

U.S. Department of Education
2022 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 1100 Myrtle Place Boulevard
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Lafayette State LA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 70506-3396

County Lafayette

Telephone (337) 521-7760 Fax (337) 521-7761

Web site/URL
<https://www.lpssonline.com/schools/myrtle-place/about-us> E-mail cbricelj@lpssonline.com

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* Ms. Irma Trosclair E-mail idtrosclair@lpssonline.com
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Lafayette Parish School District Tel. (337) 521-7000

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. Tommy Angelle
(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, leave blank.*

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 2021 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 must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2016 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: 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 or 2021.
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. The nominated school has, or is subject to, a nondiscrimination policy (provide either a link to the policy or submit a text of the policy), is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff consistent with applicable law and does not have any outstanding findings of unlawful discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s nomination and/or rescind a school’s award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

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.

The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if one of these eligibility requirements is later discovered to have not been met or otherwise been violated.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the current school year (2021-2022) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools. For charter schools: If a charter school is part of the public school system, information should be provided for the public school district. If a charter school is considered its own district or part of a charter district, the information provided should reflect that.)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 25 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 10 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 10 High schools
 - 1 K-12 schools
- 46 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. **Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not for the district.**)

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 in the school as of October 1, 2021 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	19	21	40
K	31	36	67
1	35	26	61
2	31	31	62
3	21	21	42
4	20	17	37
5	13	28	41
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	170	180	350

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0.3 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0.6 % Asian
 - 20.9 % Black or African American
 - 3.1 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 75.1 % 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 2020 - 2021 school year: 5%

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

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, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	2
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	16
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	18
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	345
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.05
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5

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

Spanish, French, Vietnamese

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 2 %

6 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 100 %

Total number students who qualify: 350

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 11 %
37 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. All students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504 should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>2</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>21</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>9</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>4</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>5</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 5
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. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	28
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	6
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	3
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

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	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017
Daily student attendance	95%	96%	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 2021.

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.

To provide a diverse and welcoming environment enhanced by French Language Immersion. To develop long-life learners passionate about our world and our local community.

16. Provide a URL link to or text of the school’s nondiscrimination policy.

It is the policy of the Lafayette Parish school board not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or disability in the educational programs or activities which it operates as required by Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the education amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

17. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

Myrtle Place is a magnet academy with a lottery system (School of Choice) in place for students to attend. This is mostly for grades PreK, K, and 1st. Starting in 2nd grade, there is a "language proficiency" criteria to meet.

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Myrtle Place Elementary is a French immersion public school located in Lafayette, Louisiana. Lafayette is locally known as "The heart of Acadiana," a region in Southwest Louisiana where many families are connected to the wonderful French language that has been spoken and enjoyed by their families for generations. For this reason, many of our families are committed to preserving the French language and culture it brings to Louisiana. Others simply want their children to attend a small, family-oriented school offering the benefits of a multicultural environment. Our teachers come from eight (8) different French-speaking countries. This build-in diversity fosters a warm and extremely nurturing school environment.

First and foremost, Myrtle Place Elementary is a safe and orderly place to learn and prepare students for a global workforce. We use emotional regulation strategies within the school to encourage and challenge all students. These include love, emotional support, a nurturing environment, mindfulness, and positive behavior support. Academic strategies include a strong response to intervention (RTI) system, an extended learning program, an individual mentorship program, data review, and discussions to improve our practices during weekly PLCs and support from district-appointed academic coaches. We consistently show support for our teachers while building a strong culture and positive school climate for all. This is accomplished through a two-fold process: "Kind Note Mailboxes" and "Positive Office Referrals." Our faculty and staff fill out these referrals weekly.

Our school motto is "Racines Profondes, Ouvert au Monde." The message here is that we value where we all come from while being open to the world. We love promoting what our students, parents, and school community members have to offer. We invite local musicians (who are often parents) to play for us. They sing and play French and Creole music as students enjoy and absorb the cultural importance of their talent. We promote and encourage our students to showcase their abilities as well.

As a district, we recently moved to use Tier 1 curricula in math (Eureka), ELA (Core Knowledge Language Arts, or CKLA, and Guidebook), and science (Ph.D. Science).

Our RTI program consists of 30 minutes daily for Tier I, II, and III, adding an additional 30 minutes for Tier III students. All K-1 students have the same block scheduled. Grades 2-3 have another block and grades 4-5 as well. This allows us to create small groups and have more teachers available to offer different levels of interventions including below level, on level, and above level for advanced students. We also use IReady which allows our teachers to create lessons targeting specific standards. Our extended learning program is also standards-driven and runs three times a year. The first round targets students identified at the end of the previous year including students returning from virtual learning due to Covid. It starts two weeks after the first day of school. The second round targets students we identified after our benchmark testing. The third round targets students we identified after our mid-year benchmark testing. We include an enrichment extended learning program for advanced students.

Due to Covid, our district offered Lafayette Online Academy (LOA) program for the 2020-2021 school year. Students who enrolled in the LOA program did not have French for a few months to a year. Responding to this need, we hired a French-speaking tutor who started pulling LOA students on the first day of school to provide interventions to get them back on track as soon as possible. This was critical because without the ongoing French language skills they would be at a great disadvantage.

Pre-Covid, we enjoyed participating in our local Festival International activities. This gave our students an opportunity to further appreciate their heritage and value other cultures. Additionally, we also enjoyed an exchange program with an elementary school from the island of Martinique. They attended school with us for a week and we did the same. We hosted their students during the world-renowned Festival International in our city and they hosted our students and families on their beautiful island. Our students and teachers expanded their appreciation of learning through this valuable exchange. Every student prospered from these incredible experiences.

Myrtle Place Elementary is very unique in many ways. We were recently visited by the U.S. Ambassador of

France to the United States, Ambassador Philippe Etienne. In his words, "Myrtle Place is a very special little school."

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

1a. Overall approach, which may include overarching philosophy or approaches common across subject areas:

We are a French immersion school so the school's core curricula, besides ELA, are taught in French. Our Math (Eureka), Science (Ph.D. Science), ELA (CKLA & Guidebook), and French Language Arts (CKLA & Guidebook) curricula are Tier 1. Tier 1 means that they meet all non-negotiable criteria and scored the best possible on all indicators of superior quality. The overarching philosophy or commonalities across subject areas are that the curricula are standards-based, they promote high-order thinking, they promote the reading of complex texts/sources by using evidence from the text to support answers. The pacing guides are ruling our daily, weekly, monthly, yearly practices and are adjusted throughout the school year by the district coaches. They are adjusted based on teachers' feedback/experience. The year at a glance allows us to recognize the frequency of standards and adjust instruction to ensure adequate exposure.

Our curricula are enhanced by technology-based support such as Zearn & IReady for math, Amplify & IReady for ELA, Ph.D. for science, and Duolingo for French Language Arts.

The instructional process to help students is called RTI (Response to Intervention) and is divided into tiers I, II, and III. Our daily master schedule has a 30 minute built-in block specifically for RTI. Any tier III students have an additional 30 minutes of intervention each day. Differentiated instruction is embedded in our daily instruction.

We collect data through different assessments and universal screening, including teacher-created tests, district-created unit assessments (Edulastic), state-created assessments (DRC/LEAP), and other programs we use (iReady, Dibles, IDAPEL, Zearn, Amplify). The data is used to lead our weekly PLCs (professional learning communities), to group our students, and offer explicit instruction. Those assessments are mostly computer-based. We did not close our school since spring 2020. The district strongly believes that face-to-face instruction is best for the children. Since March/April 2020, our district has adapted to support the continuation of teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. The district academic team adjusted the pacing calendar according to the LDOE.

1b. Reading/English language arts curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

In Kindergarten to 2nd grade, we use Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) and in 3rd-4th grade we utilize Guidebooks. They are both tier 1 curricula and were adopted by our district for all public schools.

CKLA is a comprehensive language arts curriculum that builds students' knowledge and vocabulary while teaching skills in reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

CKLA focuses on foundational reading skills which are taught in a systematic and explicit way. It also includes specific integrated instruction on spelling code and writing skills that build from the most common sounds and spelling to the least used, alternative spellings. There are embedded assessments that are administered three times a year and help teachers to make data-driven decisions on students' progression through the standards. This data supports instructional decisions in the core classroom as well as work done in remediation. In addition, students who are in need of interventions receive curriculum-aligned interventions that support foundational reading skills and practice.

Guidebooks is an ELA curriculum made by teachers for teachers and each unit ensures all students can read, understand, and express their understanding of complex grade-level texts.

In addition to Guidebooks, students are exposed to cold reads scheduled by the district. The district also provided a pacing guide for both curricula that are modified/adjusted yearly based on teachers' feedback.

All students are assessed by the teachers using assessments provided by the district and/or state as well as IReady. The data collected allows us to group students for individualized/small group instructions targeting specific standards. For our 3rd-5th grade students, the data is also utilized to provide after-school tutoring or enrichment through our free extended learning program.

Our teachers use a common writing strategy called RACE (Restate the questions, Answer the question, Cite text evidence, Explains what it means) to help our students improve their writing skills (used in ELA, science, social studies, and math for constructed responses). The formative assessments that are teacher-created are used to plan short-term interventions. The data collected is crossed with data collected by summative assessments and helps plan long-term interventions.

We have a strong after-school tutoring program (extended learning) that is standard-based. The data collected from the assessments help us create small group instructions. We connect that information to our social studies/science after-school tutoring program as well to reinforce the ELA standards through the teaching of another subject.

Since March/April 2020, our district has adapted to support the continuation of teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. The district ELA team adjusted the pacing calendar according to the LDOE.

1c. Mathematics curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

In grades pre-K-5th, we utilize Eureka Math, which is a Tier I curriculum according to the Louisiana Department of Education. It has been translated into French to meet the expectations of our French immersion program. Eureka's curriculum carefully sequences mathematical progression and aligns with the Louisiana State Student Standards. It creates a deep understanding of the why behind numbers. The curriculum strictly provides the same structure across all grade levels focusing on fluency practice, application problem solving, concept development, student debriefing, homework, and exit ticket. District math coaches create yearly pacing calendars to ensure all grade level standards are taught. With guidance from the LDOE Implementing Eureka Math document, a district's Year At A Glance document is available to recognize the frequency of standards as aligned to the Eureka Math curriculum.

To ensure our teachers are meeting the academic needs of all of our students, our math department created common module assessments on Edulastic, a digital platform. These assessments are aligned with the Louisiana Math Student Standards and Assessment Guide. Also, our students are assessed three times a year utilizing IReady Diagnostic assessments - Tier I Diagnostic Tool. Together these assessments help our teachers and students prepare for the state assessments (LEAP 360 Interims and LEAP 2021) by creating differentiated individualized lessons targeting specific standards. Throughout the school year, our leadership team, district math coach, and teachers review data monthly to decide on any future curriculum adjustments such as learning acceleration or intervention. The data also help us create intervention plans for our tiered students. We organize our students depending on how far they are from the next achievement level (i.e. bubble kids who are five or fewer points from the next achievement level) and provide intervention to help them reach that level at the next state test. Our students use Zearn and IReady math to support their learning and offer additional practice. The data collected on IReady allows the teachers to create differentiated individualized lessons targeting specific standards. Our teachers mostly use intervention, after-school tutoring, IReady, and exit tickets to continue working on standards and standards that will be tested for modeling and application and expressing mathematical reasoning (Type II and Type III questions).

We are aware that our students need to develop better skills when it comes to constructed response-type questions that require several steps and answers. We have worked with the district coaches during PLCs to develop ways for teachers to help students.

Since March/April 2020, our district has adapted to support the continuation of teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1d. Science curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Ph.D. Science is the curriculum we teach to our students from grade K to 5th. It has a hands-on approach that pushes students to experiment, explore, identify and discuss science concepts. The curriculum is translated into French and focuses on an anchoring phenomenon. It is conducive to applying, investigating, evaluating, and connecting ideas. As mentioned previously, we have district coaches who are developing a pacing calendar and providing support throughout the school year. The formative assessments take place on a regular basis and are included in the curriculum. The district created unit assessments available on Edulastic that are used to collect data and plan interventions. Our extended learning program after school includes science and combines it with ELA. They both solicit common skills such as comprehending informational texts and writing from the text using supporting evidence. Our teachers use Nearpod to make their lessons interactive and include bell ringers/exit tickets to formatively assess the students.

The data collected in class and through the assessments are reviewed by the district and our team to decide on future individualized/small group/whole class interventions.

Since March/April 2020, our district has adapted to support the continuation of teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. The district science team adjusted the pacing calendar according to the LDOE.

1e. Social studies/history/civic learning curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

There is no tier 1 curriculum for social studies available yet. In the meantime, the district coaches created materials that are helping with teaching the Louisiana State Standards. Students are exposed to sources to read (complex texts) and have to identify, explore and discuss. They have to answer constructed responses citing evidence from the text. Once again, it is tied to our ELA curriculum and helps students become skilled readers. Our social studies "curriculum" is translated into French. It is task-oriented, it involves comparing sources, and it pushes students to demonstrate understanding of the concepts through writing.

The school district coaches developed a pacing calendar and they provide support throughout the school year. The formative assessments take place on a regular basis and are included in the curriculum. The district created unit assessments available on Edulastic that are used to collect data and plan interventions. Edulastic and Nearpod are online and help students with skills needed (answering constructed response questions and reviewing sources online/on a computer) to help with the end-of-year assessment.

Our extended learning program after school includes social studies and combines it with ELA. They both solicit common skills such as comprehending informational texts and writing from the text using supporting evidence. Our teachers started using Nearpod to make their lessons interactive and they included bell ringers/exit tickets to formatively assess students.

The data collected in class and through the assessments are reviewed by the district and our team to decide on future individualized/small group/whole class interventions.

Since March/April 2020, our district has adapted to support the continuation of teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. The district social studies team adjusted the pacing calendar according to the LDOE.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

Teaching Strategies Creative Curriculum is the curriculum used at Myrtle Place and across the district. It drives differentiated instruction and is directly aligned to the authentic observation-based assessment, Teaching Strategies GOLD, that is embedded into the curriculum. The teachers use the online TSGold platform to enter their daily observations and submit documentation for evidence of leveling children's knowledge, skills, and behaviors.

Our pre-K4 students are receiving instruction in French for the most part. It prepares them with a better foundation to attend Kindergarten in French the following year.

The curriculum focuses on social-emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, and mathematical objectives that are necessary for a smooth transition into kindergarten. The pre-K program has designed the curriculum scope and sequence that is directly aligned with Louisiana's Birth to 5 Early Learning & Development Standards which are aligned with the kindergarten standards. Additionally, the program is aligned with K-3 academic standards in math such as the understanding of number concepts & operations, understanding spatial relationships and shapes, comparing and measuring, and demonstrating knowledge of patterns. The alignment with the ELA/FLA (French Language Arts) standards focuses on demonstrating progress in listening to and understanding, and in demonstrating progress in speaking English/French.

There is an alignment also with K-3 science by learning how to use scientific inquiry skills, demonstrating knowledge of characteristics of living things, demonstrating knowledge of physical properties of objects and materials, and demonstrating knowledge of Earth's environment.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Arts is included in our daily schedule and includes music, band, PACE (Primary Academic Creative Experiences) art, and regular art. The PACE artists conduct "art-integrated" classes that advance Common Core curriculum standards in Science, Social Studies, Mathematics, and English Language Arts through engaging activities rooted in art, dance, theater. They serve grades K-3.

The music class focuses on teaching the Louisiana music standards and is offered once a week for pre-K to 4th and every day for 5th graders (30 minute classes). It focuses on four standards and benchmarks based upon the National Standards for Arts Education and Discipline-Based Arts Education. These standards are creative expression, aesthetic perception, historical and cultural perspective, and critical analysis.

Physical education is offered every day for 30 minutes. The curriculum teaches the Louisiana State standards focusing on movement education, skills-themes approach, social and personal responsibility mode, teaching games for understanding.

Foreign language is part of our curriculum as we are a French immersion school. There is no other foreign language offered.

Technology is part of daily instruction. We have a device for every child. Library is once a week for 30 minutes. The American Association of School Librarians identifies four standards for 21st-century learning. The standards serve as the guiding philosophy behind the development of the Louisiana Student Standards for Libraries: inquire, think critically, and gain knowledge; draw conclusions, make informed decisions, apply knowledge to new situations, and create new knowledge; share knowledge and participate ethically and productively as members of our democratic society; and pursue personal and aesthetic growth.

We offer robotics and programming to our advanced students during RTI (response to intervention) daily.

From a character-building perspective, our teachers and staff subscribe to the philosophy that every child needs to be encouraged to develop good citizenship, good moral character, and leadership potential. For this reason, each student and staff member participates in a verbal pledge daily to "Care about themselves and others, to use good manners, to believe in themselves and to show school spirit." This school philosophy is reinforced at every level by every staff member every day. In addition, we consistently promote the power of positive thinking in announcements, correspondence, and the general school climate. Our students know that we genuinely care for one another. We teach them to genuinely care for themselves and for their classmates as well. By impacting our school culture in a consistent manner, employing the idea of positive expectations for everyone, we help facilitate this amazing transformation. During the most recent experiences encountered with the challenges of COVID, our teachers and staff have become good role models by stepping up to the plate to help each other accomplish the mission. Our administrators and

teachers help the custodians, They teach classes when substitute teachers are unavailable. In short, we believe in leading by example and demonstrating the power of teamwork.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Our school has an School Building Level Committee (SBLC) team that meets every Wednesday afternoon to discuss specific students with their teachers and parents. We review data from several assessments and discuss with the teachers what their concerns are. Based on that, we move the students performing below grade level to a tier II or III intervention. After 4-6 weeks of interventions and weekly progress monitoring, we reconvene to decide if the child will remain in tier II or move to tier III and eventually be recommended for an evaluation.

The daily instruction is also modified and the students attend RTI as well as extended learning focusing on standards/skills that need to be mastered.

Our Accelerated Reader program is organized in a way to push our students to read and test their reading comprehension. We have several challenges and one of them is for the students to reach their personal goals. Reading is important for students to be successful.

We hired several tutors with our Title 1 money and additional money allocated by the academic department. One tutor is in charge of pulling Tier II students and monitoring their progress online. Our second tutor pulls Tier III students and Special Education students to offer them additional support. Our third tutor is French-speaking and offers French as Second Language sessions during their French Language Art classes.

The teachers also program activities on IReady to help students master the targeted standards.

We also have a mentoring system in place called check-in/out with the SBLC team to follow up and show the students we are interested in seeing their progress.

Attendance is extremely important which is the reason why we contact families and help with transportation when needed when school buses don't serve certain locations. We tend to see a correlation between attendance and progress. We communicate that to our families and work with them to improve attendance.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Students who perform above grade level receive small group enrichment during our daily RTI bloc. Additionally, we offer an after-school enrichment program that is free of charge. Students are exposed to higher-order thinking questions as well as robotics and programming.

Students performing above grade level still need to improve and progress. We check their assessment results the same way we do it for all students. We look for specific standards they are not mastering yet and target those that need some tuning. Re-engagement and reteaching take place in class, during RTI, and after school when needed. The teachers also program activities on IReady to help students master the targeted standards.

The overall mindset used to be that we would work more with the below-level students. Things have shifted and we now develop activities for all levels focusing on standards and skills. We hired a French-speaking tutor who offers French as Second Language sessions during the students' French Language Art classes. Performing above level does not mean that those students are excelling in the French Language yet.

Our Accelerated Reader program is organized in a way to push our students to read and test their reading comprehension. We have several challenges and one of them is for the students to reach their personal goals. Reading is important for students to be successful.

3c. Special education:

Special education services is implemented following an inclusion setting. The homeroom teacher and special education teacher co-teach and are both available for all students while still servicing the special education students. The specifically-designed instruction does not replace but supplements the individualized supports provided in the general education setting.

Students who have a 504 or IEP receive specific accommodations on top of their special education & interventions minutes.

Our state and district promote high-quality instruction to ensure the achievement of ambitious IEP goals. We have a culture of achievement by providing collaborative structures, high-quality instruction for all that is specially designed for students with disabilities.

The instruction is adapted, when possible, in content, methodology, or delivery to address the unique learning needs of a student with a disability.

To help with the achievement gap, the special education students receive intervention in a Tier setting and they receive their special education minutes as stated on their IEP.

Myrtle Place adds an additional tutor who works in an inclusion or push-out setting and the students attend our extended learning program after school.

3d. English Language Learners, if a special program or intervention is offered:

The district offers a special ESL program and services if need be. We did not have to use the services so far.

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

The district has a department that is dedicated to migrants, displaced families, homeless.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Myrtle Place continues to engage, motivate, and provide students with a positive environment by providing a safe and conducive learning environment. From a social perspective, during the school closure in the spring of 2020, our staff created weekly activities that were engaging our students and their families. The principal recorded herself reading a storybook that she would share weekly. Students were encouraged to do the same. We would team up to post pictures of weekly challenges. For example, drawing something we all love on the sidewalk, dressing up a certain way, writing messages to each other, etc. On the academic side, our teachers organized Zoom meetings that allowed students to continue practicing the French language. Work was shared through Google Classroom and we printed packets the students could pick up (drive-thru) if they did not have a device. Our counselor was available to answer calls to continue helping students she was servicing prior to the pandemic.

When school resumed in August of 2020, we were all ready! The administration and the teachers met several times over the summertime (Zoom) to work on an action plan. Our district did an excellent job creating a document providing guiding questions to help us. Academically, one of our priorities was to offer tutoring in the French language. We hired a team of tutors to help remediate students who needed more help in math/ELA. Our district coaches tweaked the curriculum pacing guides to review foundational skills at the beginning of the school year. We used universal screening to have baseline data. Throughout the year, we hosted after-school tutoring sessions to help students who were below level and we provided advanced (enrichment opportunities) in math, ELA, social studies & science. That continuous support has been well received and our after-school tutoring program continues to be well attended.

Today, we continue offering a positive environment by first providing love and respect. This is truly the only way we can create a community that sticks together and has mutual trust. If a student is sad or upset, they won't learn. If a teacher is not doing well, they will not be able to focus and teach to their potential. By offering a nurturing environment and letting our students/staff know that we truly care for them, we set the tone for future success. Every morning during announcements, we repeat our school's expectations and reinforce them by citing specific examples. These are real examples from students we observe. We also promote positive behavior through an internal mailing system. Students and staff members write/draw positive notes that they deliver to each other.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Prior to the pandemic, Myrtle Place Elementary hosted a Principal's chat three times a year. Parents were invited to chat with the principal while sipping on coffee/tea. Our PTO (Parent-Teacher Organization) was very active as well and we would plan activities that always involved our school community. These included Fall Fete, a crawfish event at the park, or spending an hour in the classroom.

These very productive parental involvement opportunities will all be reinstated soon as the state reopens the schools to the public. Family members will be invited to again attend our "outdoor lunch" every other Friday. We also have Cub Corn once a month. This activity allows parents to come on campus and pop popcorn for our students. This event is also used as a fundraiser.

Literacy week has activities planned for five days. These activities include a picnic on the green where students, staff members, and parents can spend time together. Math Family Night is also a great event where families come to school and play math games with their children.

Our monthly newsletter has a link that parents can click on to share concerns or suggestions. We have a private Facebook group that is used to communicate with families. They can also use the group to communicate with us. The lines of communication are open and most of the families feel comfortable sharing ideas with us. That has been the most successful way to work with family and community members. During the beginning of the pandemic, we had a system in place using a Google Form to allow parents to

share concerns/questions/suggestions and help us build a strong "reopening plan" with a FAQ document.

Parents are also part of the discussion when it comes to their student's progress. Through our SBLC team, we call or meet in person as a team with our parents.

One of the community partnerships we have includes a couple of local churches. Our counselor communicates any needs for families, and the church volunteers get together to bring support (food, clothes, shelter).

Some of our families own businesses and help us organize spirit nights. These wonderful events not only raise money for our school but also bring an opportunity for our school community to come together. Our spirit nights are always a huge success! These events help promote our families' businesses and they also help us raise money for our walking track and other viable projects.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

It is important to create an environment where teachers feel valued and supported. Since the pandemic, we struggled with offering quality training to our faculty & staff. We then decided to focus on using our weekly PLC meetings to provide support based mostly on needs (differentiated). Our PLCs are designed to review data, discuss teaching strategies, model lessons and identify areas our teachers would need help with. Each PLC meeting comes with an agenda available online that has a link to an exit ticket. That exit ticket allows teachers to provide feedback and request specific follow-up discussions. We value our team and we want them to know that they can count on us. We do our best to show how important they are by getting back to them one way or another. The leadership team plans wellness activities as well as surprises for our faculty and staff (room service, mindfulness room, wellness challenges with surprises, coffee freshly made in the morning, sweets, and most importantly offering a listening heart and practicing what we preach). If staff members are absent and we don't have substitutes, the leadership team takes over and teaches. All hands on deck.

The school district provides professional development throughout the year that we, as a school, share with teachers when we identify a need.

When we heard about the possibility of starting the 2020-2021 school year virtually, we made sure to include our teachers in the discussion to adapt the sample plan shared by the district. We practiced it together which helped them feel better and ready. We never had to use the plan because we kept our schools open.

Another type of support we offer is through our 10 minute walk-through. We always highlight the great practice and provide suggestions if need be to help our teachers improve their practice. The teachers receive a yearly survey to evaluate the principal. We review the results together and they make suggestions that are implemented if we all agree. The principal helps them grow and they help her grow as well. It's important to work together.

Overall, we promote a positive working environment and culture by promoting kindness, attention, and true support.

4. School Leadership:

Our Myrtle Place Leadership Team strives to blend the key elements of a diversified school culture with aligned academics in order to better prepare students for global leadership opportunities. In that way, every staff member, student, and family member becomes a stakeholder in the process. We empower our students to take responsibility for their own actions. We also encourage our teachers to communicate their ideas and concerns. Our principal and assistant principal reach out to parents in order to help facilitate the process. We encourage every student and teacher to become better every day. As instructional leaders, our principal, assistant principal, counselor, and instructional strategist work together to make it happen.

The school principal practices what she preaches. Her voice is heard each day throughout the school and around the neighborhood as she makes morning announcements. These are often done in French and English. She points out specific qualities in students identified as "Cool Cubs" by their teachers. She gives specific reasons for such praise. She always points out how and why these acts of kindness make our world a better place. Our principal is the ambassador of positive community relations for our school.

The French-speaking assistant principal is highly visible too. He carries the momentum forward by mirroring the kindness that the principal promotes. He often reminds students during disciplinary meetings of the need to follow the tenants of the school mission. He subscribes to the personal philosophy that states: "Where there are problems, there are solutions." In short, he is a problem solver. The principal and assistant principal are true partners in the mission. They meet weekly with every teacher to carefully monitor the academic and social progress of every child.

The school counselor reminds students to "use good manners" and to "show school spirit." She is a cheerleader helping to create a culture of respect, kindness, and motivation through the weekly classes she teaches. Students like her and they feel comfortable talking to her. She has gained their trust. Our counselor is always grooming students to do their best.

The instructional strategist is known for her ability to give important feedback to better serve our teachers and students. She is highly organized and extremely knowledgeable. She consistently keeps the machine moving forward by always helping teachers better understand the intricacies of the curriculum and the most effective methods to implement the material.

Indeed, administrative roles have shifted in recent years. Disciplinary referrals have been significantly reduced over the past five years. Now, valuable administrative time is better invested in helping students see and understand the true value of a great education. Most importantly, they are loved and feel loved.

We are extremely proud that one of our students has been recently selected as the top "Student of the Year" for our district.

Myrtle Place is now a different place because of leadership and teamwork.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Our school is multicultural by the fact that we welcome teachers from all backgrounds and from all over the world. Our teachers come from Niger, Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Haiti, France, Belgium, Morocco, and the Cajun/Creole of Louisiana. When they move to Louisiana to teach the French language, they bring their folklore and traditions. They also bring their unique accent and dialect used in the area from whence they came. Our diversity allows us to better understand how important it is to be aware of who we are and where we come from. Our students and parents are exposed very early on to language and cultural barriers that help with cultivating tolerance and acceptance. Just picture a student starting in pre-K with a French-speaking teacher from Louisiana and a paraprofessional from Niger. When the student moves to kindergarten, the teacher is from France. In 1st grade, from Belgium. In 2nd grade from Morocco, etc. The multicultural experience is incredibly rich because teachers not only focus on academics, but also on sharing their background, comparing and contrasting with the students' backgrounds. Cultural awareness is definitely embedded in our daily instruction in a natural way. Respect is mutual and important. The 5th-grade graduation trip includes an international exchange with families in Martinique. Martiniquais students spend a week in Louisiana in April and stay with families of our students. In June, our students spend a week there and stay with their corresponding families. They learn and experience the differences of being in school in another country and they are immersed in the language as well as the culture. The cost of the trip requires us to work together and raise money. Students and families come up together and organize several Saturday morning breakfasts at school where we all work!

Equity is a very sensitive subject. For this reason, it is of utmost importance to ensure that our students are made aware of its benefits. We feel that we are compelled to provide an equitable education to all students. This is accomplished by teaching the same on-level curriculum to all students while offering strategies that

will be different. We learn about our students and their families to ensure that we are mindful of who they are and where they come from.

The support we have been providing ranges from academic support (tiers I, II, and III, after-school tutoring, mentorship, and check-in/out) to personal support (providing clothes, food, transportation, assistance, and counseling). Prior to the pandemic, parents were always very involved in our weekly activities. We hosted "outside lunch" every other Friday and invited parents to eat with their child(ren). We hosted outdoor games, "Fall Fete," and outdoor concerts inviting parents and musicians to play for our school community. We have several activities throughout the school year honoring veterans, grandparents, and special friends. We are now bringing these community events back since Covid seems to be more under control.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

After discussing this question with staff members, they mentioned that the overall school atmosphere has been the most instrumental to the school's success. They elaborated on that statement and mentioned that positivity, respect, and trust are definitely key to creating a comfortable working environment. Once you establish a good working environment, it is conducive to wanting to do your best at all times. This leads me to strongly believe that the social-emotional has been the most influential factor. We all know that we are there for each other no matter what because we proved it over time. Modeling the expectations and being there to support only pushes us to want to work harder. We act the same way with our students and they seem to be striving to learn in a positive school climate.

Passion is another positive trigger to create a conducive work/learning environment. If you are passionate, you will pass along that passion to your students/staff.

We all do our best to be there for each other and for our children. "All hands on deck" is something we put into practice when needed, including the leadership team and our school office staff. It is just amazing how much we all do for each other.

Of course, academics and data are extremely important as well. A quality curriculum is not enough. It has to be taught with rigor, and quality assessments will help guide your instruction, therefore, your students' success. If you have a solid and genuine foundation, you will have a conducive working environment. Your faculty & staff will accept feedback if you welcome feedback from them. It is a two-way street!

It is known that principals sometimes have to make decisions without collecting feedback from staff/parents/students, but when you can ask for their opinion it is always a positive experience because we all see through different lenses. Leading a team will work if they know they are part of the process. When it is possible, it is important to include them in the thinking process and insist on the fact that they are key. Let them know through your actions that they matter and are valued. It does not have to be impossible tasks. It takes simple things such as taking the time to know them, taking the time to care, making a big pot of coffee early in the morning, writing them a nice note, covering for them in class when needed, or just "being there."