U.S. Department of Education
2018 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 Mrs. Lori Degenhart
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Heck/Quaw Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 308 North Broadway
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

Belgrade   MT   59714-3707
City   State   Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Gallatin County

Telephone (406) 924-2120   Fax (406) 924-2155

Web site/URL https://www.bsd44.org   E-mail ldegenhart@bsd44.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. Godfrey Saunders
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)   E-mail gsaunders@bsd44.org

District Name Belgrade Elementary   Tel. (406) 388-6951
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. Peter Morgan
(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. 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.)

2. 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 and all subgroups, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.

3. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2018 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.

4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.

5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2012 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.

6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, or 2017.

7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.

8. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. 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.

12. 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 (2017-2018) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district
   (per district designation):

   3 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
   1 Middle/Junior high schools
   1 High schools
   0 K-12 schools

   5 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

   [ ] Urban or large central city
   [ ] Suburban
   [X] Rural or small city/town

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2017 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	8	5	13
K	50	52	102
1	38	50	88
2	42	37	79
3	45	38	83
4	54	37	91
5	0	0	0
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	237	219	456

4. Racial/ethnic composition of   1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
the school: 0 % Asian
    0 % Black or African American
    5 % Hispanic or Latino
    0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
    92 % White
    2 % 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 2016 – 2017 school year: 20%

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

Our mobility rate is above 15% for a variety of reasons, but two reasons stand out. Our neighboring city's cost of living is higher than our town's making housing more affordable here, so families are moving into the District. When students leave our school, it is typically because families are taking jobs in other cities or states.

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 *to* the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	39
(2) Number of students who transferred *from* the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	43
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	82
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	410
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.20
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	20

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %
        5 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 32 %
Total number students who qualify: 147

8. Students receiving special education services: ___14___ %

    ___65___ 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.

_1_ Autism	_8_ Multiple Disabilities
_0_ Deafness	_0_ Orthopedic Impairment
_0_ Deaf-Blindness	_4_ Other Health Impaired
_9_ Developmentally Delayed	_4_ Specific Learning Disability
_3_ Emotional Disturbance	_34_ Speech or Language Impairment
_0_ Hearing Impairment	_0_ Traumatic Brain Injury
_2_ Intellectual Disability	_0_ Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: _5_

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to 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.	22
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	8
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	11
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	5

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1   _21:1_

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

Required Information	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013
Daily student attendance	86%	84%	89%	88%	90%
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 2017.

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 X

    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.

To educate students to become responsible members of society where students are our priority; we are committed to excellence and value community involvement.

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

Belgrade is a lower middle-class community. It is adjacent to the larger city of Bozeman and serves as a more affordable residential community for its more affluent neighbor. As a residential community, it tends to have a younger population and higher number of young children per capita than comparable cities in the region.

The school district serves students residing in town, and in large subdivisions outside of the city limits and from agricultural areas beyond the sprawl of houses. The large area of the school district requires that the district operate an extensive student transportation department. The boundaries are contiguous with Bozeman to the east, Monforton to the south and Manhattan to the west.

Belgrade has been the fastest growing community in the state for the past 25 years. Its burgeoning population is a boon, but also has created challenges for the district. The district must provide buildings, staff and materials for a rapidly expanding student population. This creates a monumental task for the tax-burdened residents as the district has more needs than can often be addressed. Facilities are the first hurdle.

The Heck/Quaw Elementary School has a conglomeration of buildings spanning from 1907 to a Public Works structure built in the 1940's to a one story structure built in the late 1950's. The campus is laid out with a busy street separating the classroom and gym areas from the classroom, office and cafeteria structure on the east side of Broadway Street.

Belgrade's elementary schools have always prided themselves on teaching basic skills and positive citizenship. The traditionally conservative community is beginning to change somewhat with the influx of new people, but most new students hail from other areas within the state of Montana. The attendance area now garners students from a more diverse population.

As the internet and social media became more readily available through the years, professional development could be sought more easily, and educators began to develop their own Personal and Professional Learning Communities. Gone are the days of teaching in isolation or "being on an island" in your own classroom. Teachers now could connect with other educators from around the world to help grow and develop their skill set. Teachers also became more interested in utilizing researched based practices instead of merely following a basal approach or textbook that may or may not teach essential concepts to students.

Heck/Quaw Elementary School has also implemented our Montana Behavior Initiative (MBI) and has put in place many positive behavior supports and academic supports based on this concept. Annually, we send a large team to the MBI Institute for continued professional development. Our District leaders also meet regularly to improve our protocols for our multi-tiered systems of support.

The State of Montana adopted the Common Core State Standards and our administrators have purchased and adopted materials for teachers to better provide standards based instruction. In the past few years, teacher leaders have met in order to develop a guaranteed and viable curriculum for all students. Our focus is on learning and developing the whole child. Our school is also implementing the Professional Learning Community at Work framework to help build school culture and capacity from the inside out. We are always focusing our efforts to improve student outcomes.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. **Core Curriculum:**

The school's core curriculum in ELA and Mathematics has been developed by the district's Standards Based Instruction (SBI) team based off the Montana Common Core ELA and Mathematics Standards. Science and Social Studies are integrated into the ELA and Mathematics curriculum. With the input of grade level teams, the SBI team has created curriculum maps that are the guidelines for instruction. These maps outline when certain standards should be taught based off the knowledge of our students and prior grade level learning maps. They include guiding instructional information such as enduring understanding, essential questions, concepts, skills, vocabulary and carefully vetted pre and post assessments so teachers can have common data for planning instruction. The standards define what all students are expected to know and be able to do, not how teachers teach, so the SBI team has created a bank of instructional resources teachers can use to differentiate and help students meet the standards according to their individual students' need.

A balanced literacy approach is taken to help students acquire foundational skills in ELA. Because we know that research on best practices for reading instruction involves lots of opportunities for high-success reading, teachers present mini lessons on reading strategies, opportunities for shared reading, read alouds with instructional conversations, and independent reading in which the teacher is instructing, scaffolding, and conferring with students. Teachers meet with differentiated guided reading groups to support different aspects of students' reading development. Teachers use a variety of instructional materials in reading to meet students' needs and interest levels. Articles from Readworks.org, Scholastic News, and NewsELA are used to increase students' schema and vocabulary on science, social studies, and current event topics while also increasing reading fluency. Teachers may also access leveled libraries, classroom libraries, and educational magazines like Scholastic Storyworks to support and teach reading strategies. Writing is taught and utilized across all content areas to encourage students to share their thinking. Examples include science journals where students can share their thinking on science topics, mathematical journals where students share their mathematical thinking and problem solving strategies, opportunities in reading and social studies to respond to text and share text evidence. Foundational skills are built in early grade levels by teaching concepts of print, providing numerous opportunities to engage with and discuss a variety of sources of text, and fostering a love of reading and writing.

Mathematical practices along with the standards form the basis of math instruction. Problem solving is constantly incorporated throughout the lessons. Teachers facilitate number talks to encourage students to share mathematical thinking, engage in problem solving, and develop logical thinking. Data from district and school tests help drive math instruction and let teacher's differentiate to meet all students needs. Teachers use strategies such as posing meaningful questions, supporting productive struggle, and scaffolded discussion to further students thinking about math concepts and help students build foundational skills.

Montana has adopted the NGSS standards in science, so teachers plan lessons built around these standards. Teachers use sources such as Mystery Science, betterlesson.com, and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math) activities to meet the standards. Teachers know that hands on activities help students build foundational skills, so students participate in lots of hands on activities along with science journaling to explain their thinking on science topics and help teachers identify and clarify any misconceptions. Knowing the importance of STEAM and engineering practices, students are participating in makerspace activities, and teachers have implemented coding with devices such as Spheros, and Lego robotics kits.

Social studies curriculum is made up of Montana Social Studies Standards with the incorporation of Indian Education For All (IEFA). There is a large focus on civic learning and community in all grades. Teachers use lessons from kidsvotingUSA.org and civiced.org to provide civic knowledge on government and democracy. Students in the school participate in mock elections and discuss the importance of voting. Social Studies and civic learning are integrated into reading with students participating in close readings of important historical documents such as the Pledge of Allegiance, the Star Spangled Banner, and parts of the U.S. Constitution, and Declaration of Independence. Teachers utilize local resources such as the Museum of

the Rockies for classroom visits, live streaming, and outreach kits that teach students about local and Montana history as well as include IEFA elements.

Engagement strategies used in all content areas to help students reach academic success include: think-pair-share, response cards, exit tickets, whiteboards and formative assessment, conferring, project based learning, quick writes, gallery walks, and sketchnoting.

Heck/Quaw Elementary School also houses our district's Special Education pre-school program. Students in this program have a variety of abilities and disabilities and each have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). There are seven core curriculum areas that are addressed in our Special Education pre-school including: the creative arts, language and literacy, mathematics and numeracy, science, social studies, physical development and health, and social and emotional development. Much of the core curriculum is aligned to early childhood and primary grade academic standards. The program's curriculum is specially formatted to assist with the development of the whole child and their developing needs in order for them to be prepared for further learning and growth. The mission of our program is to meet the needs of every child in an inclusive environment where all children are accepted and guided to their highest potential.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

All student grades kindergarten through 4th grade participate in richly engaging music, physical education, library media center, and counseling classes. Music and physical education classes occur twice weekly for students, library media center occurs once weekly with counseling class occurring monthly. Visual and performing arts are offered through our core curriculum and workshops provided by our Parent Teacher Council (PTC).

The library media center is one of the most dynamic environments where students gain knowledge and essential skills for success. Serving all kindergarten through fourth graders during a weekly block of time, students not only get to explore personal interests through book checkout, but are also taught a lesson focused on various library media skills which go beyond the media center. Story time provides an opportunity for students to develop analytical thinking skills, research projects teach older students about the ethical use of information; and online collaborative writing helps students understand what it means to be a first-rate digital citizen. Additionally, the media center and its staff provide direct curriculum and technology support to teachers so they may have the tools they need to assist student acquisition of essential skills in the core classroom.

Making music individually and as a group are core functions of our music programming. Not only are we developing singing skills and instrument skills, but preparing students to read music, improve listening skills, develop improvisation skills, connecting music/the arts to daily life, learning about other cultures through music, experiencing a varied repertoire of music and discovering music from various cultures.

In PE the students learn a variety of sport and movement skills. During the course of the year we cover the following units: teambuilding, soccer, fitness, dance, bowling, circus skills, basketball, gymnastics, volleyball, jump rope, track and field, T-ball, racquet sports/scoop skills, cup stacking and yoga. These units focus on locomotor, non locomotor, manipulative skills, movement concepts, listening and following directions, sportsmanship, teamwork, social interaction, and health concepts such as healthy eating with my plate, why our body needs exercise, the benefits of exercise, and what to do to keep your body healthy.

The Belgrade Public Schools Comprehensive Elementary School Counseling Program's school counseling curriculum supports Heck/Quaw's academic mission by promoting and enhancing the learning process for all students through an integration of academic, career, and social/emotional development. The school counseling curriculum consists of a written instructional program that is comprehensive in scope, preventative and proactive, developmental in design, and coordinated and delivered by the school counselor with the support of other educators. The counseling curriculum is designed to facilitate the systematic delivery of activities to every student consistent with the school counseling program's statements of philosophy, goals, and student indicators. It promotes knowledge, attitudes and skills through instruction in three content areas: academic, career, and social/emotional development. At Heck/Quaw Elementary the

school counseling curriculum consists of monthly 30-minute structured lessons delivered to each grade level (K-4) that are developmentally designed to assist students in achieving the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success: K-12 College-and Career-Readiness for Every Student standards appropriate for our K-4 students (ASCA, 2014). Examples of lessons taught to each Heck/Quaw student through the counseling curriculum include topics such as: school skills, healthy choices (drug and alcohol prevention), problem-solving/conflict management, empathy/caring for others, friendship/bully-proofing, self-worth/self-esteem, emotional awareness and regulation, personal safety and career exploration/transition to middle school.

The school nurse for Heck/Quaw Elementary also visits with every K-4 class to provide either handwashing lessons or hygiene lessons. These lessons are important as they emphasize the importance of cleanliness and promote ownership of each child in helping to maintain their own health. Every spring, the nurse spends classroom time with all of our 4th grade girls discussing the maturation process and addressing questions and concerns.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

At our school, students are our first priority and focus. We believe that all students can learn, and we have made significant changes in instructional methods, interventions and assessments in order to meet the needs of all students. We continually look at our current practices and strive to grow each day to improve our craft.

Our District leaders have been working together to refine our multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) based on the Georgia Department of Education's work on MTSS. In Tier 1, all students receive standards based classroom instruction. As part of that classroom instruction, universal screeners are used, such as FastBridge, three times per year as a benchmark to get a general sense of where students are achieving. The Montana Common Core Curriculum Standards are implemented through a standards-based classroom structure where fluid, flexible strategies of differentiation are used in the general education classroom. Classroom teachers use a variety of assessments to inform instruction such as, running records, fluency practice, and FastBridge progress monitoring. Continual formative assessments in the forms of exit tickets, individual student conferences for student goal-setting, online formative assessments to integrate technology such as Kahoot and Plickers which can be analyzed whole class or by individual student to determine student learning are also used. To further promote student learning, students are provided student choice and multiple outputs which is progress monitored through standards based common formative assessments (CFA's). Our Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) then analyze the CFA data and other collected data which triggers Tier 2 supports.

As part of Tier 2, in addition to Tier 1, PLC's make decisions on what interventions will take place for students who didn't reach proficiency and what enrichment opportunities students will participate in if proficiency has been met. PLC's collaborate using student data analysis to identify specific learning objectives and assessment tools. This information is used to target and inform instruction in the general education setting using standards based intervention protocol using responsive and flexible instruction based on grade level proficiency scales and scaffolded learning targets. Other assessments, such as iReady a computer based program, are sometimes used to help diagnose skill gaps and has built in computer based lessons to help close those gaps. Our PLC's continually look at all this data.

Some students who are not responding to Tier 1 and 2 are then brought to our Student Assistance Team (SAT) which triggers Tier 3 interventions. Students at this level, after receiving Tier 1 and 2 supports, participate in learning that is different. This team identifies student needs by intensive formalized problem solving strategies where targeted research based intervention are implemented based on that student's needs. Frequent progress monitoring and analysis of student response to intervention data is collected. Depending on how the student is responding, additional intervention can take place in multiple settings. When a student has received instruction and intervention in Tier 1, 2, and 3, and is still not responding to the interventions, he or she will also receive Tier 4 supports where specialized programs, methodologies, or instructional deliveries are implemented and then a greater frequency of progress monitoring occurs.

It is important to note that all students participate in Tier 1 and 2 instruction which leads to intervention and

enrichment. Tier 3 and 4 are in addition to what is being provided in the first two Tiers. This MTSS process is not just based on academics. We use this same process for behavior support, as well. Classrooms also provide enrichment opportunities through things like Maker Space, Genius Hour, and coding, to name a few. We want all students to achieve at high levels. How a student achieves that looks differently for each student based on need.

Teachers use a variety of instructional methods to ensure student success and achievement at high academic standards. Teachers use data from pre-tests to determine students' needs and differentiate instruction. Teachers confer with students frequently in reading, writing and math to help students set individual learning goals and provide one-on-one help. Problem based learning and projects like Genius Hour allow students to drive content that teachers can use to teach concepts and skills that cover grade level standards. Students are given multiple ways to reach each standard that covers a variety of different learning styles. For example, students may watch videos to explain a standard, play games to practice that standard, work with a small group or work one-on-one with the teacher.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. **School Climate/Culture:**

Heck-Quaw Elementary uses Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports (PBIS) to engage and motivate students and staff. Examples of this include reinforcing our universal school-wide expectations of "Being Respectful, Responsible and Ready to Learn" through ticket systems which are provided by a variety of staff members. These are reinforced on a continuum, using Golden Tickets for weekly drawings of a small tangible surprise and Green tickets for monthly drawings to have popcorn with the principal at lunch and weekly "Paws"itive Practice/reinforced over morning announcements. Additionally, individual teachers use positive tools such as the student/teacher game, clipping up/down with behavioral choices, and the stoplight system for immediate feedback. For at-risk (Tier 2) students, we use Check-in/Check-out or Dollar Incentive programs, and high risk students are provided with individual positive behavior support plans. Separately, our lunch and playground staff include their own ticket drawings of special lunchroom privileges.

In addition to positive reinforcement, social-emotional learning is supported through tiered levels delivered by the school counselor. Universally, we have a school wide counseling curriculum delivered in the classrooms monthly. Students at the Tier 3 and Tier 4 level have access to group and individual counseling as needed. For very high risk students, we also have mental health supports in the school, specializing in supporting students with a significant history for Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE). ACE trainings are also held with the staff to help deliver trauma-informed response and practices across the building.

Academically, student skills are monitored using FastBridge as both a universal screening and progress monitoring tool. Learning needs are addressed with differentiated instruction and tiered supports, including Title I and special education intervention to supplement core instruction for at-risk students and those with disabilities.

We have a very active and supportive Parent-Teacher Counsel, or PTC. The PTC helps us deliver additional PBIS practices with Awesome Attendance awards, school wide assemblies, Fun Runs, Field Day, visits from a Community Reading Dog, and PTC funded school-wide field trips such as Cowboy Crickets and Missoula Children's Theatre. Specific to teachers, the PTC provides ample food during parent/teacher conferences and treats throughout teacher appreciation week.

Staff support and encourage each other through a variety of means as well. We are building our school culture from the inside out. Our teachers are building capacity within and collective efficacy. Positive message boards are also posted in all staff restrooms, and there is a designated bulletin board for staff "Shout-Outs" to publicly post recognition of something great a staff member was observed to do. At staff meetings, staff are randomly selected to have someone cover a recess or crosswalk duty. Our wellness committee organizes monthly Soup or Salad Swaps so that teachers can come together to enjoy and share recipes and fellowship. Our administrators are very approachable and willing to help staff in any way possible. All of these things contribute in creating an environment where teachers feel valued and supported.

2. **Engaging Families and Community:**

The Belgrade community is an interesting one to be a part of because it is an area of high growth at this time. The dynamics of engaging families and community partners has had to shift significantly over the past few years. Social media has played a large part of informing and engaging family and community members in the past few years. We've made many simple shifts, such as publishing school newsletters via our website, Facebook and Twitter accounts rather than print paper copies. Some teachers have class Instagram, Facebook, Seesaw journals, etc. to share learning and ideas with parents. Academic achievements are frequently posted to these sites as well as school and PTC social media accounts. Parents have responded very positively to classroom social media because it gives them instant access to what their children worked on that day. Seesaw journals have been particularly useful because students document

their own educational journey but parents have full access to it, therefore there are always educational talking points available to the families that desire them. Parents of kindergarten students are provided with home visits before school starts as well as a kindergarten social at the beginning of the year.

We also have built a strong collaborative with our PTC group, with many teachers attending meetings to collaborate with parents about ways to problem-solve and improve service delivery and student learning. Additional outreach is provided through Health and Wellness night, quarterly movie nights, and Back to School nights. Students with unique transition needs, such as those stemming from anxiety, are provided with individualized back-to-school arrangements. Most student challenges are individually communicated with parents and include discussions of ways to help students' progress such as learning games they can play at home or reading strategies that they might use to discuss text. However, community wide challenges such as the need to redistrict or build more schools is often discussed at town hall-style board meetings or informational meetings held at the school.

Specific to the community, we have partnered with Montana State University to do a literacy night event at the school. We will be doing this again this year. The Belgrade News, our local newspaper, publishes articles actively and regularly to keep the community informed of events and more. We also work with the Belgrade Chamber of Commerce where we sometimes present student achievements or important information at their monthly "Lunch and Learn" meetings. Administrators also participate in the Building Belgrade business group via the Chamber of Commerce which keeps business partners personally informed of what is happening within our schools. We partner with the Greater Gallatin United Way to provide a quality afterschool program at a reasonable cost to our families. We also partner with the YMCA to provide our families with information and access to all the services they provide, as well as access for our strategic readers to attend their Achievers summer literacy remediation program.

3. **Professional Development:**

Heck-Quaw Elementary has a very open and supportive approach to professional development. Trainings that are held locally and that align with research-based practices are always supported. Out of state or national conferences have a more rigorous approval process, but are never denied outright. Administration promotes self-development, individual expertise, building individual and group capacity and the growth mindset through a variety of means. Opportunities to share out information gained by staff members at conferences and trainings are provided via time to present at staff meetings as well as discussions at PLC meetings. The culture is that we are not just educators, but lifelong learners.

Specific examples of professional development activities include our Elementary Administrators attending 2 one-week conferences on Standards Based Grading and Reporting. Each of the three administrators brought that training back to teachers where it has been presented to all. The Administrators have then worked with grade level teams monthly for the past 2 years to develop a viable curriculum. The Principal has attended a National Professional Learning Community conference in order to help lead and strengthen the school's PLC's. Teacher leaders have attended technology professional development and presented the training they've learned to their colleagues in order to better integrate technology in instruction. Google Certified staff are available across the building to help individual teachers incorporate Google Classroom efficiently and effectively. Teachers also regularly participate in training on the Montana OPI Teacher Learning Hub, including science courses to examine 3D teaching practices and NGSS standards along with integrating science into core subjects. Our district also took a team of educators to the 2018 General and Special Education Conference in Seattle in hopes to better understand brain research and how best to improve social, emotional, and academic outcomes for all students.

Professional Development days are built in to the district calendar as well to promote and provide access to improving practices throughout the school year, rather than relying on teachers utilizing the summer or other times to expand and grow their skillbase. In February, a full day training using the EdCamp un-conference format. This format uses breakout sessions in the morning, then tailored lessons through networking and discussion with fellow educators in the afternoon. Teachers were given the opportunity to engage in professional development to address both their strengths and weaknesses as they learned from each other. This did not only further them professionally, but allowed them to connect with each other so

that continual professional development can occur for the individual teacher and his/her needs.

Teachers are encouraged to attend other types of professional development as well to improve their daily practices. This includes using donorschoose.org to attend national conferences such as the International Literacy Association Conference to improve reading instructional practices. www.donorschoose.org is a website where teachers can post projects related to professional development or student materials to improve student achievement which can be funded by donors who visit the site. In their post teachers explain how the materials will be used to further student learning and complete follow up tasks about the project and learning after it occurs. Staff also use online professional development like book clubs on Facebook and Twitter for growing a Professional Learning Network (PLN). Participation in teacher leadership conference ECET2 (Elevating and Celebrating Effective Teaching and Teachers) to gather ideas on ways to be a teacher leader from within the classroom is also encouraged and supported.

4. **School Leadership:**

Our principal has been ultra focused over the last few years to help positively impact both student and adult learning at our school. Seeking professional development is encouraged for all and our principal leads by example in this category by attending conferences, webinars, and reading educational literature that coincides with the goals of our school. She regularly shares out what has been learned to help continue to build collective efficacy and foster a positive school culture from the inside out. We have also made growth mindset and goal setting a priority. Teaching students to have a growth mindset to improve achievement is equally important.

Our leadership believes all children can learn and deserve to learn alongside their peers using grade level standards tailored so each child is and feels successful. Working collaboratively is also a priority. We are working to creatively carve out more time during the week so our PLCcan have sustained time to make instructional decisions for students who need more instruction on a standard and to plan for how to enrich students who demonstrate proficiency on a standard.

Our principal works with other administrators in the district as well to develop consistent protocols for our multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS). Our leadership also values shared decision making, soliciting ideas from teachers and the community as we continue to make gains on standards based instruction, grading, and reporting. Our teacher leaders have met monthly over the past few years to develop a guaranteed and viable curriculum for all students. Our district has also met with parent groups to explain changes in our grading practices and to seek input on what they would like to see in a standards based report card.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Teachers, administrators, and staff have developed PLC with a variety of different focuses that improve teaching and learning from all aspects leading to academic success for students. The standards based instruction (SBI) PLC provides teachers with powerful learning and exploration in good instructional practices, a deeper understanding of content and standards, and helped establish standards based grading practices.

Having a better understanding of SBI, teachers are planning lessons based on their knowledge of students and student learning which has led to academic success. When a grade level PLC committed to using student data and knowledge of standards in math they went from 70% of students being on grade level to 90% of students being on grade level in one year. The SBI PLC has also committed to focusing on healthier grading practices, creating common assessments to be used for pre and post tests and scheduling grade level planning times to discuss the data to improve student learning.

Cross grade level PLCs have been implemented by teachers in order to increase communication from grade to grade and further support students academic needs. A teacher participating in a PLC with middle school and high school science teachers has increased knowledge of teaching science standards and has brought resources to the grade level PLC. As a result students are participating in creating science journals in which they create scientific models and demonstrate scientific thinking which is an NGSS performance expectation.

Teachers have created their own PLCs in the form of a Personal Learning Network (PLN) utilizing sites such as Twitter for professional development and support for increasing student learning. Looking for ways to support and differentiate for students in math, a teacher reached out to a highly respected educator in the field of math on Twitter for suggestions and strategies for improving math practices.

Health Enhancement, Music, and Library Media teachers participate in their own PLC to improve instructional practices in their content areas and are developing standards based report cards in order to have consistency in all content areas. Knowing that the arts and health are important factors in student success and motivation they have created lessons to tie in curricular content such as music lessons to support math concepts such as counting and fractions, library media lessons to support technology and research skills, and health enhancement lessons that incorporate science concepts such as the human body.

Counseling staff participate in a PLC focusing on social-emotional curriculum and how to support teachers in this aspect in the classroom, because we know that students will have higher academic success if their social/emotional needs are met. Adding another layer of support, administrative PLCs meet with the goal of what's best for students and how can administration support teachers in doing that.