

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

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address PO Box 769  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Larimore State ND Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 58251-0769

County Grand Forks County

Telephone (701) 343-2249 Fax (701) 343-2463

Web site/URL https://www.larimorek12.org E-mail kylie.swanson@k12.nd.us

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. Steve Swiontek E-mail steve.swiontek@k12.nd.us  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Larimore School District #44 Tel. (701) 343-2249

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. Mitch McCoy  
(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**

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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 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

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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):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 2 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	14	13	27
K	10	14	24
1	14	12	26
2	12	8	20
3	8	24	32
4	13	18	31
5	13	9	22
6	12	17	29
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
<b>Total Students</b>	96	115	211

\*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):
- 3.3 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 0 % Asian
  - 0.5 % Black or African American
  - 10.4 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 83 % White
  - 2.8 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2020 - 2021 school year: 6%

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.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	9
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	5
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	14
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	237
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.06
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	6

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

Spanish

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %

3 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 28 %

Total number students who qualify: 59

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 17 %  
36 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>4</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>4</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>5</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>2</u> Speech or Language Impairment         |
| <u>0</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: 7
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.

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	15
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	8
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	5
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 14:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017
Daily student attendance	97%	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.

<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.

To educate students as individuals in an environment that commits to high personal and academic achievement. Every Child, Every Chance, Every Day.

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

[https://www.larimorek12.org/pdf/Policies/A\\_Policies-School%20District/aac\\_\\_nondiscrimination2.pdf](https://www.larimorek12.org/pdf/Policies/A_Policies-School%20District/aac__nondiscrimination2.pdf)

[https://www.larimorek12.org/pdf/Policies/A\\_Policies-School%20District/aac-br\\_grievance\\_procedure.pdf](https://www.larimorek12.org/pdf/Policies/A_Policies-School%20District/aac-br_grievance_procedure.pdf)

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

## **PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW**

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Larimore, North Dakota is a rural town located 30 miles west of Grand Forks, ND, which is in the heart of the Red River Valley. The town is nestled between the Largest Concentration of Shelter Belts in the World and acres of prosperous farmland. While driving through Larimore, you will encounter numerous local attractions: the Larimore Dam, the Larimore Golf Course, the historic Avalon Theater, and the Larimore Museum.

Larimore is named after Newell G. Larimore, who established what is now known as Elk Valley Farms. It was when the railroad was built in 1881 that Larimore began to see an increase in population. Our school and community continued to grow when the Grand Forks Air Force Base was established in 1957, approximately 15 miles east of Larimore. Today, many families in our community continue to be employed by the Grand Forks Air Force Base.

The current elementary school was built in 1961, with students enrolled in grades kindergarten through sixth grade. However, during the initial years, due to lack of space, sixth graders were transported to the neighboring small town of Arvilla. In 1985, an addition was built to allow us to welcome the district's sixth grade students into the building. Recently, a referendum was passed to build a gymnasium onto the south side of the elementary school.

The community is family centered, providing ample opportunities to create memories together. Families can spend time attending local sporting events, parades, concerts, street dances, the Larimore Days town celebration, Farmers' Market, and the annual Holiday Extravaganza. The community of Larimore continues to invest and make improvements through a citywide street infrastructure project, a recently passed referendum for an additional elementary school gymnasium, and a potential project to increase housing availability within the community.

Many of the students we have in our district have parents or even grandparents that have attended Larimore Elementary School. Families continue to be self-employed farmers, work at the Grand Forks Air Force Base, or are employed by one of many local shops along Larimore's main street, Towner Avenue.

The Larimore Public School mission is "To educate students as individuals in an environment that commits to high personal and academic achievement." This encompasses the passion for learning that we hope to instill in all students who advance through Larimore Elementary School.

The staff at Larimore Elementary School believe in the school motto "Every Child, Every Chance, Every Day." This is evident through the variety of opportunities and services available to our students.

The current administrator has been employed within the district for the past 23 years as a classroom teacher, a school counselor, and is currently serving in her seventh year as principal. The consistency of our administrator as an employee at Larimore Elementary School has allowed the school to have follow through of initiatives and buy-in from all stakeholders.

A full-time school counselor is available to all students and provides counseling lessons in the classroom. In addition to providing social and emotional support services to students, the counselor also serves as the lead team member for the district Cognia team, as well as the school's data coordinator.

The special education department includes a variety of qualified professionals. This team consists of two full-time special education teachers, a part-time special education teacher, a speech language pathologist, a part-time occupational therapist, and a part-time physical therapist. Additional supports available to our students include a behavioral therapist, a vision specialist, and a community violence intervention therapist.

The school provides a variety of opportunities for students to be successful in all aspects of education. Administration and staff continually examine current practices to determine areas for improvement within the school.

Our school implemented a preschool program in 2008 due to the need for early intervention within our community. Students between the ages of three and five attend a district wide preschool screening to determine if early intervention services are needed. All children are accepted into the program once they turn four years old.

In 2015, the Walk to Read program was established for students in first and second grade to help differentiate instruction based on student's academic needs. Students are grouped based on instructional level and move to either a support or benchmark/extended group for reading instruction. After witnessing the success of the program, Walk to Read was extended the following year to include students in third and fourth grade. This program relies on additional push-in support from paraprofessionals, the Title I reading teacher, and special education staff.

Currently, Larimore Elementary School is in the process of switching from Targeted Title I to a Schoolwide Title I program. The district employs a full time Title I reading teacher and a part time Title I math teacher. Qualifying students receive services individually or in small groups. The Title I reading teacher is pushed into the classroom during Walk to Read to help improve student reading skills.

Following a Cognia review, it was determined that sixth grade students were struggling with the transition to Junior High. In 2019, a middle school concept was implemented in the fifth and sixth grade. Our teachers went from teaching one group of students to departmentalizing. Teachers were provided more opportunities to collaborate, which allowed them time to develop cross-curricular learning experiences, common expectations, and a flexible schedule. This was done to create a cohesive program to meet the unique needs of this age group.

Through Multi-Tiered Systems of Support training, staff have started utilizing data in all aspects of decision making. The team consists of the administrator, school counselor/data coordinator, and the Title I reading teacher. Special education staff, along with teachers, attend monthly meetings to discuss individual student concerns and progress.

In response to COVID-19, Larimore Elementary School took steps to ensure the students continued to receive a quality education. From March to May 2020, all students in our district were distance learners. A technology device was provided to each student in kindergarten through sixth grade.

Kindergarten through fourth grade incorporated SeeSaw as a learning management system, while the fifth and sixth grade classrooms incorporated Microsoft Teams. In addition to teachers providing asynchronous learning in all subject areas, individual and class meetings were scheduled throughout the week using Teams and Zoom. Special education case managers served the required Individualized Education Plan minutes daily through these same platforms.

In order for students to receive the required course work, the office staff scheduled weekly pickup/drop off times for in-town students, and bus drivers delivered to out-of-town students on their route. Daily meals were provided to all children within the district, ages birth to eighteen. These meals could be picked up at the school or delivered to their homes.

In the 2020-2021 school year, school was held in person with the option of distance learning. Staff and students who attended in person were required to follow the district Covid-19 committee guidelines. In December of 2020, a distance learning teacher was employed by the district to help support our distance learners. This teacher incorporated the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt learning platform, Ed, to instruct and communicate with students. A part-time nurse was also hired in December 2020 to help assist with Covid-19 related issues and other medical needs. Larimore Elementary School has continued to receive the services from a school nurse throughout the 2021-2022 school year.

This year, 2021-2022, distance learning was not offered. All students attended school in person.

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

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### **1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.**

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

Elementary staff members worked together collaboratively to create a document for the content areas of reading and math, aligning curriculum to the North Dakota State Standards. “I Can” statements were developed after analyzing standards to aid students in the understanding of their learning objectives. Following the creation of this document, priority standards were determined at each grade level, and eventually aligned horizontally and vertically across all grade levels. This document provides staff and administration the guidance needed when purchasing curriculum and planning student instruction. Learning goals are posted in classrooms to communicate with students the intended learning objective in that specific content area.

Instructional strategies utilized by teachers are based on the forty-three elements from Robert Marzano’s Instructional Framework. These elements identify specific teacher behaviors that directly impact student learning. Professional learning goals, based on this framework, have allowed teachers to increase their pedagogy skills, which has had a direct impact on increasing student engagement.

Through differentiated instruction, teachers accommodate student learning needs. Formal and informal data is reviewed regularly to ensure all students are making adequate progress. If data shows a deficiency, interventions and re-teaching are provided.

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

Kindergarten instruction focuses on a hands-on learning approach aligned to the North Dakota State Standards. Students begin by being introduced to the letters of the alphabet using the A-Z Circle Maps, where students focus on one letter of the alphabet each day. Teachers incorporate Heggerty Phonics, Scott Foresman Reading Street, Saxon Phonics, and decodable readers into their daily reading instruction. These resources provide students with knowledge to learn pre-reading readiness skills that include sight word practice, working with a variety of manipulatives to reinforce concepts, and participating in backpack reading.

Walk to Read is the instructional approach used in first through fourth grade. Embedded within this program is the core concept of differentiating instruction based on students’ instructional levels. In addition to teacher input, students are grouped according to Fountas and Pinnell reading levels and the Renaissance STAR assessment. Students are placed in either a support group or a benchmark/extended group within their grade level.

The primary focus of the support group is to help close the learning gap by providing multiple staff-led centers. Student instructional content is based on the grade level standards; however, the teaching methods vary depending on skill levels. Any deficient skill areas are taught during this time through push-in services from special education and Title I staff.

Instruction in the benchmark/extended group involves opportunities for students to become independent learners. The format is the same as the support group; however, the emphasis for this group is based on providing opportunities for a higher level of thinking.

The concept for Walk to Read is based on instructional strategies from The Daily 5. This consists of a whole group focus lesson, followed by small group center rotations. Materials used to support teacher instruction include Scott Foresman Reading Street, Scott Foresman Reading Street decodables, novel units, Heggerty Phonics, and Fountas and Pinnell leveled readers. We also utilize various technology platforms such as SeeSaw, Epic, Raz-Kids, newsela, SplashLearn, Dreamscape, and Reading A-Z. Also incorporated in the

Scott Foresman Reading Street curriculum is the spelling program that teachers in grades first through sixth use.

Moving into fifth and sixth grade, most of the students are at or above benchmark, which has allowed us to provide instruction without the intensive format of Walk to Read. Instruction is still differentiated, and students continue to rotate through centers; however, there is more opportunity to implement project-based learning through novel studies and book clubs due to the increased skill level of the students.

Larimore Elementary School uses the Steve Dunn Writing curriculum. Teachers have attended trainings in order to implement this writing initiative across all grade levels. This approach was chosen due to the rigor and continuity that students have from kindergarten through sixth grade. Due to the structure of the middle school concept, we are able to dedicate a daily writing rotation for these students.

Beginning in preschool, students are introduced to handwriting using the Zaner-Bloser Handwriting curriculum. Cursive writing is first introduced in the second semester of second grade. Students continue to practice learned techniques through sixth grade.

Formative assessments used to check student understanding include exit slips, student self-assessment tools, quick-writes, think-pair-share, reading related educational games, reader's theater, task cards, and small group discussions. Technology based platforms are also used for formative assessments, including Kahoot, Blookey, Quizizz, and Quizlet. These are effective practices that provide teachers with feedback regarding student understanding of concepts. These results help guide teacher instruction on a more regular basis.

In addition to daily formative assessments and in-program summative assessments, students are assessed monthly using Renaissance STAR and quarterly using Fountas and Pinnell. Data is reviewed monthly by the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support data team, as well as in grade level professional learning communities to inform instructional practices and track student progress. Preschool and kindergarten teachers evaluate students using a standards referenced report card each quarter.

Another summative assessment used in grades three through six includes the annual North Dakota State Assessment in the areas of both reading and writing.

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

Saxon Math curriculum is used in kindergarten through sixth grade. This curriculum aligns to the North Dakota State Standards. The North Dakota State Assessment scores have increased significantly since implementing Saxon curriculum schoolwide. Each grade level is provided with both intervention sheets and re-teaching worksheets for students who are not making adequate progress, as well as challenge worksheets for students needing additional challenges.

Students in kindergarten through grade two start their day with the Saxon curriculum math calendar. In addition to calendar concepts, weather, number charts, and patterns are included in calendar time. Teachers then continue with fact practice, a teacher guided lesson, and an independent student worksheet.

Once students are in third grade, they transition from the guided worksheets to a student math textbook. The curriculum then shifts to a spiraling approach where new concepts are taught daily while continuing to work on skills previously taught. Students begin each lesson by completing a power-up fact practice, followed by whole group instruction of a new concept, and then time to work independently on lesson practice. Teachers provide small group instruction or re-teaching of skills based on how students perform on their daily assignments.

A formative assessment that is completed monthly in kindergarten through sixth grade is the Renaissance STAR math test. Additional formative assessments that occur more frequently include exit tickets, white board responses, hand signals, task cards, math related educational games, and project-based learning activities. Technology based platforms are also used for formative assessments, including Kahoot, Blookey, Quizizz, Quizlet, and Prodigy.

In-program summative assessments are provided after every five lessons. The assessment consists of a power-up fact practice along with twenty questions that review skills taught in previous lessons. After every twenty lessons, there is a benchmark assessment that students complete. This assessment consists of twenty-five multiple choice questions addressing the skills taught in previous lessons. In grades three through six, students participate in the annual North Dakota State Assessment.

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

To support the North Dakota State Science Standards, teachers use the online Mystery Science curriculum, where students watch interactive videos and engage in activities and projects related to standards. Scholastic Super Science and Scholastic Science Spin are also used to aid in learning objectives. Hands on learning labs are encouraged in science for all age groups. Staff have access to shared science lab materials to help support classroom lab activities.

Students in fourth grade participate in River Watch activities sponsored by the high school River Watch team. Moving into fifth grade, students use the knowledge obtained from fourth grade to complete a project with the North Dakota Watershed Department to learn about the different watersheds in our local area. Each spring, this group releases a decorated canoe on the Turtle River. These canoes are registered and can be tracked through the different watersheds. In sixth grade, students visit Turtle River State Park twice a year to participate in hands-on learning activities presented by park staff.

Safer Kids for Tomorrow sponsors a variety of hands-on learning experiences for our students. Third graders participate in a bike safety presentation, and fifth graders participate in a water safety course.

The Larimore Fire and Rescue department and Larimore Ambulance Services work with the school to provide hands-on learning experiences related to fire safety and first aid during Fire Prevention Week.

Priorities in teaching science include fostering critical thinking and collaboration skills, as well as building confidence through participation and investigations. Staff want students to step into the shoes of a scientist and understand the importance of science in their world.

Formative assessments in the area of science include lesson quizzes in Mystery Science, observations, concept maps, exit slips, journaling, think-pair-share, and project-based learning activities. Technology based platforms are also used for formative assessments, including Kahoot, Blooket, Quizizz, and Quizlet. Summative assessments include unit tests in Mystery Science and the North Dakota State Science Assessment in fourth grade.

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

Teachers use the North Dakota Social Studies Standards to develop an instructional guide for social studies. All grade levels utilize Scholastic News to support student learning. Topics for students include civics and government, economics, geography, and history.

In fourth grade, students learn about North Dakota geography, history, government, and citizenship using the North Dakota Studies curriculum. They also use Pearson My World Social Studies: Regions of Our Country.

Instructional strategies used to teach social studies includes the use of graphic organizers to help organize learning concepts, using maps, cooperative learning activities, writing prompts, and different presentation techniques. Additional practices used to enhance an understanding of concepts in social studies is to develop cross-curricular experiences in conjunction with other subject areas such as music, art, reading, and writing.

Formative assessments in the area of social studies include lesson quizzes, project-based learning activities, concept maps, exit slips, debates, and quick-writes. Technology based platforms are also used for formative assessments, including Kahoot, Blooket, Quizizz, and Quizlet. Summative assessments include unit tests.

## **1f. For secondary schools:**

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

Larimore offers a part-time preschool program to provide early school readiness skills for students between the ages of three and four years old. Preschool screening is held in the spring to identify any students who may require early intervention. To attend preschool as a three-year-old, students must qualify for an Individualized Education Plan. The preschool classroom is staffed with a full-time teacher and a full-time paraprofessional, with additional supports provided by special education staff.

The preschool program is aligned to the Early Childhood State Standards. The standards have been prioritized to help students acquire skills that will help with the transition into kindergarten.

The preschool program focuses on preparing students to be successful in a school setting. The preschool teacher works with students to introduce literacy and math curriculum and develop social and emotional skills.

Learning is centered around themes to spark interests in students and create a fun learning environment. The students sing songs, recite rhymes, read books, and engage in fine motor activities all relating to these themes.

Students rotate between literacy, writing, and math centers throughout the day. During literacy centers, the Heggerty Phonics Awareness Curriculum is utilized, along with a variety of skills, including letter and sound recognition and beginning knowledge of books and how they are read. For writing centers, students work on handwriting using the Handwriting without Tears curriculum. Fine motor skills are enhanced by using manipulatives such as stamps, sand, and playdough. Math centers focus on number recognition, counting, patterns, and shapes. The calendar program that is used is similar to the Saxon Math curriculum to create an easy transition into kindergarten. Students gain knowledge of the calendar, weather, patterns, and work on counting skills.

Along with academic skills, this program also encourages students to build their social and emotional skills through daily free play activities. Students have the choice of various centers such as dramatic play, fine motor, gross motors, reading, puzzles, sensory, and music.

Student progress is reported to families each quarter using a standards referenced report card.

## **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

Larimore Elementary School offers a variety of other curriculum areas to help foster well-rounded students such as physical education, music, band, art, counseling, and library skills.

### **Physical Education**

The physical education program is formatted to engage students in a variety of physical activities to support healthy student lifestyles. Based on the North Dakota Physical Education standards, students are involved in various activities to address skills such as balance, coordination, and endurance. Through play, students not only gain physical skills, but learn how to work as a team and demonstrate positive sportsmanship. The ultimate goal is for students to realize the importance of staying active and the benefits of maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

### **Music and Band**

Students in preschool through sixth grade participate in music class for ninety minutes a week using the music curriculum, Spotlight. This program aligns to the North Dakota State Standards and covers topics

such as music vocabulary and comprehension, vocal techniques, handheld instruments, and listening and performance skills.

All students are given the opportunity to perform for a variety of audiences throughout the school year. This might include small group performances in the classroom, schoolwide assemblies, and community programs. Each year, there is a winter and spring program where third and sixth grade students act and sing on stage using a variety of props and microphones. The main goal of this program is to provide students with exposure to acting and performing, as well as foster an appreciation of music that will continue throughout their lifetime.

Students in fifth and sixth grade are given the opportunity to participate in band. They are given the option to choose their own instrument and attended weekly individual or small group lessons, as well as a weekly full band practice. The band performs twice a year, at both the winter and spring school concerts.

Fourth through sixth grade students are able to participate in after-school choir, where they are bussed to the high school to practice two days a week. These students then perform at the elementary school spring concert. This opportunity is provided to help create an interest in joining choir at the junior high level.

## Art

All students receive forty-five to ninety minutes of art weekly depending on their grade level. Students have opportunities throughout the school year to enhance their artistic abilities by using a variety of mediums such as watercolors, charcoals, pastels, acrylic paint, oil paints, chalk, crayons, markers, and color pencils, to create their own work of art.

In primary grades, the focus of art is on building fine motor skills through cutting, gluing, hand-eye coordination, tracing, coloring inside the lines, folding, and tearing.

In the upper-elementary classrooms, students work on fine tuning these skills as they learn more advanced techniques when working with warm and cool colors, patterns, perception, and shading. Students also learn techniques to properly use acrylic, tempera, and watercolor paints. At this level, students will follow step-by-step directions to complete art projects, or students will learn and practice skills to create their own individual art projects.

In previous years, funds have been donated to provide the students an opportunity to be taught by an Artist in Residence. This has given the students the ability to broaden their skill set while being taught by a professional artist. Student artwork was then put on display and families and community members were invited to view projects.

## School Counselor

The full-time school counselor provides a comprehensive counseling program addressing the academic, career, and social emotional development of all students. Students receive responsive individual or group counseling to address concerns and needs. The school counselor also provides career instruction using the North Dakota RUPReadyND online platform. In addition to direct support services, the school counselor is also a member of the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support team, the district's Homeless and Foster Care liaison, and works with outside agencies to advocate and provide support for student and family needs.

## Library

Our school employs a part-time librarian who sees each classroom once a week. The librarian is trained in using Odín, the North Dakota State Library system, to help manage material check in and check out.

The librarian instills a love of books for all students beginning in preschool. This is done through developing themes based on award-winning books, Dr. Seuss week, holidays, and author studies. Books are read to the students at the start of each class and book clubs are held throughout the school year for students in grades

five and six.

Library skills are taught to third graders. Some of these skills include how to find books in both the fiction and non-fiction section of the library, the categories of non-fiction books, and how to find and utilize different types of reference materials, such as a thesaurus, dictionary, and phone book. The librarian also teaches students how to utilize non-fiction text features, such as the glossary and index.

Twice a year, a book fair is held through Scholastic Books. This book fair positively impacts both students and teachers. Students and families are able to purchase books and other reading materials, which fosters a love of reading at home. Money from the book fair is donated back to the school, which helps teachers to grow their classroom libraries with new, up-to-date books. This is a very successful event in our community.

Other

Student Council is an activity for students in grades four through six, ran by the school counselor and the administrative assistant. Four students from each grade level are elected to serve as members of this club and plan events and fundraisers throughout the school year. This club promotes positive character traits, and these students serve as role models within our school. The student council proudly boasts of the various celebrations they sponsor, such as The Candy Cauldron, Holiday Bow Tree, movie and popcorn holiday celebration, school-wide bingo, Egg-stravaganza, various dress-up days, and the highly anticipated Larimore Dam Day.

A foster grandparent volunteers three days a week in various classrooms. She primarily listens to students read and is available to monitor group activities during the Walk to Read program.

We offer an extended school program to families in our school. Certified staff provide homework support and enrichment activities to students enrolled in the program. Students also have the opportunity to engage in free play, where a variety of skills are enriched, including peer relationships, collaboration, and a sense of imagination. This program is offered Monday through Friday from 3:15-5:30 P.M.

Summer school is offered to all students for four weeks each summer. Summer school teachers provide differentiated instruction to improve both reading and math skills.

### **3. Academic Supports**

#### **3a. Students performing below grade level:**

If a teacher has a concern regarding a student's abilities, they may refer the student to the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support team. At this meeting, teachers present data collected regarding student academics or behavior. It is then determined what accommodations to provide to assist in increasing student performance. Follow-up meetings are scheduled to track student progress, assess if accommodations are working, and, if needed, make a referral to special education.

For students to be selected for the Title I services, Title I staff refer to student data from previous years, Renaissance STAR assessments, Fountas and Pinnell reading levels, and classroom teacher input. The Title I program is designed to assist students in developing and expanding reading, language arts, and math skills taught in the classroom. Our school employs one full-time Title reading teacher and one part-time Title math teacher.

Once selected, additional screeners are administered to determine a targeted area of support and students are grouped according to deficit skill areas. Teachers provide this instruction in a small group or one-on-one setting to ensure all interventions are taught with fidelity.

The Title I reading teacher also provides push-in support to students through rotating centers in the Walk to Read support groups. Providing these additional interventions has been pivotal to the success of both the Title and Walk to Read programs due to the increased time spent with at-risk students.

Interventions for reading include: Heggerty Phonemic Awareness, Orton Gillingham, Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Readers, Modern Curriculum Press, and various sight word games and activities.

Math interventions include Saxon Math materials to reteach concepts, various manipulatives, and math games geared towards identified skills that students are lacking.

The Title teachers provide progress reports to families quarterly, which include the Renaissance STAR Progress Monitoring Report, a sight words progress chart, as well as an individualized report on student progress.

### **3b. Students performing above grade level:**

Students performing at or above grade level are provided with opportunities to challenge themselves academically using higher-level thinking skills. Professional development provides teachers with time to discuss priority standards, instructional strategies, and student engagement techniques. Progress is monitored monthly using Renaissance STAR test results to track academic growth for these students.

Grouping at or above benchmark students together during Walk to Read provides students with more opportunities to work independently and to be challenged with complex tasks. Instruction is not as repetitious, and tasks are not as structured as they are in the support group.

Students performing higher in math are challenged through “next level” math. For example, a student in one grade level whose data shows performance significantly higher than his peers will have access to materials that support concepts from the next grade level.

### **3c. Special education:**

The special education department in Larimore employs two full-time and one part-time special education teacher, five paraprofessionals, one full-time speech language pathologist, one part-time physical therapist, and one part-time occupational therapist.

Interventions provided to students are research based and are determined based on student need. Intervention programs include Orton-Gillingham, Heggerty Phonemic Awareness, Fountas and Pinnell, Reading Mastery, Edmark, and Touch Math. Staff monitor student progress using a variety of summative and formative assessments and student interventions are monitored and altered based on these results.

The Speech-Language Pathologist provides many interventions in the areas of expressive and receptive language, articulation, and augmentative and alternative communication.

The goal of the special education department is to help the students be successful in the least restrictive environment. Along with pull-out services, special education staff provide push-in services for additional support.

Special education staff work closely with classroom teachers to ensure student success. A weekly communication sheet is used and monthly meetings with grade level teachers are scheduled.

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

Our school employs one English Language Learning teacher who provides services to migrant students and students who qualify as an English learner. There is an interpreter available for Spanish speaking families during parent-teacher conferences, Individualized Education Plan meetings, or any other event where they may be needed. Students have the option to take any Renaissance STAR assessment using the Spanish version.

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



## **PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE**

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### **1. Engaging Students:**

Engagement is an important part of effective teaching. Larimore staff use the Marzano Framework elements to help improve teacher instructional pedagogy, which in turn increases student engagement. We realize that not all students are always capable of engagement, however, our school strives to create an environment where student engagement is carefully planned and monitored through observation and feedback from administration and peers.

Elements that are monitored most often are effective pacing, demonstrating intensity and enthusiasm, building positive teacher relationships, and using effective feedback. Pacing allows teachers to look at transitions, purposeful seatwork, and how they are presenting new information to students. To build positive relationships, teachers ensure equitable treatment of all students and find opportunities to show affection for students. Providing feedback is also demonstrated. Thoughts teachers might consider include analyzing the areas in which they can provide feedback to students and considering how feedback should be phrased.

Learning goals are posted in classrooms to provide students a clear focus on learning expectations and the desired achievement. Teachers provide ample opportunities for students to engage in their own learning using a variety of strategies, such as collaborating with peers, lessons focused on student interests, and genius hour presentations where students study various topics of personal interests.

Brain breaks and active movement strategies are incorporated in classrooms to enhance focus and increase engagement. Classrooms also have flexible seating options to fit the needs of individual students. This gives students the choice and responsibility in finding an appropriate space that positively impacts their personal learning abilities.

Our school provides one-to-one iPads to all students in kindergarten through sixth grade. A technology coordinator is available to assist with a variety of applications to enhance student engagement. Some applications students have access to include Reading A-Z, Epic, Prodigy, and Kahoot.

Classroom teachers and staff members were met with the challenge of adapting their teaching styles to continue to engage students from home during the Covid-19 pandemic. Multiple different technology platforms were utilized to engage learners and communicate with students and families. Teachers connected with students through different applications, including Zoom, Teams, and Seesaw.

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

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought new challenges with family and community engagement due to social restrictions and quarantine guidelines. This school year, we have slowly been getting back to the new normal and look forward to welcoming parents and community members back into our school.

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, parents and community members were invited into the school to attend a variety of activities, such as parent-teacher conferences, parent lunch days, student assemblies, music programs, and sixth grade graduation. The school previously hosted a carnival and silent auction that occurred every other year. This event provided additional funds to help support teacher instruction and student learning. Parent and community volunteers helped supervise games, serve dinner, and monitor a bouncy house. This was always an event that students, families, and community members looked forward to and we are excited to host it once again in April 2023.

The community shows support for our school through a variety of activities. The Larimore Community Action Club hosts holiday celebrations and family dances. We work collaboratively with the Larimore Park Board to provide summer activities for students such as t-ball, baseball, and recreational swimming. Larimore Polar Bear Booster Club sponsors a 3-on-3 basketball tournament for students in grades three through six, as well as a youth wrestling tournament for students in kindergarten through grade six. Another

great supporter of our school is the Larimore Booster Club. This group accepts staff requests to purchase classroom items that enhance student learning and engagement.

The students and staff support our community by hosting a yearly food drive for the local food pantry, providing holiday cards and treats to residents of the Good Samaritan Center, and donating to various charities throughout the year.

Larimore Elementary School prides itself on excellent communication with parents using the platform SwiftK-12, Seesaw, Schoology, Facebook, the school website, emails, notes, and newsletters.

Even though Covid-19 restricted some activities, it has allowed administration and staff to create new traditions, while continuing to honor some past traditions. Larimore Elementary School implemented an open house at the beginning of the school year to provide students and parents the opportunity to visit their classroom and meet their teacher. The annual sixth-grade graduation ceremony has changed from a semi-formal celebration held in the elementary gym to a graduation parade around town led by the local deputy, fire department, and ambulance.

Stakeholders are surveyed through Cognia resources regularly to ensure the school is getting adequate feedback on all areas of our school system.

### **3. Creating Professional Culture:**

Larimore Elementary School staff believe collaboration between team members is a crucial component for student success. Professional development is guided through the Cognia strategic plan which gives clear goals for staff to strive for. Administration, with input from staff, create a yearly professional development plan for designated district professional development days.

Professional learning communities have been established as a part of our culture. Grade level teams meet weekly to discuss instructional practices, engagement strategies, student performance, and other schoolwide tasks. This is something that has been developed over the past few years and administration has received positive feedback regarding the importance of this designated time. It has created a cohesiveness amongst staff members in regard to planning and classroom expectations. This is a space for teachers to be vulnerable and seek guidance from peers.

Teachers have participated in professional development pertaining to the Marzano Evaluation Model. Each year, staff determine a professional goal for evaluation purposes. Teacher feedback and support on identified goals are provided by administration and professional learning community members to help ensure accountability and progress towards their goal.

A positive shift in culture was evident when staff began to view students as “ours” versus “mine.” A big part of this shift transpired when Walk to Read was established. Eventually, as teachers were given opportunities to collaborate and share, this mindset became more apparent. Teachers had to learn to trust other teachers with “their” students, as well as how to collaborate and plan instruction together. Slowly, the culture began to shift. Student progress and success are celebrated by all staff members, and students not making adequate gains are supported by all staff members.

Professional culture is also influenced by staff willingness to change. Perspective on doing things a certain way because that’s the way it has always been done has altered. Change is viewed as positive within our school, as long as it is in the best interest of the students or school as a whole. This belief has helped create a culture where staff feel supported in trying new ideas.

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

Larimore Elementary School aims to provide a high-quality of learning through an administrative team that focuses on continuous improvement, a collaborative culture, professional development, and high expectations that foster growth for students and staff.

The district administrative team consists of the superintendent, building principals, technology director, business manager, athletic director, and the maintenance/transportation director. This team meets weekly to discuss short and long term needs of the district. The administrative team has yearly professional goals to support this process, completes a yearly book study, and is currently in the process of reviewing the district's vision and mission statements.

The principal was raised in Larimore and has been employed with Larimore Public Schools for 23 years. Throughout the years, she has served as a classroom teacher, counselor, and for the past seven years, has served as principal. The knowledge of this school district has led to many positive changes and consistency of programs. Since 2015, the principal has implemented the Marzano High Reliability Schools, the Walk to Read program, the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, is in the process of becoming Schoolwide Title, and continues to maintain school accreditation.

Larimore Elementary School adopted the Marzano High Reliability Schools Model in 2015. This allowed for a process that had continuity for teacher improvement. Staff is provided with support and professional development centered around their chosen goal. Each teacher chooses elements from the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model. The principal completes teacher evaluations and reviews individual progress towards these goals.

Curriculum, instructional programs, and formal assessments are reviewed yearly by the principal to ensure that a high quality of education is taking place. The principal communicates the overall student achievement data and progress towards goals with all stakeholders.

The principal promotes collaboration within all levels of decision making. Staff is empowered by the principal to seek opportunities for leadership within the school and to participate in professional development to advance their skills. The school promotes a positive culture where students and staff feel comfortable taking risks within the classroom. The principal ensures the Cognia Strategic Plan is being met with fidelity and district policies are being upheld.

##### **5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:**

Staff members take advantage of opportunities that provide culturally appropriate lessons to students for various holidays and traditions. We take pride in celebrating Black History Month, learning about the Native American culture and traditions, and about Mexican family traditions. Providing an inclusive curriculum helps students to understand different perspectives, appreciate strengths in others, and to build empathy towards others.

## **PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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One of the most influential changes made at our school continues to be the Walk to Read program. In 2015, staff expressed to the then first year principal their discontent with reading test scores on the North Dakota State Assessment. This forced staff to look at how reading was being taught and what assessments and data we were lacking as a school. Walk to Read has been part of our culture since December 2015. We started with students in grades one and two, and due to the success of this program, all students in grades one through four now participate in Walk to Read. After years of success, most fifth and sixth grade students are reading at or above benchmark. This has allowed us to shift from the Walk to Read program to a middle school, departmentalized concept.

To begin the process of Walk to Read, the first and second grade teachers spent a great deal of time assessing students. Fountas and Pinnell and Aimsweb were used to accurately determine students' instructional levels. Once instructional levels were determined, these students were divided and assigned to one of four instructional groups. At this time, grade levels were not a factor. Groups were based solely on the needs of students.

Student instruction was determined through weekly professional learning communities. Teachers at each level taught the same concept at the students' instructional level, which guaranteed that all students were learning the required standards. This was helpful for students because expectations were consistent between all classrooms and grade levels. Data was analyzed quarterly, and at this time, students were able to move to a different group as needed.

Additional supports were pushed into each instructional group but was not limited to only Title I staff and special educational teachers. We utilized everyone to help our students, including paraprofessionals, the school counselor, office staff, our foster grandma, and even the custodian. After one semester, staff recognized the drastic improvements in student achievement, which led to teacher buy-in.

Staff participated in professional development, which included a book study on *The Daily 5* by Gail Bousey and Joan Moser. This led to all classrooms being structured in a similar format, using a mix of whole group and small group instruction. Each day began with a focus lesson, followed by students rotating through various centers including a teacher center, word work, read to self, listen to reading, read to someone, and writing.

Through this process, there was a shift in school culture. Teachers began collaborating more and began seeing students as "ours" instead of "mine." Staff was willing to take risks and try new things, not only in reading, but also in their teaching, which greatly impacted student engagement.