

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

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

School Mailing Address 500 W Randolph Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Wausau State WI Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 54401-2501

County Marathon

Telephone (715) 261-0175 Fax (715) 261-3100

Web site/URL http://jefferson.wausauschools.org/ E-mail bsjohnson@wausauschools.org

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Dr. Keith Hilts E-mail khilts@wausauschools.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Wausau School District Tel. (715) 261-0500

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 Tricia Zunker
(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):
- 14 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 4 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 4 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 22 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	60	47	107
K	28	26	54
1	23	23	46
2	29	21	50
3	26	22	48
4	20	15	35
5	23	32	55
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	209	186	395

*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):
- 1.3 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 34.9 % Asian
 - 1.3 % Black or African American
 - 11.1 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 44.8 % White
 - 6.6 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2018 - 2019 school year: 23%

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

With our level of economically disadvantaged students the housing and daycare shortages have forced many families to move frequently.

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	21
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	77
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	98
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	430
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.23
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	23

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Mandarin, English, Hmong, Laotian, Spanish, Telugu, Thai, Vietnamese, Korean, and Filipino

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 70 %
 Total number students who qualify: 275

8. Students receiving special education services: 14 %

55 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>3</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>2</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>8</u> Developmental Delay | <u>5</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>6</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>24</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>5</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

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

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

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	20
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	9
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	18
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 17:1

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	94%	97%	96%	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.

We envision Thomas Jefferson Elementary as a community that achieves high expectations, and feels safe, engaged, and accepted.

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

Thomas Jefferson Elementary School is an amazing group of committed and passionate learners, staff, and families. We are located in Wausau, Wisconsin, on the north-west side of the city. Our district comprises 13 elementary schools, two middle schools, two high schools, three charter schools, and four alternative education settings. Thomas Jefferson has a diverse population of 400 learners from four-year-old kindergarten through grade 5. Our students are representative of 1.2% American Indian or Alaskan Native, 37.8% Asian, 1.9% Black or African American, 14.6% Hispanic/Latino, 39.4% White, and 5.2% two or more races. The English Language learner (ELL) population is 55%, and 61% of our student population are economically disadvantaged. Our student families speak ten different languages: Mandarin, English, Hmong, Laotian, Spanish, Telugu, Thai, Vietnamese, Korean, and Filipino. Our diversity is our greatest strength and is what makes Thomas Jefferson so special.

Thomas Jefferson has many programs celebrating our diversity to help learners develop their full potential academically, emotionally, physically, socially, and culturally. Our after-school program Growing Great Minds (G2M) is well attended with an average of 90 learners in grades 2-5. This program provides academic support in Math, English Language Arts, and homework assistance, and cultural opportunities including Hmong Dance Team, Sewing Club, and World Cultural Connections Class. Our “What I Need” (WIN) intervention is a daily 40-minute period in which learners are systematically placed into groups to work on academic interventions specific to their needs based on the Common Core State Standards. Each grade level has two opportunities annually for parents to join us during the school day. The first is for family breakfast or lunch. The second is through participation in Math and English classes. These opportunities build the foundation for our home-to-school connection and provide parents a closer look at the amazing things happening in school every day. We also host parent engagement nights, which showcase our cultural diversity and bring families together.

To meet the social-emotional needs of our students, Thomas Jefferson partnered with community mental health professionals through a District-wide consortium. These professionals provide mental health services at school, a beneficial convenience for both students and their families. The relationship between the school and the mental health professionals helps create a safe environment for our learners to grow. They communicate with our classroom teachers and freely share ideas and concerns. This partnership has had a positive impact on our learners and our school.

Thomas Jefferson uses innovative processes and exceptional teamwork to achieve uncommon results in helping all students reach their fullest potential. Thomas Jefferson has been recognized as a Wisconsin Title I School of Recognition for 11 consecutive years in the Beating the Odds category and this year also was awarded with the High-Progress Award. Our school is in the top 25 percent of high-poverty schools in the state and we have above-average student achievement in reading and math when compared to schools from similarly sized districts, schools, grade configurations, and poverty levels. Thomas Jefferson received an overall score of 89.7%, placing us in the Significantly Exceeds Expectations rating, on the most recent State of Wisconsin 2018-2019 report card in the areas of student achievement, school growth, closing gaps, and on-track and postsecondary readiness.

One of our innovative processes is a distributive-leadership committee structure with follow-up communications to our entire staff. Every Tuesday morning we schedule a collaborative time for all certified staff. The meeting structure ensures that everyone is vested in doing what is best for learners in our school. Each person plays an integral role in the effectiveness of the team. On the first Tuesday of the month, a staff meeting is held where communication and learning are tied to our school improvement plan. The second Tuesday we break into smaller committees, to strategically focus on best practices and to develop our craft as educators. These committees evolve from year to year based on feedback and the effectiveness of learner/building growth. Every member is an active participant. Clear goals and responsibilities have been co-created by the staff. The committees are School Culture, Equity/Engagement, Tier 2/3 Response to Intervention Systems, Positive Behavior Intervention Support Logistics, and Professional Development. The third Tuesday is focused on professional development and is planned with feedback from our staff. Our fourth Tuesday meeting is an additional professional learning community time for grade-level teams to

collaborate around data specific to achievement gaps and subgroups. Our focus on these groups has led to proactive interventions and success in closing achievement gaps.

Thomas Jefferson is committed to providing daily collaborative staff opportunities with an innovative instructional focus. The focus this school year is to increase the rigor in which we ask questions of the learners and integrate technology to engage learners in self-reflective conversations.

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

Thomas Jefferson Elementary School is a professional learning community where all individuals strive to meet high expectations while feeling safe and accepted. We are committed to the success of our Jefferson community through our relationships with our families, staff, and community at large. We nurture the whole child through our deliberate academic opportunities with focus on social/emotional wellbeing, behavioral health, and extending learning beyond our school walls. We take pride in establishing a love for lifelong learning. We support the needs of all of our learners through achievement gap reduction (AGR), one-to-one technology initiative, flexible learning environments, and deep-rooted commitment to do what is best for our children. Following our district and state assessments, we analyze the data as collaborative teams to make decisions that are best for each and every one of our learners in both academic and behavioral capacities to advance student learning achievement and success. Across all subject areas, the educators at Thomas Jefferson create, inspire, make connections and work towards facilitating engaged and future ready learners.

1b. Reading/English language arts

A culturally diverse population inspires our Jefferson family of learners to embrace the components for a solid foundation of skills in reading, writing, and language. Innovative applications allow Common Core State Standards (CCSS) to be the driving force through all of our literacy practices. In addition to our primary resources, SuperKids (K-2) and Wonders (3-5), we address learning standards through a variety of curricular approaches: establishing essential questions, providing a variety of diverse texts with text-dependent questioning, requiring our learners to read and comprehend difficult text, and modeling how to handle the rigor and frustration that ensues.

Instruction is delivered through engaging conversations, while lessons are crafted with an intentional purpose of exposure to rich vocabulary, building background knowledge and developing meaningful experiences, as well as celebrating our own diversity. Tiered instruction creates the opportunity for teachers to deliver instruction to the vastly different learners in the classrooms, while having the support of specialists, like our EL teachers, special education teachers, interventionists, and our encore (Art, Music, Science, Gym, Library Media, and Guidance) specialists.

Using the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for our framework allows us to assess learning levels, which lends itself into conversations regarding differentiated instruction throughout our WIN (What I Need) intervention/enrichment time. We also systematically use data to guide our conversations in building data digs. These conversations focus on all learners, progress that is being made, how to support not only our struggling learners, but extending and enriching our higher ability learners. Building knowledge, exposing discourse patterns (reports, articles, essays, business letters - writing for a variety of purposes), collaboration within grade level, but also across grade levels (heterogeneous), extending learning beyond the classroom, making connections, and repetition of concepts are essential in our day to day work. For our beginning learners, we have interventions in place with programs like: Specialized Program Individualizing Reading Excellence (S.P.I.R.E) and Sounds Sensible, and Reading Mastery. For our intermediate learners we use Reading Mastery and WonderWorks. Interventions are delivered in addition to the literacy block and based on district given student assessments three times a year. Learner's in interventions are progress monitored weekly, which allows for fluid movement of learners to other learning endeavors as they make progress. All grade levels have a designated 40-minute intervention time during the school day. Teachers and support staff use tiered approaches to help close gaps and best meet needs of all of our learners. Our staff works together to place students in appropriate interventions and groups based on data and deep conversations about the whole child.

1c. Mathematics

Thomas Jefferson Elementary believes in our learners and their ability to grow in their understanding and implementation of mathematics. Our lessons, resources, and goal setting for each learner are centered on the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and lessons are included in the Ready Math resources that our district adopted this year. With the data gathered through FastBridge assessments, Ready Math diagnostic assessments, and Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), we have a comprehensive understanding of our learners' abilities and gaps within their understanding.

Our teachers are leading instruction with number talks, which help learners through discourse and immerses them with mathematical vocabulary. The conversations centered on math are rich with vocabulary and create opportunities for our learners to defend and support their thinking. Using number talks has helped learners see multiple approaches to their mathematical thinking, develop their ability to challenge the thinking of peers, and build confidence in their own mathematical mindset. Throughout our 75-minute math blocks, learners are a part of whole group instruction, small group instruction, and individualized lessons, which are at their targeted level. Common Core State Standards, Ready Math, Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) and FastBridge assist teachers in building the foundation of a strong mathematical process and understanding.

Learners have access to lessons within i-Ready, the online component of our math resource, as well as, hands on learning, and skill-specific math rotations. Providing a variety of differentiated learning opportunities allows teachers to meet the learners at their level of understanding, while being cognizant of learning styles. Our learners are given opportunities to work with high school mentors, volunteers, and paraprofessionals during the school day and in our after school programs, which places a positive emphasis on our math instruction and implementation.

Data is an integral part of our instruction. Our learners take the FastBridge and i-Ready Diagnostic assessments three times a year. These data drive our initial placement of students into our Math Intervention group, taking place during each grade level's intervention block. Learners are progress monitored on a weekly basis throughout their math intervention. Formative assessments are given frequently to help adjust and improve instruction, form new groups, and guide pacing of our lessons. Summative assessments are given at the end of each unit. The data from all of these assessments are a key piece of our Professional Learning Community conversations, data digs, and conversations centered on assessment validity, standards, rigor, leaners, and approaches that will best benefit the needs of our learners. We are fortunate to have staff that are collaborative and progressive, willing to engage in possibilities with what is best for our learners in our forefront.

1d. Science

Our Science roadmap developed by our K-5 science educators coincides with the Wisconsin State Science Standards. We utilize FOSS curriculum to guide us throughout the year. At Jefferson, our students learn in a hands-on, engaging environment that take lessons to the next level. We utilize manipulatives, sing songs about vocabulary, and find new and innovative ways to take assessments digitally. We develop our problem solving through these hands-on challenges that fit our standards.

We tie in real-world problems with our experiments making it meaningful to learners. We take an everyday lesson and turn it into a problem-based activity, which guides young scientists to want to find solutions through trial and error, reflecting, and providing opportunities to challenge each other in our discussions. To increase student involvement and retention, taking the engineering design model to create and build as well as modify and reflect. For example, a human body lesson to better understand ligaments, tendons, and bones becomes building a device that might help someone that has lost a hand.

Our science lessons reach outside our four walls. Instead of planting seeds in a cup, each student K-5th grade class utilizes our school garden. We teach outside the box and this encourages the excitement and retention of information that comes with engagement. We feed, share, and tie the community to us. We follow a standard set of assessments set by our department, both formative and summative, but at Jefferson, we believe that specialized experiences are the real difference-maker.

Through technology, we utilize applications that chart, document, photograph, and video experiments and reflect back on what we did each week. We celebrate success and we help our friends when they struggle by reviewing and problem-solving as a team. We see the whole child, utilizing any scientific resource to create lifelong learners.

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

Social Studies is an integral part of our day, teaching our learners about culture, history, and the economy. Primary grades focus on communities, economy, and cultures around us. From kindergarteners visiting the Farmer's Market and pumpkin patch, to second graders learning and exploring our community through Mystery Skype, real-world experiences are essential to our success. This glimpse into cultural differences outside of our building allows our learners to recognize and appreciate diversity.

We participate in Junior Achievement, a program that brings community leaders into our classes to share with our learners business and economics at an appropriate grade level. We intentionally access literacy resources, which are embedded with Social Studies concepts, that allow for an understanding of United States past and present. We optimize nonfiction reading resources that reinforce learners' discovery of facts and information about historical figures, cultures around the world and historical events.

Intermediate grades focus on Wisconsin and United States history. Fourth graders create an E-book about Native American tribes in Wisconsin and share their research with others in our building and district. This integration of technology and research addresses an important component of our state history and focuses on Wisconsin Act 31 (American Indian Studies in Wisconsin). They also cover geography, history, economics, and behavioral sciences, and compare groups and their behaviors to the present. Fifth graders specifically build their understanding of history through a focus on United States history and colonization, the history and growth of our nation's government, and the causes and effects of the Revolutionary War and the Civil War.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

Thomas Jefferson is home to three 4K classrooms that provide instruction for both morning and afternoon 4K learners. There is also a full day 4K bilingual program at Jefferson offered to Spanish speakers. The Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards serve as the framework for the 4K established learning standards. The 4K curricular map has identified key learning objectives and benchmarks in the areas of social emotional development, literacy (including phonemic awareness), math, fine motor (including handwriting), and gross motor skills. Children in every 4K classroom at Thomas Jefferson experience individualized learning that is engaging, active, and reflective with family involvement. We emphasize learning key concepts through play and strive to establish a foundation for lifelong learning. The learning targets emphasized in our early childhood programming were intentionally aligned to the K-3 academic state standards. In addition, 4K & K teachers at Thomas Jefferson engage in discussions related to curriculum and data multiple times throughout the school year. Historical data analyses in the areas of math and literacy indicated that at least 80% of the children attending 4K programming at Thomas Jefferson reach spring benchmarks on district math assessments and the myIGDIs (Individual Growth & Development Indicators) literacy screener.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Art

Thomas Jefferson takes pride in educating our learners in the field of Art. Every learner experiences art-making to inspire, evoke feeling, experience, and learn new skills while creating masterpieces that cover the Wisconsin State Standards. Learners spend an hour each week engaging in art to create work that expresses the core values of creating, responding, presenting, and connecting what they learn and make to their world. The connection of art to prior and parallel learning in other classrooms not only shows how art is woven into

our lives, but also connects learner to learner via shared experiences, dreams and learning.

Guidance/ Counseling

Guidance classes are delivered biweekly 30-minute sessions for grades 1-5 and three 30-minute guidance lessons biweekly for kindergarten learners. Lessons follow the Wisconsin Comprehensive School Counseling Model (WCSCM) standards and benchmarks to meet the social emotional, academic, and career domains. There is also programming and services set in place to provide individual, small group, and family assistance. These programs focus on preventative and responsive, social emotional supports based on behavior documentation data, attendance, behavior screening data, nurse visits, as well as child, teacher, or family requests. These interventions are delivered in a collaborative relationship among school, parents, and community, providing children with the necessary skills to become successful, lifelong learners, good citizens, and productive workers.

Music

All learners have music for thirty minutes, twice a week. In these classes, learners are actively engaged in the music making process through singing, performing on instruments, moving to music, and creating music. All learners are given the opportunity to experience a wide variety of instruments, including xylophones, glockenspiels, drums, and a range of other classroom percussion instruments. The older learners receive instruction on recorders and ukuleles. There are ukuleles available for learners to bring the joy of music to their families. Additionally, they learn about, and are able to experience, how music can affect them on an emotional level and how they can use music to reach others in that same way. A child's listening skills are developed through music with and without words, from around the world and throughout history. There is a large focus on how musicians hone their craft and how those same skills and strategies can be utilized in other areas.

Library/Media

All learners participate in our Library Media program at their own ability level, meeting weekly for an hour or 30-minute blocks. Our learners have diverse needs and we strive to provide tasks that are inclusive and exciting. Children learn the basics of how a library functions and how to be a citizen of the library community. We also challenge learners to be good digital citizens and inform them how to keep themselves safe. The curriculum is a blend of International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) and American Association of School Librarians (AASL) standards, with a focus on Future Ready Libraries in how the program itself operates. Our librarian's philosophy is to talk to our students about careers and futures. Everything our learners do has a career connection. Our learners are programming, coding, working with robotics, stop motion, green screen activities, composing music and learning to be creators. Our collaboration on our daily work and understanding of how to use our iPads and Chromebooks effectively supports this philosophy. Our learners can pursue their passions today, knowing that they might be able to carry this learning into an unexpected future. Learners demonstrate that they are committed to being the leaders in their interests, learning, academic growth, and individual products.

Physical Education

Learners in grades K-5 receive Physical Education instruction twice a week for thirty minutes a session. During that time, they are engaged in a sequential, standards-based curriculum that promotes lifelong learning through physical activity. We believe that through a comprehensive and quality program, our learners will develop into individuals who value physical activity, maintain active lifestyles, and become proficient in a variety of physical activities. These activities improve physical fitness, body awareness, skill, and personal development. Sportsmanship and improved social development are also a focus of our program.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

Thomas Jefferson provides intervention in math and reading for all learners who score below benchmark in our universal screening process. Our two full time Title I interventionists and support staff work directly with learners to help reduce the teacher-student ratio during the intervention block. Additionally, an out of school enrichment coordinator provides after school opportunities for Study Zone and Math Achievers to address academic concerns. During the intervention/enrichment blocks, specialized direct instruction focuses on closing gaps through resources that are aligned with Common Core State Standards. Progress is monitored consistently to measure learner success. Our administration, school psychologist, social worker, guidance counselor, and a team of teachers meet during a Response to Intervention (RTI) weekly meeting. During this meeting, learner progress and next steps are discussed. We review student progress and determine their need for continued intervention either in regular intervals or more frequently. Thomas Jefferson also hosts many volunteers who help teachers and learners in specific target skills. We collaborate with outside agencies, including volunteers from the Foundations of Education program from our local Northcentral Technical College and Big Brothers Big Sisters.

3b. Students performing above grade level

We identify learners for Gifted and Talented (GT) in second grade. Our building has a part time GT resource teacher that provides pull out instruction, as well as support to classroom teachers, to challenge learners. Our staff as a whole uses data gathered from instructional practices such as- iReady math data, FastBridge assessment data, and academic assessments such as reading assessments given in SuperKids (k-2), and Wonders (3-5). Using Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), we begin by identifying and creating a framework to meet the needs of learners ready for academic challenges within our intervention/enrichment block, in kindergarten through fifth grade. To ensure that we are meeting the needs of our above grade level learners, whether qualifying for GT services or by identifying a talent pool, we focus on challenging learners both academically and socially. During data digs, we discuss assessment scores as well as classroom behaviors and work habits. We utilize the Behavioral Emotional Social Traits (B.E.S.T Screener) which provides insights and supports for our learners. Offering tiered assignments and options during work time allows learners to excel and show their understanding in a variety of ways. Historically, we have brought our encore (science, library, art, music, and gym) staff into the planning and implementation of enrichment to learning, uniting their expertise into our grade level standards. This has provided a larger audience of learning through presentations, performances, and projects. Parents, other learners, community members, as well as educators see what academic challenges provide. Culturally diverse events, such as Hmong dancing, art shows, book bowl competition, art cluster, innovative learners in technology, and leadership and music enrichment programs, are organized to meet the needs of our academic and creative talents.

3c. Special education

Special education success at Thomas Jefferson is possible thanks to our committed regular education, special education staff, and paraprofessionals. All of these groups work together to provide special education services in both pull-out and push-in models at all grade levels for students with learning, emotional/behavioral, speech, and cognitive disabilities. Weekly Response to Intervention and Professional Learning Community meetings include the regular education, special education staff, and pupil services. This allows for common language and collaboration across the board to provide the best care and teaching for each of our students. Academic and behavioral data is analyzed on a consistent basis so progress can be celebrated and changes can be made for each individual student when needed. The flexibility and strong commitment from our staff, allows necessary changes to be made in a timely and smooth manner.

Different programs taught by our Special Education staff help all students to be successful and the common language from our 4K program all the way through fifth grade. We use elements from the SEFEL model (Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning), SuperFlex, and Zones of Regulation. Students also have access to different resources that help them focus, meet their physical needs, and calm them when stress and anxiety are at their peak. These include exercise balls, wiggle seats, fidgets, puddy, velcro, relaxation videos or practices, pinwheels, breathing tools, bike pedal, foot juggler, oversized pillows, headphones, bubble wrap, and alternative locations to take a break within both the regular education and special education setting.

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

Thomas Jefferson is a school full of diversity and we take pride in the growth that we make from year-to-year with the 31% of our students who are English Language (EL) learners. Our EL staff works together with our regular education staff to provide services to EL learners at all achievement levels. In addition, regular education teachers are required to get their EL Teaching Certification, which includes learning the cultures of our students and strategies that benefit all students. Our staff participates in data dig meetings several times a year and weekly professional learning community meetings to collaborate and analyze data for growth and achievement at each grade level. When staff dives into the data, we are able to break down the standards our students are struggling with and make action plans for our next steps. Our EL interventionists pull students during our intervention/enrichment block based on data to work on reading and math concepts for students not performing at grade level. Some paraprofessionals are also trained to deliver direct instruction reading interventions so that we can meet the needs of more of our below grade level EL learners. EL paraprofessionals also provide support in the classroom during math, reading, and writing, especially in the area of vocabulary. Our paraprofessionals are fluent speakers of Spanish and Hmong, which helps rephrase vocabulary and academic language to these learners. In the classroom, the paraprofessionals work with small groups of EL learners, which allows for a greater depth in connecting current concepts to background knowledge and cultural elements. Each year we celebrate it when we exit students from our EL program, but we continue to follow up with them after their exit. Additionally, we work very hard to engage parents of our EL learners through translation of both written and spoken language.

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Thomas Jefferson has a strong history of engaging students and creating an environment where all learners feel welcome. A major part of learner engagement is our Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS), providing the framework for our school. Thomas Jefferson implemented PBIS 11 years ago and focuses on our three expectations, “Be Respectful, Be Responsible, and Be Safe.” These expectations are reinforced by handing out Jaguar Paws, which in turn can be spent at our school store or used on random rewards. Learner engagement and motivation has increased across all grade levels and in academic and social situations, because of the motivation and significance of the Jaguar Paws. Quarterly assemblies recognize learners with perfect attendance, along with two learners from every classroom for academic and behavioral excellence. To increase learner engagement across grade levels we also have Paw Buddies where intermediate level classes are paired with primary classes to provide mentorship.

Learners are academically motivated through our building's commitment to ongoing discussions about goal setting and data. Learners are aware of their academic expectations and what is needed for progress and growth. To increase motivation and accountability, Thomas Jefferson uses technology to engage learners, help them reflect on their assessment data, and set goals. These reflections are also shared with parents, and parents give their feedback as an additional layer of support.

Learner engagement is also present in our student-led TV announcements, which celebrate the learners and cultures in our school, embracing different cultural backgrounds throughout the school year. This includes birthdays, staff introductions at the beginning of the year, safety patrol of the week, a weekly cultural video, testing vocabulary exposure, learner recognition, and reteaches for our school-wide expectations. Our morning continues with a daily morning meeting, with the purpose of teachers having time to connect with children as we are developing and nurturing our classroom community. Morning meetings give learners a chance to build meaningful connections. Classrooms discuss virtues, character education, and problem solving classroom dilemmas, topics that are beneficial to strengthening the classroom culture.

We are very fortunate to have many opportunities for student engagement beyond the classroom. This includes our Growing Great Minds (G2M) after school programming which includes: Hmong Dance, Study Zone, Math Achievers, and Sewing. Learners can also participate in Global Story Bridges which is a partnership with university leaders to help learners engage in multicultural language opportunities.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

At Thomas Jefferson we are committed to partnership with families and the overall community. We provide a high quality and engaging environment where learners build confidence and gain respect for themselves and those around them. Teachers engage in daily communications with families through online applications including Class Dojo, Seesaw and Remind. These allow teachers to send and receive pictures, messages and school information. The school emails weekly video and newsletters translated into three languages to inform parents of events and to share reminders with almost 400 views per newsletter! We participate in community programs such as Helping Others Prepare for their choices Everyday (HOPE) for drug/alcohol and online citizen education; Junior Achievement, whose purpose is to inspire and prepare young people to succeed in a global economy; Noon Optimists to recognize positive leaders and donate dictionaries; Blessings in a Backpack, which is led by local volunteers who deliver food and supplies to learners whose families have identified a need. We also provide on-site community counseling services.

We have numerous events that celebrate our hard work and successes at Thomas Jefferson. Every year we host a kindergarten through fifth grade Open House inviting families to meet teachers and explore the school. Quarterly, parents are invited to an assembly where selected learners are presented with an award honoring academic and behavioral excellence, as well as perfect attendance. We engage in Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) celebrations, recognizing positive behaviors and honoring our core values. A yearly Read-a-Thon features community members as guest readers including a variety of guests and our superintendent. At the end of the year we have a larger celebration with a school carnival or all school dance. Fifth graders are honored with a graduation ceremony as they transition to middle school.

Parents also can participate in our Parent Teacher Organization (PTO).

As a school-wide Title 1 program and through Growing Great Minds (G2M), we host themed Family Fun activities. Families are encouraged to participate in various activities including Garden Night, Bingo Night, a Barnes and Noble Book Fair, Walk/Bike to School, Annual Thanksgiving Feast, Art Show and the Hmong New Year. Family Breakfast and Lunch events focus on engaging families in grade level curriculum and interacting with learners in a school setting. Teachers and community partners have a vested interest in building relationships and educational importance when they participate in instruction during after school programs.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

The Wausau School District provides both district wide and building specific professional development tied to Whole Child Whole Wausau, the five year initiative for the Wausau School District Plan. At the district level, the current focus is on the implementation of our new Ready Classroom math resources. Teachers collaborate across the district with grade level colleagues on the implementation of our new resources, while meeting with a Ready Classroom trainer both in a large group setting and by building. District professional development is offered through optional academies online or in person and taught by district teachers and district level administrators. These classes provide learning on all topics, from behavior, to teaching strategies, to cultural awareness and sensitivity.

At the building level, our professional development is centered on our School Improvement Plan and involves sessions delivered not just by administration, but also staff. A staff interest survey was given for feedback to guide our building level decisions on professional development. A behavioral specialist has come in to help the whole staff and individual teachers guide through the implementation of behavioral interventions based on the Behavioral Emotional Social Traits (BEST) assessment. In-building coaching is provided by our technology mentor, Educator Effectiveness coach, Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports coaches, and recently our Leader in Me coaches. This year, in connection to our technology goal on our School Improvement Plan, ten teachers from Jefferson meet once a month onsite to become certified Apple Teachers. Classes and meetings are led by staff, with support from the district technology team. A shared interest in our Student Learning Objectives (SLO) and Professional Practice Goals (PPG) solidifies our commitment to our learners. Staff work together to set a goal, and increase their own professional knowledge through Educator Effectiveness coaching and Professional Learning Community discussions.

4. School Leadership:

We envision Thomas Jefferson as a community that achieves high expectations, feels safe, engaged, and accepted. Shared leadership has reinforced this vision focus through the support of the building principal. Bridging communication, leadership, and commitment to our learning and learners is what makes us unique. Our professional development structure has transformed over the last several years to allow teacher leadership to grow, creating a positive impact on our commitment to learners, family, and life-long learning. Our leadership teams have evolved into different committees on School Culture, Equity and Engagement, Tier 2/Tier 3 Systems, Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS), and Professional Development. Each committee focuses on the diversities and challenges our building needs to address in order to achieve academic, social, and culturally responsiveness in the success of our learners.

Our principal has promoted and supported the need to access outside professional community connections. We currently have three outside counselors who meet with children in our building each week, allowing our student services team to focus on relationships and social, academic groups, connections with families and staying focused on attendance and family support. We utilize a retired school psychologist, who supports educational planning to optimize learners' success by establishing a uniform benchmark for behavioral anchoring. His work provides academic staff intervention strategies and support for our learners, building teacher confidence in handling difficult learning/environmental challenges to secure learning advancement. These professional pieces construct a structure of awesomeness to move our children forward in academic prosperity and social stabilization.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

“Individual commitment to a group effort – that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work.” – Vince Lombardi

It is through combined commitment from our staff, students, families, and community that we have been able to build up our school from a solid foundation. We believe the deep level of commitment that our entire staff and community exhibits is the most instrumental piece that makes us successful at Thomas Jefferson Elementary School. The commitment here has had a ripple effect on our learners, families, and community. Thomas Jefferson’s foundation of success has been built on this long-term commitment by staff, which has resulted in limited staff turnover over the years. The staff is committed to working together to provide an atmosphere that is beneficial for all learners. We have an atmosphere that encourages risk-taking, relationship building, and collaboration, contributes to the commitment by the staff. Staff commitment is further demonstrated through the high number of staff working at our Growing Great Minds (G2M) after school program, so that we do not have to outsource to other agencies.

Commitment by students is evident every day at Thomas Jefferson. Student attendance is one indicator of their commitment, with students showing up ready to learn every day. They work together to encourage one another both academically and socially by setting class and individual goals. Our students share progress and celebrate growth! Learners also show commitment through Safety Patrol participation and Innovative Learners which helps students and guest staff with technology,

We value a high level of commitment from our parents as well. There is strong participation at our conference nights and parent engagement activities throughout the year such as family lunch and breakfast days, family fun nights, class field trips, and Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings. Parents also show commitment by being connected to their child’s classroom through Seesaw, Class Dojo, and Remind, where they interact and provide feedback on student work through these online resources. This engagement strengthens our home to school connection and works toward the progress of each learner.

Community commitment is visible by the vast number of community programs that support our school, including Blessing in a Backpack (provides meals for students in need), Big Brothers Big Sisters (mentors), Girl Scouts, monthly dental cleanings, health department nutrition lessons, Junior Achievement, multiple outside counseling agencies in-house, and high school tutors.