

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2019 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mr. Landon LeFevre

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

Official School Name Burton Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 2211 W 1000 S

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

<u>Rexburg</u> City	<u>ID</u> State	<u>83440-4748</u> Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)
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County Madison County

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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. Geoffrey Thomas

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail GMT@msd321.com

District Name Madison School District #321 Tel. (208) 359-3300

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. Kevin Howell

(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**

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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 2019 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 2013 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: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, or 2018.
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

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Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2018-2019) unless otherwise stated.

### DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 6 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 2 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 10 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
  - Rural or small city/town
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2018 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
<b>PreK</b>	107	88	195
<b>K</b>	48	51	99
<b>1</b>	35	39	74
<b>2</b>	39	36	75
<b>3</b>	43	40	83
<b>4</b>	41	31	72
<b>5</b>	0	0	0
<b>6</b>	0	0	0
<b>7</b>	0	0	0
<b>8</b>	0	0	0
<b>9</b>	0	0	0
<b>10</b>	0	0	0
<b>11</b>	0	0	0
<b>12 or higher</b>	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	313	285	598

\*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 0 % Asian
  - 1 % Black or African American
  - 8 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 89 % White
  - 0 % 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 2017 – 2018 school year: 11%

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

This mobility rate is for kindergarten to 4th Grade students.

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	19
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	21
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	40
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	368
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.11
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	11

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 7%  
41 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 44%  
 Total number students who qualify: 263

8. Students receiving special education services: 24 %  
144 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>12</u> Autism                 | <u>3</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>1</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>23</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>33</u> Developmental Delay    | <u>0</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>70</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>1</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: 6
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	17
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.	30
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	0

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 23:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	96%	95%	96%	95%	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 2018.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
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.

Burton Elementary is a caring community school focused on building character and academics in every student.

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**

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Burton Elementary is located in Rexburg on the eastern side of Idaho. The school is located approximately eighty miles from the entrance of Yellowstone and Teton National Parks. Burton Elementary is two miles away from Brigham Young University-Idaho. The university has over twenty thousand students attending school in Rexburg. Many Burton Elementary parents work or study at the university. The university is expanding quickly. Enrollment is up by nine percent this year at Burton Elementary. Madison County also has many potato and wheat fields that contribute to the robust Rexburg economy. The Burton community was settled by pioneers around 1883. A couple of years later the first Burton school opened. By 1905 it was named the Burton School. After multiple buildings and tremendous growth, the Burton Elementary school is now in a building that is only ten years old with all the modern amenities. In those ten years, two additions have been needed, adding four classrooms each time.

Burton Elementary is comprised of five hundred ninety-eight students. Grade levels at Burton Elementary include Pre-kindergarten to fourth grade. Preschool has almost two hundred students in 14 different sessions. The preschool takes students from throughout the Madison School District. These students are serviced by four early childhood special education teachers, two speech and language pathologists, and many paraprofessionals. This is a developmental preschool. About half the students have a disability and are serviced with an Individualized Educational Program (IEP). The other half are typically-developing peers. The peers model language and behaviors appropriate for their age group. Burton Elementary also includes the district extended resource room for elementary students. This program is named the developmentally appropriate classroom (DAC). Many of the eight students in this class are non-verbal and have aggressive behaviors. The students have a special education teacher trained in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). Each student also has a behavior interventionist assigned to work one on one with them throughout the day. These interventionists are certified through the Idaho State Department of Health and Welfare. Burton Elementary school has a total of seven special education teachers and a total of one hundred and forty-eight students on IEPs. The community often referred to Burton as the “special ed” school.

One of the key strategies that have led to success at Burton Elementary is identifying the needs of individual students. Academic, behavioral, mental health and social/emotional needs are identified and addressed first by a grade level collaboration team. This is a group of teachers that work together in a grade level. Concerns are addressed and intervention strategies engaged. If a student is not making progress, the student is brought up in a monthly Child Assistance Team (CAT) Meeting. Involved in this meeting include a licensed counselor, special education teachers, classroom teachers, Title I teachers, and the principal. They discuss individual needs for individual students. In these meetings, assignments are made to create intervention plans based on individual student needs. Of course, this whole process can be circumnavigated based on the immediate need of the student.

Title I is a huge part of the school intervention program. The program used at the school is named walk-to-read. Every student (K-4) gets thirty minutes of reading intervention daily at his/her reading level. This is facilitated by our Title I staff, teachers, and aides in each grade level. Many intervention groups have less than five children. The teachers are able to focus on specific skills that students need to improve reading skills. Grade level teachers, special education teachers, Title I teachers, and the principal meet on a monthly basis to review student data and progress. If interventions are not working or a skill is learned, the student is then moved to a group that is better suited for that student’s needs. A similar program is used in Math to deliver interventions.

Burton Elementary has a very supportive Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). The PTO hosts events, fundraisers, and community outreach. There is an annual fall carnival, annual bulldog jog, family picnic, school store, McTeacher night, family reading nights, and many more events sponsored and supported by the PTO. For example, the Burton PTO was able to purchase t-shirts for every student at the school through donations and support from the community.

Burton Elementary library circulation is through the roof. These numbers can be attributed to the quality of books in our library. Over the past six years, the school has been awarded over \$50,000 in grants. One

hundred percent of these monies have been used to buy new books. These fresh new books have spurred tremendous growth in the number of books read, and students are building a love of reading. This year if reading goals are met, Mr. LeFevre, the principal, will be doused with a huge bucket of green slime in front of the student body.



## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Core Curriculum:**

#### **1a. Reading/English language arts:**

English Language Arts instruction at Burton Elementary adheres to Idaho’s adopted Common Core State Standards (CCSS). As prescribed by the State Standards Initiative, educators focus on developing reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills in all content areas. Every subject integrates skill development and understanding from other content areas. This interdisciplinary approach promotes engagement, maximizes learning experiences, and develops the critical skills necessary for lifelong learners.

In kindergarten through second grades, teachers seek to build foundational reading skills through print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics, word recognition, and fluency. In second through fourth grades, educators emphasize word analysis, decoding words for meaning, fluency, and comprehension. Recently, Madison’s teachers expressed a desire to provide students with increased exposure to nonfiction text. Their purpose was to develop critical reading skills and thoughtful engagement while exposing students to global experiences. During summer collaboration, teachers utilized resources from National Geographic’s Reach for Reading curriculum to facilitate that goal. Teachers use the program resources to augment their efforts to build critical reading skills through standards.

In addition to lessons directed in the critical components of foundational reading development, teachers present daily lessons in spelling, vocabulary, grammar, and writing. Students learn to understand a range of words directly and through morphology. Teachers design grammar lessons and activities to develop student understanding of parts of speech in correlation to oral and written sentence structure. Teachers integrate these skills into the writing process as students learn to produce and edit writing pieces that increase in complexity through the grades. In every grade level, students publish narrative, informative, and persuasive pieces.

Teachers assess students weekly on content provided to determine if the need to reteach concepts is necessary. In addition, every student completes a monthly computer-adaptive reading assessment to assist teachers in planning for individual needs as they evaluate which students will need additional support to meet the benchmark.

#### **1b. Mathematics:**

Burton’s core mathematics instruction begins with addition and subtraction concepts, skills, and problem-solving in kindergarten and increases in rigor through second grade. Teachers consistently develop number sense and place value understanding as prerequisite skills foundational to the conceptualization of successive mathematics standards. Students explore measurement, time, counting, patterns, comparison, and operations.

In third and fourth grades, educators predominantly engage students in activities to promote mastery of multiplication and division concepts, skills, and problem-solving competence. Additionally, third and fourth-grade students acquire the ability to represent and express fractions as numbers. Educators recognize the grade level, required fluency appropriate to their respective students’ level of development. Students practice fluency daily.

Teachers use the Envision program published by Pearson to cover the CCSS. During a weeklong summer collaboration, department teams adjust the curriculum to provide coherent instructional outcomes for their respective grade levels. Burton’s teachers incorporate each of the eight mathematical practices in their classrooms daily to build skills that prepare students for lifelong math proficiency. Teachers integrate reading, writing, speaking, listening, and science into math units as well.

Burton’s teachers design daily lessons to meet the needs of students as individual learners. Each teacher

plans and prepares differentiated instructional groups to scaffold standards aligned concepts below, at, and above-below grade level. Daily informal assessments and topic tests guide instructional planning and student grouping. Assessments are administered about every two weeks with an emphasis on remediation for students that need scaffolding to meet proficiency levels.

Manipulatives and models are incorporated into every learning activity. Leveled assignments include re-teaching with scaffolded, teacher-guided instruction for struggling students, on-level guidance for typical learners, and enrichment and extension activities for students demonstrating advanced levels of conceptual understanding.

Math Instruction begins with clearly stated and discussed learning objectives followed by a problem presented for students to work through. Subsequent to this, teachers facilitate a class discussion guided by student examples and high levels of engagement. As supported by recent research, teachers follow their whole group mini-lesson with small group differentiated instruction.

### **1c. Science:**

Teachers align science instructional efforts to Mathematics and English Language Arts & Literacy Standards. To support this, board members approve curricular adoptions that are recommended by a committee after extensive evaluation by parents, teachers, and administrators. Committee members analyze a program's Science standards.

Each year, teachers contribute one week of their summer vacation to curricular alignment. During this week, teacher professionals develop a scope and sequence that determines standards emphasis, lesson development, and content coverage. Teachers share current pedagogical practices and improve unit plans. As part of the discourse, educators plan curricular frameworks that ensure adequate coverage of critical content standards. Learning outcomes are analyzed and adjusted to demonstrate core competencies appropriately for each grade and subject.

The current math program provides unit introductions aligned to the Next Gen Science Standards, which the State of Idaho has approved and adopted. Teachers are aligning their scope and sequence to Idaho's recently adopted Next Generation Science Standards and have found that many of these concepts are easily integrated into the current math and reading curriculum. Additionally, educators present critical science concepts as isolated lessons where concepts require solitary attention. Each grade level participates in academically designed field trips each year that relate to grade-specific learning standards in science and social studies content areas. The local community is a resource for teachers as they plan these external learning opportunities for students.

### **1d. Social studies/history/civic learning and engagement**

Students participate in social studies lessons with literacy interwoven as recommended by the English Language Arts Common Core Standards.

For social studies, third-grade students study their community, including the history and culture of the Rexburg (City) and Madison County. Furthermore, students explore a unit of citizen responsibility. Students at Burton Elementary benefit from community involvement. They attend field trips and enjoy expert guest speakers with social studies topics. Fourth-grade students study Idaho History including the first settlers, western expansion, geography, economics, and government. Every student in the school participates in Idaho Day each year on March 4th. As part of this statewide initiative, teachers are encouraged to celebrate Idaho and educate students about her history.

As per the recommendation of the CCSS, the curriculum has been designed to provide access to social studies content. Approved instructional materials must demonstrate standard alignment, sensitivity to cultural diversity, accessibility for a range of learners, a variety of assessment measures, and coherent sequencing. Additionally, teachers scrutinize programs access to literacy in social studies. Subsequent to purchase, teachers begin the intricate process of examining the program for areas of deficiency and respond.

This continuous curriculum revision and approval process through reflective practice and responsiveness to students is ongoing.

**1e. For secondary schools:**

**1f. For schools that offer preschool for three- and four-year old students:**

Burton Elementary preschool provides core curriculum and Individualized Education Programs to a balanced student demographic of students with special needs and typical learners. Inclusion and peer modeling are critical to the program's success. Early Childhood Special Education certificated teachers instruct students through thematic units that align with Early Learning Guidelines. They determine what students should be learning along with recommendations from the Division for Early Childhood and National Association for the Education of Young Children. Instructors embed science, math, reading and social studies into daily routines. These daily routines are aligned to unit themes and are delivered in developmentally appropriate activities. Early Learning Guidelines are coherent and aligned to the content standards of the upper-grade levels at Burton Elementary.

Preschool special education teachers collect and submit data to the State of Idaho. Progress monitoring data is collected for students that enter and exit the program on an IEP. Students participate in academic assessments during benchmark periods each year to ensure that all students are progressing in basic skills. These assessments include alphabetic recognition and other basic skills, such as counting.

**2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

Burton Elementary benefits from involved parents and teachers who support other curriculum areas. The PTO concentrates efforts on providing the school with extracurricular opportunities and a character-building mission. In recent years, the members have supported an annual Bulldog Jog. This promotes physical education. They integrate the positive behavior theme, which is Kindness.

Burton Elementary has increased the number of devices available and students appreciate the benefits of technology integration. Each classroom has a set of iPads, Chromebooks, and desktop computers. Every grade has benefited from computer lab time each week. During this time, students familiarize themselves with a variety of software and hardware. In third grade, students begin keyboarding instruction and achieve an appropriate level of mastery by the end of fourth grade.

Through a variety of mediums, students explore styles and create personal work. As an extension to the art curriculum. A local art lab provides instruction each year about famous artists, classical pieces, and techniques. Students' artwork is displayed in the hallway throughout the school year.

Each week, students in every grade level visit the school library. The librarian reads aloud from a variety of genres and generates interest in unfamiliar literature. She coordinates with teachers to establish goals and help students locate books at their appropriate instructional level. Students listen to stories and check out books.

Students receive monthly music instruction. A district music teacher visits each classroom and instructs the students in foundational music skills including rhythm, melody, pitch, and expression. They practice singing various song styles and following the beat. Teachers extend the concepts taught in music by incorporating singing into classroom activities. Additionally, every grade level prepares a presentation for the school each year. Music and singing are integral to these productions, so students practice regularly within their classrooms.

Every class participates in a weekly Physical Education class focusing on developing students' proprioceptive awareness. Students build hand-eye coordination, concentration, body awareness, endurance, and strength. They are instructed in cooperation and rule following specific to the sport or activity that they learn.

Parents, teachers, and students have instituted other curriculum and instruction into Burton Elementary school's focused content through dedication and hard work. Many of these programs operate through the cooperation of teachers and parents for decades. They are as essential to the academic success of each student as the core curriculum. Stakeholders agree that Burton would not be as effective if any of these programs were retired.

### **3. Special Populations:**

In addition to a robust core reading and math program, Burton's team has a thoroughly developed process for increasing math and reading proficiency of students as individuals. Teachers follow the Response to Intervention (RTI) model and group students by common identifiable skills. They invoke the support of trained Title I paraprofessionals to meet the needs of homogenous groups of students. Over a dozen research-based interventions, with various levels of each, are utilized to address targeted reading performance deficiencies as well as identified strengths.

Students take a computer-adaptive screener and diagnostic at the beginning of each school year to identify individual student competency in the five critical areas of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. During grade level collaboration teachers then plan for intervention implementation to support students' acquisition of determined deficit skills regardless of present skill level. Flexible grouping, collaboration among team members, and consistent progress monitoring ensure that every student advance in their ability to decode and comprehend text. Grade level teams plan enrichment activities for students performing above the expected level. Additionally, these students read rich literature and participate in discussions involving theme, character analysis, unfamiliar vocabulary, and plot. Teachers model higher-order questioning as well as comprehension skills developed through writing.

Teachers use math screeners and diagnostic assessments to identify individual student needs prior to instruction in the major works of the grade. Results are utilized to plan Response to Intervention (RTI). A Math Diagnosis and Intervention System delivers interventions building critical foundations in concepts of numbers, place value, facts, computation of whole numbers, measurement and data, and fractions. Teachers provide leveled assignments. These lessons include re-teaching with scaffolded, teacher-guided instruction for struggling students, on-level guidance for typical learners, and enrichment and extension activities for students demonstrating advanced levels of conceptual understanding. In addition to core instructional materials, students enjoy using the Reflex math facts program online to improve fluency, as well. Students who continue to struggle with the presented concept after the mini-lesson, small group teacher-guided instruction, and peer support receive additional explicit instruction through paraprofessionals. At the end of fourth grade, students are assessed in number sense, procedural fluency, computational understanding, and problem-solving. Qualifying students are identified for advanced placement in mathematics courses the following year

In addition to differentiated instructional groups designed to help students who are below grade level, the school provides enrichment for students that are academically advanced. Each classroom teacher designs lessons to challenge exceptional students. Additionally, two teachers with Gifted and Talented teaching endorsements design lessons for groups of students. These extension activities serve as a creative outlet for students with a higher than average performance ability. Students benefit from two hours of specially designed instruction per week in addition to integrated extension daily activities within the classroom.

Burton Elementary is proud of the on-site Developmentally Appropriate Classroom. This program provides academic, assessment, and behavioral interventions to students from the district with the most intensive special needs. Within this classroom, students are instructed in life skills and individualized academic programs. Students are provided with alternative assessments congruent with their Individualized Educational Programs.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### **1. School Climate/Culture:**

The teachers, staff, and administration love the students that attend the school. The key to success in this area is the focus on individual students.

Each morning begins with the principal welcoming students at the front of the school. Teachers greet students at the buses and every student is welcomed to their classroom each morning. Announcements are made over the intercom once per week, on Monday morning. The principal announces the physical education trophy, professor blue book, and spirit stick. Each week classrooms get a score when they attend specials. The class with the best behavior earns the right to have the trophy, book, or stick in their classroom. At that time the principal also announces the golden ticket winner for the week. Golden tickets are given to students for showing kindness, respect, or for being helpful. They put their ticket in a bin in the office during the week. Then ten winning tickets are pulled, and students get to come to the office to claim a prize. The principal always signs off by saying, “have a great day and I’ll see you on the playground.” The principal is in the cafeteria and outside at recess with the students every day that he is in the building. Every effort is made to make special connections with the students at Burton Elementary.

For the last two years, the Burton Elementary community has been focused on promoting kindness. The PTO has purchased a “Buddy Bench” for the playground and has given instruction to students on how to use it. All students have a kindness shirt they are encouraged to wear on Friday to promote school spirit. This year every class has a kindness motto generated by the students. They have a poster outside that explains their class motto and many classes have taken a pledge to be kind by signing their poster. Every week the principal shares a kindness thought, quote, or challenge for students during the Monday morning announcements.

At Burton Elementary, all staff play a critical role in the success of students. Teacher and staff feel supported through regular professional development, appreciation events, and PTO engagement. Teachers are offered professional development through district inservice, state-level regional trainings, and national training opportunities. The office staff at Burton provide lunch for the staff four times per year. These lunches are in recognition of the hard work and tireless service rendered on behalf of the students. The PTO provides and organizes room parents to be in charge of classroom volunteers, parties, and events. Teachers are also given classroom grants and classroom books from the PTO. The goal of the PTO and building administration is to provide the necessary resources for teachers to be successful. Teachers are encouraged not to use personal funds to purchase items for their classrooms. These practices have led to teachers feeling valued and supported.

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

The Burton Community is very family-focused. An effort is made to get parents involved in volunteering in the classroom or with PTO. Each classroom has a room mom that helps the teacher with volunteers, parties, and events at the school. Three times a year the school hosts a family reading night. These events are supported heavily by the Title I program. Students can win books, participate in activities, and read a book with a family member. The PTO has been instrumental in finding sponsors for the school. They found enough sponsors to pay for a kindness t-shirt for each student.

The school has a parent-teacher conference twice a year. For the last five years, parent attendance has exceeded ninety-seven percent. This is a great opportunity to focus on individual students with parents. It allows teachers time to reflect on the progress of each student and present those findings to parents. At the parent-teacher conferences there are information meetings for parents about Title I, and information about the school and the progress being made as a whole, is also available.

Safety is a primary concern at Burton. Due to this concern, a relationship has been developed with the local police and fire departments. Officers are often seen walking the halls, interacting with students while

completing safety checks. The fire department participates in events at the school, presents fire safety talks and has shown off their equipment to students. The relationships these first responders build with students is critical to the success of the school.

Burton Elementary enjoys a close association with the local university (BYU-I), opening many doors to additional learning opportunities for Burton students. The university students visit the school as practicum or student teachers. This gives the teacher more opportunities to work with small groups or have students work one-on-one with students from the university. This relationship has been fostered over the years and Burton has been trusted with a large number of university students. Currently, fifty practicum students and four student teachers are helping Burton Elementary succeed academically.

### **3. Professional Development:**

Professional Development is teacher-driven and supported by the administration at the district and building levels. Every year surveys are developed with teacher and staff input. The surveys are then sent out and opinions are given on the type of professional development. This drives district-level professional development. As a district, we meet four days a year for inservice. Classes are specific to grade or subject. This year we had 100% attendance at inservice meetings.

Burton Elementary professional development is teacher-specific. Teachers have decided to seek professional development through book studies. Each grade level or department gets together at the beginning of the school year and decide what they would like to study. Generally, each grade level will pick a different book or subject and study that throughout the year. During faculty meetings, teachers use the time to deliver presentations about the topic they are studying. Most presentations spur discussion that has been a catalyst for new teaching ideas and improvements in the school as a whole. This puts the teachers in a leadership role to give input in deciding how the school runs. Teachers have also been pursuing master's degrees at a higher rate. Approximately forty percent of our teaching staff have a master's degree.

The collaboration model at Burton Elementary lends itself to more professional development. Every grade level has at least one teacher with over twenty years of experience. Those teachers help in mentoring and training of newer teachers. These relationships build continuity across the grade levels.

Teachers also submit an individual learning plan for the year. This document includes goals for the year, observation data, and evaluations for the year. These plans from the professional discussions between teacher and principal for continued improvement in teaching. Each teacher is also encouraged to attend additional district, regional, and state training. Teachers also have access to district level reading and math coaches. These teachers work with all teachers but are specifically responsible for giving accurate feedback for improvement for teachers in their first and second year of teaching.

### **4. School Leadership:**

The success of students, teachers, parents, and administrators depends on the relationships developed over time. Positive relationships promote a positive learning environment. At Burton Elementary this is a constant focus.

The principal is the only administrator at Burton Elementary. He strives to work with individuals in building relationships. He knows student names, meets with teachers, staff, and parents individually. All problems that come to his office are seen as learning opportunities. These opportunities allow for everyone to learn and listen, including the principal. All ideas are listened to and vetted as a team, to decide the validity. A recent administrative intern witnessed an interaction with a teacher. The teacher was upset about a situation in the school. The principal fully listened to the complaint and then brainstormed ideas with the teacher that could be possible solutions. Then they decided on a plan that was palatable to each party. This happens with grade levels, parents, and staff on a regular basis.

The principal at Burton leads by example. He works hard every day. Solving problems and turning them

into opportunities. He has a philosophy to say “yes” as much as possible. He believes people’s first reaction to every question is to say no. If it is possible, say yes. It leads to building relationships of trust. Then when the principal chooses to say no, people listen because they know it is important.

There are many leaders in the school that help Burton to be successful. For example, the amazing PTO board focuses on building a sense of community at the school. The board president is visible in the school community, and the community as a whole. This gives businesses and families an opportunity to support and feel part of the school. The instructional coach at Burton Elementary has elevated the success at the school, as well. Decisions are made with a collaborative approach, focusing on student data and needs. Also, each grade level has a lead teacher that leads grade level collaboration meetings, attends schoolwide collaboration meetings, and disseminates information to colleagues in grade level meetings. This approach of shared leadership is crucial to the success at Burton Elementary.

Another focus at Burton Elementary is to put the children first. We do what is best for children every time. This guiding principle is employed when making decisions about interventions, service programs, and many other collaboration scenarios. This includes working with parents and families.

Burton Elementary is successful because of relationships built on trust, kindness, and love. Students at Burton Elementary know they are loved because of who they are as individuals and the potential they possess.

## **Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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The most beneficial practice at Burton Elementary has been the walk-to-read Title I program. This program is critical to the success of the school. The program consists of assessment, collaboration, and intervention. These three components are in continuous motion; students are never stagnant in the process. This program is lead by professional educators that put in significant energy because they love the students in their class and grade level. Burton Elementary only hires and retains teachers that are passionate about the success of students.

Assessments start on the first day of school in the fall. A baseline is established for reading skills for every student. The focus is on the research-based pillars of teaching reading skills to students. Assessments are given for phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Once a general area of struggle is identified, a focus is made with more in-depth assessments that pinpoint the beginning of the struggles. A monthly progress monitor assessment is given to all the students in the school to see the progress as compared to the baseline data. Students that need more intense intervention are often monitored on a weekly basis.

Collaboration is key to success at Burton Elementary. The teachers use the verbiage, “these are our students, not my students.” Title I, special education, and general educations work together to develop a reading plan for students that are struggling with reading concepts. The general education teacher shares this plan with parents and asks for their support. Parents support by reading with or to students on a regular basis. They are encouraged to make it part of their routine. This allows students to see the importance of reading not only at school but also at home.

Interventions for specific students are developed. Students with similar deficiency are grouped together to receive their interventions. Most groups are less than five students for Title I or Special Education interventions. This program is for all students in the building, first to fourth grade. Students that are at grade level or higher receive interventions for their instructional level. This allows all students to participate in walk-to-read. This takes away the stigma of certain students getting a small group or one on one help. All students participate in walk-to-read. This brings the whole school together in a common purpose and that is to, “build a love of reading.”

Burton Elementary does not focus on state test scores. The success at Burton Elementary comes from real data collected by professional educators in the building to drive academic decisions. This focus has led to excellent state test scores.