

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 Mr. Chad Ryburn
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

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

School Mailing Address 14001 Pilot Knob Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Apple Valley State MN Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 55124-6602

County Dakota County

Telephone (952) 423-7595 Fax (952) 423-7665

Web site/URL
<https://sites.google.com/apps.district196.org/highland-elementary-school/home> E-mail chad.ryburn@district196.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* Ms. Mary Kreger E-mail mary.kreger@district196.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Rosemount-Apple Valley Eagan School District Tel. (651) 423-7749

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 Mrs. Jackie Magnuson
(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):
- 19 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 6 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 5 High schools
 - 1 K-12 schools
- 31 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	52	53	105
1	55	56	111
2	62	69	131
3	68	53	121
4	66	61	127
5	60	50	110
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	363	342	705

*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):
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 9 % Asian
 - 8 % Black or African American
 - 7 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 69 % White
 - 5 % 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: 4%

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	17
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	14
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	31
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	729
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.04
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	4

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

The 24 Languages spoken at Highland are: Spanish, Somali, Russian, Arabic, Chinese, Anuak (spoken in western Ethiopia), Amharic (one of the primary languages in Ethiopia), Korean, Ukrainian, Swahili, Oromo (spoken in Ethiopia and Kenya), French, Hindi (spoken in India), Tamil (spoken in India), Telugu (spoken in India), Gujarati (spoken in India), Nepali, German, Japanese, Cambodian, Bengali, Malayalam (spoken in India), Liberian English, Turkish, and Portuguese.

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 10 %
72 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 13 %

Total number students who qualify: 92

8. Students receiving special education services: 18 %

125 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>2</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>25</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>7</u> Developmental Delay | <u>26</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>4</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>30</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>2</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>11</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: 18

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.	33
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	25
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	22
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

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 22:1

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	98%	98%	96%	94%	94%
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. 1991

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

Parents, community, and staff work together to develop lifelong learners and contributing members of our society. At Highland Elementary, we envision a school in which staff: demonstrates accountability for each student through ongoing assessment, regularly collaborates within and between teams, addresses the needs of the whole child, including academic, social and emotional development, researches and implements "best practices," all while working together toward common goals, and welcomes and utilizes the involvement of our parents and community.

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

Highland Elementary, a K-5 school is 1 of 19 elementary schools in District 196, educates 733 students in Apple Valley, Minnesota. Highland Elementary works with a diverse group of young learners to help them reach their full potential by focusing on the academic, social, and emotional development of every student. Highland Elementary accomplishes this by providing students with high-quality, data-driven instruction every day. With a focus on the principles of accountability, collaboration, and community involvement, we have been preparing students to achieve success at the secondary level and beyond for over 34 years. We engage our community through ongoing family all-school involvement activities and grade-level activity nights with emphasis in forming home-school partnerships. The demographics of our students of color and English Language Learners (ELL) at Highland Elementary have changed significantly over time. We remain as one of the top performing schools in academic achievements in the state exam, student growth, as well as closing opportunity gaps. Highland Elementary is home to special education programs serving students with Developmental Cognitive Disabilities (DCD) and students with Communication Interactive Disorders (CID). These programs have been part of our school since we opened in 1986.

At Highland Elementary, we believe it is important to look specifically at how we celebrate and recognize student accomplishments. One way we celebrate is during our all school ABC (Appropriate Behavior Counts) celebration, where we recognize students who have demonstrated appropriate behavior. Students practice and learn social and group behaviors, as well as feel part of the school community, while being recognized for their accomplishments.

We feel we have well-behaved children, but occasionally discipline problems will occur. In order for school and home to work together with these concerns, it is necessary to have procedures outlined to create a common base of understanding. This policy outlines more specifically the expectations and limits we have for student behavior and the procedures for responding when a child demonstrates inappropriate behavior, and/or in need of support to follow schoolwide expectations. Highland Elementary uses a discipline policy based on shared power and accountability. This means that all students are taught consistent schoolwide expectations that are modeled, practiced, and taught throughout the school year. Behavior is communication and, occasionally, students may struggle to follow schoolwide expectations. To better understand trends in behavior and to support decisions regarding need for intervention, it is necessary to have some procedures outlined. This also enables Highland Elementary staff and caregivers to have procedures for a common base of understanding.

Highland Elementary is 1 of 8 schools within District 196 which is implementing the method and practice of Conscious Discipline by Dr. Becky A. Bailey. Conscious Discipline is a comprehensive emotional intelligence and classroom management system that integrates all domains of learning (social, emotional, physical, cultural, and cognitive) into one seamless curriculum. For children, Conscious Discipline provides a positive school climate that fosters academic achievement and pro-social skills. We emphasize the importance of routines and using visuals to make kids feel safe in the classroom and the building by creating Safe Places in our classrooms.

Highland Elementary is currently focusing on the Safe Place component of the Power of Perception that Conscious Discipline describes. The goal of this power is to teach adults and children to take responsibility when upset. To do this, all classrooms K-5 have designated Safe Places within their room to offer students the opportunity to identify how they are feeling and utilize tools to regulate and rejoin their peers. The Safe Place helps students walk through the 5 steps to calm: I am, I calm, I feel, I choose, I solve. Students are taught to use developmentally appropriate tools and strategies to change their inner state. It is the centerpiece of our student self-regulation program. Only when we are in our executive state can we access the higher brain functions needed to problem-solve and learn. This aligns with our Social/Emotional goal within the Continuous Improvement Plan to continue implementation of Conscious Discipline schoolwide. These tools will be essential when students return in the fall in order to calm an inner state, especially after having to start distance learning in the spring with the COVID 19 school closure.

Highland Elementary was awarded the National Blue Ribbon School award during the 1991-1992 school

year. Since this recognition we have become even stronger in working collaboratively in Professional Learning Communities.

Highland Elementary is a learning community that recognizes and celebrates the diversity, strengths, and inquisitive spirit of every child. Using the model of Cultural Proficiency by Randall B. Lindsey, Kikanza Nuri Robins, and Raymond D. Terrell, we enable all students to succeed and strive for personal excellence, no matter their background or experience. One of the secrets to our success is a strong school climate focused on respect and building relationships. All adults, no matter the role or position, work together to create a welcoming environment where all students can succeed.

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

The core curriculum for elementary-aged students is grounded in the Minnesota state standards with a focus on Math, Science, Social Studies, and English Language Arts/Literacy. Our teachers believe all students can learn at high levels and are committed to ensure access and equity for all students. At the same time, teachers are working alongside students to grow their social-emotional intelligence. These caring educators are dedicated to providing students with supportive learning environments and engaging in innovative educational experiences that allow them to explore the outer limits of their vast potential. District 196 is a public school district that is committed to educating students to reach their full potential. Whether it is an affinity for academics, arts and/or athletics, our goal is to expose students to the infinite possibilities within the district and throughout the communities we serve. Together, we encourage students each day to pursue excellence as they experience their exciting journey along the road of life.

The Language Arts curriculum encompasses the areas of literature, informative texts, writing, speaking, viewing, listening, media literacy, and language skills. Integrated units of study contain both literature units and informational text units. Literature units include a community unit (character development), author unit, and illustrator unit. The informational text units integrate nonfiction reading with science and social studies content, allowing students to conduct thoughtful research that includes reading, writing, and publishing their findings. The math curriculum emphasizes key state benchmarks for each trimester as students work toward mastery.

1b. Reading/English language arts

District 196 implements a comprehensive, scientifically-based literacy model that incorporates research from the National Reading Panel (NRP) report (2000). Our comprehensive K-6 literacy model addresses all components outlined in the NRP report. Literacy instruction includes phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension, as well as integrated writing, which supports the NRP's recommendation for future research in the reciprocity of reading and writing. Our district implements a research-proven, nationally recognized whole school literacy model that incorporates professional learning, school leadership teams and coaches, alignment with common core state standards, and meets the requirements of Response to Intervention (RtI)/ Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS). Teachers who identify reading difficulties and/or characteristics of dyslexia incorporate a number of interventions based on the child's needs. Interventions align with Minnesota statute 125A.56 sub. 2, which indicates alternate instruction is multisensory, systematic, sequential, cumulative, and explicit.

Our classrooms have 150 minutes of literacy each day: 60 minutes of Reader's Workshop, 60 minutes of Writer's Workshop, and 30 minutes of Word Study. The literacy blocks each have a short mini-lesson, time for small group and individual instruction, independent work time, and sharing. All of these components are critical for student success.

The Literacy Collaborative model provides individualized instruction based on data driven decision-making for all grade levels. Teachers use our literacy assessment tool up to four times each year (August, November, March, May) to plan their instruction. Differentiated small group instruction occurs based on student need, determined by multiple data points such as: Benchmark Assessment System (BAS), Observation Survey (OS), and writing samples. In addition, teachers use student work to constantly and continually assess student learning on a daily basis. For this daily assessment, teachers use student work such as Reader's Notebook, Writer's Notebook, Word Study Materials, and Science Journals. All of this data is used to plan individualized instruction that may include: asking questions when students are reading independently, conferring with students as they are writing, and meeting with small groups or individuals to provide focused instruction to support student learning.

In this model, students learn to be managed independent learners while researching genre-led inquiry units. The focus is building on what the child knows and extending what the child needs. The inquiry units also integrate science, social studies, and health content while leading by genre. Students analyze and critique the craft of multiple authors, illustrators and researchers over the course of the year. It's an exciting opportunity for students and teachers to go deeper with their learning while sharing their thinking with their classroom community. Sharing happens daily and comes in many forms including: sharing their research/discoveries, reading a piece of writing, reader's theater, reading a passage/book to the class, teaching a concept to the class that was learned during guided practice, individually, or as a small group.

We are committed to high levels of learning for every child, every day. We have high standards and expectations for all students to experience learning that is innovative, extending, relevant, and connected. Integrating inquiry-based instruction into lessons and units of study promotes student engagement and a dynamic learning environment. The ability to use and understand language, both spoken and written, is critical to every aspect of students' lives.

1c. Mathematics

The elementary school mathematics curriculum is based on the Minnesota Academic Standards in Mathematics. The Minnesota Academic Standards in Mathematics are organized by grade level into four content strands: 1) Number and Operation, 2) Algebra, 3) Geometry and Measurement, and 4) Data Analysis and Probability. Each strand has one or more standards. The curriculum builds students' mathematical understanding, skill, and proficiency at each grade level within the strands of number and operations, algebra, geometry, measurement, data analysis, and probability. Students also engage in problem solving, reasoning, and communicating ideas while making connections to the world around them, which challenges them to become increasingly sophisticated in dealing with mathematical concepts. These practices are aligned to the National Council of Teaching Mathematics Resources Grades K-2: Bridges in Mathematics published by The Math Learning Center and Grades 3-5: Bridges in Mathematics published by The Math Learning Center.

Our district uses Math Frameworks 2.0 which is an interactive document to help align our district math goals consisting of what you know about your students and how to respond instructionally. This document is grounded in the belief that all students can and should be mathematically proficient. All students should learn important mathematical concepts, skills, and relationships with understanding. The standards presented here describe a connected body of mathematical knowledge that is acquired through the processes of problem-solving, reasoning and proof, communication, connections, and representation. The standards are placed at the grade level where mastery is expected with the recognition that intentional experiences at earlier grades are required to facilitate learning and mastery for other grade levels. It is organized by trimester and includes Minnesota State Benchmarks, District 196 Learning Targets, vocabulary, assessments, and instructional resources. The Learning Targets specifically identify what skills and/or concepts need to be mastered within the benchmark by the end of the given trimester.

The Math Workshop Model structure allows us to meet the needs of all learners, where each math block incorporates a minimum of 60 minutes. This model is supported by two anchor texts, *Minds on Mathematics* by Wendy Ward Hoffer and *Math Workshop in Action* by Dr. Nikki Newton, and supports the ability for students to learn concepts at various paces, and the ability to work collaboratively with peers. Assessments such as Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) and Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) Math grade level common assessment and technology application provide numerous data points for making instructional decisions throughout the year.

Additional resources we use to engage students learning include IXL, Dreambox, XtraMath, Math Playground, and Public Broadcasting Station (PBS) Math Games. All of these math program applications have been very valuable during distance learning due to the COVID 19 school closure we have been experiencing for the end of the year.

1d. Science

Science is the active study of the natural and man-made world, including processes, structures, designs, and systems. Students use their senses and tools to observe, record, and analyze data about the world and make conclusions based on evidence. Scientifically literate students can understand basic science concepts, use skills for doing scientific investigations, solve technical problems, and design technologies for today's world.

To meet the goals of promoting science education, students engage in inquiry-based instruction that offers real-world, relevant problem solving. This includes, but not limited to: fieldwork experiences, engineering design challenges, and integrated units of study. Throughout the day, classrooms are facilitated by teachers who guide students to explore academic content by posing, investigating, and answering questions. This inquiry-based approach will help students develop habits of mind that characterize a life-long learner. When teachers implement an inquiry-based instructional approach, students are given opportunities to take ownership of their own learning and make connections to other content and their own lives, which can be particularly important for culturally and linguistically diverse learners (Center for Inspired Teaching, 2008).

Students engage in 3 different science research projects each school year involving the study of earth science, life science, physical science, and engineering. Students are immersed in reading many books around a science topic of study and are responsible for presenting out their research in writing, as well as sharing their research with an audience. They also keep a science notebook and record hands-on science investigations.

When considering science programming, providing high-quality instruction and curriculum must be a focus in helping students reach challenging academic standards. Our K-5 Units of Study align to the state standards, and are designed using the Backwards by Design framework to allow for an interdisciplinary approach to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) learning and strategic performance assessments.

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

In District 196, we are committed to developing citizens who are informed and able to contribute to our democratic system. The social studies curriculum provides the opportunity for each student to acquire knowledge; gain a deeper appreciation of the commonalities and the diversity that makes our national and world societies culturally unique, and develop skills necessary for responsible social, political, and economic participation in a diverse, interdependent and changing world. We ensure students function effectively and contribute constructively to society by introducing a variety of integrated experiences that draw on such disciplines as history, geography, economics, political science, sociology, psychology, and anthropology.

Students research social studies topics through integrated units of study. Every classroom will begin with a community unit as they establish the habits of mind of a strong learning and research community. The social studies program will provide the opportunity for each student to acquire the knowledge of content and concepts, develop the critical thinking skills and processing skills necessary for responsible social, political and economic participation in a diverse, interdependent and changing world.

One example of the integrated units of study is "Understanding Cultures Different From Your Own." This unit offers the opportunity to look beyond one's own culture to find out about traditions, history, language, beliefs, and lifestyles other than what is familiar. The unit includes books from various cultures, but a more extensive American Indian collection. By looking closely at the Ojibwe and Dakota peoples that were the original inhabitants of Minnesota, we hope to provide the inquiry path that students can follow to discover lots of other cultures outside of their own.

One further example focuses on political geography and the cultural landscape of North America. They create and use various maps to identify the physical and human characteristics of places, examine regions in different locations and time periods, and analyze patterns and trends. They learn about tribal government

and develop a better understanding of the multiple players involved in the United States government and the economy. Students practice a reasoned decision-making process to make choices.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Our visual arts curriculum makes valuable connections to the individual, society, and culture. The growing complexity of our culture requires every individual to have a capacity for visual analysis and critique. In the production and contemplation of artwork, we can understand ourselves and the world around us. Learning through the visual arts develops creative problem-solving skills as students face issues that often have multiple solutions. Art brings individuals together to share feelings, beliefs, values, and develop a sense of community.

All students attend Art class in which K-3rd grade are on a 5 day rotation, while 4th and 5th grade are on a 4 day rotation. The lessons focus on a product and process using two and three dimensional materials with objectives changing with each grade level. Each lesson incorporates a class discussion regarding art throughout history and across cultures, demonstration, implementation of new artistic skills/techniques, and varying degrees of choice to promote The Studio Habits of Mind that encourage students to think like an artist. At class end, students engage in a gallery walk for both inspiration and insight into their classmate's work.

We believe library and media education is essential for teaching the whole child. Our elementary media curriculum prepares students to be lifelong learners through the development of skills that require critical and creative thinking, collaborating while taking into account a variety of perspectives, collecting, organizing, evaluating and communicating information, and becoming responsible digital citizens. We believe that reading is the foundation for all learning. Our licensed Media Specialist plays a vital role in helping to develop literacy competencies in all students, and fosters the development of lifelong readers. All students actively participate in the library curriculum by attending class on a rotating schedule. The children are in the library class approximately 50 minutes every 5 days. During their class, the children are given time to browse the collection and choose materials that spike their interests and allow for the development of skills related to the core curriculum. In addition to their time with the media specialist, the children are able to visit the library to access resources and materials as needed.

Our music curriculum is a critical component of our performing arts program. These offerings contribute to the lifelong development of the whole child: intellectual, physical, social, and emotional. Music provides sequential experiences in creating, analyzing, and performing which are an integral component of a quality, comprehensive education. Music gives students the opportunity to develop their own creative potential while exploring world cultures and one another's diverse backgrounds. It also serves as an important form of communication that reflects and affects society, culture, and history. Students learn to sing and play recorders, dulcimers, and ukuleles, in addition to Orff instruments and unpitched percussion instruments from around the world. Da Capo Choir is offered to students in grades 3-5, performing a musical in the fall and a traditional concert in the spring which includes singing at an assisted living facility for seniors. After school clubs for recorder, dulcimer, and ukulele players allow students to play more challenging music with their peers. Grades K – 2 are in music class approximately 4 out of every 5 days, and 3rd – 5th grade have music class once every 4 days.

Our physical education curriculum is designed to contribute to the lifelong development of the student by providing opportunities that positively impact and increase the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical fitness of the student. Physical activity enhances social development by emphasizing personal achievement, character, and integrity through individual gross motor development, participation in team games, and exposure to lifelong recreational activities. A few activities unique to our school include a rock climbing wall, family P.E. events, and track and field days. Incorporating technology is also a focus using Smartboard technology to highlight skill and heart rate monitors. Grades K – 2 are in PE class approximately 4 out of

every 5 days, and 3rd – 5th grade have PE once every 4 days. All students have recess daily for 20 minutes.

Band is a sequential class offered for students through our district starting in the summer before 5th grade. The skills developed in learning to play an instrument help students to perform better in other academic areas especially in literacy, math, and science, as well as enriches social and emotional development. Students meet once per week as a large group and have small group lessons once per week. On average, over 90 percent of our 5th grade students participate in the band program and have students of all ability levels participate every year.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

Tier 2 is a responsive, comprehensive literacy model that is layered within classroom instruction. These interventions happen in addition to classroom instruction, not as a replacement. Students receiving Tier 2 interventions also receive small group literacy instruction from the classroom teacher in response to the Tier 2 interventions. The Tier 2 interventions align with the theory, structure, and language of Tier 1 classroom instruction in that they include reading, writing, oral language, phonics, phonemic awareness, and word work. Tier 2 interventions are delivered by masterful teachers who receive specialized training and ongoing professional development. Tier 2 interventions include Reading Recovery, Literacy Lessons, and Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI).

Reading Recovery has one clear goal to significantly reduce the number of children who are having difficulty learning to read and write. During 1st grade, Reading Recovery students receive individualized lessons with a specially trained teacher for 30 minutes a day for a period of 12 to 20 weeks. During this time, these children make faster than average progress so they can catch up with their peers and continue to work on their own within an average group setting in core instruction.

Literacy Lessons is the same individualized instruction as Reading Recovery but happens with students who receive special education or students who receive English instruction from grades 1 to 4. Literacy Lessons is provided for these students who struggle with beginning reading and writing and need the individually designed instruction tailored to their specific needs.

Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) is a short-term, supplementary, small-group literacy intervention designed to help struggling readers achieve grade-level competency. The intervention provides explicit instruction in phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, reading comprehension, oral language skills, and writing. LLI helps teachers match students with texts of progressing difficulty and deliver systematic lessons targeted to a student's reading ability.

3b. Students performing above grade level

Gifted and talented services in District 196 is an inclusive, flexible, and fluid model. A student does not need to be formally identified as gifted and talented to receive support for their high academic and learning ability and/or high achievement needs. Gifted services are provided through flexible grouping based on formative and ongoing assessment of student needs in the classroom based on the content and standards being presented at that time.

District 196 conducts universal screening at a district level to find students who are demonstrating outstanding abilities and are capable of higher performance when compared to others of similar age, experience, and environment. They have significantly different educational needs from their peers and require educational differentiation as a regular part of their school day to ensure they reach their full potential. Our gifted and talented differentiated instruction occurs through various models including: core classroom, co-teaching, guided small group pull-outs, and focuses on individualized instruction for students whose grade level acceleration extends beyond the tiered service model.

We use multiple criteria for a strengths-based identification of gifted and talented students. The screening

and identification process is done annually starting with all 2nd graders who are universally screened to comply with the MN State Statute 120B.15. We use multiple assessments such as NWEA MAP tests in math and reading, Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) Test, (Having Opportunities Promotes Excellence) HOPE scale, Special Education data and English Learners data. Periodically throughout the year our Assessment Center collects and analyzes data used for math instructional services for students who would benefit the most to accelerate progress towards proficiency.

3c. Special education

The Special Education department is committed to equitable opportunities through high quality practices to accelerate growth for all students. At Highland Elementary, special education teachers are considered interventionists who offer a range of service delivery models to support students who qualify for special education services or are receiving interventions in their least restrictive environment.

Resource special education teachers support students with identified academic and social emotional needs through co-teaching, push in support, or pull out groups. Speech and Language Pathologists support students language, articulation, and social needs through these models as well. Related service providers, who include Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Developmental Adapted Physical Education, and Deaf and Hard of Hearing, work with students by pushing into their mainstream classroom, pulling students out for direct instruction, or as a consultant for teachers. In addition to licensed staff, paraprofessionals work with students to provide assistance on work completion, reinforce skills, or offer breaks. All interventionists regularly collaborate with classroom teachers to support individual students in meeting their goals and closing the gap with peers. This collaborative teamwork offers additional help teaching, reinforcing skills, or adapting materials as another layer of support for students within their classroom.

For students who aren't currently receiving special education services, but demonstrate an academic or social-emotional need, they are brought to the Student Assistance Team. This team of interventionists and teachers discuss appropriate interventions that could be put into place to support student success.

Interventions are put into place for 6-8 weeks, then the team reconvenes to review the data. If a student isn't responding to the intervention, a new intervention may be put into place or the student may be recommended for an initial special education evaluation. Being part of a large district allows schools to offer a full continuum of services for students with disabilities. Most students receive services in their neighborhood school and, when possible, in their general education classroom setting, but if a different setting is needed, students can access programming in another school within the district that could better support their needs.

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

The English Learner (EL) program supports multilingual learners in acquiring the English they need in order to succeed in the classroom and beyond, in accordance with the State of Minnesota Guidelines and English Language Proficiency Standards. Incoming students are tested for English proficiency when entering District 196 schools, as well as periodically throughout the school year to determine progress and eligibility for continued instruction.

The EL program develops the language skills of multilingual learners in the language domains of Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. A continuum of services is provided to English Language Learners (ELLs) that vary according to the language needs of students. One service model implemented is co-teaching. For the co-teaching model, the English Language Learner (ELL) teacher co-teaches with the general education teacher for about 50 minutes. Both teachers collaboratively plan lessons to help develop the language skills of ELLs.

Push-in service is another model implemented in which the ELL teacher provides service in the classroom for about 20 to 30 minutes. The final service model is pull-out service. This model is used when students have very minimal English skills (new-to-country students) or need more intensive instruction in a specific language domain (Listening, Speaking, Reading, or Writing). This model of service is provided in a small group.

Additionally, Highland Elementary has had the opportunity to implement the Hamline English Learners in the Mainstream (ELM) coaching model for the last 2 years. The purpose of the ELM coaching model is to help build the capacity of all teachers so they are able to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students, which is in accordance with Minnesota state law and the LEAPS Act. The certified ELM coach at Highland Elementary works individually with teachers to provide them with effective instructional methods for English Language Development.

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

Highland Elementary is home to a special education program that services students with Developmental Cognitive Disabilities (DCD) and students with Communication Interactive Disorders (CID). Currently Highland has 2 DCD and 3 CID classrooms. Our CID programs are created for students with significant communication disorders, social skill needs, and sensory processing needs; many of these students have autism. In both programs, students' needs are met in a small group special education setting and focuses on academic skills (literacy, mathematics), social skills, and functional skills. Appropriate inclusion opportunities are available in the general education classroom. Our program focuses on the whole child. Each classroom has a teacher, as well as several paraprofessionals to help assist with academic instruction, functional skill instruction, mainstreaming activities, and other items as needed. Throughout the week students spend time with a music specialist, occupational therapist, speech and language therapist, and an adapted physical education teacher.

The classrooms are designed to provide academic and functional skill instruction. Classroom staff also help students regulate their sensory systems throughout the school day. As people travel around Highland Elementary, it is easy to notice some of our program's equipment. The carts, vests, swings, trampoline, and wagons are all used to provide vestibular and proprioceptive input to our students who need help moderating their sensory processing systems. These activities help students' sensory systems maintain a level that is optimal for learning.

We believe that all learners, with or without disabilities, will mutually benefit by having opportunities to learn together by participating in educational experiences appropriate to meet their individual social and academic needs. All learners at Highland Elementary have value and dignity, and are treated with respect regardless of differences. It is our belief that students with disabilities can become contributing members when provided with opportunities to learn, socialize, and function in a variety of environments.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

The Conscious Discipline method is implemented building-wide and is evident from the moment students walk through the doors every morning as they are greeted by adults using different rituals to welcome them in our building. Additionally, all teachers use a morning meeting to make connections with ALL of our students every day. Making that personal connection creates an environment where all kids feel safe and free to make choices.

At Highland Elementary, it is important to look specifically at how we celebrate and recognize student accomplishments. Appropriate Behavior Counts (ABC) program is a schoolwide positive behavior program we utilize. Students earn ABC tickets for demonstrating positive behaviors or random acts of kindness. Students have a chance to earn an ABC pencil during a ticket drawing at one of the school assemblies. Children practice and learn social and group behaviors, as well as feel part of the school community during these celebrations.

Highland Elementary uses a discipline policy based on positive reinforcement and the Highland Elementary Bill of Rights. This means that appropriate behavior will be acknowledged through individual class activities and incentive days. Highland Elementary uses a discipline policy based on shared power and accountability. This means that all students are taught consistent schoolwide expectations that are modeled, practiced, and taught throughout the school year.

While rigor and high expectations are key foundations to Highland Elementary's success, teachers and staff know having fun and authentic learning experiences create a strong culture. With engagement in these environments, students take more risks in their learning, knowing a teacher cares and wants them to do their best. Teams frequently meet in Professional Learning Communities to discuss academic, as well as social and emotional needs of students to create a plan for student success.

We strive to intentionally use multiple tools in our learning environments. There are human tools of conversation and discourse, non-digital tools of notebooks and print text, and digital tools such as: ipad 1:1 in grades 4-5, classroom ipads, Chromebook carts, and computer labs. All of the above tools have helped bring a smooth transition during distance learning with COVID 19 to continue to engage students through digital platforms for learning including SeeSaw and Schoology. Our goal with digital decisions is that their use is grounded in learning. By using the strengths of these tools for learning, we provide a balanced approach in a digital world because learning is at the heart of everything we do.

A student-led Student Council organizes schoolwide events to raise awareness of social concerns and community needs. This group coordinates fun ways to help end bullying, teach kindness, and raise money to help charities. Wearing orange on Unity Day in October, and collecting pennies for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society are just a couple events at Highland Elementary that allow our students to become leaders and role models in our community.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Highland Elementary promotes communication between staff, students, and parents. Effective communication is essential for building school-family partnerships. It constitutes the foundation for all other forms of family involvement in education. Communication includes, but not limited to, mass email/phone notifications, quarterly printed newsletters, updated school website, and a district-generated newsletter called Spotlight. Parents are given access to their child's attendance, grades, and teacher comments through an online parent portal called Infinite Campus.

Each fall our teachers host a curriculum night for each grade level. This is an evening where families come together and are informed in detail on what their child(ren)'s academic year will look like. It is a great opportunity for parents to be informed and to discuss what they can expect throughout the year. We

celebrate ELL and their cultures during our ELL Night events throughout the district. These events are a great way to expand our community while celebrating our diverse population with food and cultural activities.

At Highland Elementary, we are very proud of the amount of parent involvement within our school. Parents are welcome to volunteer in the classroom and during schoolwide events. We have two volunteer coordinators who manage the amount of volunteers. Having our parents be so involved in our school shows our students that we are all working together to provide an unmatched school community.

Another parent involvement opportunity at Highland Elementary is our Site Council. The Highland Site Council consists of four parents, four staff members, the volunteer coordinators, and our principal. Members meet six times throughout the year and all parents are welcome to join in these meetings. Site Council members are elected for two-year terms.

Building community is an important part of the culture at Highland Elementary. To honor our 25th anniversary, a community garden was built on our property by parent volunteers, and our students are actively involved in planting and maintaining it. The maintenance of this garden by parents and students continues throughout the summer months, allowing harvesting of these vegetables, which are donated to our local food shelves.

Highland Elementary would not be as successful as it is without the continued partnership with our families and community.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Highland values shared leadership, and the opportunity to learn with and from each other. Professional Development (PD) provided at the district level increases learning around best practices in education and is offered regularly. In addition, the calendar is structured to allow PD to be done within each building to meet their individual learning needs. At Highland Elementary, several teams and coaches help lead and facilitate PD opportunities.

The Conscious Discipline Action Team helped staff go through a book study last year in an effort to get grounded in the mindset around Conscious Discipline practices. This year the team has helped the building move into year 2 of implementation by incorporating some of the initial components throughout the building and in all classrooms, such as Safe Place and School Family.

Highland Elementary's building leadership team consists of 2 teachers from each grade and specialist area. This team meets regularly to discuss topics being implemented across District 196 and within Highland Elementary. These leaders guide discussions during their Professional Learning Communities (PLC) and help with decision making for the building.

Our Student Assistance Teams meet regularly to identify struggling students and plan interventions. Stakeholders, including classroom teachers, are intentional in matching the best intervention with student needs. This process is used for each individual student identified during the benchmark window. Prioritizing communication and collaboration between core instruction and intervention is a focus in planning for accelerated growth. Child Study is the special education team and they meet to discuss students currently receiving interventions, as well as discuss students already receiving special education services.

Cultural Proficiency Sessions are facilitated by the building leadership team throughout the school year, in collaboration with the Integration and Equity Department. Sessions include self-reflection questions and address topics such as: culture, reflection, dialogue mindset, inside-out process, identity, continuum language, barriers guiding principles, and essential elements. These strategies enhance our academic language, classroom management, and academic literacy.

Ongoing professional learning alongside coaching in each building supports student-centered conversations and responsive planning. Our Tier 1 Literacy coach pushes into classrooms to observe, co-teach, collaborate

on lesson planning, and to dig into data around specific students to propose intervention ideas. Data-informed intervention includes Reading Recovery and Leveled Literacy. Licensed staff meets with a Peer Leader for an observation cycle each trimester which utilizes Charlotte Danielson's Components of Professional Practice to support teachers on improving their knowledge and instructional skills in order to increase student achievement.

The Teacher Seminar Class is led by District 196 lead teachers in the areas of math and literacy to provide monthly professional learning to all new-to-district colleagues and teachers interested in focused learning opportunities. The focus is around district level initiatives such as the literacy collaboration, and the math and reading workshop models.

4. School Leadership:

Highland Elementary has had two principals in its 34 years of existence. Although the principal oversees the day-to-day operations, our Building Leadership Team and others play an important role in a healthy school environment and the overall success of our school. Grade level teams engage in student centered collaborative conversations supporting a Professional Learning Community structure. Teams meet regularly to monitor achievement of student groups and plan responsive instruction; progress monitoring between benchmarking periods helps identify progress towards goals. Every trimester data is entered in our data support system, and all stakeholders have access to data at any time. Benchmark data provides a larger view of how students are performing. Comparison data of students receiving interventions and a full student body helps us analyze growth trajectories for "closing the gap."

The Highland Site Council includes staff members, parents, and community members who advise, recommend, and make decisions in areas that affect the operation of Highland Elementary. Staffing patterns, budgeting, grouping patterns, class size, and special programs are a few of the areas in which the council gives input. Fundraising expenditures are examples in which the Council has decision making authority. Members of the Site Council may also be asked to serve on district wide committees. Involvement with committees of this type will depend on the goals and priorities set forth by the district.

Addressing 4 fundamental questions helps us move from a culture of teaching to a culture of learning: What do we expect students to learn? How will we know what students have learned? How will we respond to student's who aren't learning? How will we respond if they already know it?. Highland Elementary is working toward accomplishing our mission by using data to analyze students' strengths, weaknesses, and to provide appropriate educational opportunities for all students.

The administration, staff, and community at Highland Elementary believes that our students come first and all students can learn. Our highly-skilled and compassionate educators and staff are dedicated to creating safe, respectful, and inclusive environments that allow students to maximize their learning. Partnerships between home and school are truly outstanding. However, we also acknowledge that despite these efforts, we have the ongoing challenge to meet students' needs and ensure achievement for all students. This has especially been true as we have had to reinvent how we are educating our students through distance learning during the COVID 19 school closure.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Highland Elementary is built upon the foundational values of addressing the needs of the whole child revolving around academic, assessment, and social-emotional accomplishments, all while implementing best practices for the students. The one practice that has been the most instrumental to Highland Elementary's success is the focus on social-emotional practices to create a school culture that is committed to nurturing the whole student. This culture is a living, breathing, and balanced lifestyle best described as inclusive, supportive, and thriving. It is not only seen through actions, it is felt as soon as one walks through the door; whether it comes from administration, licensed staff, support staff, clerical, or custodial there is always someone there to provide what a student needs to be successful.

Highland Elementary is implementing Conscious Discipline where lies the focus of creating a positive school family culture, which in turn allows the opportunity to build connections and student achievement. This is a community approach by the entire staff led by a supportive, caring, and respectful administration. All staff is committed to ensuring the social-emotional success of students regardless of background or exceptionalities. The students feel safe, valued, and empowered to make positive choices in our caring environment due to staff learning about their interests, families, cultures, and then bring that into the classroom. Through our dedicated teamwork at Highland Elementary, genuine long-lasting positive relationships and reciprocal respect is established. Students know they are loved and safe within their school family, and are celebrated when they succeed and when they are challenged in their journey of social-emotional growth.

The active practices of putting students first, collectively making opportunities, and creatively meeting the ever-changing student needs, are all conscious practices utilized by staff to build a successful social-emotional environment at Highland Elementary. Within these conscious practices there are collaborative strategies employed through differentiation, co-teaching, individualized, small group, and whole group. All students are encouraged to confidently find their voice whether it is in the classroom, in a club, or class that meets before or after school.

Our collaborative school culture is continuously working to improve with the driving thought of what is best for students. Most importantly, we are a family where there is a genuine love shared for all the students, and we take time multiple times a year, and in the day, to celebrate the students and the school family; that is the building block that makes us Highland Elementary.