veterans and active military are asked to sit in the front row and participate in our choir presentation when their branch of service is called. We share a slideshow with photos submitted by children and families of loved ones that have served our country. There is not a dry eye in the gym when the presentation is over! At the end of the school year, students participate in Field Day, 5th Grade Picnic, and Graduation. The final day of school is celebrated with a “clap out” for the graduates and retiring teachers. Everyone exits the same set of doors and gathers in the Prairie Garden to talk about their summer plans and sign yearbooks.

Elm students have the opportunity to extend their learning and growth opportunities by participating in a variety of clubs that are sponsored by both teachers and the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). The opportunities include Lego Club, Yoga Club, Language Lab-Spanish, French, Mandarin; Battle of the Books, Yearbook Club, Chess Club, Destination Imagination, Environmental Club, Game Club, Fiber Arts Club, and Coding Club. Student representatives decide on school spirit days and fundraisers for charitable organizations. Additionally, fifth graders act as leaders and assist with lunchroom supervision and run the school store. Their positive actions and support contribute to ensuring the safety of our school throughout the day.

Members of the PTO work closely with Elm teachers and administrators to ensure funding supports ongoing curriculum advancements. The PTO oversees more than fifteen parent-led committees who plan and execute school sponsored activities and fundraisers from the popular bi-weekly hot lunch program to the Bike Safety Rodeo and Family Trivia Night. The PTO is instrumental in essential parent communication with a robust website and weekly Sunday “eBlasts” highlighting important information for the coming week. They host relevant speakers and provide funding for curricular assemblies during the school year. Parent volunteers are passionate leaders who dedicate countless hours and unique skills to bring to life some of the most popular student activities. For example, Elm’s annual “Celebrating Differences Assembly,” where fourth grade students rotate through seven stations and experience what it’s like to live as another person with learning challenges, autism, or visual/hearing/motor impairments.

A key component to Elm’s success is the desire for continuous improvement. Teachers are constantly looking for new ideas to engage, support, nurture, and inspire students. Elm offers rigorous academic programming. Numerous additional supports allow for targeted differentiation and the freedom to adapt and adjust instruction to meet the specific needs of our students. Seventy eight percent of Elm students met or exceeded the 69th percentile in reading as measured by NWEA, and 75% met or exceeded the 69th percentile in math as measured by NWEA. The Building Leadership Team analyzes this data, along with common grade level assessment data, and determines school and grade level goals for improvement. Professional Learning Communities meet weekly to provide teachers the opportunity to monitor and adjust instruction for students. Benchmark and target review meetings allow teachers to monitor instruction at and

across grade levels and group students for What-I-Need Time (WIN) an intervention block in which students receive targeted support or enrichment. The Elm Problem Solving Team meets bi-weekly to discuss individual students and generate goals and plans for any student a teacher identifies as needing additional support in academic or social emotional areas. Additionally, the Elm Social and Emotional Learning Committee meets monthly to review all student social emotional data and create building-wide goals and strategies to support students' social emotional learning.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

1a. Overall approach, which may include overarching philosophy or approaches common across subject areas

Community Consolidated School District 181, and Elm School, take a consistent and systematic approach to core curriculum. While the foundation is built upon the Common Core Standards, it also incorporates Illinois Learning Standards, including social-emotional objectives. Additionally, our core curriculum is responsive to our unique population of learners, considering off-grade level standards for differentiation. As many of our students are advanced in their learning, standards considered developmentally appropriate for our students are introduced to them as they demonstrate readiness.

Teachers utilize common pacing guides for science, social science, english-language arts and mathematics in order to provide a common experience to all students. Science and Social Studies pacing guides are separated into units and each unit provides teachers with standards for instruction. English-language arts and mathematics pacing guides are cyclical and provide teachers and students with standards to introduce, reinforce, and master throughout the trimester. Common Assessments are given at the end of each unit by grade-level teams. The individual student data is analyzed at both district and building levels to determine the effectiveness of the core curriculum guides. All teachers are surveyed on pacing guides to gather a global perspective. Suggested changes are reviewed by individual curriculum committees composed of classroom teachers.

At Elm, classroom teachers review assessment data as grade-level teams to inform instructional practice, and as individuals, to prepare for small group opportunities or re-teaching of standards. Standards are introduced in various ways including whole group direct instruction, small group reinforcement and independent practice. Technology is used to enhance, not replace, instruction. Elm teachers are nearing the completion of common formative assessments, that are given weekly, and discussed as professional learning communities. The data gathered from these formative assessments guide small groups within the classroom, but can also create flexible opportunities for tiered instruction outside of the classroom. In addition to this, classroom teachers utilize anecdotal notes, exit slips, technology integrated applications and collaborative work assignments to analyze students' understanding on a daily basis.

1b. Reading/English language arts

At Elm School, English-Language Arts (ELA) is at the heart of learning; it consists of reading, writing, communication and critical thinking. ELA is the foundation for much of learning and is a bridge into content areas. Teachers create engaging and differentiated lessons while implementing the District 181 ELA Curriculum, which is aligned to the Common Core Standards. Teachers at Elm are members of the District ELA Committee, which wrote the curriculum, identified priority standards, and created the pacing guide and common assessments for teachers to utilize.

Teachers at Elm School work hard to learn as much as possible about their students as readers through a variety of assessments. Students are benchmarked in Fall/Winter/Spring using MAP, Aimsweb and Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System. Teachers collaborate with specialists and administrators to review data and identify strengths and challenges within their class, groups, and individual students. When these teams collaborate and analyze data, they set goals and make instructional decisions for students based on need.

Elm teachers implement the district's balanced reading model where interactive read-alouds, shared reading and mini-lessons are used to teach standards and model reading skills and strategies. Through guided reading, independent reading, conferencing and word study, teachers differentiate lessons to focus more on individual student needs and responsive teaching. Through the use of reading records and observations of reading behaviors, teachers are able to create flexible groups and individualize instruction. Teachers also implement the model of gradual release of instruction in their classrooms. This is a well choreographed

dance for Elm teachers modeling, the “I do”, and constantly fluctuating between the “We do” and “You do”. Elm’s Team challenges students to be their best, but are also there to support, nudge and rescue when needed. We want to provide rigorous and exciting learning, but not cause frustration in our learners.

Elm teachers collaborate with specialists in many ways. We work together to study, modify and create rubrics for a variety of areas in ELA. Recently our staff focused on students’ written responses to reading. During faculty meeting times, teachers reviewed the rubric, brought samples of student responses, anchor graded and discussed the work. Through discussion during and after grading, we established consistency at and between grade levels for student expectations. When teachers saw what students at lower grades were capable of, they realized they could raise the bar in their classroom.

Teachers also collaborate with specialists to create question stems for grades K-5 that reflect all four of Webb’s Depth of Knowledge levels. Staff work together at co-plan meetings to incorporate questions at all four levels to increase complexity in whole group and small group instruction. Again, consistency at and between grade levels was established, so higher order thinking and deeper learning for all Elm students was accessible.

Another example is when several specialists collaborated with RtI Tutors and Classroom teachers to create a rubric and consistent language when teaching a fiction retell in the primary grades. When using framed sentences, visuals, actions and consistent language, students were more successful with oral and written retells in the classroom and in interventions.

At Elm, writer’s workshop is utilized to teach process writing. Teachers use mini-lessons, anchor texts, writing time and sharing time for students to practice various forms of writing. Students learn through modeled and shared writing throughout grades K-5.

1c. Mathematics

Elm School’s math curriculum is guided by the Common Core Standards with a focus on the Mathematical Practices throughout all grade levels. Elm teachers believe a high-quality mathematics curriculum engages students in a balanced approach to developing conceptual understandings, procedural knowledge, fluency, and application of knowledge to solve real-world problems. Students are a community of learners who must be able to discuss, explain, and justify solutions to further develop conceptual understandings. Our curriculum promotes diverse thinking through modeling and complex problem solving approaches.

The math program is academically rigorous and includes compacting grade-level concepts as well as providing math enrichment and acceleration. There are three distinct tiers of math curriculum at each grade level beginning in grade three. Students are placed and may move based on standardized test scores and classroom performance. The primary grades regularly use pre-assessment data to group students to provide guided math in the classrooms, enrichment opportunities from the Differentiation Specialist, and reteaching from the Resource teacher.

Teachers use data from formative assessments to monitor understanding and provide differentiation within the classrooms. Based on this data, teachers provide direct small group instruction and set individual goals. Technology-based programs allow teachers to collect and analyze data to determine students’ current understandings and next steps for instruction. At Elm 89.8 percent of students made RiT growth between fall 2019 to winter 2020 on the NWEA MAP Math Assessment. In addition, 77% of students met or exceeded expectations on the Illinois Assessment of Readiness in the Spring of 2019. This number is an increase on the previous year which was at 74% of students proficient on PARCC. Elm believes all students can learn mathematics when engaged in a responsive, supported curriculum.

1d. Science

Elm’s science curriculum centers on 21st Century-skills and a comprehensive understanding of collaboration, innovation, and communication required in the ever-changing world. Incorporating real-world problem solving and hands-on learning, students meet and exceed expectations when completing written,

multi-level depth of knowledge assessments and performance tasks. Ninety three percent of Elm fifth grade students demonstrated proficiency on the 2019 Illinois Science Assessment.

Beginning in kindergarten and continuing through 5th grade, Elm students construct arguments based on information learned through investigation. They explore a foundation focused on the Next Generation Science Standards which covers Physical Science, Life Science, Earth and Space Science, and Engineering Design. In upper elementary years, students also identify criteria and constraints and evaluate the effectiveness of their solutions. Through the common pacing guide, developed by members of the Science Committee, teachers utilize textbooks, videos, leveled texts, hands-on experiments, and Google Expeditions as resources for science to come alive in their classrooms.

Students have the opportunity to share their science learning with the community each spring at the Elm School Science Exposition. All students from kindergarten through fifth grade are encouraged to participate. Students choose a project based on interest and follow the inquiry design model to conduct and execute their projects. A display is created and presentations are given for feedback to local science experts. Additionally, students are given time to view one another's experiments and provide helpful feedback to each participant in a commemorative science journal. In the evening, parents, teachers, and peers are invited to a celebration and sharing of learning.

1e. Social studies/history/civic learning and engagement

Through inquiry, realistic experiences, problem-based learning, and technology integration, teachers create lessons aligned with the district's newly aligned social studies standards and resources. Students learn to become accountable citizens, understand physical environments and global connections, and develop a sense of financial literacy while exploring a wide range of historical people, events and eras. Students develop the ability to analyze evidence and draw conclusions about the world around them.

Integrating social studies curriculum into ELA allows students to practice reading skills and strategies authentically. Written responses reflect critical thinking as well as social studies content in order to develop strong writers. Our resources support the integration of ELA and social studies by providing primary teachers with leveled content-area books that can be used to teach subject matter during guided reading instruction.

Inquiry skills engage students in creative and critical thinking. Students learn to construct essential questions, determine credible resources, and gather and evaluate those sources. Students then develop claims using supporting evidence, communicate their learning and take informed action.

Elm staff are passionate about curriculum work and serve on multiple committees, at both the building and district level, including the district's Social Studies Committee. Many Elm teachers worked with district administrators to write pacing guides and common assessments. Our teachers were instrumental in choosing the resources adopted to support teaching the standards. They also provided integral professional development to staff members at our building and across the district.

1f. For secondary schools:

1g. For schools that offer preschool for three- and/or four-year old students:

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

All Elm students attend art class once a week. Kindergarten and first grade students have art for 45 minutes and second through fifth grade students have art for one hour. The art program is aligned with the Illinois Fine Arts Standards. Students are exposed to artwork from a variety of people and places across the world, and throughout history, as well as artistic careers and creative technologies. Students are encouraged to develop studio habits of mind, including problem solving and persistence, by having the opportunity to create art using a variety of tools and media. Student art is displayed throughout the school and community, including the Hinsdale Public Library, Community House for a district-wide art exhibit, and the West

Suburban Consortium of Academic Excellence, a regional K-8 Art show held at the Cheney Mansion in Oak Park. Every year in the spring, Elm hosts a Fine Arts Night where each student has one 2-dimensional and one 3-dimensional piece of art on display. Students and family members attend Fine Arts Night to view the art exhibit, enjoy the chorus performance and participate in PE, iLab and One School, One Book activities.

Elm School's physical education program provides a quality learning environment for all students in kindergarten through 5th grade. We are proud to be recognized as a Blue Ribbon program for the past six years and counting. Within our program, students are introduced to a wide range of manipulative and locomotor skills. Our lessons allow students ample opportunity to develop and master these skills, as well as address and integrate the SEL standards. We use a wide variety of up-to-date equipment and technology to provide experiences that allow students to learn at their highest potential. In addition to our gymnasium, we utilize a large black top area and field space as extensions of our "classroom." These alternate locations enhance our program and allow our students to learn in different environments. Through a district grant, we received 12 bowling lanes that are shared throughout our district. We use these during our underhand rolling/bowling unit. At the end of this unit, parents are invited to participate in a "cosmic bowling" class to experience the skills, teamwork and fun their students have learned firsthand. In the fall and spring, students also have the opportunity to join our optional morning "Mileage Club," which teaches students the importance of pacing themselves while running and all of the benefits that come with it. The physical education program at Elm School is designed to teach students to flourish both as an individual and also as a cooperative member of a team. Not only do we strive to keep Elm students actively engaged during PE class, but we also encourage a positive attitude towards physical fitness in general to promote an active and healthy lifestyle outside of the classroom.

Elm's Spanish program provides instruction three times a week for fifth graders. The curriculum is aligned with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language Standards (ACTFL). Students are immersed in the target language with an emphasis on the development of vocabulary acquisition and beginning listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Students learn the value of being risk-takers by performing language tasks, dialogues and songs in front of the class. The experience of learning a new language teaches empathy and tolerance for other cultures as well as promotes social-emotional skills. Culture is an important component of the curriculum and is infused into the fifth-grade units by learning about the various Latino customs, traditions and holidays.

The Elm School library is filled with rich, diverse literature that provides "mirrors and windows" for our students, and is truly the heart of the school. Students come to read and inquire, and leave motivated to become life-long readers. Teachers come to collaborate and gather resources to support teaching, learning and technology integration. The library space is flexible to accommodate both library classes and small groups simultaneously. Elm is fortunate to be staffed with a full time Teacher Librarian and an Instructional Assistant. This allows our library to provide full support to students and staff. Students acquire future-ready skills through time spent in the iLab, Elm School's STEAM lab. The teacher librarian facilitates weekly lessons with all students in grades K-5, and collaborates with classroom teachers to design activities to complement and extend the classroom curriculum. Students spend 30-45 minutes each week designing solutions to challenges and problems connected to classroom content. A variety of low- and high-tech tools are utilized as students work through the engineering design process. Students reflect on their challenges and ways to improve their designs in each class session. Third through fifth grade students can also participate in the Dash Robotics club completing challenges through the Wonder Robotics League Competition. The Elm library offers enrichment activities for students. The Monarch and Bluestem programs motivate students to read 20 books on the State of Illinois Readers' Choice Awards Monarch and Bluestem lists. Fourth and fifth graders can join the Battle of the Books club where they read literature from many genres, form teams and compete by answering questions based on the books. The Bowser Challenge is a bracket style reading program for 3rd-5th graders exposing them to 8 different genre categories. Students read and then vote for the winning book.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

Elm School works together to provide focused intervention for our striving students. These interventions take place during What-I-Need (WIN) time. This time is outside of core instruction so students can receive a "double dose" of focused teaching to increase progress in reading or math, helping them close the gap.

Students are benchmarked three-times a year in reading and math with MAP, Aimsweb and Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System. After each benchmark period, a team of specialists (differentiation specialist, reading specialist, EL teacher, school psychologist, principal, social worker, speech pathologist, occupational or physical therapist) come together with classroom teachers to identify grade level, classroom and specific student needs. After identifying these focus areas at benchmark meetings, teams collaborate at weekly professional learning communities and progress monitor meetings every six-weeks.

During these more-frequent meetings, teachers and specialists plan differentiated lessons/units and review student progress. This plan for responsive teaching is crucial for student success. The team works together to identify needs, plan for groups and then the team reconvenes to review progress, regroup students and plan new learning.

Students who fall between the 20-45th%ile on benchmark assessments are targeted for small group instruction provided by the reading specialist or RtI tutors. Reading and math interventions may include LLI (Leveled Literacy Intervention), extra guided reading, multi-sensory phonics or word study instruction, pre-teaching or re-teaching of skills and additional practice. Interventions are typically 30-minutes, 4-5 days/week. The amount of time and size of the group depends on student need. Students are progress monitored and data is reviewed in professional learning communities and progress monitor meetings. Depending on progress, students can decrease or increase intervention time. If a student is not making growth, an Individual Problem Solving (IPS) meeting will be called to develop a plan for additional intervention, enrichment, behavioral or social/emotional support necessary.

3b. Students performing above grade level

Elm school is committed to providing each child a challenging learning environment. Without a formal identification system for gifted services, we are able to be flexible in meeting the needs of our advanced learners; holding teachers accountable for differentiating in the classroom, and targeting small group instruction.

Weekly professional learning communities and regular data benchmark meetings are an opportunity to review pre assessments, formative assessments, and summative assessments to identify students already proficient in the standards. Particular attention is paid to students above the ninetieth percentile in developing instructional plans to expand, enrich, and/or accelerate the core curriculum.

Differentiation Specialists provide teacher support as well as small group pull-out instruction in Mathematics and English Language Arts. his instruction incorporates conceptually challenging, in-depth, and complex content for students with academic talents. This year, students from Elm participated in a newly created inquiry based novel unit that brought together advanced learners from across five different schools.

The school has a policy and criteria for early entrance into kindergarten as well as full grade and single subject acceleration to accommodate academic outliers. A team is formed to review assessments, and required documents to determine qualified candidates. Individual plans are developed to help the students reach their learning goals.

3c. Special education

Elm school provides comprehensive support for all students, including students with identified disabilities and those receiving special education services. Several systems are in place to identify students with disabilities and carefully monitor students receiving special education.

To ensure that students identified with disabilities still receive high quality core instruction, Elm school

safeguards core curriculum time in both language arts and mathematics. This ensures students do not miss valuable instruction time with their general education teachers and peers. Moreover, Elm school uses What-I-Need (WIN) time for related services to provide support without impacting core curriculum time.

In addition to benchmark data review, targeted data review for each student with an Individualized Education Plan occurs at the end of each trimester. The purpose of these meetings is to monitor student growth and progress toward individualized goals. Adjustments to students' plans can be made depending on the student data.

The special education team at Elm school also works collaboratively to meet the needs of all students. The resources used for individualized instruction are aligned to the core curriculum. Also, teachers frequently co-plan to ensure that the special education instruction and related services directly relate to core curriculum content and state standards. This also allows all stakeholders to have a role in the decision-making process. To promote consistency of service for students, Speech/Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Social Work use rubrics to help determine the level of need and intensity of support of services.

As an administration team, the Principal and Pupil Services Administrator also use flexible grouping, creative scheduling, and provide professional development opportunities for the special education team. As a result, students in special education have shown exceptional growth. Eight percent of students in both reading and math met their projected growth targets from Winter 2019 - Winter 2020.

3d. ELLs, if a special program or intervention is offered

Collaboration is key in meeting the needs of our diverse learners. We begin each school year by sharing ACCESS results with all stakeholders including teachers, parents and the students themselves.

Elm teachers take a team approach when working with English Learners. During collaboration each week, we plan for upcoming curriculum and assessments to determine which scaffolds or supports may be necessary for our students to be successful. These include Language Experience Approach, Graphic Organizers, Visuals and Sentence Frames and Cooperative Learning Groups.

We have benchmarking meetings several times a year where we analyze various assessment data. When it is determined that an EL student is below grade level or not making significant progress we identify strengths and weaknesses to create an individual plan using student data. We use this data to determine intervention changes to support areas such as fluency, comprehension, content vocabulary, or writing.

Accessibility has increasingly become an important part of learning and assessment for our English Learners. We continuously work with our Teacher Librarians and Technology Instructional Assistants to discover ways to use technology to increase accessibility regardless of students' English proficiency. For example, we found that the speaking domain was lowest for most of our students. We implemented Seesaw as a tool for students to demonstrate learning using academic language.

We have an English Learner Instructional Coach who works with grade level teams to model effective instructional strategies to increase academic vocabulary and engagement in the classroom setting.

We share ACCESS results with parents at one of our four English Learner Parent Nights. At that initial parent meeting, we ask parents to share how we can partner with them to meet the needs of their child providing interpreters when needed.

Lastly, we share assessment results with students so they may see their areas of strength and areas of need for goal setting and data binders.

3e. Other populations (e.g., migrant), if a special program or intervention is offered

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Elm School stakeholders focus on relationships that have a great impact on the overall climate and culture of the school. Teachers work hard to make sure each student knows they are valued and can succeed. At the beginning of each school year, Elm staff selects a long-range theme which is woven into monthly social emotional lessons for the students. For the 2019-2020 school year, the RESPECT theme was chosen as a shared vision, which serves as an acronym to bring value to the idea of students having Respect for Each other, Self, Property, Environment, Classmates, and Teachers. At the beginning of each school day, students are reminded of the theme through morning announcements.

Students are also awarded with “Bowser” Bucks, the namesake of our school mascot, for displaying acts of kindness, showing respect for peers and teachers, and being responsible when completing learning assignments. Students use these Bucks to participate in weekly class raffles and larger school motivational activities, which are often activities chosen by the students themselves. When a teacher presents a student with one of these coupons, the teacher specifically explains what good behavior choice they have made and why it is important to continue to display this behavior for our community of learners. As a teacher, it is rewarding to see students continue to display appropriate behaviors after initially being rewarded with these Bowser Bucks. Over time, students begin to exhibit the good choice behaviors instinctively and therefore, this positive behavior becomes second nature to them.

Additionally, teachers complete a SAEBRS screening on each student within their classroom three times a year. This data is reviewed at our benchmark meetings and student challenges are identified. Supports are provided to students and teachers based on this data, and progress is monitored to determine effectiveness of these interventions. In between benchmark meetings, teachers may bring students to the Elm Individual Problem-Solving Team for strategies and suggestions on helping students in need or social/emotional supports.

Last, and most importantly, is the relationship that staff develop with individual students and their families. This begins at the start of the school year as classrooms are set-up to provide warm, nurturing spaces for students to engage in learning. Elm staff greet children by name when they exit their cars, enter the building, and walk into their classroom. Teachers are encouraged to reach out to families each month through email or letter to “check-in” and provide specific feedback. All of these steps help to build a trusting relationship and partnership with Elm families and students.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Culture of community is a defining strength of the Elm School family. From students to parents to staff to building leadership, all stakeholders feel a strong connectedness to one another. Distinctly positive interactions focused on open communication to understand and appreciate each other’s similarities as well as differences have built a strong foundation from which our students learn.

Our weekly community engagement through the Elm School Bowser Blast, pushed out digitally through email and text, keeps parents informed of important notices along with school and PTO events. Skyward is our online portal used by students and parents to understand the lessons being taught in class as well as results of student assessments. Our active PTO supports a broad range of activities such as Bike Safety Rodeo, Ice Cream Socials, Trivia Night, One School/One Book, and Community Rummage Sale bringing families together under the one roof.

Elm School’s partnership with the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) to support Social Emotional Learning for Academic Success has resulted in a strong school-home connection which supports our learners. Our annual school theme is supported by SELAS activities embedded throughout the school day, led by parent volunteers and staff alike. Monthly social-emotional learning topics, both uplifting and challenging, are addressed in a child-friendly manner, such as making positive choices, celebrating diversity, community

building, volunteerism, and bullying. This year our school hosted Celebrating Differences in partnership with Elm parents enabling our 4th grade students to step into the life of individuals with autism, learning impairments, physical impairments, visual impairments, and hearing impairments. Parent volunteers set up stations with hands-on simulations with the goal of encouraging empathy, openness, and understanding for our young, growing learners.

Elm School is a melting pot in our Hinsdale/Burr Ridge community. With more than 15 languages spoken by our families, Elm School represents a cross-section of American society. Our teachers engage the broader community to celebrate our diversity through International Club, where cultural traditions of fellow students are taught by parents. This culminates in a cultural variety show with student participants of all ethnic backgrounds.

Our iLab STEAM learning is supported outside of class with extra-curriculars, such as Science Expo and Destination Imagination. Science Expo encourages scientific exploration, research, and testing with student project presentations to local real-world STEM professionals from the renowned Fermi Lab and Argonne Lab. Destination Imagination teaches STEAM curriculum while encouraging creativity and problem-solving through team work. In the past 5 years at Elm School, over 130 students, managed by parent volunteers, have showcased their team challenge solutions at regional, state and global competitions.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Elm School has a culture of constructive collaboration and continuous improvement. Our staff respects one another and are generous in helping each other build capacity. Professional development funnels from district level initiatives, to building based school improvement strategies to classrooms that impact student learning.

Every fall, the School Improvement Plan (SIP) targets specific strategies for addressing literacy, math and social/emotional learning goals. Our Building Leadership Team (BLT) identifies areas that support our district initiatives and SIP for the year. Last year the district provided training in Kagan Cooperative Learning strategies. These strategies would support our building goal of increasing classroom engagement through discussion. Our EL teacher, passionate about using Kagan cooperative learning in the classroom, was eager to provide additional training to the staff.

Individual coaching through planning, co-teaching, and reflecting on the effectiveness of the lessons with a colleague made teachers comfortable trying new approaches. Staff members were given time at BLT meetings, staff meetings and co-plan meetings to share ways they used cooperative learning in their classrooms.

Weekly staff meetings are focused on professional development. Staff members are surveyed to determine needs and interests, and the results are reviewed by the Building Leadership Team to ensure meaningful learning takes place. Staff members share presentation duties depending on the topic; whether sharing new ideas learned at a conference, research from a recently read book/article, or leading a discussion of rubrics to ensure consistency in scoring and vertical alignment. These meetings are staff/committee led. All staff meeting topics relate to academic SIP goals. Information dissemination is saved for a weekly memo; face-to-face time is focused on learning.

Opportunities to meet as Professional Learning Communities are prioritized by the Principal as the master schedule is created. Meetings are all scheduled collectively on one day of the week so that the principal, reading specialist, and differentiation specialist may be in attendance without disruption to the students' schedules or services. To an observer, the participants at these meetings are not recognizable by position; rather everyone is seen as a valued member of the team. Everyone is a leader and contributor in equal measure. Discussion focuses on student learning:

What do we want students to know?

How will we know if they learn it?

What if they already know it?

What if they struggle to learn?

Formative assessments are created and shared and conversation is structured so that teachers are supported in their efforts, not compared.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership philosophy at Elm School can be described as collaborative. Leadership is something to be fostered and shared among staff. Elm is an organization that values each member's contributions and strengths, and one that realizes they're only as strong as their weakest staff member. To ensure student achievement, school leadership champions and models continued growth and professional development, as well as shared ownership and dependence on one another to improve.

The leadership philosophy centers around the building's core values of education:

- School safety is paramount
- All students deserve powerful instruction.
- Relationships move an organization forward.

Elm School Committees are developed around these core values and all staff members are asked to participate on one or more of these committees, depending on their interest. The Safety Committee meets monthly to involve school staff in a cooperative effort to promote safety and health in the workplace. The safety committee assists administration in making recommendations for change. The Building Leadership Committee analyzes building-level data trends, selects strategies for the School Improvement Plan, and plans the building professional development schedule. The Social-Emotional Learning Committee plans positive incentive rewards for the school year, professional development opportunities for Social-emotional learning, and connects state standards to classroom curriculum so SEL is embedded in core curriculum appropriately. Parents are invited to participate in building-level committees as well. Their perspective is welcome and assists in keeping students' interests top of mind.

Students are viewed as partners in education. As co-leaders, these stakeholders have opportunities to play a significant role in shaping the culture and priorities at Elm. Children provide feedback on clubs and activities and are offered leadership roles through school sponsored activities (Environment Club, Debate Club, 5th Grade Helpers). Additionally, students are asked to create academic goals based on data and assist in reaching these targets. Efforts have paid off. In our most recent Comprehensive School Climate Inventory, students reported a score of 4.57 in the area of School Connectedness and Engagement. This empirically validated tool is scaled 1-5, with anything over a 3.5 being viewed as positive results.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

While a successful school may employ a multitude of strategies, instructional practices, or data analysis, the culture of adaptability allows room for growth and change for students, teachers, and administrators. Adaptability is how Elm School continually demonstrates excellence each and every day. In the ever-changing landscape of education, our teachers and administrator are asked to shift. Shift instructional practices, behavior strategies, testing procedures, and differentiation to meet the social-emotional and educational needs of our students. We are preparing our students for a rapidly changing world. A key to Elm's success is the established culture of learning for everyone. Rather than closing their doors and relying on past practices, teachers are leaning in and have discovered that vulnerability has value in order to grow and change as an educator.

Elm School stays focused on meeting the needs of each child in all areas and maintaining that focus on expertise, collaboration, and accountability allows teachers to adapt. Elm School has teacher book clubs that explore the latest research and share with all staff the important take-aways to implement. Self-directed Professional Development allows teachers to continue to develop their own pedagogy and then share their learning with their colleagues. The Principal strives to nurture and support staff to be inquisitive and share ideas with each other. Every staff member is welcomed to request time at a staff meeting to bring ideas, successes, new strategies, or questions. Teachers are encouraged to take risks and feel empowered. Allowing the development of professional interests and knowledge to be shared continues to foster the collaborative culture at Elm.

Accountability is expected as well. Beyond state and district mandated accountability measures and data, Elm staff members work to hold themselves and each other accountable for the growth and development of each other and our students. Our teachers work tirelessly to advocate for all students and there is never a sense of "my kid" or "your kid" because every student is "OUR kid." Whether it is the EL teachers providing resources and cultural insights or the differentiation specialist collaborating and planning to make sure all kids are being challenged at their level, everyone strives to hold themselves accountable to the students' educational experiences. This development of a culture of shared learning is critical to Elm's adaptability. It gives teachers the grace and opportunity to continually develop as an educator. The world of education changes rapidly and yet Elm School has the resolve to continually adapt and improve.