

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

Official School Name Nathan Twining Middle School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1422 North Louisiana Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Grand Forks Air Force Base State ND Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 58204-0000

County Grand Forks County

Telephone (701) 787-5100 Fax (701) 787-5143

Web site/URL https://www.gfschools.org/Domain/651 E-mail sbilden150@mygfschools.org

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Dr. Terry Brenner E-mail tbrenner270@mygfschools.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Grand Forks Air Force Base Public School District #140 Tel. (701) 746-2200

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. Lewis Isassi
(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):
- 12 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 4 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 3 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 19 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	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	15	10	25
7	18	13	31
8	12	16	28
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	45	39	84

*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
 - 7 % Asian
 - 9 % Black or African American
 - 17 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 57 % White
 - 8 % 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: 22%

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

Our military families are quite mobile and move anywhere from every 2-5 years depending on the rank of the enlisted military family member(s).

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	10
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	7
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	17
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	79
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.22
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	22

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

We do not have any ELL students at this time.

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %
0 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 30 %

Total number students who qualify: 25

8. Students receiving special education services: 13 %

11 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>4</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>4</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>0</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 4

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.	6
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	14
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	3
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	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 14:1

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

Required Information	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	97%	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.

Growing together to enrich the world. Strong relationships in our schools and community will result in developing connected, innovative learners, ground by strong character.

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

The Grand Forks Air Force Base (GFAFB) is located 14 miles west of Grand Forks, N.D., which is located in the heart of the Red River Valley at the junction of the Red Lake River and the Red River of the North. The Base was established in 1957 and is the home of the 319th Air Base Wing (319 ABW) assigned to the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center of the Air Mobility Command (AMC). It is the only base in AMC to receive remotely piloted aircraft systems, such as the RQ-4 Global Hawk Unmanned Aerial Vehicle.

Since the 1960s, Nathan F. Twining and Carl Ben Eielson schools have been located on the Air Force Base, both hosting Kindergarten-8th grade students. In 1972, with the increasing enrollment and reaching building capacity, the 7th and 8th graders from Carl Ben Eielson transitioned to Nathan Twining and Carl Ben Eielson became a Kindergarten-6th grade school. In 1993, the 6th graders transitioned to Nathan Twining, making Carl Ben Eielson a Kindergarten-5th grade school. 1995 was the highest year for enrollment at Nathan Twining, with approximately 890 students in Kindergarten-8th grades.

Nathan Twining and Carl Ben Eielson schools faced a large decline in enrollment in the late 1990s when the federal government began reorganizing and closing military installations through the Base Realignment And Closure (BRAC) process. By 2001, due to continued declining enrollment, the schools reconfigured once again and Carl Ben Eielson became a K-3 school and Twining hosted grades 4-8. In April 2014, with the enrollment at both schools at an all-time low due to changing missions, the Grand Forks Air Force Base School Board voted to consolidate Nathan F. Twining Elementary and Middle School and Carl Ben Eielson Elementary School for the start of the 2014-2015 school year, and Carl Ben Eielson School was closed. Nathan Twining now has an enrollment of approximately 285 students in grades K-8. With our smaller population, Nathan Twining school now has a much closer "family" than what was seen before and classrooms have a smaller teacher to student ratio. The school staff is more united than ever seen before, which benefits all of our students.

Students in our school are unique as being dependents of military members. It is common for our students to stay at our school for approximately three-five years. As a school on a military base, we also have students who transfer into our school at the beginning, middle, and end of our school year. Many of these students transfer in from schools in other states or Department of Defense schools.

Twining has a variety of programs that provide instruction for our somewhat diverse population as well as support staff.

Special education teachers provide any special education services our students need such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech services, autism, etc. Student services also include a .6 FTE counselor and a .6FTE social worker for students in K-8 .

A Reading Recovery teacher provides additional support through training, resources, and effective teaching strategies through the MTSS process K-8. This teacher is also the data steward, reflecting and sharing student data with teachers to develop differentiated lesson plans.

Twining Middle School has a 6-8 MTSS team to provide interventions for students who are not making adequate progress in the classroom with the core curriculum. Staff refer students to the MTSS team for support and ideas about how to best meet their individual needs and provide additional interventions to implement in the classroom. The MTSS team meets with grade-level teachers during early dismissals or as needed to monitor progress, analyze student data, and adjust interventions.

Middle School Team Time is where classroom teachers meet daily to discuss student concerns and develop plans for success. This time is used to communicate with parents and keep them abreast of student progress.

A Middle School TransMath Instructor provides math instruction to students who are not performing at grade level. The goal of this program is to provide foundational support to help students get back on grade level.

Students are placed in enrichment and remedial classes based on achievement data. These classes include Pre-Algebra, Algebra, Geometry, and Applied Reading courses.

ZAP (Zeros Aren't Permitted) is implemented when a student receives a zero in one of their classes. The student reports the following week to the ZAP classroom to make up any missing assignments during lunch hour. The goal of this program is to teach students' responsibility, accountability, and quality of work.

The Olweus Bullying Program is designed to improve peer relations and make school a safe and positive place. The three main goals are reducing existing bullying problems among students, preventing the development of new bullying problems, and achieving better peer relations at school. Each week, grade level class meetings are held to learn the components of this program.

Sources of Strength is an active student group whose goal is to prevent suicide, violence, bullying and substance abuse. This group is led by the school counselor. Focus is placed on supporting students through the recognition of the Sources of Strength: Family Support, Positive Friends, Mentors, Healthy Activities, Generosity, Spirituality, Medical Access, and Mental Health.

Youth Gaining Opportunities, Recognition, and Skills (YORS) - This group of students exist to identify, promote, improve, increase, and provide services and programs for young people in Grand Forks. YORS is a group of 5-20 students that meets once each month. YORS actively engages youth in the decisions of city government and other community activities that affect youth. YORS is a leadership building program that encourages youth to discuss the concerns and needs of their community.

Student leadership is a group of students that promote excellent citizenship, school spirit, community service, staff recognition, and positive leadership. It is composed of hard-working individuals who are dedicated and wish to be involved in activities that promote Twining Middle School.

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

Twining Middle School offers a school learning environment that encourages students to engage in their learning experience. By engaging students in the learning process, students can focus their attention on reaching higher levels of critical thinking while participating in meaningful learning experiences. To ensure that each student will be provided a quality educational experience, Twining Middle School has adopted the Marzano High-Reliability Schools framework. This framework identifies best practices to implement in schools to improve student achievement. Grounded in research, this model includes five levels of performance supported by twenty-five variables or leading indicators. The leading indicators provide schools with a road map of best practices to follow and implement over an agreed-upon implementation process.

The five levels of performance are:

Level 1 - Safe, Supportive, and Collaborative Culture

Level 2 - Effective Teaching in Every Classroom

Level 3 - Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum

Level 4 - Standards-Referenced Reporting

Level 5 - Competency-Based Education

Level 1 certification was met in May, 2019 and Twining is currently working on Level 2.

The following goals, strategies, and progress monitoring indicators outline the strategic focus:

1. Principals will communicate a clear vision as to how teachers should address instruction in the school.
2. Support will be provided to teachers to continually enhance their pedagogical skills through reflection and professional growth plans.
3. Predominant instructional practices throughout the school will be known and monitored.
4. Teachers will be provided with clear, ongoing evaluations of their pedagogical strengths and weaknesses that are based on multiple sources of data and are consistent with student achievement data.
5. Continued support to teachers and administrators to attain High-Reliability Level 2 Certification.

Progress Monitoring

1. An instructional model is used to define what instruction should look like in each classroom.
2. This model is annually reflected upon, revised, and staff recommit to this process.

1b. Reading/English language arts

Priority learning standards are discussed and agreed upon by grade level/content area teachers at district level meetings. At Twining Middle School learning standards are posted for students to see and are referenced at the beginning of a lesson, as well as during and after lessons. This is done because it gives

students an idea of what they are learning about in the coming lesson(s) and a chance to discuss why they are learning about the concept.

The curricular approach at Twining is focused on educating the whole child. There is a balance between a behavioral approach and a humanistic approach. The behavioral approach focuses on the standards and is goal/objective-driven. The humanistic approach focuses on the social-emotional curriculum and places the learner at the core of the curriculum. To focus the curriculum on the whole child we design our lessons around student needs and interests: for example, student-led discussions, literature circles, summative assessment options, and reflective writing.

With the focus on educating the whole child, we use various instructional approaches to connect to all learning styles: for example, small group discussions, group or individual projects, journal responses, and incorporating movement in the classroom. Differentiated instruction is an important aspect of all instructional approaches. Differentiation occurs through leveled classes, as well as through the instruction in class.

At the beginning of the 2018-19 school year, our middle school team recognized a need for more intensive reading interventions. We were differentiating in the classroom but had students who needed more. After evaluating STAR data information and Jan Richardson assessments, teachers worked with our reading specialist to devise and pilot a reading intervention program geared to specific comprehension needs. Student progress was measured by STAR data and classroom performance. The results were impressive. In the 2019-20 school year, we implemented a similar intervention in all three middle school grade levels and focused on specific student needs as determined by the data.

Twining uses formative and summative assessments to check the level of understanding before moving on. Examples of formative assessments used are exit slips, quick writes, and 5-4-3-2-1 (students self-assess their level of understanding). Based on the data gained from the formative assessments, teachers decide whether or not to spend more time on a concept as a whole or just to check in in a small group or one-on-one with students that need it. Once a unit or novel has been completed, a summative assessment of some sort is given to check understanding. Some examples of summative assessments used at Twining are essays, tests, projects, or presentations. Benchmark testing is also used as a way of gaining data through summative testing.

1c. Mathematics

Learning standards along with I can statements can be found in a number of places. Students can see their learning standards posted in their classroom using an objective wall along with being stated in their lessons. Learning standards are introduced at the beginning of a lesson giving students an idea of what they are learning and reviewed throughout to check the progress of the class. This approach was chosen to give students ownership to their learning while keeping them accountable for lesson material.

Instructional Approaches in math range from differentiated instructions, projects, using technology, and using peer group work to learn.

Differentiated instruction includes giving students guided notes which helps to ensure their participation and their motivation in the classroom.

Projects include using a hands on approach which involves using manipulatives to help their learning process. This way of learning allows students to visually see the concept.

Technology support is greatly important as well. We use online resources to give in depth explanations of a topic from a different mode. Such online resources include online DEMOS, BrainPop, Prodigy, and VMath. With our online resources, we are able to incorporate technology and technological skills into the content area.

The last instructional approach used in our classrooms includes group learning. Students are also able to

participate in group learning where they are able to learn from their peers and work together for a common goal. This approach allows students to converse and use critical thinking skills to complete a task. They work with others and their ideas to reflect and mold their own understanding of the material.

Formative and summative assessments are used to check the student's level of understanding before moving on to another topic. One way we do this is by conducting quick, short checks like enter / exit tickets, thumbs up / thumbs down, or finger numbers for their personal level of understanding. More traditional ways we use these assessments are in the form of homework assignments, lesson quizzes, chapter tests, and benchmark testing. We also use generated assessments like STAR tests and state mandated tests. With the results of these assessments, we are able to see if students are succeeding in class or if there needs to be additional steps for them. Additional steps could be as simple as reviewing the lesson again before moving on or if a student needs more help, placement tests are used. Placement tests help us see at what level the struggling student is at and helps us decide if an intervention course would be useful.

1d. Science

In our science classrooms, learning standards and goals are posted throughout the classroom for students to visually see them. Learnings standards and goals are also pinpointed orally for specific lessons or chapters. This gives students an idea of what they are about to learn and their specific goals. Many of our standards and goals are described at the beginning of a chapter or a lesson.

Instructional Approaches in our science classrooms range from differentiated instructions, projects, using technology, and using peer group work to learn.

Differentiated instruction includes giving students guided notes which helps to ensure their participation and their motivation in the classroom.

Projects are a big factor in our science classrooms. This style of learning allows students to be more hands on and allow them to learn their specific way.

Technology support is greatly important as well. We use online resources to give in depth explanations of content information that we may not have the opportunity to have in the classroom.

The last instructional approach used in our classrooms includes group learning. Students are also able to participate in group learning where they are able to learn from their peers and work together for a common goal. This approach allows students to converse and use critical thinking skills to complete a task. They work with others and their ideas to reflect and mold their own understanding of the material. They also have to learn how to work and learn with their peers and what that entails.

Formative and Summative Assessments include checking levels of understanding before, during, and at the end of a learning standard. They may include, but are not limited to enter / exit tickets, quizzes, tests, benchmark tests to cover multiple chapters.

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

Twining utilizes a student centered approach to teach standards that include all people affected by aspects of American history. Students at Twining are encouraged to demonstrate their knowledge through different mediums, allowing for students to choose whether to write, draw, record, or act out their knowledge of standards. Learning standards also address the impact of all people in American history, so students understand how experiences of all people affect how our country, and the world, functions today.

Our school utilizes several approaches to facilitate student learning. All approaches augment the Socratic Method, in which all students develop a sense of ability by synthesizing conclusions about aspects of History. While we use technology to give additional information to students needing it for debate, or differentiate our rubric to allow simpler responses, or modify problem based learning to accurately reflect students' experiences, all students have the opportunity to challenge themselves and present knowledge that

is both consequential to the world today and that demonstrates personal growth. Furthermore, student growth is monitored and additional resources and modifications are given as students move through our Multi Tiered System of Supports.

To further augment growth through the understanding of American history, Twining looks at each student's education holistically. Utilizing assessment data from other classes, we seek to tailor our social studies instruction to students' strengths while attempting to provide more instruction towards their weaknesses. Social studies is uniquely positioned to incorporate other disciplines, helping students to understand the role all classes play in today's world. Students struggling in English but excelling in Math can write a speech about mathematically calculating the areas lost by Native Americans. Another student struggling in Earth Science but doing well in Drama could act in a History Museum, playing the part of Louis Agassiz, highlighting his contributions to the field.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Seventh grade participates in Spanish, French, German and Latin for ½ the school year 45 minutes per day. Eighth grade participates in Spanish, French, German and Latin for one quarter of the year for 45 minutes each day.

Foreign Language enhances brain development improving academic performance in every area with students reaching a higher level of proficiency in reading, writing and speaking. It helps students be more open-minded to other people, bridges the gaps between people and communities, is socially responsible, and helps people feel less isolated. Knowing another language can open the doors for jobs, especially when employers are looking for bi-lingual speakers. When traveling, one can experience more of what you see and do.

The library media center supports student learning by providing a wide range of materials on various topics and reading levels for students and staff checkout through e-books, databases, and educational websites.

The goal is to have materials students are interested in for pleasure reading, learning new skills, and academic areas to create lifelong readers and learners. Each grade level is assigned one day of the week while other days are unassigned so any student that needs materials may access the library.

Family and Consumer Science is offered to seventh and eighth grade students for nine weeks. It contributes to a broad range of intellectual, moral, and workforce development goals while empowering students to take responsibility for their actions and create alternative solutions. FACS utilizes skills such as problem-solving, decision-making, higher order thinking, communication, literacy, and numerical skills in applied community, work, and family contexts. Students are able to promote optimal nutrition and wellness across their life span.

Visual Arts is offered to sixth grade for nine weeks, seventh grade for 18 weeks, and eighth grade for nine weeks. Experiences range from drawing, painting, sculpture, design, and folk arts involving a wide variety of tools, techniques, and processes. It encourages joyful, active learning while improving student motivation, engagement, and self-esteem. Students demonstrate willingness to experiment, innovate, and take risks to pursue ideas, forms, and meanings that emerge in the process of art making and designing.

Physical education/Health promotes personal responsibility and lifelong fitness activities. PE classes are held every other day all year long for grades sixth through eighth. Health is held for nine weeks for students in grades 6 and 7. We discuss the benefits of a healthy body and a healthy mind. Physical activity has proven to help reduce stress and helps students become confident in ways to become more active on their own. We discuss proper eating habits and the benefits of it.

Yoga is offered to grade 8 and provides students healthy ways to balance emotions and stress. A calm classroom environment has been created where listening skills have improved as well as focus, concentration and memory. Students have experienced lower levels of anxiety and stress, which helps them when testing and working in the classroom. They have discovered ways to regulate and process their emotions during this mindful time. The newfound respect and self love for themselves shines through as they learn to become present and in the moment! Their overall well being has improved.

Music programs provide students with rich, diverse learning and performance opportunities. Our school has outstanding student involvement as 72% of students are involved in the fine arts.

Band is open to all students and meets as a group three times a week for 45 minutes per class meeting. Students also have a weekly one-on-one or small group lesson for 25 minutes. Students use fine motor skills, learn discipline and how to work as a team to create a final project. Students use math skills for counting rhythms, listening skills to blend and memorize, and reading skills to learn the language of note reading and music expressions.

Students may join Orchestra at any grade regardless of playing experience. Students are offered small and large ensembles, and individual playing experiences. Orchestra meets twice a week for 45 minutes each class period focusing on teamwork as students strive to play together. Weekly lessons provide in-depth instruction on technique and ear training. Orchestra is an interdisciplinary subject with close ties to math, science and history while providing opportunity for perseverance and self discipline.

Seventh and Eighth Grade Choirs meet every other day during school hours. Sixth Grade Choir is an elective after school. Students sing music from various styles, eras, and cultures and receive instruction about music notation, sight-reading and music history. Voice lessons are held three times a quarter and are required for one-on-one instruction and self improvement. Students have the opportunity to perform in concerts, choral festivals with other middle schools, All-state choir, solo/ensembles, assemblies, the sixth through eighth grade musical, and talent shows. Students learn to be confident in themselves and present themselves with professionalism and proper etiquette.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

There are several components in place at Nathan Twining Middle School to ensure that every student has success. At the heart of this, is teacher collaboration, student assessment data, and professional development of staff. Teachers meet regularly to monitor progress of the students at Twining. These meetings take place during daily TEAM time and also twice a month during early release Wednesdays. Academic progress and social emotional needs of students are discussed and monitored during these times. STAR assessment data as well as grades are used to place students in appropriate classes where the pace of the learning is appropriate to student needs.

In addition to these meetings teachers have job embedded professional development centered around the needs of our students at Twining. Teachers have received professional development on Jan Richardson Comprehension Modules, Marzano's scales and rubrics, and how to support the social emotional needs of our students.

Twining has a MTSS process in place where teachers meet and use data to identify students who are in need of additional support. The MTSS team meets on early release Wednesdays twice a month. Identified students are supported in several ways. Some are supported by paraprofessionals in the classroom setting by scaffolding learning. Those students identified as most in need are placed in small intervention groups and work on their skills during home room time each day. The teacher progress monitors using various assessments and that data is discussed during MTSS meetings.

Developing strong work habits is an essential skill at Twining. Twining implements a program called ZAP (Zeros Aren't Permitted). If a student receives a zero in one of their classes during the week, they report the

following week to the ZAP classroom during their lunch hour. Through ZAP, Twining School is looking to accomplish teaching responsibility, accountability, and quality of work.

3b. Students performing above grade level

There are several components in place at Nathan Twining Middle School to ensure that every student has success. At the heart of this, is teacher collaboration, student assessment data, and professional development of staff. Teachers meet regularly to monitor progress of the students at Twining. Each grade level has scheduled TEAM times in place and also twice a month during early release Wednesdays. Grade level teams meet to discuss student performance as well as social emotional needs of our students. Data is used to place students in appropriate classes where the pace of the learning is appropriate to student needs. Students that excel are placed in classes that provide enrichment opportunities, as well as learning that moves at a faster pace. Students that require enrichment are also offered classes through our innovations department. Differentiated instruction in the content areas is based on student ability.

3c. Special education

Nathan Twining School has a diverse population of students with unique learning needs. Some students have had to move as many as ten times as a child in a military family. A top priority of Nathan Twining School in helping meet the diverse and individual needs of these students, is forming positive relationships. A collaborative effort is taking place between administration, general education teachers, special education staff, specialists, paraprofessionals, and families. Content is delivered in a variety of methods to include formats such as videos, audio, readings, and lectures. Interventions are in place to enrich students' mathematical computation and comprehension skills as well as reading comprehension strategies e.g., summarizing, predicting, retelling, and inferring. Students are provided the opportunity to choose which method works best for them when taking assessments; for example, working outside the classroom, having the assessment read to them, or taking the assessment over a two day period. The instruction at Nathan Twining is reflected by the ability to respond appropriately and flexibly to students' diverse needs. Teachers adjust teaching strategies to support individual students' learning. Nathan Twining's dynamic educational staff demonstrates an abundance of knowledge and skills in using a variety of strategies and content to improve student learning and achievement.

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

When registering as a new student at Twining, ELL paperwork is filled out to determine if there is a need for services. Our service provider is based out of another school in the district, Winship Elementary School, in Grand Forks. The ELL coordinator provides us with testing, reports, and ELL plans for teachers to implement in the classroom setting. Currently we do not have any middle school students that require ELL services.

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

At Nathan Twining Middle School, we consider a positive culture to be vital to the success of our students, and the culture is really the heart of our school. The biggest influencers of our culture are our students. Being a military community, our students have often attended multiple schools in their lives. Twining students tell us that they feel “at home” almost right away because of the positive culture. Our students are leaders in this area. Every day we see students building positive friendships and choosing to be kind to one another. The students all know what it’s like to be the “new kid” and they show each other an immense amount of empathy and inclusion. We also believe that this leads to an increase in overall positive behavior and school attendance. This year, only 2.4% of our middle school population has 8 or more unexcused absences.

To help provide a positive and supportive school environment, social emotional learning is not only integral for our students, but also our staff. With our staff having a better understanding of their own SEL, they are able to model and help effectively teach these skills to all students. SEL positively impacts staff and student relations, creating a collaborative and engaging school culture and climate.

Our PBIS, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, team has worked hard to create positive reinforcements that students are able to earn throughout the day. As Twining Thunderbirds, students can earn a Thunder Strike Card that not only enters them into the drawing at our quarterly assembly, but it is also something they can also bring home to carry on celebrating their successes.

Twining utilizes the Olweus Bully Prevention Program and Second Step. Second Step is delivered by the school counselor during quarterly lessons; focusing on skills to support students academically, socially and emotionally. Olweus is a program that is used amongst classroom teachers during weekly class meetings. During these small group class meetings, the discussions improve peer relations, providing a supportive environment for students to thrive academically, socially and emotionally.

We often collaborate with the Air Force Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) school liaison, as well as their Military and Family Life Counselor, who provides on-site therapy for our students. The EFMP offers after school mentoring with Airmen as well as off-site activities such as rollerblading and open recreation/gym for our students to engage in.

Sources of Strength is a suicide prevention program that we employ at Twining. This program is student-led and focuses on helping ourselves and our peers develop and rely on their strengths when life is hard. Our students develop positive campaigns to get the student body engaged and talking about their strengths. Earlier this year, our students did a “give/take a generous act” bulletin board. They wrote on sticky notes generous actions, such as “make a meal for your family”, “give someone a hug”, or “call your grandparents and talk to them” and instructed others to take a generous act off of the wall and write a new sticky note for someone else to take.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

We believe that involving our parents and community is important to the success of the school. An active parent teacher organization meets monthly to support the needs of our students. Funds are used to purchase resources, subscriptions, flexible seating options, prizes, field trip expenses, etc. The PTO also hosts activities such as donuts for families, a carnival, turkey bingo, movie night, and Month of the Military Child activities.

The Grand Forks AFB School Board provides an annual \$15,000 discretionary budget. Technology, break out boxes, field trips, middle school musical/drama department, reading program, and positive behavior support for students are supported by this budget.

Twining is assigned a school liaison that provides communication avenues between the school and military base personnel. Commanders in the classroom is a special event that is held annually. Commanders are assigned to classrooms and either read or lead career oriented discussions. Airmen volunteer to help with various programs when needed.

A military family and life counselor has an office in our school to support students whose families may have a family member deployed, going through a divorce, or some other trauma sensitive situation. This counselor provides one-on-one counseling sessions, hosts lunch bunches, goes into classrooms to participate in activities, and hosts friendship circles.

The reading recovery teacher and library media specialist develop activities to include parents in the reading program. RED (read every day) Day is an event held monthly where parents can come in and read with their child(ren) in the elementary school. Children that do not have a parent are read to by middle school students so no one is left out.

The improvement of our drop off/pick up process was improved through the involvement of parents. A committee consisting of the principal and parents developed a plan to improve this process. Surveys were sent out to receive feedback from stakeholders to develop an effective plan.

Parents are invited to assemblies where student success is celebrated. Weekly newsletters are sent out to provide information regarding school achievement data, links to our ND DPI Dashboard, other pertinent information, and celebrating success. Twining has a Twitter feed to share out student and staff accomplishments as well as an up to date website.

The University of North Dakota provides resident teachers for our special education department as well as student teachers. Twining has hosted many of these young professionals helping them develop the necessary skills to be successful in a school setting.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Twining's commitment to its students and families is truly one of a kind. As a collective k-8 school, we follow one simple rule, Do what is best for kids! This is the question we ask ourselves daily when making decisions.

We have a strong belief in collaboration between all team members. We have a set time twice a month dedicated to collaboration between classroom teachers, specialists, paraprofessionals, support staff, and at times, parents. During this time, we discuss and reflect on instructional practices that foster student growth. If something isn't working, we work together to brainstorm possible solutions. Everyone on the team is an active participant and invested in the students' success.

Professional development opportunities are offered to enhance students' learning and engagement opportunities. We have dedicated time to studying Jan Richardson's Guided Reading instruction, use of technology to support student learning and health and wellness for students and teachers. We have a full time Instructional Design Coach that helps provide ongoing professional development and coaching sessions to teachers. The Grand Forks Public School District offers district wide professional development by grade level content and supporting district wide initiatives.

Teachers are encouraged to write stretch goals that foster both professional and personal growth. The Instructional Design coach and administration encourage and support teachers in meeting these goals. Progress towards achieving set goals are discussed and revisited multiple times throughout the year. The principal and instructional design coach provide feedback to teachers that focus on improving instructional practices. Professional development opportunities are explored and offered to help support teacher growth.

Twining is a one of a kind school fostering a safe, supportive, collaborative and encouraging learning environment for students and teachers. Not only do the staff work tirelessly to support students academically, but emotionally as well. When you walk through the halls, you are greeted with friendly

smiles, greetings and a sense of belonging. Staff often consider themselves a family. Staff, students and families leave a lasting impression in the lives of all that walk through the doors.

4. School Leadership:

The Grand Forks Public School District adopted the Marzano High Reliability Schools (HRS) Model to provide all schools with a continuous improvement process while providing continuity across the district. Professional development and training was provided for stakeholders to understand this research based program and its positive effects.

The principal at Twining began the implementation of this model in the Fall of 2018, by placing focus on Level 1 - Safe, Supportive and Collaborative Culture. Staff developed steps to create this culture evaluating strengths and identifying weaknesses. In the Spring of 2019, Marzano representatives made a site visit, met with our Marzano HRS leadership team, interviewed students and staff, and went through the evaluation process. Goals were met and Twining was Level 1 Certified in May, 2019. Sustaining Level 1 (Safe, Supportive and Collaborative Culture) and the implementation of Level 2 (Effective Teaching Strategies) started in the Fall of 2019, with the HRS committee determining next steps. Continued professional development, discussion of resources and strategies, and teacher stretch goals are revisited twice a month during our early dismissals. The principal and instructional design coach provide support and opportunities to staff to grow professionally.

The position of the principal involves a variety of duties. The principal manages the building while creating a positive culture where staff and students feel safe, valued and appreciated. The principal monitors student achievement, assesses effective teaching, and provides professional development specific to Twining. The principal communicates the strategic plan and upholds the policies set forth by the district. The principal involves the parents and community in school events and keeps them abreast of educational progress.

Staff are empowered in decision making opportunities through the committee work of their choice where they have ownership and provide direction in Olweus, Cognia, MTSS, PBIS, Team Leader, RED Day, Crisis Team, Sunshine Club, and the HRS Committee. Norms and schedules have been created by staff for each committee.

The special education and reading recovery teachers attend team meetings to develop strategies based on student achievement data. Intervention classes have been organized to provide specific instruction based on students' needs. Monitoring of progress is done as a team and is reviewed weekly.

The parent teacher organization meets monthly to support Twining students and staff. The PTO is an active organization that not only provides financial support but also engages families in various activities throughout the year.

When working together in these capacities, students are at the forefront. The questions asked are: "Is this what is best for kids?" "Does this align with our school's goals?"

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The implementation of the Marzano High Reliability Schools Model has made a huge educational impact at Twining. As Twining began down the journey of HRS, staff were eager to buy into a model that would provide support and point arrows in the same direction. It has proven to be a road map that provides guidance and structure in doing what's best for kids.

To begin this process, staff were surveyed regarding the climate and culture of Twining. Survey results were reviewed by team leaders identifying strengths and weaknesses. Summary results were communicated to staff, success was celebrated, and plans were put in place to address the areas where improvement needed to occur. This was a continual process of implementation and reflection throughout the year. Feedback was gathered from staff, students, and parents. Stakeholders were given opportunities to provide direction. At the end of the year, all of our hard work was recognized through the Marzano evaluation process and we met the criteria to be certified Level 1 - A Safe, Supportive, and Collaborative Culture.

As Twining continued down the HRS path in the fall of 2019, Level 2 goals were developed regarding effective teaching strategies in all classroom environments. An instructional design coach was hired to work with teachers and provide necessary resources. Professional development was centered around staff stretch goals, Marzano compendiums and videos, and iObservation videos. Teachers shared effective strategies and helped one another brainstorm ideas. An instructional model was constructed using Marzano's New Art and Science of Teaching to guide us through the process. After much discussion and revisiting the model numerous times during professional development time with the whole staff, the instructional model was completed depicting what instruction looks like at Twining. The model includes indicators in each of the following categories: Should See and Hear Almost Daily, Might See and Hear But Not Daily, Should Never See or Hear. The indicators were also divided by feedback, content, and context. This model will be revisited and recommitted to each fall to begin the school year.

The HRS model continues to provide Twining with important resources and logistical next steps. This model is based on over 40 years of research and has proven to be effective in many ways.