

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 100 James Avenue
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Mankato State MN Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 56001-3998

County Blue Earth County

Telephone (507) 388-5480 Fax _____

Web site/URL https://je.isd77.org/ E-mail sjohns4@isd77.k12.mn.us

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* Mr. Paul Peterson Ed.D E-mail ppeter1@isd77.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Mankato Public School District Tel. (507) 387-1868

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 Mr. Darren Wacker
(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):
- 10 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 3 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 15 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	27	15	42
1	23	14	37
2	13	24	37
3	21	17	38
4	26	26	52
5	18	22	40
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	128	118	246

*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
 - 1.6 % Asian
 - 15.7 % Black or African American
 - 8.3 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 68.9 % White
 - 5.1 % 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: 21%

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

Our school serves students from an area domestic abuse shelter, and we had a high rate of turnover through the shelter last year. The housing market also had an impact on students coming into, and leaving, our attendance area.

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	31
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	18
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	49
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	239
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.21
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	21

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

Arabic, English Creolized, Nuer, Oriya, Somali, Spanish

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 39 %

Total number students who qualify: 96

8. Students receiving special education services: 15 %

36 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>1</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>5</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>3</u> Developmental Delay | <u>8</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>7</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>16</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>3</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: 7

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	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	12
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	7
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	4
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 21:1

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%	95%	95%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2019.

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

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No

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

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

Assuring learning excellence and readiness for a changing world.

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

Jefferson Elementary School is located in Mankato, MN and is one of ten elementary schools in the Mankato Area Public School District. The greater Mankato area includes the cities of Mankato, North Mankato, Eagle Lake and Madison Lake. This region is a rare blend of small town atmosphere with big city possibilities. The Mankato area has received recognition and awards from a variety of national publications. In the past five years Mankato has been recognized as “One of the 25 Safest Cities for Families in the U.S.” (Secure Choice), #2 on the “Best Small College Towns” list (Schools.com), and #39 nationally on the “Best Small Places for Businesses and Careers” (Forbes). People from around the region and beyond come to Mankato because of its amazing employment and education opportunities. Mankato offers a variety of learning options from pre-Kindergarten through post-graduate studies. Mankato post-secondary opportunities include Bethany Lutheran College, Minnesota State University, Rasmussen Business College and South Central College.

Jefferson Elementary was built in 1960 and provides education for approximately 250 students in kindergarten through fifth grade. Our student population consists of a diverse socio-economic background. Remembering our district's mission of Assuring Learning Excellence and Readiness for a Changing World, we use positive behavior strategies, collaboration between students, parents, and teachers and high expectations for academic achievement to create lifelong learners. Our purpose is to guide students to reach their goals by making strong connections with families and promoting a challenging, yet supportive learning environment. Jefferson School is a family. We see our staff, students and community as part of our family. Everything we do is in support of this family. We welcome all staff, students and parents in our building. We collaborate, support and challenge each other. Jefferson staff truly believe that all students can and will learn. Staff use the MN State Academic Standards and research-based curricula provided by the district to drive their instruction. Strong connections and collaboration are key to the success of each student. Because we believe all students can learn at high levels, we believe in providing support for teachers to help them meet each student's needs. Creating a positive school culture has been a significant part of our school's success. We understand the importance of all members of our school feeling valued and respected, and the importance of every family feeling welcome when they walk through our doors. Our positive school climate has been developed through learning communities and numerous opportunities provided to staff for professional growth. Our Mentor Coach works with staff to examine student data, support instructional best practices, research interventions and promote strong connections. One important area of focus is utilization of the Response to Interventions (RtI) framework. This framework is an important tool used to meet the unique needs of ALL students, behaviorally and academically.

Staff at Jefferson School have embraced the challenge of creating a culturally responsive learning environment in an effort to eliminate the achievement gap. The Jefferson principal participated in the Institute for Courageous Principal Leadership 1.0 and 2.0. Staff are provided regular opportunities to participate in ongoing PD, book studies, and guided discussions around relevant articles, all related to the creation of a culturally responsive environment for our students and families.

Title I programming is available to students who are in need of academic support in the areas of math and reading. Interventions and extra support are given to students who need additional reinforcement for reading or math skills. Jefferson participates in the Backpack Food Program. Funded by local donations and grants, this program provides a weekend's supply of food for students. At the end of each week, teachers place the food in the students' backpacks for them to take home. Families sign up for this food assistance program. In 2019 Jefferson School received a grant allowing us to participate in training and professional development around Project Lead the Way Launch. PLTW Launch “empowers students to adopt a design-thinking mindset through compelling activities, projects, and problems that build upon each other and relate to the world around them. Students engage in hands-on activities in computer science, engineering, and biomedical science. They become creative, collaborative problem solvers ready to take on every challenge.” Finally, Jefferson School has placed a renewed emphasis on student voice and student leadership. During the 2019-2020 school year, every Jefferson student had an opportunity to serve as a leader in some capacity as a member of one or more of our student leadership teams.

In the end, everything we do with and for our students and families connects back to our district mission of Assuring Learning Excellence and Readiness for a Changing World. We work hard every day to hold ourselves to that mission.

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

Jefferson’s core curriculum is based upon the Minnesota State Standards. Our staff is well versed in the use of standards and have ensured their alignment to all curriculum resources. Teachers at Jefferson began aligning formative and summative assessments to benchmarks and standards many years ago in order to document and monitor student progress toward grade-level goals. Formative assessments drive instruction, and recent work has focused on collaborative team utilization of the district standards-based report card. Professional development focused on standards-based instruction, the use of district-level instructional expectations, and effective use of our curriculum resources have been critical to our success.

1b. Reading/English language arts

The English Language Arts (ELA) Minnesota State Standards are taught through a balanced approach to literacy instruction. This approach encompasses phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics and word study, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency. Benchmark Literacy is the curricular resource we use to guide standards-based instructional decisions. Reading, Informational Text and Literature strands are taught through the Interactive Read Aloud, Shared Reading and Guided Reading components of a balanced approach to literacy. These components are taught through the varied strategies of whole group, small group, and individual learning opportunities. This allows teachers to facilitate fluid and ever-changing groups to meet students needs in response to the formative assessments aforementioned. A gradual release model allows focused instruction and the opportunity for differentiation on many levels. Reading Foundational Skills are taught mostly through the Phonics and Word Study components of balanced literacy, but are embedded in all components of the balanced literacy framework. Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language standards are the focus during the Writer’s Workshop component of balanced literacy, and are embedded in all components of instruction that take place during the language arts block and throughout the day. We are focused on embedding the ELA standards throughout the entire school day and incorporating them in all subject and content areas. While ELA grade-level standards guide core instruction, Jefferson teachers are always looking beyond grade-level standards to provide enrichment and challenge students. During Interactive Read-Alouds, students listen as their teacher reads a story that builds on the strategies they are studying that day. Shared Reading allows the students and teacher to read together while the teacher guides and supports the students. Guided reading allows for differentiation and the ability to meet the needs of all learners through small groups. Students are individually coached and guided through the application of reading skills and strategies. Teachers confer with students often and record individual student data, to support and coach students through the stages of reading development. In addition to the reading component, the Writer’s Workshop teaches students the skills needed to become better writers.

1c. Mathematics

The 2007 Minnesota Math Standards drive math instruction at Jefferson. Grade-level Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) have aligned these standards to the curriculum resource, Everyday Math, and collaborated with district-wide curricular leadership to create common learning district-developed learning activities, enrichment activities, formative and summative assessments. While these serve as the base for core instruction, teachers at Jefferson go above and beyond standards to challenge and meet the needs of each student. Each collaborative team has identified essential learner outcomes (ELOs) or high priority benchmarks that are monitored through weekly team meetings and monthly PLC meetings. Students who do not meet grade-level standards, ELOs, or high priority benchmarks are the focus of small group guided instruction where teachers are able to use more explicit modeling, problem-solving strategies and reteaching. Teachers at Jefferson have utilized the professional learning and best practices from our Balanced Literacy framework and applied them to math instruction to assure all student individual and collective needs are being met. Students are engaged in rigorous, problem solving based instruction around all math content, including algebra, number and operation, data analysis and geometry. Students as young as kindergarten

and first grade are exploring algebraic thinking through hands-on, real-world problems. In addition to our youngest learners, our fourth and fifth-grade students engage in various tasks to work toward a conceptual understanding of math topics, rather than just rote memorization. Our after-school program, Excellent Community of Engaged Learners (ExCEL), is designed to target and support math intervention. For math enrichment, students are challenged through extension activities, collaboration with peers, a deeper level of conceptual understanding and a faster pace of content presented with a focus on critical thinking.

1d. Science

The 2009 Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards in Science were implemented in 2011. Our science curriculum resource is the 2012 Pearson Education Interactive Science program. Our district approach to science provides inquiry-based learning, investigating hands-on experiences and a rich, consumable text to support the learning of science concepts which makes learning personal, relevant, and engaging for students. Jefferson has gone above and beyond district expectations in this regard as well. MN Science Standards were updated in 2019 and implementation will roll forward in the coming years. Jefferson began to integrate an approach to STEAM (Science Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) five years ago by bolstering “maker spaces” in our media center in order to provide accessible and rich experiences around application of science concepts. Furthermore, Jefferson was one of two elementary buildings in Mankato Area Public Schools to apply for and receive grant funding to implement Project Lead the Way, Launch STEAM kits in preparation for the implementation of Minnesota’s new Science Standards. In addition to PLTW Launch, Jefferson teachers also incorporate Mystery Science as a resource for science instruction. These tools combine hands-on inquiry-based learning, with phenomenon that foster the natural curiosity within elementary students. Students are investigating ideas such as light and sound, infections, and energy, in addition to a K-5 computer science program that helps students learn coding skills. All of these resources support the scientific inquiry process, as well as the engineering design process, as Jefferson teachers know the importance of problem-solving skills and processes that support the development of a growth mindset. Now Jefferson is leading the efforts for full implementation of these tools as we work to fully implement the new science standards throughout the district.

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

Minnesota’s 2010 Revision of Social Studies standards are currently under review and will be revised during the 2020-2021 academic year. Social studies at Jefferson is the interdisciplinary study of citizenship and government, economics, geography and history. Students develop the content knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary to be informed and engaged citizens in the contemporary world. ELA and math standards are embedded in social studies instruction. Students engage in citizenship and government through the lens of rights, rules, and laws which builds on our work as a PBIS building. In addition, community is a theme that is explored throughout all grade levels in connection to the MN Social Studies standards. Students explore their local community as well as communities around our ever-changing world. From our kindergarten students studying Famous People and Events in U.S. History, Freedom and Choice, the Purpose of Government, and the Role of Rules to our fifth graders focusing on Prehistory Through 1607, Colonization and Conflict, Political Unrest and the American Revolution, Growth and Westward Expansion, Civil War and Reconstruction, Beliefs and Principles of U.S. Democracy, and Documents of the American Government, our Jefferson students engage in learning specific to helping them become responsible, informed, young citizens.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

At Jefferson our non-core subjects are another key to our students’ success. All students at Jefferson attend each of the following special area classes once a week for a 50-minute period: Media and Technology, Music, and Visual Arts. Students attend Physical Education two times a week for 50 minutes each time.

Media and Technology classes focus on analyzing information and communicating using traditional and digital formats as well as developing strong, safe, secure digital citizens who understand how to protect themselves and others in an online world. These skills are built upon each year to enhance reading and writing skills. Students have become responsible online digital citizens through the use of Chromebooks and iPads. Media Specialists view learning with technology through the SAMR (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, Redefinition) model. Students explore technology through different devices, coding, mass media projects with green screen technology, and other STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, , Art, and Mathematics) related activities. In our media classes metacognitive strategies are reinforced for reading with a purpose. Students are engaged through interactive read-alouds, author studies, exposure to different genres of literature, the use of text and e-resources, note taking and research skills. All of the assessments in media are tied to Minnesota English Language Arts Standards in Speaking, Viewing, Listening and Media Literacy Benchmarks K-5. Students culminate their work with a multimedia project.

In music, children learn to sing, play, listen, read, compose, and dance/move. They are taught to understand world history and how cultures work to achieve excellence through the disciplines of rehearsing and performing. Math is reinforced through learning rhythms and reading music. Through the Game Plan music curriculum, students are provided a repertoire rich in folk literature, nursery rhymes and traditional singing games.

The focus of our physical education classes is to empower all students with the knowledge and skills to sustain a physically active and healthy lifestyle. Physical education units are taught to coincide with long-range reading plans which supports the teaching of high frequency words, children’s literature, and letter recognition.

The school’s visual arts program supports classroom learner outcomes specifically focusing on the genre of fairy tales, geometric shapes, overlapping design, and perspectives. Research skills and projects are supported by using mobile devices to learn about artists and art history.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

Standards-based instruction is the basis for all student learning. Standards-based instruction provides guidance and support to all students and staff working toward predetermined learning objectives. The instructional practices used to meet the standards include differentiation, the use of leveled materials, and the integration of technology. Teachers routinely develop instructional activities and determine the effectiveness of instruction through the use of common formative and common summative assessments. Pre and post assessment is a common practice among Jefferson staff. Teachers meet regularly as part of our Professional Learning Community to set and revisit instructional goals. Student academic needs are addressed using an RtI model. Assessment helps identify tiers of students who receive differentiated instruction based on assessment results. Tier 1 students are on or above grade-level. Tier 2 students are slightly below grade-level and require modifications and extra practice. Tier 3 students are below, or significantly below, grade-level and benefit from targeted small-group interventions. These groupings are subject to change as new data is collected and studied. Jefferson utilizes a push-in model for students requiring Tier 2 and Tier 3 support. Licensed reading and math intervention teachers meet with individuals or small groups of students within the classroom setting during grade level intervention blocks of time. The targeted instruction students receive from intervention teachers is in addition to the core instruction they receive from their classroom teacher, not in replacement of it.

3b. Students performing above grade level

Standards-based instruction is the basis for all student learning. Standards-based instruction provides guidance and support to all students and staff working toward predetermined learning objectives. The instructional practices used to meet the standards include differentiation, the use of leveled materials, and the integration of technology. Teachers routinely develop instructional activities and determine the effectiveness of instruction through the use of common formative and common summative assessments. Pre and post assessment is a common practice among Jefferson staff. Teachers meet regularly as part of our Professional Learning Community to set and revisit instructional goals. Student academic needs are

addressed using an RtI model. Embedded in each curricula are differentiation options for classroom teachers to support academically exceptional students. Beginning in 3rd grade, students who qualify for our talent development program are clustered. Cluster teachers are provided additional professional development and standards-based enrichment materials to enhance classroom curriculum. Michael Clay Thompson resources, either in print text or through an online learning environment called Mentor Network, are utilized for grammar instruction, grammar practice, and vocabulary to enrich the language arts. Students who require math enrichment have access to our Beast Academy resources. Beast Academy is available to students in grades 3-5 who qualify for an enriched learning atmosphere in mathematics. Beast Academy teaches kids how to think critically and understand the concepts behind the math calculations they're performing. Comic-book style illustrations keep kids engaged, even as they are pushed to solve some of the most rigorous math problems they have ever encountered.

3c. Special education

Standards-based instruction provides guidance and support to all students and staff working toward predetermined learning objectives. The instructional practices used to meet the standards include differentiation, the use of leveled materials, and the integration of technology. Our special education teacher collaborates frequently with classroom teachers as part of our Professional Learning Community to set and revisit instructional goals for students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). Students who have an IEP receive targeted individual or small-group instruction from our special education teacher. Special education instruction utilizes research-based intervention programs, which are sometimes delivered in a pull-out setting in our Resource Room. The targeted instruction students receive from special education staff is in addition to the core instruction they receive from their classroom teacher, not in replacement of it. Some special education students also receive push-in support in their homeroom setting from highly-qualified special education paraprofessionals. The amount, and type, of support provided to special education students at Jefferson varies according to individual student need, and it is reviewed annually as part of the IEP process. Because Jefferson is a relatively small building, and we therefore have a small raw number of special education students, academic achievement data is quickly skewed by changes in proficiency among a small number of students. That said, our strategies for closing the achievement gap for our special education population mirror what we practice in our efforts to eliminate disproportionality elsewhere. We believe in the power of building positive relationships, the importance of collective efficacy, and the necessity of a growth mindset around the continuous improvement process.

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

We believe strongly in the power of eliminating the deficit mindset around English Language Learners and the importance of seeing what they bring to our school as a strength. Our English Language teacher collaborates frequently with classroom teachers as part of our Professional Learning Community to set and revisit instructional goals for students with Individualized Learning Plans (ILPs). Students who have an ILP receive targeted individual or small-group instruction from our EL teacher. The EL teacher focuses on grade level reading standards and targeted language acquisition strategies while working with EL students. The targeted instruction students receive from our EL teacher is in addition to the core instruction they receive from their classroom teacher, not in replacement of it. EL support typically occurs via the push-in model in the classroom setting, but some students, particularly students who are new to the country, receive pull-out instruction in one of our intervention spaces. It's also not uncommon for Level I and II EL students to receive additional reading support from our Reading Intervention teachers or our primary level classroom teachers, who have a wealth of experience teaching students how to read. The amount, and type, of support provided to EL students at Jefferson varies according to individual student need, and it is reviewed annually as part of the ILP process. Because Jefferson is a relatively small building, and we therefore have a small raw number of EL students, academic achievement data is quickly skewed by changes in proficiency among a small number of students. That said, our strategies for closing the achievement gap for our EL population mirror what we practice in our efforts to eliminate disproportionality elsewhere. We believe in the power of building positive relationships, the importance of collective efficacy, and the necessity of a growth mindset around the continuous improvement process.

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Jefferson School is a family, and we are all about creating a culture and climate in our building in which students, their families, and staff all feel welcome and valued. Jefferson staff have engaged in a great deal of learning the past few years to better understand culturally relevant teaching practices, embrace a collective efficacy mindset, and emphasize the importance of equity and access in creating the climate we believe all kids and families deserve. Our staff engaged in a book study on *Everyday Antiracism: Getting Real about Race in School* and most staff have also completed professional development related to the impact of race and culture in their lives and on our school system. A deepened understanding of this impact has led to decreased disproportionality in our discipline and academic achievement data. The Jefferson principal personally contacts every family that is new to the building during October of each school year, and he conducts numerous home visits each year, making a concerted effort to visit the school's traditionally underserved families. Jefferson teachers go above and beyond to communicate with families and keep them updated on the social-emotional and academic progress of their children. Jefferson's PBIS model focuses on behavioral expectations for students and reminds staff of the importance of teaching and reteaching strategies students can use to model expected behaviors. School expectations help students understand the importance of being prepared, acting responsibly, giving respect, and thinking of how their personal safety and the safety of others are impacted by their actions. On a daily basis, classroom teachers use a Responsive Classroom framework to build strong classroom connections, help students understand the strengths our differences bring and foster a caring family environment. Another opportunity for camaraderie occurs during our TEAM Time. Multi-age student groups, in which membership remains consistent from year to year, meet weekly to further develop a sense of building-wide community and belonging. Students learn *The Seven Habits of the Leader in Me* program and how to apply the habits foster their own success. There are monthly school-wide celebrations in which kids are recognized for distinguished displays of positive behavior, and students and staff come together to have fun. Each of these celebrations ends with the student body singing the Jefferson song. Hearing our students proudly sing the school song each month is the embodiment of our Jefferson family.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Engaged families and community members contribute to student academic achievement and a positive school climate at Jefferson Elementary. Family attendance at various activities outside of the regular school day is excellent. Before the school year begins we hold entrance conferences that allow teachers, students, and families to get to know each other. Attendance at Jefferson entrance conferences is regularly close to 100%. Families attend fall and spring conferences to learn more about their children's successes and challenges, and attendance during these conferences is typically 90% or higher. Activities such as fall Open House, Family Literacy Nights, the Jefferson Art Show, and yearly music performances are also extremely well attended. In addition to these, our Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is highly motivated to engage all our families in activities that are educational and fun. Book Fairs and BINGO for Books are examples of educational activities that draw families into the school setting. The PTO also organizes and staffs school carnivals, the Jefferson Jog, dances, and other family fun nights. They provide additional funding for field trips, books, and classroom resources, cold weather gear for families in need, and they are currently saving money to fund a playground remodel.

Partnerships are the cornerstone of our success. The Promoting Respect Workshop (PRW) is a community program for students at Jefferson. The lessons presented by trained community facilitators focus on specific diversity-related topics geared toward our community's changing needs. In the past few years, Jefferson School has engaged in partnerships with a local publishing company to provide books to students who come to us through a domestic abuse shelter, a local manufacturer to provide a metal casting experience for our 5th-grade students, two local universities whose student-athletes visit our school to work with our kids, and Mankato West High School whose VEX robotics members and volunteer mentors have all worked with Jefferson students. Finally, Jefferson has written and received multiple grants from a local foundation to purchase books, fund classroom innovation, and most recently to purchase STEM kits and allow our

teachers to participate in professional development around real-world problem solving in the areas of math, science and technology. We know that successfully educating children takes a community, and Jefferson benefits greatly from engaged parents and community members who care deeply about children and their success.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Mankato Area Public Schools create a professional culture through a professional development approach designed to enhance instruction with the ultimate goal of improving student learning. Professional development is rooted in daily learning, is standards-based and is closely tied to student achievement. Job-embedded professional development is a real-time part of teachers' daily work. It includes both on-going collaboration and reflection focused on improving instructional practices. Professional Learning Communities at Jefferson provide a venue for teachers to set goals, analyze data related to student achievement, plan for students' unique needs, determine instructional responses and reflect on successes and challenges. Teachers and support staff (principal, mentor coach, intervention teachers, EL staff, and special education teacher) meet at least bi-weekly to collaborate around curricular standards, core instruction, and individualizing instruction. The Jefferson Vision Card defines and guides our work. The Jefferson Leadership Team regularly reviews the vision card, assesses progress toward building goals, and provides support to teaching teams as needed. Our building vision card is aligned to the district vision card, which is focused on student achievement. Over the past three years we have narrowed our focus to three main areas; operating as a high-functioning professional learning community, creating a culture of collective efficacy, and implementing culturally relevant teaching practices. Our Mentor Coach works with teachers in support of the goals set forth in our vision card. Through classroom visits and team meetings, the coach collaborates with teachers and teams around implementing new learning and making data-driven decisions. Jefferson staff initiated several "open door" days. On these days teachers are able to visit other classrooms to learn from colleagues and see the application of best practice instruction. These visits often lead to reflective conversations between colleagues and with our mentor coach towards the common goal of continually improving instruction. Another opportunity for learning occurs during district wide, cross-building grade-level collaborations. Several times a year, grade level teachers come together to collaborate around initiatives tied to the district vision card. The District also holds Learning Academies throughout the year where district staff present in their areas of expertise and staff attend to further their learning and skills. Frequent job-embedded professional development paired with a culture of collaboration are essential in our school's quest for continuous improvement. We pride ourselves on getting better every day, and our student achievement results reflect that commitment.

4. School Leadership:

Jefferson school believes in the ability of all stakeholders to act as leaders, the importance of people leading in their areas of strength, and the power of collaboration to bring everyone together toward the common goal of Assuring Learning Excellence and Readiness for a Changing World. We strive to create an environment where students are eager to attend every day, parents are proud to send their children, and staff enjoy coming to work. The school principal believes strongly in the power of shared leadership and developing staff and students to lead within the system. The principal values his role as both a culture builder and instructional leader. He works to foster a culture of collaboration, to empower staff to take risks and share their successes with one another, and to sustain a focus on continuous improvement. Every staff member has strengths to contribute to the learning excellence of all our Jefferson Jaguars. The Jefferson Leadership Team (JLT) is the building-level component of our leadership structure. Its members include 4 licensed teachers, our Mentor Coach, and the building principal. The JLT embraces shared leadership as it works annually to set goals as part of Jefferson's Vision Card, which guides and measures our school efforts and initiatives. The work of the JLT is focused on leading through the building initiatives to increase student achievement. Teacher leaders are actively engaged in several aspects of Jefferson Elementary. They drive the work of our PBIS efforts, Professional Learning Community, and other building committees. Additionally, our building Mentor Coach leads professional development in all areas of instruction for teachers. Jefferson has teacher leaders who routinely step up and lead committees such as our Lead Team and PBIS Team. Several staff have also shared their expertise by leading sessions at district-wide professional development gatherings. Jefferson students are provided multiple opportunities to share their

leadership skills, as well. The Lead Team instituted school-wide leadership development during Team Time. Teams meet once a week for 20-30 minutes to discuss the Leader in Me tenets and plan upcoming leadership activities. Students plan school events, manage and work the school store, keep the building and grounds clean, make morning announcements, and perform many other leadership duties that help maintain our unique school culture. Jefferson School's shared leadership model and expectation of collaboration contribute directly to our positive school culture and success on district and state assessments.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

First and foremost, Jefferson Elementary School is a family. Our children are the heart of our family. Students come first at Jefferson School. We put children at the forefront of everything we do and every decision we make. Jefferson Elementary School is committed to making a positive impact on the lives of every Jefferson Jaguar by building connections and engaging all students and families in the teaching and learning process. We understand students need to be engaged academically, behaviorally, socially, and emotionally. We know that students don't care what you know until they know that you care. We place a high value on relationships and their role in increasing engagement. We intentionally shape our school culture to include opportunities that foster positive relationships with students and their families. Students feel proud to be here, are invested in their learning, and positively contribute to our school community. Teachers use a Responsive Classroom framework to build strong classroom connections, help students understand the strengths our differences bring, and foster a caring family environment. We utilize weekly Team Time to build community and enhance student leadership within our family. We design structures to enhance the student experience. We identify disconnected students and make home visits, practice positive calls home, match them with external mentors or staff members as invisible mentors, include them in friendship groups facilitated by our counselor, or reach out to their families through our school social worker to provide additional support. We put students first by utilizing solid core instruction and differentiating, using an RTI framework, to meet the needs of a wide range of learners. Students are put first as we focus on behavior using a PBIS model. Students understand that showing their best JAGS behavior is an expectation we always have of them. Staff are committed to teaching, and reteaching, our school-wide expectations. Students actively participate in positive recognition efforts and are expected to hold one another accountable. Jefferson teachers know our students as individual learners, and they work with families to help each individual reach social-emotional and academic goals. Families are a huge part of the success of Jefferson School. We understand the importance of building positive relationships with them, ensuring every person feels welcome when they walk through our doors, and embracing them as partners in the education of the children we share. Embracing them as partners is much easier when they know we put students first, and that students first philosophy is what makes Jefferson such a great family.