

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 9525 Indian Boulevard South
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Cottage Grove State MN Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 55016-3603

County Washington County

Telephone (651) 425-4201 Fax (651) 425-4215

Web site/URL https://gces.sowashco.org E-mail lloshek@sowashco.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. Keith Jacobus E-mail kjacobus@sowashco.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name South Washington County School District Tel. (651) 425-6300

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. Tracy Brunnette
(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):
- 16 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 4 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 3 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 23 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	61	44	105
1	57	53	110
2	60	67	127
3	60	57	117
4	72	47	119
5	51	61	112
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	361	329	690

*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):
- 0.4 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 5.9 % Asian
 - 5.6 % Black or African American
 - 6 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 77.5 % White
 - 4.6 % 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: 6%

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	5
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	38
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	43
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	714
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.06
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	6

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

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 6 %
38 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 12 %

Total number students who qualify: 80

8. Students receiving special education services: 17 %

114 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>33</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>10</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>8</u> Developmental Delay | <u>24</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>6</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>35</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: 12

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.	28
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	15
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	15
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

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 25:1

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	96%	96%	96%	95%	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.

Together we build the foundation for the growth and success of all learners.

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

Grey Cloud Elementary School, a neighborhood school in Cottage Grove, Minnesota, is one of 16 elementary schools in the South Washington County School District. Families in this St. Paul suburb vary from families who have strong Cottage Grove roots to families new to the area moving into newly constructed housing or cohabiting with other family members. It is not uncommon for families to verbalize that they selected housing because they wanted their children to attend Grey Cloud due to our favorable reputation with other families and our student performance.

Grey Cloud Elementary has an intentional focus on relationship building articulated in our mission, "Together we build the foundation for the growth and success of all learners." This mission has been carried out in our SOAR Program that focuses on teaching, supporting, expecting, rewarding and holding students accountable in the areas of safety, organization, accountability, and respect in all settings. Over ten years of our SOAR Program, schoolwide relationship building efforts, and intentional staff development have all been reflected in our yearly themes and school improvement plans. Our yearly themes, including: "It's All about the 'E,' Everybody, Energy, and Evidence that leads to Excellence," "It Starts with Me," and "W.I.N the Day! Work hard, Improve and be Nice," are woven into our words, actions, and visuals throughout the school. Each year, all students and staff members submit a photograph and place it on (what this year is) a pennant. These pennants are hung throughout the hallways showcasing our community. Each pennant also includes ways that each individual will "W.I.N the Day!"

We have established monthly themes that also support developing student character, reinforce expectations, and build a positive school climate and culture. The year begins with "SOARing at Grey Cloud" which allows us to spend a week on each letter in SOAR teaching expectations prior to expecting them. The year progresses into "Kindness Month," "Grateful at Grey Cloud Month," "Celebrating Everybody Month," "Mindfulness and Movement Month," "I Love to Read and Learn Month," "Math, Music, and Motivation Month," "Grit and Goals Month," and ending with "SOARING Now and Beyond Month." All of these months are saturated with messaging, skill building, strategy work, valuing diversity, a growth mindset approach, and character development to set students up for success in a safe, welcoming, and challenging environment.

Grey Cloud is systematic. We have structures set in place to support students, staff, and families. Our School Improvement Planning Committee closely looks at data at the school and individual level and creates, monitors and measures our goals and action steps monthly. One of those action steps has been each teacher having two individual conferences with each student annually. Thus, when taking into account conferences with specialist teachers, each student has a minimum of ten personal conversations with teachers per year. This relationship building is at the heart of all we do. Teachers also have monthly Grade Level Problem Solving meetings to talk about supporting students socially/emotionally and academically as a team. We have a building mental health team that meets weekly to collaboratively support students and a student support team that meets twice a month to support special needs students and staff. The principal is an active member of all of these teams.

To maintain a balanced approach, academics are the focus of two monthly Professional Learning Community meetings. Rotating between a reading and math focus, a benchmark is selected by each team to focus on. Professional development is part of each staff meeting using Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching strategies, infusing equity work into monthly staff meetings as well as the yearly and monthly themes. Teachers are active leaders on staff development days, co-facilitating sessions with the principal and leading sessions for their colleagues to choose from in what we call an Ed. Camp Format, providing licensed staff with choice and voice in their learning.

At Grey Cloud, we believe in having fun, celebrating, and recognizing students, staff, and families. Our staff and Parent Teacher Association meetings always include "Five Minutes of Fun" and laughter. We believe in our shared responsibility, value vulnerability, and hold each other to high and shared expectations. For students, we have schoolwide celebrations such as the annual "Celebration of Learning" at the end of the year, buddy classroom activities and we even just had a school dance party before spring break after we

reached the goal of 20,000 SOAR tickets awarded.

Students and staff alike can echo that we have established and expected ways we do “things” at Grey Cloud. It is these habits and consistency that have made our school successful. We are fortunate to note this success quantitatively in very little staff turnover and high student attendance and academic success rates. Qualitatively, the message comes through in the pride and ownership as students, staff and families echo that Grey Cloud is a great place to be! Winning the Blue Ribbon would validate these shared beliefs and serve as a continued sense of pride that what we do matters- it would be the bow (or ribbon) on top.

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

Whether we are focusing on adult or student learning, we are focused on the “what” and more importantly the “why.” We want our learners to not only know what they are learning, articulated in a posted learning target, but why the learning is important. If the facilitator or the teacher cannot identify the “why,” meaningful learning is sacrificed. Therefore, it is important to know our learners, their interests, motivators, triggers, current understanding and/or skill level. We embrace failure and mistakes to better build a climate for healthy risk-taking and cultivate a school culture that values learning.

We believe in a gradual release model moving from a teacher model, to a shared approach, and then releasing to individual student practice with the ultimate goal of independence. We believe in a guided and small group approach to personalize learning. This guided approach allows for opportunities for students to participate with peers in centers, workplaces and more hands-on learning opportunities keeping engagement high. Using attention signals, call and responses, and varied discussion protocols, we strive to be responsive to our students and incorporate choice. and voice.

Measure of Academic Progress (MAP), the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs), and the Benchmark Assessment (BAS) scores are summative data collected to guide our planning. High level questions, exit tickets, observation, running records, projects and written assessments provide us with formative data. In literacy, we operate off a balanced literacy framework and with math we have moved to a conceptual math curriculum called Bridges. When students struggle or need support outside the core, we have a 30 minute block for intervention called “What I Need (W.I.N.)Time”. During this time, multiple groups are pulled including Special Education, English Language Learners, and intervention groups that use a Leveled Learning Intervention. Enrichment, extra work time, or interest areas can be provided for other students during W.I.N. Time.

1b. Reading/English language arts

Grey Cloud Elementary students engage in a daily 120-150 minute Balanced Literacy Instructional Framework Block. During this time, students are engaged in literacy instruction in a variety of ways, such as the following: read aloud, mini lessons, shared reading, focus lessons, guided practice in reading as well as writing and independent practice in reading and writing. Grey Cloud teachers subscribe to best practices, following a gradual release of responsibility to the students starting with the highest level of support (teacher guided) to the lowest level of support (independent student practice or student led). We have many schoolwide and districtwide thrusts to support these areas of literacy instruction. One of our monthly Professional Learning Committee meetings is used to look at English Language standards and benchmarks and track student progress.

Our district uses Fountas and Pinnell’s Benchmark Assessment System, administered up to three times per year-based on grade level, to drive the instruction of Guided Reading during the literacy block. Students performing below grade level are met with more frequently to bolster their reading skills. Students performing at or above are still met with each week and provided with other independent reading activities. First grade students performing in the lowest 25th quartile, have the opportunity to be tested and qualify for the Reading Recovery program. Reading Recovery is an international reading acceleration program that delivers 30-minute individual lessons for students for a period of twelve to twenty weeks.

As previously mentioned, Grey Cloud has implemented a daily “What I Need Time.” This time is a daily thirty minute block of time, different times per grade level, where students may be met within the classroom setting or in a pull-out model. This time may be used for anything from remediation or enrichment to English Language Learner services, etc. Students may also be working with an intervention teacher who delivers Fountas & Pinnell’s Leveled Literacy Initiative. Our first-grade through fourth-grade classrooms

also engage in the Words Their Way curriculum. Words Their Way is a word study curriculum for phonics, vocabulary and spelling instruction. Students are grouped based on their spelling levels, which is determined by giving a baseline assessment.

We have school based resources such as: Fountas & Pinnell Shared Reading (first Grade), Scholastic Core Clicks, PebbleGo, Reading A to Z (RAZ) Kids, and Pioneer Valley Footprints (first and second Grade). To keep students engaged in literacy outside of the school day, many classrooms offer books in a bag for at home use, Reading Recovery students are provided with personalized leveled books daily, and classrooms are offered the opportunity to offer RAZ Kids to their students for at home access.

In the summer, select students are offered the opportunity to attend the district summer program called The Mix. This program extends the school year for students who need additional focus and opportunities to grow in Language Arts and Mathematics. Students are recommended by their teacher and with parent approval the student is then enrolled in the program.

1c. Mathematics

Grey Cloud Elementary students engage in a daily block of Mathematics. Together with our district, we have implemented the Bridges Mathematics Curriculum. This is a conceptual, comprehensive K-5 curriculum. Our K-2 classrooms are currently in their second year of implementing the program and our 3-5 classrooms are in their initial year. During the math block we focus on developing students' deeper understanding of concepts in mathematics through a spiraling, hands-on approach. Students have two separate blocks of mathematics education throughout the day: the longer core instruction block as well as a shorter Number Corner block of time. Number Corner is a rotating group of guided lessons focusing on a themed, monthly calendar and corresponding lessons. Each of the blocks include a wide variety of instruction methods to best reach every student. Methods used include presenting students with a multitude of strategies to help them solve word problems in the way that makes the most sense to them, solving linked problems to allow students to see how different strategies and problems are connected, hands on work, math discussions to showcase every student voice, and a variety of daily practice.

In addition to the comprehensive whole-group curriculum, teachers also practice Guided Math. Guided Math is a small group approach to further student's mathematical growth. Teachers conduct both formative and summative assessments to help form small groups for guided math instruction so each student gets the best supplemental instruction possible, whether it is in the form of enrichment, intervention, or simply additional practice.

For students needing further interventions, we offer online resources such as IXL and Moby Max that students can use both during and outside of the school day. These resources are used particularly to help close any learning gaps students may have in mathematics by placing focus in areas needing improvement. Classroom and resource teachers have access to view the areas identified by the programs and can use this information to help form additional small group and individual interventions.

We have many schoolwide as well as districtwide drives to help support in the area of Mathematics. Grey Cloud teachers have attended many training sessions offered at both district and state level to help enhance teaching practices in mathematics. Grey Cloud teachers have been trained in Cognitively Guided Instruction, Number Talks and the Rational Number Project. Classroom and resource teachers use the knowledge gained from these training sessions and implement strategies from each of these programs alongside our math curriculum to enhance and elevate our students' learning. Throughout the first few years of the curriculum roll out, Grey Cloud teachers have participated in many meetings and training sessions put on by our district as well as by the Bridges company to ensure we are teaching this new curriculum as thoroughly as possible. One of our monthly Professional Learning Committee meetings is used to look at Mathematics Benchmarks and track student progress. Furthermore, many of our grade level teams meet weekly to discuss math curriculum and to plan together so that math instruction is cohesive across the grade level.

1d. Science

Grey Cloud Elementary has always given Science a significant role in our students' education. While the push for having Science instruction embedded in other curricular areas has taken explicit Science instruction out of some schools, Grey Cloud has recognized the importance in allowing our students the opportunity to engage in specific science curriculum. At Grey Cloud we use both the FOSS Science hands-on kits as well as the Scott Foresman textbook curriculum to ensure we are covering all of the science standards set by the state of Minnesota. Many of our grade levels provide students the opportunity to learn different Physical, Earth, and Life Science standards in a hands-on inquiry-based approach.

To help enhance science education at Grey Cloud we have had a number of teachers coached and trained by the University of Minnesota in STEM-based programming. These teachers have worked closely with the STEM department of the University and helped develop STEM units that have now been put in place not only at Grey Cloud, but both statewide and nationwide as well. Grade levels take field trips that help connect text books and hands-on in-building learning to the world around them. Annually our staff brings in a Star Lab to give every student in our building an opportunity to learn about the night sky, astronomy, weather patterns, and more in an interactive planetarium right at school. A new science addition to Grey Cloud this school year is the implementation of Tower Gardens. These hydroponic growing systems are shared around the building to help students learn about how plants grow and how they can use that knowledge to grow their own food.

Each of our grade levels have a variety of thematic units year-round that help to give our students a level of scientific knowledge that builds from year-to-year and has allowed our fifth grade students to consistently perform well enough on the Science MCA to put Grey Cloud significantly above both state and district averages.

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

In addition to math, literacy, and science, Grey Cloud Elementary students actively engage in Social Studies content throughout the year. While some schools have eliminated Social Studies from their teaching, Grey Cloud staff continue to be diligent in ensuring students are meeting grade-level benchmarks through grade level appropriate curriculum. Not only is Social Studies taught as a separate subject but teachers at all grade levels also approach Social Studies through the integration of the content within literacy instruction, using texts that address grade level benchmarks in both whole and small group instruction.

Social Studies learning does not only happen in the classroom. Students in different grade levels have opportunities to attend field trips that enhance the Social Studies curriculum. Grade levels go to museums to learn more about our state's rich history through interactive displays. We have grade levels that will visit living-history towns and parks to learn about the diverse background of the people of Minnesota and what life used to be like. Some students get to visit government buildings to learn more about our state, and national, government. Through these captivating field trips our students not only learn about Social Studies, they truly experience it. Our teachers carefully plan these trips so that our students will return with knowledge, acquired in a memorable way, that lasts a lifetime.

Grey Cloud staff implement state Social Studies benchmarks and also strive to follow and lead district initiatives in adding more diverse perspectives to the curriculum utilized. A wide variety of cultures are represented in Social Studies across every grade level. Grey Cloud teachers utilize a wide variety of resources and curricular materials to expose students to a variety of cultures. Staff at Grey Cloud have been leaders in the district in viewing holidays through an equity lens, therefore changing traditional practices to be more inclusive and sensitive to all cultures.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Grey Cloud Elementary students participate in Music, Art, Physical Education, and Media specialist classes on a rotating five day schedule. Students participate in 30 minutes of Physical Education four days per week, 30 minutes of Music two days per week, 30 minutes of Media two days per week, and Art once per week for one hour. Our fourth and fifth grade students also are able to participate in the enrichment opportunities of Band, Choir and Orchestra which offer additional weekly small group and large group lessons.

Music standards and instruction are designed by district and building music staff to specifically address performance and composition elements. In addition to singing, a variety of instruments including drums, guitars, keyboards, and boom-wackers are used to teach these elements. Students perform one annual concert in Grades 1-3 for their families and school community. Choir students perform a concert twice annually, for which the theme, song selection, instrument use, and choreography is all planned and designed by the students. Orchestra students meet weekly in small groups specific to their instrument, and weekly as a whole orchestra, preparing and practicing for two concert performances each school year.

In art, the scope and sequence of standards and instruction at Grey Cloud focuses on the philosophy that students have the opportunity to create, connect, and reflect through their art. The students are taught using a variety of mediums and art principles, including oil pastels, watercolors, tempera paints, clay, paper-mache and 3-dimensional art. An annual art show is held during winter parent conferences, in which all students at Grey Cloud have their art displayed throughout the school building for families to enjoy when they attend conferences. In addition, 15 student creations are selected each year to participate in a district-wide art show.

Physical Education is a tightly paced class in which fitness and gross motor skills are developed in a positive, inclusive environment. Typically, all students in grades K-5 are greeted and enter the gym immediately forming squads and follow a prescribed warm-up. Skills are taught and practiced individually and in small groups to keep students as active as possible for the duration of the 30 minute class. The skills practiced align with our district scope and sequence. Grey Cloud physical education staff work hard to create cooperative games that integrate these skills and involve strategy and teamwork. Positive character development is intentional through the focus on character terms, the use of SOAR tickets, and on-going goal setting opportunities and measures.

Grey Cloud students are immersed in a variety of literacy, research and technology skills during Media instruction. Each class has one day each week to check out new books, and one day in which they utilize, learn and practice the use of technology. Media staff implement project-based instruction, and across grade levels students use research skills to complete a variety of projects. Students are instructed in the use of Google Docs, Google Classroom and Google Slides. Use of these tools carries over to their classrooms and they are heavily used for media projects. Chromebook instruction, keyboarding skills, and overall computer literacy is a focus as well, as students use Chromebooks more regularly across school settings as they progress through grade levels. Students begin to identify and use empowered reader skills, learning to choose books that are not only high-interest but also books that support their skill development or that assist them in fulfilling a specific task. In recent years, the media scope and sequence has included a fiction text selection written by a Minnesota author that addresses our school focus on Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching. Recent text selections have included Native American and Hmong authors, both of whom made site visits to Grey Cloud. During these visits, the authors read their books to the students and answered student questions about their book and craft.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

Grey Cloud believes in using data to drive our instruction. Before the school year begins, teachers schedule a thirty minute one-on-one session with every student over a two day period. These sessions allow for teachers to administer baseline assessments so they know every student in their class and where they are academically before the school year even begins. Starting in kindergarten, students are monitored with our district's kindergarten assessments. Using the results of these assessments, classroom teachers become our

first support for our youngest learners. Teachers offer classroom support to students performing below grade level. Our grade level “W.I.N. Time” is used to assist these students. Kindergarteners may also receive Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) instruction from an intervention teacher.

Our most fragile first grade learners benefit from our district’s most intense intervention. Reading Recovery offers one-on-one lessons for thirty minutes a day with a trained Reading Recovery teacher. Reading Recovery is a short term intervention, 12-20 weeks, designed to help learners reach a grade level average. Grey Cloud is allotted 12 Reading Recovery slots during Round One and Round Two. At the end of a school year 24 students may be serviced, which equates to an entire First grade classroom, 20% of our first grade population. Students who may need support before or after Reading Recovery is offered may be serviced with an intervention teacher using LLI. Classroom teachers continue to be our first support for these students as well.

In all grades, we offer LLI to students performing below grade level. We rely on strong classroom teachers to provide quality instruction, believing that all other services are a “double dose” for the student. We are also fortunate in having strong resource teachers who collaborate well with classroom teachers. We use the Zones of Regulation, Teacher Child Interaction Training, many teachers provide flexible seating options for students in the classroom, and students are even assigned mentors as needed. At Grey Cloud, we work hard to meet the academic, social and emotional needs of all students, truly believing in equity based on individual needs.

3b. Students performing above grade level

While there are many interventions in place for students who are performing below grade level, there are also many learning opportunities for students performing above grade level. Grey Cloud Elementary staff enrich students’ learning using teaching strategies embedded in the curriculum. Our math curriculum, Bridges, provides teachers with many suggestions for ways to challenge their students’ thinking and understanding. Enrichment also occurs in small group instruction where teachers can better meet the unique needs of these learners.

Teachers also provide their students with opportunities to use their higher level thinking skills through activities such as Word Masters and Continental Math. Both of these activities provide students with opportunities to demonstrate both their problem solving abilities and higher level thinking skills.

For students who consistently show above grade level skills we administer the CogAT test to determine if they qualify for our Gifted and Talented (GT) Program. Students who qualify are placed in GT clusters within each grade level in order to provide them the opportunity to work together on challenging enrichment and instruction. Classroom teachers consult with district GT leaders frequently to learn of new ways to supplement these learners’ education. When a student shows a significant need for more GT learning, they are given an invitation to apply to our district’s GT specific program for elementary students, Gateway.

In addition to all of our in-class enrichment opportunities for students above grade level, in 5th grade students are given the opportunity to extend their knowledge in the afterschool program Academic Triathlon. The nationally recognized Academic Triathlon program gives students the opportunity to work creatively to solve problems and complete activities. Students compete as both individuals and by working collaboratively in teams. Our building team(s) compete at meets against other local and district teams for the chance to go to the state Academic Triathlon meet.

3c. Special education

The special education (SPED) programming at Grey Cloud reflects what we as educators know to be true—that students with educational disabilities are best served when their teachers support them through a collaborative approach. We demonstrate this belief by functioning as a team, in which administration, SPED resource teachers, SPED program teachers, related service professionals, and general education teachers support the growth of our SPED students through a variety of shared curricula, strategies, and systems. Staff utilize a balance of push-in and pull-out support, responding fluidly to individual student needs. The SPED

team also works closely together with families to develop Individualized Education Programs that reflect students' growth areas and abilities, and provide written and verbal progress reports to families frequently and with specific regularity. Related service staff (occupational therapists, Speech/Language Pathologists, DAPE teachers) provide pull-out services in small groups, as well as classroom support. In addition, they consult regularly with classroom and SPED teachers to ensure accommodations and adaptations are integrated in all settings.

In regard to academic instruction, the SPED team at Grey Cloud uses a variety of curricula to address students' needs. In reading, students are primarily learning in small groups using LLI to further skill development in phonemic awareness, reading fluency, and comprehension. The Bridges Math Intervention kits align with curriculum taught in the general education classroom. Frequent assessments embedded in the program identify potential areas of growth and skill deficits in small, targeted groups of students.

Our SPED students may attend social skills groups taught by SPED teachers using various curricula. Teacher Child Interaction Training, MeMoves, and Zones of Regulation visuals and strategies are used by building staff to support student emotional and behavioral regulation across settings. In classrooms, a variety of accommodations including visual timers, fidgets, flexible seating options, classroom calm corners, and regular movement breaks are available to students. Paraprofessionals are trained to implement academic modifications as well as meet the social, emotional and behavioral needs of SPED students across school environments. Knowing that relationships are foundational to learning, paraprofessionals are scheduled mindfully in specific grade levels to support our students.

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

At Grey Cloud we have a dedicated English Language Learner (ELL) staff that provide daily support to our ELL students in both push-in and pull-out models. This has helped our ELL students to be successful on their annual ACCESS assessments and has helped to close learning gaps. During "W.I.N Time" ELL students meet in a small group to work on individual and grade-level goals centered around speaking, writing, listening, and reading. Imagine Learning is used on iPads to address literacy skills. When needed, our ELL teacher has access to our LLI curriculum to provide reading intervention. We are able to provide paraprofessional support to our ELL students. This support is monumental in helping with difficult writing tasks as well as helping to build reading skills. When possible our ELL staff works with classroom teachers to provide a team teaching approach in content areas.

The ELL staff not only support the learning of students, but also facilitate and promote engagement and communication with families. Their instructional delivery and communication are vital components of student success and strengthening home-school relationships. Teachers make phone calls to schedule parent conferences and promote flexibility when the traditional conference is not ideal or comfortable for families; interpreters are scheduled and provided when appropriate. ELL teachers communicate with families to support engagement and trust. ELL students are encouraged to take pride in their home culture, as we recognize the value each culture brings to our school community.

As a building we have implemented schoolwide Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching strategies. Our staff has been to, and chooses to continually attend, a variety of Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching training sessions to ensure we are providing an inclusive environment for every student in our building. Our ELL staff as well as select building teachers have attended ALTELLA (Alternative English Language Learners Assessment) conferences to help develop and give feedback on assessments for ELL students with cognitive impairments to help build a bridge between resource, regular education, and ELL classrooms in order to begin to close the learning, and cultural, gaps nationwide.

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

A variety of interventions and programs support the growth of our students with unique needs or circumstances. Grey Cloud houses a federal setting III Autism Spectrum Disorders program that serves students impacted by ASD districtwide. The program is composed of 3 teachers and classrooms, the classrooms having been specifically designed for this population of children with sensory rooms, area for

swings, and bathrooms attached to classrooms. The teachers lead and participate in districtwide program alignment with all district ASD teachers and related service professionals. This program alignment staff development was implemented to facilitate and support the consistent use of strategies, program development, and curriculum across district settings. Teachers also provide practical training for families during Grey Cloud's parent night on a variety of relevant topics including accessing state and county services, registering for adapted sports and community education, community mental health services, social skills instruction in the community, and assistive technology implementation and support. Knowing that some students with ASD are nonverbal or struggle to verbalize details of their school day, the Seesaw app is used often by students in the ASD program to communicate their social and academic progress with their families.

Grey Cloud administration and teachers are also working to closely monitor, identify and support students through the 2019-2020 implementation of Grade Level Problem Solving (GPS) committees. The GPS committees were formed with the primary goal of supporting students with social, emotional and behavioral needs, who are not currently receiving special education services. GPS was also designed to support teachers so that they can best serve students. GPS committees are made up of grade level teams with an administrative member or mental health lead (principal, assistant principal, school psychologist, school social worker, reading specialist) for each grade level. Each grade level GPS team meets monthly and teams work together to mindfully brainstorm and facilitate interventions, teaching strategies, and possible behavioral supports. After interventions have been implemented with fidelity, GPS teams are able to reconvene and reflect together on data gathered following interventions that have been implemented, to determine if they have successfully addressed students' needs.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

At the beginning of every school day when you enter our school, staff members are always dispersed throughout the building excitedly greeting students. You will also be greeted with students' artwork throughout the building. Each child and staff member is represented with a pennant with their picture and something important about them. Each classroom displays the work of students and our Art teacher displays unique projects from each classroom.

In the commons area, for all to see, is a collection of SOAR tickets awarded during the current school year. SOAR tickets are awarded to students who are displaying our school SOARing behavior. To keep students engaged in SOARing throughout the school year, prizes are given from a SOAR ticket drawing every Thursday morning. We also have two classrooms each week chosen as our SOAR classes of the week, one class from the younger grade level classrooms (K-2) and the second from the upper grade level classrooms (3-5). The student body also works to earn building-wide prizes for SOAR tickets awarded such as 'Hat Day', 'Pajama Day', and even a DJ dance party day.

Each teacher in our building has one-on-one documented conferences with each student several times per year. The goal of these conferences is to connect with each student personally. We have a strong staff and with little staff turnover, so relationships are strengthened with year-after-year connections between teachers and students throughout our students' time at Grey Cloud.

We have monthly themes during the school year, as listed in the summary section. Each month, a new school wide focus emerges. Teachers and students are engaged in the theme and the theme carries over from announcements to classrooms to classes with specialists.

Many students are provided with movement breaks each day. Students are recommended for these breaks by their teachers. During movement breaks, students might engage in light jogging, yoga/breathing exercises, ride scooters, throwing and catching, etc. These movement breaks allow students to have the opportunity to engage in kinesthetic activities with hopes of having them be able to successfully meet the demands of their academic day.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Families will only engage when they feel welcomed in a school setting. With that being said, we run our school on a restaurant model. If you walk into our office you will be warmly greeted and you will be asked promptly how we can help. Typically a personable conversation follows. Students and staff open car doors, greet families and have designated areas to welcome families and students each morning by name whenever possible. At the end of the day staff help students onto buses and open car doors wishing families a "Good Night" all while enforcing student safety.

Communication builds that trusting relationship that welcomes families into our school life. A weekly link to "Grey Cloud to Go" is sent to families in both an email and text message that allows for use of Google Translate. Classrooms send frequent newsletters to families and have moved to use an online program called Seesaw. Seesaw allows teachers to share samples of student work and a glimpse into their day including photographs and videos. On average, we have more than 300 posts per week. We use other programs such as at home reading bags and RAZ Kids to give students reading support at home. In grades 3-5, families sign student planners nightly to see what the learning targets were for the day and what may need to be finished at home. Staff check these planners daily to partner with families.

While we have an active core of PTA families who meet almost once a month, provide financial support, and plan enrichment opportunities, this group is not large. However, when it comes to events, our attendance is impeccable with around $\frac{2}{3}$ of the students and families attending. Our families attend and financially support our one large "Fun Run" fundraiser each year and come and walk alongside their children.

Likewise, they help us garner community sponsorship and local business providing in-kind donations allowing almost 100% of the funds to go to the school. Community members support Grey Cloud through Junior Achievement Programs, 3M math and science grants and programs, and high school students return to us each year to serve as teacher interns.

Five times a year, specific students and their families are invited to our Star Student Breakfast that recognizes one student per month from each grade level and department for the student's outstanding character. Families, community service workers, and local authors are invited annually to present their knowledge corresponding to our monthly themes adding enrichment and supporting College and Career Readiness.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Words matter. Our mission statement that focuses on growing all learners was intentionally designed to include adult learners. When we talk about Grey Cloud, we use the verbiage, "Our school," "Our kids," "We," and "Team members" as it is our collective knowledge, intentions and actions that make Grey Cloud a place where learners thrive. With adults, communicating the "why," having playful intentionality, communicating clearly, and building a service-oriented and collaborative culture is essential. At Grey Cloud, our Site Improvement Planning committee sets goals and an action plan looking at data, our district strategic plan, and where we are as adult learners to determine our next steps.

A systematic, integrated calendar is created and provided for staff at the beginning of each year to designate time for this balanced approach. Each month, the calendar includes one Site Improvement Planning committee meeting, two Professional Learning Committee meetings, and one Grade Level Problem Solving meeting. For each of these groups, there is training at the start of the year and communication about the meetings in staff weekly notes. There is an established process for setting the agenda, actions to be taken, and documentation for action steps using shared Google Documents allowing for the team to guide their course. Staff meetings are held once a month aligning with our Site Improvement Plan, modeling strategies and building community while providing training and communication. All staff members are invited to our staff meetings.

Full staff development days incorporate shared leadership and learning. For example this year they included equity work, math training, technology training and work time, and an Ed Camp in which staff designed sessions and chose sessions to attend. For our paraprofessional staff, we have specific trainings offered once a month covering pertinent special education topics and collaborative meetings with our recess/lunch supervisors.

Actions really matter. It is important that whatever is expected is modeled and that the leader is willing to do, and does, everything the leader expects from others. This means trying the new strategies, being in classrooms to learn more about implementation, and responding to the "learners" and making adjustments. At Grey Cloud we show staff appreciation by having an annual staff gratitude breakfast in lieu of one of our staff meetings. We always kick off the year with a "Welcome Back" party-style meeting and each staff member receives a gift that reflects our new theme for the year. Our Sunshine Committee actively supports those with family changes and hardships through cards and flowers and hosts various themed potlucks throughout the year. Learning together and being there personally for each other matters.

4. School Leadership:

Our Principal and Assistant Principal can be seen at the carpool at the beginning and end of each day, working in the cafeteria during lunch, walking the halls, monitoring students, picking up stray paper in the hallways, closing lockers, comforting students, covering classrooms, and much more. Students are able to identify the school leadership by their roles because they are so visible throughout the building. The school leadership are also able to greet many students by name, helping to foster a personal and warm sense of connectedness in the school. There is a huge focus on student and staff mental health in our school building, especially those students that are "school dependent". Many students are supported through our school Social Worker who works with them in groups and are monitored in a weekly meeting with our Mental

Health staff.

Our Principal is responsive to data, believes in early intervention and bases all of her decisions on what is best for the students and school. She is approachable and listens to the needs of individuals and does her best to meet the needs of all students, teachers and classrooms. She uses resources responsibly and is forward thinking constantly weighing the sustainability of all decisions made. She provides weekly notes for staff and a weekly correspondence to families. This provides an organized and clear message that is received by everyone. The principal and Assistant Principal work in tandem with each other. With two different styles, they complement each other very well. Although our Assistant Principal is only half time there is a 0.5 reading specialist who supports literacy coaching and interventions as well as a

Teacher Leader who assists with teacher to teacher observations and plans for goal setting days and an Equity Lead teacher who co-plans staff development sessions with the principal and SIP Committee

Other leadership is more committee driven including the following:

Site Team: They approve staff development, the School Improvement Plan, workshop day schedules, calendars, and the capital outlay budgets. This includes representation from teachers, paraprofessionals, parents, and administration.

PTA: Our parent group meets as a board monthly and for general membership five times a year. They offer enrichment, plan events, fundraise, and receive updates from the school and district.

SIP: Our school improvement plan committee meets monthly. They draft our SIP plan annually looking at data, check for progress on the plan, and share curricular updates and assist with staff development. This includes on grade level representative, a specialist teacher, a special education rep, the teacher lead listed above, the reading specialist, and the principal.

e, she is instrumental in many ways. In scheduling conferences for the school, managing and monitoring behavior while in the building, presenting to staff among other things, the Assistant Principal provides side by side leadership with the Principal.

At Grey Cloud, we also look at the Office Coordinators, Janitors, and Nurses as part of our school leadership team. Our school could not function without these instrumental people. They are on the ground, responsive and such an integral part of the tapestry of our building each day. They garner as much respect as the Principal and Assistant Principal. The rhythm of our school is very predictable. From announcements promptly as school begins, to the systems that have been put in place for dismissal. These are the things that make Grey Cloud work.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

While choosing one practice is difficult, when it comes down to what leads to all of Grey Cloud's successes, the choice is clear. Our Social Emotional focus is second to none. At Grey Cloud we have a Social Emotional program in place that has been around for almost ten years, called SOAR. It is the backbone of our school and something all of our students have learned about since their first day at Grey Cloud, whether that was just a few months ago or six years ago. Any and every member of the Grey Cloud family-students, staff, and families-know of SOAR. Our SOAR program is a predictable, constant, dependable part of the Grey Cloud school day. Each letter in the acronym represents one of Grey Cloud's core values.

At Grey Cloud we are Safe. Above all else we provide a safe space where children can come to be themselves and learn in an open, welcoming environment. At Grey Cloud we are Organized. From our administration which provides the teachers with an organized calendar at the beginning of the year, to the staff members that work together to create themed monthly calendars, to the students who take such pride in the organizational skills they have been taught. At Grey Cloud we are Accountable. From students to staff, we complete the tasks we set out to do. Students and families can depend on their teachers to not only teach them daily, but to support them and be constant role models. Teachers can depend on their students to take an active role in their education and get work done as needed. At Grey Cloud we are Respectful. Every single voice is heard, every single student is represented. Staff listen to each other and their students. Every culture, every voice, is not just recognized but celebrated.

As our SOAR focus has progressed through the years we have developed a SOAR ticket recognition program. Any student or class that is seen following building SOAR expectations is rewarded with a ticket. On Thursdays a drawing is held. While a prize is awarded, that is not what students look forward to the most. They wait all week to hear the names that are called on the announcements. Students not only get excited to hear their own name recognized over the loudspeaker, but also the names of their classmates, siblings, and friends. The sound of cheering and clapping can be heard throughout the building. That is the sound of recognition and the sound of belonging.

Our students know that Grey Cloud is their home, it is the place they are known by name and recognized for everything that makes them who they are.