

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 [] Magnet [] Choice

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

Official School Name Ethan Elementary School - 02
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 320 South 2nd Street PO Box 169
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Ethan State SD Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 57334-0169

County Davison County

Telephone (605) 227-4211 Fax (605) 227-4236

Web site/URL https://ethanschooldistrictsd.sites.thrillshare.com E-mail tim.hawkins@k12.sd.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.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent* Mr. Tim Hawkins E-mail tim.hawkins@k12.sd.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Ethan School District 17-1 Tel. (605) 227-4211

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.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Mr. Jeff Clendening
(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.

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date _____

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):
- 0 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 0 High schools
 - 1 K-12 schools
- 1 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	10	11	21
K	9	7	16
1	10	11	21
2	9	10	19
3	8	17	25
4	11	10	21
5	8	7	15
6	10	12	22
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	75	85	160

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 1.9 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 % Asian
 - 2.5 % Black or African American
 - 1.9 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 93.7 % 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: 1%

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	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	2
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	2
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	160
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.01
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	1

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

Spanish

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

2 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 24 %

Total number students who qualify: 38

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 22 %
35 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>1</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>2</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>4</u> Developmental Delay | <u>4</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>22</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: 2
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. 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	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	10
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	2
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	4
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 16:1

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	97%	98%	97%	97%	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 X No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2006

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school’s mission or vision statement.

The belief of the Ethan School district 17-1 is that the best possible education is the right and privilege of every student. The responsibility of the school is to educate students within the context of community values. The curriculum should be dynamic and progressive in order to meet the changing needs of both the individual and the entire student body. The school should strive to produce well-rounded American citizens through the total school program. The school will attempt to foster an atmosphere of excellence throughout its courses of studies and activities.

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

https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/819871/NonDiscrimination.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

Ethan, South Dakota is a very small community of 332 people located in south-eastern South Dakota. It lies on the very south edge of Davison County and borders the north edge of Hutchinson County. Ethan lies directly between two larger school districts along Highway 37. Parkston, South Dakota is ten miles south of Ethan and has an approximate population of 1,700 people. Mitchell, South Dakota is ten miles north of Ethan and has an approximate population of 15,600 people. The community of Ethan is agriculturally based, and the majority of the district's students come from farming families. The district is comprised of one main building that houses all three schools (elementary, junior high, high school), with a total enrollment of 283 students.

The Ethan School District is one of the smallest districts in the state, when you consider acreage and population. Due to its proximity to the larger districts to its north and south, the school does gain many students through open enrollment. Approximately one-third of the student enrollment comes from students that reside in other districts. These students come to Ethan because of their proximity to the school or because they wish to be educated in a smaller educational setting. These open enrolled students are vital to keeping the district's numbers strong and our doors open.

With limited number of businesses located in Ethan, the school is the focal point of the community. The community is very active in all events that take place at the school. Whether you are talking about sporting events, plays, or concerts, the stands are always full of community members of all ages. Ethan also has a Booster Club and our Community School Organization (CSO). Each fall, these organizations help plan and provide food and workers for our Open House. This is a great start to our school year and helps get our parents and community involved with the school. Both organizations are heavily involved with supporting our students and all programs they are involved in.

Academic achievement is something that has always been stressed in the Ethan School District. The grading scales used throughout the building are more stringent than most schools in the state. Like all small schools in South Dakota, we have a limited number of resources at our disposal. Three years ago, the district took steps to provide a laptop and/or iPad for each of our elementary students. This move gave our students an even greater opportunity to be successful in the classroom. The Ethan staff members take pride in having such high expectations of their students and go above and beyond to help those students obtain high standards of achievement. Rigorous curriculum is presented to our students, and teachers work diligently to support that curriculum with other resources that help students relate the material to real world applications. Staff members do this in a warm and inviting environment that helps them build strong relationships with their students. Those strong connections lead directly to high academic achievement.

The faculty continued excellence as the COVID-19 Pandemic closed schools across the country. Within a short period of time, curriculum was modified and adapted, and online e-learning schedules were established. The leadership and determination of the faculty allowed learning to continue. The Pandemic forced our teachers to become more innovative. Our school's strong engagement with parents allowed for information and guidance to families on effective practices for supporting their student and the e-learning process. We faced a challenge of not all families having access to internet service. Our District was able to connect families with internet providers to connect those families to e-learning. The 2020-2021 school year began with students in the building with COVID protection measures in place: temperature checks, dividers, and social distancing in attempts to continue face-to-face learning.

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:

The Ethan Elementary prides itself on aligning their curriculum to the South Dakota State Standards as well as the National Common Core Standards. Our view of pedagogy is that skills are taught at the appropriate level and then built upon year after year. We use data analysis and an instructional coach to help us find the “gaps” and/or “instructional holes” so we can ensure students are receiving a seamless education. Teachers also use curriculum mapping to make certain they are covering the standards set for their grade level. Teachers use a variety of means to educate their students. Exploration, inquiry, authentic experiences, and visual/auditory/kinesthetic learning are often implemented in the elementary classrooms in the Ethan School. Teachers are fortunate to also have technology such as SMART Boards, iPads, Chromebooks, Common Core Standards, and Boogie Boards as tools for their classrooms. From year to year, teachers collaborate on specific students and what can be done to best help them be successful in the future. Teachers share techniques, skill sets, advice, and assistance so the transition from one grade to the next is a smooth shift. Teachers look out for their students, not just the year they have them, but for many years following.

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

The reading curriculum at Ethan encourages students to complete and master skills at an individualized pace. It also covers a wide range of genres to provide students with a well-rounded literacy experience. We practice reading skills daily using selections chosen for the skill we are focusing on. We also use a collaborative approach in discussing and practicing those skills. The students also read leveled novels independently and apply those skills to their reading of the novel. We learn vocabulary words each week that go along with the literature for the week. The students practice using the vocabulary words daily. We incorporate writing into the reading almost daily as well through journal entries focusing on skills learned.

In lower elementary grade levels, students are given a placement test at the beginning of every year placing them at an appropriate reading level. Students are placed in small groups to focus on leveled and guided reading, word work, comprehension, retell, spelling, and other foundational skills to build upon in later years. They are given a mastery test every four weeks to monitor progress and review skills learned.

Our curriculum offers the opportunity for students to collaborate with their peers, listen to read-alouds, and echo read. The students are required to use their best handwriting practices throughout their elementary years. Acadience benchmark tests are used three times a year to assess students’ comprehension and retelling skills. Weekly vocabulary quizzes assess their knowledge of the vocabulary. Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments are used to collect data and identify any weaknesses a student may have. Instruction is then modified to address any of those weak areas. This drives the curriculum and lessons so we can focus on skills yet to be mastered.

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

The curriculum used by the Ethan Elementary incorporates both the eight Standards of Mathematical Practice and the South Dakota Common Core Standards. Our goal is for students to understand, plan, persevere, and solve problems using all the mathematical domains at each grade level. A strong emphasis is put on learning the operational facts, algorithms, place-value, number sense, math properties, expressions and equations, geometry, and application of these concepts to real-life problems.

A variety of instructional methods and materials are utilized by our teachers to provide students with differentiated learning activities. At Ethan Elementary, we use the Savvas Investigation Math Series. Along with this series, our teachers use morning work/boards, number lines, hundred charts, 2D and 3D shapes, fact fluency games, fraction and decimal cards, and many hands-on activities. Daily math journals, bell

ringers, and exit tickets are also used to reinforce skills taught. Math manipulatives and drawing representations are always incorporated into our lessons with students seeing, touching, and verbalizing their way to solving real-life problems. The use of technology has become such an important part of our instruction. All students in the Ethan Elementary have access to computers or iPads. Students can be found reviewing their math facts with online games, making graphs and tables on excel, drawing and categorizing shapes, and taking quizzes and tests on their computers. Teachers at the Ethan Elementary help students make connections from grade level to grade level, helping students understand how one math skill or concept contributes to the understanding of another.

Assessing students in the area of math at the Ethan Elementary School consists of a combination of informal, formative, and summative assessments. For example, giving students a bell ringer at the beginning of math class that reviews the concepts from the day before is a great way to assess informally the understanding and mastery of each student. Weekly formative quizzes, online math programs such as Edulastic, peer sharing, group projects, and performance tasks are also ways we assess students. Summative tests like unit tests, pre and posttests, and the Smarter Balanced testing are also a vital part of our curriculum. The Acadience benchmark tests are also used three times a year to assess strengths and weaknesses throughout the school year for all grade levels. To check progress and review standards taught, our teachers give the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment blocks and use the data collected to plan our lessons. We can take a deep dive into specific claims and targets and identify strengths and weaknesses for individual students, as well as the group as whole. This helps drive the curriculum and gives teachers focus on what needs to be reviewed and mastered before sending students on to the next grade level. Our staff uses Teacher In-service time to analyze our testing data in order to improve teaching methods and determine standards that need to be addressed. Using data from the Smarter Balanced testing and other assessments helps us to meet the needs of all students in our elementary.

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

The science curriculum used by the Ethan Elementary School incorporates all the South Dakota Science Standards. Classes explore science topics according to their grade level standards through hands-on investigations that develop their critical thinking skills. We use the Harcourt science curriculum, but also have many great supplements that engage and challenge our students. These include Generation Genius, Mystery Science, Science Spin, and numerous other videos and activities. Generation Genius and Mystery Science offer videos and lessons with activities that are very engaging. They are presented in age-appropriate manners that make it easy for the students to comprehend. These also provide the basis for incredible discussions. Many STEM activities are included within our science instruction. Students learn to be aware of the science that is happening all around them and to become critical thinking problem solvers and lifelong learners. Teachers at Ethan Elementary help the students connect concepts learned from one grade level to the next, building upon their knowledge. Science classes also focus on literacy skills and incorporate daily writing.

Students are assessed through a combination of formative and summative assessments. Chapter and unit tests are used, as well as performance assessments through hands-on labs. Technology, such as Kahoot, is often used to assess students. Students also learn through virtual labs where they can manipulate variables and see the outcomes. Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment blocks are also used to assess the students' understanding of the standards. The blocks target specific standards, enabling teachers to identify strengths and weaknesses. Using data from the Smarter Balanced Assessment, as well as the other assessments, helps ensure that we are meeting the needs of all students.

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

Ethan Elementary's social studies classes include US History, Geography, Civics, Government (country and state), Economics, South Dakota History, and Ancient History. United States History, Civics, and US Government are explored in grades Kindergarten through 5th grade. South Dakota History is emphasized in the 4th grade. Sixth grader dives into Ancient History and Government. For Geography, students start with the basics of mapping, and eventually build on that basic foundation to identify continents and oceans, describe longitude and latitude, and interpret or analyze map regions. Kindergarten through 6th grade

incorporate the social studies standards throughout other subject areas in the form of projects, researching, the use of Scholastic News articles, and having in depth discussions on current and historical events. Writing skills are addressed in our social studies curriculum as well. For example, students write Compare and Contrast essays over the 12 Tables and the Declaration of Independence. They also learn how to write informational reports about people and events in history. Students in 5th and 6th grade make connections between ancient history and American history.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

The Ethan School District Preschool strives to offer children an opportunity to develop in an environment planned with their physical, mental, social, sensory and emotional needs in mind. The program provides experiences with the intent of meeting the needs of all attending preschoolers. It is a language-based, developmental preschool. This means that activities are implemented with attention to different needs, interests and developmental levels of individual children as well as the group. Research indicates that preschool aged children learn best through a multi-sensory approach. As examples, preschool activities may include playing with play-dough, water, sand, shaving cream, rice, games, puzzles, and lots of reading. Music and singing are important elements to the preschool curriculum, as the children learn listening and language skills through these activities. Phonemic awareness is taught through repetition and familiar patterns heard in routines and everyday experiences.

Early childhood has a major impact on the success of students and school readiness. Students who complete the preschool program often enter Kindergarten having a baseline knowledge of letters, numbers, sounds, shapes, and colors. They also know how to sit quietly and listen to a story and know the school regimen/schedule. Students know how to navigate through the school and have formed relationships and personal skills that help them be successful. This makes the transition to Kindergarten much easier, as they come to school in the fall less scared, less hesitant, and eager to learn!

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Ethan Elementary School offers a general music class every other day for grades preschool through 6th grade. The 4th graders are exposed to instruments and instrumental music with playing the recorders. They learn the different types of notes and how to read sheet music. The 5th and 6th graders are introduced to band choosing their own instruments to play and practice. They receive large group and individual instruction. Along with vocal and instrumental classes the students in 5th and 6th grade attend vocal and/or instrumental contests.

All students receive a physical education class every other day allowing them to be physically active, learn healthy habits, and learn how to follow rules. In the spring of the school year the elementary staff and students are involved in what we call “Bike Rodeo” to encourage students to practice bike, road, and water safety.

Since COVID-19, we became a one-to-one school with technology. The students in 3rd – 6th grade practice typing skills and begin learning presentation and word processing skills. Each classroom teacher trains students in technology skills at their own grade level. During COVID-19, we utilized Zoom and Google Classroom, and to this day we continue to utilize them. For Pre-K through 2nd grade, we utilized Class Dojo for our communication. We included videos, stories, learning documents, games, and conversations with the parents and students.

Throughout the year the students have guidance once a week. Our guidance curriculum encompasses social emotional learning, attaining coping skills, career exploration, substance prevention, and internet safety. The curriculum is adapted as needed to each individual grade level. Major themes of the curriculum include goal setting, decision making, managing relationships and conflict, building a growth mindset, and resiliency. In

addition to guidance classes, students have the opportunity to be involved in small group learning or one-on-one guidance.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Because of our smaller District's size, lower number of students in classrooms allow educators to efficiently differentiate instruction. Teachers have become mindful of their practices by using curriculum which engages and motivates students. It develops them into critical thinkers, higher level thinking, along with promoting reflection about learning. Smaller class size provides teachers the opportunity to work with small groups or individuals. Small group work is incorporated into the English Language Arts and Math Curriculum. Small group work within the classroom provides students the opportunity to work more one on one with the classroom teacher. Teachers can quickly identify students in need of academic support. Students are provided with the academic support from the classroom teacher and additional services through the Title I Program.

The Ethan School District utilizes a variety of assessments for students. The Smarter Balance Assessment, Interim Formative Assessments, Interim Comprehensive Assessments, and Interim Block Assessments denote overall scale scores and performance level designations. The information and data collected on student's strengths and weaknesses is used for teachers to make data-based decisions for continuing student gains. Classroom teachers perform fall, winter, and spring benchmark assessments with Acadience Reading and Math. Students are closely progress monitored throughout the year. Students in need of academic support participate in the Ethan Elementary Title I Program to gain and pursue academic success. Students participating in the Title I Program also complete the STAR Reading and Math assessments by Renaissance Learning. This assessment provides necessary feedback to understand and recognize the skills and standards in which need to be better focused for individual students to experience success. When students are in need of additional support beyond Title I Services, teachers begin collecting and compiling data for the referring process for Special Education Assessments.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Ethan Elementary School has many accelerated students. We provide many opportunities for students who are performing above grade level. One program we have for students starting in second grade is Prairie Readers. This is a program that places students in grade level teams. Each team, consisting of four students, reads grade appropriate books and answers comprehension questions about the books. The students then get to compete in a local Prairie Reader contest held at a neighboring school. Trophies or medals are awarded for first, second, and third place. Ethan Elementary also holds an annual spelling bee. Each class picks its top two spelling students based on an oral spelling test. The top two finishers from grades three, four, five, and six compete in a school spelling bee. Of the eight contestants, the top two finishers get to represent our school at the local spelling contest. In addition to Prairie Readers and the spelling bee, our school also uses a reading curriculum that includes reading sets tailored to a variety of different reading levels and skill sets. Each set provides materials for eight weeks of instruction. Every student is given an initial placement test to determine which set is appropriate for their reading level. Students are reassessed after every four sets. This is a way for us to track student progress and make adjustments to each individual's varying instructional needs.

3c. Special education:

When a student is identified as being significantly below grade level and requiring special education services, a referral is made by either the classroom teacher, Title I teacher, or the parent. The Individual Education Program (IEP) team consists of the parents, classroom teachers, special education teacher, school psychologist, related service staff, administration, and, when appropriate, the student. When all special education testing is complete, the team meets to discuss the evaluation results and determine whether or not the student is eligible for special education services. If he/she is eligible, an IEP is written for the student, taking into consideration the student's current academic strengths and needs, as well as the least restrictive

environment (LRE). Whenever possible, the student will participate with their non-disabled peers. Any modifications and accommodations are also discussed at initial IEP meeting. This includes in the classroom, as well as for statewide assessments such as the Smarter Balanced assessment. If a student is not eligible for special education services, a 504 plan might be considered. Students who are eligible for a 504 plan might have hearing or vision disabilities, attention issues that affect learning, or other issues that facilitate the need for special considerations in the classroom.

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

English Language Learners focus on techniques, methodology, and special curriculum designed to teach English language skills to students with English as a second language. These skills include speaking, listening, reading, comprehension, writing, vocabulary, and cultural orientation. The Ethan School District provides families with a Home Language Survey. This survey is a tool used to determine if a student is eligible for language support services when a language other than English is spoken in the home. Our English Language Learner Program ensures that students attain English proficiency, meet the academic content and achievement of the standards students are expected to meet. Ethan Elementary School District's English Language Learner program provides support for the implementation of the English immersion. Ethan Elementary is prepared to meet the challenge of an increase in student diversity not proficient in English. The English Language Learner Program at Ethan Elementary is generally a pull-out program. Students spend part of the school day in a mainstream classroom. Classroom teachers support and enhance the English Language Learner's performance and meaningful participation in the classroom. Teachers assist students in achieving proficient grade-level standards in the areas of reading, writing, speaking, comprehension, and listening and are pulled out for a portion of the day to receive instruction in English as a second language. The English Language Learner students complete the ACCESS (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners) Assessment. This assessment is a comprehensive measurement of English language proficiency. Students scoring at benchmark on this assessment, skills, and progress are continued to be monitored for two years. The WIDA Assessment Screener (World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment) is administered to English Language Learners to identify students in need of English Language Services. South Dakota belongs to the WIDA (World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment) Consortium, which designs and implements high standards and equitable educational opportunities for English Language Learners.

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

An underlying objective of the Ethan School District for homeless or migrant students is to provide a source of support as the student seeks to understand and adapt to his/her academic setting. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is to ensure all students have significant opportunity to have fair and equitable high-quality education to close educational achievement gaps. The Ethan Elementary School provides assistance to students who are migrant, at-risk (neglected or delinquent), homeless, and/or English Language Learners. The teachers work to develop an appreciation of their student's strengths within the school setting and to ensure full access to the range of educational opportunities available in the schools.

Ethan Elementary has both a Home/School Coordinator and a McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison. Our coordinator is in contact with Social Services, Police Department, Public Health, Indian Public Health, Parents, Special Education and Title I. All community service agencies provide necessary information on possible homeless/migrant children. As the Home/School Coordinator/Liaison makes contact with these families to help with the transition between home and school, along with helping determine housing status. The school enrollment form includes questions asking if the child has permanent or temporary housing. The Homeless Liaison follows up on all temporary housing students to determine homelessness.

Our Homeless Liaison maintains contact with several community service agencies and receives school supplies, clothing, and personal items from these organizations. These donations are always available for any students identified as Homeless, Migrant, English Language Learners, or students receiving foster care.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Ethan School District may be smaller than other districts throughout the state, yet our students are provided with the tools they need to be successful. We acknowledge that there are many learning styles, and we make sure we develop different learning strategies that fit the needs of our classes and our students. For example, our reading curriculum allows teachers to place students into individualized reading groups. This allows teachers the opportunity to work with small groups and zone in on the needs of each student. Because the reading groups are encouraged throughout our elementary, students have the chance to build on foundational skills as they become more fluent and independent readers. Creating engaging lessons and allowing students to personally relate to what is being taught in the classroom is also a part of what makes our students and teachers successful.

Teachers, administration, and staff each do their part to make sure students feel welcomed in our school building. If one were to walk through our building, it would not take long to hear or see a greeting or conversation between a staff member and a student. Positive rapport that is built between students, staff, and parents/guardians is one of the many reasons our school district is successful. It is important to us that our students and parents feel welcome and comfortable in our building, and it is equally important to us that our teachers, parents, and guardians have an open line of communication. We recognize, as a staff, that it is our responsibility to do what we can to help each student reach his or her potential. Going above and beyond for our students is not an uncommon trend in the Ethan School District. Teachers, of course, go above and beyond, but there are many parents, community members, and students that do the same. Many of our students are involved and are highly successful in their chosen extracurricular activities.

Recognizing student success is something that is done throughout the school year; however, at the end of each school year, we hold an awards ceremony. At this this awards ceremony, we gather in the gym and celebrate our academic as well as extracurricular achievements. Some of these achievements include awards for Reading Counts, band and vocal contests, perfect attendance, spelling bees, and sport participation. Every month, we also meet as an elementary to hand out Principal Awards and Reading Counts awards. The Principal Awards are given to students that have set an exemplary example in the classroom by reaching a desired goal, being a kind classmate, or setting a positive example for their peers.

Throughout the time we experienced online learning, we had to find a way to continue connecting with students and engaging them in our lessons. Doing so was not an easy task, but teachers persevered to ensure learning was being done whether it be online or in the classroom. Google Classroom was the platform used to keep work organized and prioritized. Students were able to access everything they needed to know daily from there as well as watch videos at their convenience to learn the new concepts. Teachers and students also used Zoom to connect with one another for academics and socializing. We felt as though it was very important for the students to maintain a normalcy by visiting with their peers to be successful in the academic area as well as the social area.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

The feeling of community is felt continuously during the school year in Ethan. We are fortunate enough to have very supportive community and family members. Whether it is participating in a food or clothing drive, traveling to support the athletic teams, having an Open House Night, coming into classrooms to read with students, or donating funds for a project or fun activity, community members are very involved and interested in supporting the school, staff, and students.

Having a constant and active community support systems makes Ethan a very fortunate school district. CSO (Community School Organization) is one of these examples. CSO is made up of teachers and parents. These parents and teachers collaborate to raise funds for the elementary students. In the past, CSO has sponsored a trip to the movies, an end-of-the-year carnival, book fairs, and a talent show for PreK through sixth grader. CSO has also donated money to classroom teachers in hopes they can purchase items that will benefit

student learning.

Maxwell and Bowar Insurance Agency has also been very generous to our school. For the past several years, they have graciously donated money so teachers can be reimbursed for items they have paid for out of their own pockets. This has been very appreciated, and teachers have been able to purchase extra items for their classrooms to contribute to the academic growth of their students.

Communication within our building is very important as is communication with our parents and community. In order to keep parents updated, elementary teachers send home weekly newsletters. Class Dojo is also used as a communication tool in some elementary classrooms. Our school website has also been updated and improved over the past couple of years allowing staff, students, parents, and community members to download an app that is accessible on mobile devices. Those that have chosen to utilize this app can see messages from administration, add school and sporting events to their calendars, and access forms needed by the school. Daily bulletins are also emailed out to those that sign up for them. Because Ethan is a small school, we are so fortunate to be able to be in contact with parents during after school pickup, during a sporting event, or even during out of school activities. This allows us to really get to know the parents of our students and build positive relationships with them and community members.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Ethan school does a great job of making teachers feel valued and supported. Transitioning from our regular school day to distance learning was quite the challenge. Fortunately, we live in a community where everyone comes together to make the best out of any situation. One of the things we did during COVID was a teacher parade. All the teachers worked together to make signs, and parents drove their students slowly passed the school to greet their teachers after four long weeks of at-home learning. To see the kids' faces was priceless.

To show their appreciation for the staff during the pandemic, the school board provided teachers and support staff with a production bonus for all their hard work and efforts they put forth during that difficult and challenging time.

It is not unusual to have food provided to the teachers as appreciation for what they do. A few elderly couples in the community always make fresh cinnamon rolls for the staff during American Education Week. A group of parents bring in food twice a year for parent teacher conference night, so the teachers have something special to eat. Our administrators always provide food for staff in-services and special events for teachers.

Lastly, the encouragement and support from administrators and parents is evident. There have been numerous times that we have heard, "We truly have the best staff in the Ethan School system," or "Thanks for all you do for the kids in Ethan." It makes all the hard work, long nights, extra duties, and pay a little bit easier. Ethan truly is a great place to work!

4. School Leadership:

The Ethan School District is a very small, rural school with its elementary, junior high, and high school all contained in one building. Therefore, the administration consists of two individuals that wear many hats within the system. The High School/Junior High Principal also acts as the school's Athletic Director and Instructional Leader. He is also a coach in the athletic department and often acts as a substitute teacher in various classrooms throughout the school year. The superintendent of the district is also the Elementary Principal. He, too, is a coach in the athletic department, bus driver, and substitute teacher. With both administrators having a background in athletics, they both feel that a "team" approach is best when it comes to their leadership style.

The administration believes that its teachers are the professionals when it comes to the day-to-day happenings in their classrooms. Therefore, teachers are given a great deal of input when it comes to curriculum, policy, school calendar setup, and decision making. Teachers feel supported and safe to share

their ideas and opinions with the administration. Administration also believes that student input and community input is vital as well. Students and community members are encouraged to share their ideas and opinions that they feel will make the school a better place to thrive in. The administration believes that when everyone feels valued, a family atmosphere is created, which in turn results in the best possible situation to achieve academic success.

The superintendent, with input from the principal and business manager, ensures that personnel is in place and that staff has the resources to work in a highly efficient environment. The school board has set policy to support the school's mission statement, and the administration makes sure these policies are fully enforced, with fairness and the best interest of its students in mind. Both administrators can be seen in the hallways and in the classrooms throughout the school day. They believe in creating strong relationships with their students and staff members, creating a safe and welcoming environment to work and learn in.

While the administration believes in shared decision making, there are times when tough decisions need to be made, and they are not afraid to make those decisions, even if they are not popular with all involved. The well-being of the students and their academic success will always be the driving factor when tough decisions need to be made. Those decisions will be made with thoughtfulness, fairness, and integrity after all outside input is considered.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Ethan Elementary is in a rural, agricultural community. Our approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion is what makes our school and community very special. Helping our students develop socially, emotionally, and academically in a safe and fun environment is our top priority. Each teacher takes the time to respect and acknowledge the diverse backgrounds of each family to make school a comfortable and welcoming place to come each day. We strive to provide a culture that makes everyone feel valued and important which helps students work to their potential. Ethan offers a wide variety of activities that appeal to the interests and needs of all our students. The students, teachers, and community are involved in many FFA and FCCLA activities, musical contests, sporting events, and other fundraising and schoolwide activities. For example, our school organizations and community provide low-income families with mittens, hats, and gloves and have a bike rodeo each spring which provides needy families with bicycles and helmets. Our elementary works with local businesses such as Pizza Hut to provide incentives for students to meet their reading goals. Many of these activities are possible because of being a small school in a close-knit community.

Although we are a small school in the Midwest, we have a diverse population with students from different ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. At parent-teacher conferences, we provide translators for those parents who may not speak English and sign-language interpreters for those who are hearing impaired. We also use interpreters at our music programs to ensure that all can enjoy the experience. Realizing that all students do not learn the same way, our teachers use very diverse teaching activities and strategies, and our classrooms are inclusive with students of all learning abilities. The use of para-educators in the classroom to assist teachers and students makes our inclusive learning environment very effective.

The teachers at Ethan Elementary make sure to discuss and address social and cultural events that take place in our community and in the world. Through our social studies and reading curriculums, we provide an accurate depiction of events in history and help students understand the importance of accepting and understanding the diverse cultures and ethnic backgrounds that have shaped our world. Being respectful to others and being a responsible and productive citizen are important objectives for our students. At Ethan Elementary, we strive to give all our students that sense of pride and community.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The success of our students at Ethan Elementary can be attributed to multiple factors. We are blessed to have highly qualified teachers whose mission is to prepare our students for the academic hurdles that lie ahead. But the one thing that truly makes the Ethan school so special is the encouraging, safe, and relaxed environment that our kids can come to learn in each day. They are greeted with smiles, laughs, and jokes. Our excellent teachers genuinely care about connecting with each student on a personal level. The students know this, and in part, give great effort when working towards mastery in the classroom.

One event that we do at Ethan that we believe helps foster success is our monthly assemblies. One morning each month, we gather the Pre-K through 6th graders into the gym for a half hour assembly. Each teacher talks for a few minutes about specific students who have been showing great character and going above and beyond. We reiterate the importance of keeping a positive attitude and always treating others with respect. We discuss the importance of persevering through demanding and rigorous situations, both in the classroom and in real life. These assemblies show our kids that change is always possible when they control what they can control, stay positive, and give full effort in everything they do. We think that these assemblies make it clear to our student body what is expected from them, and it gives them a high sense of pride and confidence to do their best work.

We are extremely proud of the academic success that we have at Ethan Elementary. However, what makes us most proud is the wonderful learning environment that we have created. Our students truly enjoy coming to school each day. We love hearing the laughter and seeing the smiling faces in the hallways. There is no better feeling than when former students stop by and reminisce about their fond memories from being an elementary student. This is the culture that we have created at Ethan. We are a big family that truly cares about each other and each other's success.

In Ethan Elementary, every student truly counts. Our inspiring and hard-working teachers and administrators have prepared our kids to go on to be life-long learners. Most importantly, though, we have instilled in our students the work ethic and positive demeanor that is necessary to be successful in all facets of life.