

***U.S. Department of Education***  
***2023 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program***

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Dr. Ryan Marzen

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

Official School Name Perry Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1600 8th Street

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

City Perry State IA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 50220-2554

County Dallas

Telephone (515) 465-5656

Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Web site/URL https://www.perry.k12.ia.us

E-mail ryan.marzen@g.perry.k12.ia.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\* Mr. Clark Wicks E-mail clark.wicks@g.perry.k12.ia.us

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Perry Community School District Tel. (515) 465-4656

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 Mrs. Linda Andorf

(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 2023 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 2018 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2022.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 or 2022.
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 (2022-2023) 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)
  - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 3 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, 2022 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 Students
PreK	91
K	135
1	137
2	131
3	128
4	128
5	112
6	0
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	862

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 4 % Asian
  - 6 % Black or African American
  - 44 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 45 % 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 2021 - 2022 school year: 8%

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, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	43
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	16
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	59
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	751
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.08
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	8

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):  
Arabic, Burmese, Chinese, Tigrinya, Spanish, Dinka, Creole, Karenic, Kyanyama, Chamorro

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 14 %  
121 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 63 %

Total number students who qualify: 547

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 20 %  
Total number of students served 170

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 should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

<u>10</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>3</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>5</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Developmental Delay	<u>90</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>12</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>46</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>4</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 1 %  
Total number of students served: 11

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 2

11. 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	3
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	33
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	24
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	37
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

12. 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 26:1

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

Required Information	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
Daily student attendance	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

14. **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 2022.

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%

15. 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.

16. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

Ensuring Learning For All.

17. Provide a URL link to the school's nondiscrimination policy.

<https://www.perry.k12.ia.us/>

It's embedded on the bottom of every webpage within this domain.

18. **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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Perry Elementary School is part of a progressive school district located in central Iowa. The Perry Elementary School staff is composed of over 70 teachers and 40 paraprofessionals that serve over 850 students in a PK-5 building. Perry Elementary School is equipped to meet the needs of all students by having a robust multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) that helps remediate or enrich students' learning depending on each particular student's needs. Within this network of support, our school offers many services including but are not limited to: Over a half dozen Title I literacy and math teachers, three full time professional school counselors, a full time mental health therapist, multiple English Language (EL) teachers, and at least one special education teacher attached to a grade level to help best serve students throughout our building.

Perry Elementary School has met the needs of students and families by providing a comprehensive educational experience intertwined with outstanding social emotional learning for students. For the last three years we have onboarded all staff members with Capturing Kids Hearts (CKH). This has provided meaningful and productive relationships with students and colleagues. In addition to this, our elementary school has implemented the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework to promote school safety and positive behavior. Our school has championed PBIS by implementing PBIS Tier 2 for check in and check out for students who may need more intensive support. In addition to this, our elementary school has three professional school counselors who provide a whole group social emotional lesson to each student every 6 days. They also provide individual and small group instruction for students throughout the day. Lastly, our school houses an onsite mental health therapist to help provide the most intensive layer of support for students' social emotional learning and mental health.

Over the last four years our school has become a leader in the state with computer science. Perry Elementary School was a recipient of the inaugural "Computer Science is Elementary" Award which awarded a dozen elementary schools in Iowa with 50 thousand dollars to create, develop, and enhance their computer science programs. This award equipped our school with different professional development, robotics, and programming for staff and students to gain the necessary skills to meet the needs of the 21st century learner. Perry Elementary successfully submitted our "Computer Science is Elementary Blueprint" to the state of Iowa to use as a blueprint for any school seeking more information about our computer science program. This also encompassed a half day visit by the Director of Education in Iowa to observe Perry Elementary's computer science program. In addition to this, in 2022, Perry Elementary School was awarded over two hundred thousand dollars through an Iowa Grant to get over 30 teachers certified with an endorsement in computer science. Perry Elementary School partnered with Northwestern College in facilitating these courses tailored to our elementary school. This partnership has led to many teachers gaining the essential knowledge in computer science but also making the dream of attaining a Master's degree possible to best serve students.

Perry Elementary School has also incorporated Professional Learning Communities (PLC) at the elementary school. In 2019 and 2022 every teacher was able to attend the national Professional Learning Community conference in Des Moines to enrich and clarify staff's background knowledge on PLC's. In 2022 our school's grade levels chose three to five essential standards in all of our academic areas. These have become our most important standards to teach and assess. This has led into the professional learning work of vertical alignment between grade levels and buildings to ensure the most important standards are identified through endurance, leverage, readiness, and rigor. This has created PLC's to become embedded in our professional development every Wednesday. During this time staff address the four essential questions of each PLC to either remediate or accelerate student and staff learning.

Perry Elementary School allotted time during professional development to define the tiers of supports to create and refine a robust MTSS process for staff and students. These definitions provided clarity to tier 1 instruction, tier 2 supports, and our tier 3 systems to either accelerate or remediate student learning. Furthermore, this has provided our elementary school with a revamped General Education Intervention (GEI) process to provide administration and support teachers to partner with general education classroom teachers to see what additional support we can provide for the teacher and the student.



Perry Elementary School also provides additional programming for students who need additional support in their academics by offering an 8 week tutoring program for an hour after school in the Fall and Spring semester. These targeted small groups provide additional support through a certified classroom teacher and a classroom paraprofessional for an hour after school. Furthermore, our school offers a comprehensive summer school program for three weeks in the summer for over one hundred students. These students are placed in small groups instructed by a certified teacher and a classroom paraprofessional.

In conclusion, Perry Elementary School's motto of "Ensuring Learning for All" is a top priority. Our staff is committed to doing whatever it takes to meet the needs of every individual student on a daily basis through the systems of support that our school has. Perry Elementary School is an exemplary school that has championed meeting students' social emotional needs with highly effective instruction.

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

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

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

Teachers preschool through 5th grade at Perry Elementary School use Benchmark Literacy as their core reading curriculum. Students are immersed in reading and language arts instruction for more than 90 minutes of their school day which is composed of at least 30-45 minutes of whole group (core) instruction, followed by small group instruction and repeated practice. Benchmark Education Company is known for its pedagogically sound, research-proven literacy solutions. Benchmark Literacy supports all the daily components of high-quality reading instruction, with a particular emphasis on the development of comprehension, but also incorporates phonics, fluency, phonemic awareness, and vocabulary development. Classroom teachers also incorporate additional strategies into their 90 minute reading block when data indicates a need for increased intervention. Classroom teachers utilize instructional routines such as Michael Heggerty, West Virginia Phonics, Onset Sound Routine, Sight Word Routines, and Handwriting without Tears. Kindergarten and first grade teachers place a heavy emphasis on phonics and phonemic awareness instruction, to develop a foundation for students' reading abilities. Upper elementary grades shift their reading focus to fluency, with an emphasis on accuracy and comprehension, with the goal that all students are able to read at grade level, with 95% accuracy.

For students performing below grade level or requiring additional support, Perry Elementary has five Title 1 Reading Teachers who provide small-group instruction with repeated practice and multiple opportunities to respond to reading strategies taught in the grade-level classroom. Title 1 reading teachers use a combination of instructional strategies including Orton Gillingham, PRESS, Michael Heggerty, West Virginia Phonics, and many sight-word and repeated practice routines. Special education students that are performing at a level that is significantly below their peers and are unique when compared to same-aged peers, receive instruction in 1:1 or small groups with intensive reading instruction. Kindergarten through second grade special education students receive intensive reading instruction using Wilson Reading Systems FUNdations for a tactile and systemic approach to reading. Students in grades three through five receive intensive reading instruction through strategies of Orton Gillingham and the Wilson Reading System.

Student progress in reading is assessed formally through FAST three times a year for all students. In addition, students who are continuing to perform below benchmark are provided intensive interventions by classroom teachers or support teachers, and weekly progress is monitored. In addition, student's reading performance is assessed annually in grades 3-5 with the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress. In 2022, 69.75% of elementary students scored at or above proficiency in this assessment. This is an increase of 14.23% from the 2021 ISASP administration in which 55.52% of students scored at or above proficiency in reading.

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

Perry Elementary School utilizes the curriculum Everyday Math throughout the elementary school. Our elementary school adopted this curriculum close to ten years ago. This curriculum provided fidelity for our teachers and students to teach and learn essential standards through the Common Core. Teachers have used this curriculum as a guide to help them teach students essential content in the area of math. Teachers work through different math boxes and lessons to ensure that students receive the same educational package from room to room. Teachers then work beyond the book by creating groups through disaggregating math data on a weekly basis to remediate or accelerate learning for students learning specific standards. This allows our teachers to provide a more robust and differentiated math lesson by not only teaching grade level specific standards across each room but also by responding to the classroom data from each unit.

Perry Elementary School teachers use a variety of instructional methods to engage students throughout the learning process. These included but are not limited to: whole group instruction, small group instruction, guided math, and through an application of technological resources such as EPIC and Prodigy to support

instruction, and online Everyday Math resources. Perry Elementary teachers meet in Professional Learning Communities to disaggregate math data to best serve our students on a weekly basis. Teachers often look at different math assessments that are provided by Everyday Math and make adjustments to these assessments to gather data on our essential standards. This helps accelerate or remediate learning for students at Perry Elementary School.

Many grade levels have also incorporated a “Flex” day on a weekly or bi-monthly basis. This allows teachers to review student data from the past unit and make instructional adjustments on grouping students, re-teaching essential skills and standards, and enriching students who have demonstrated mastery of the specific standard or skill that has been taught. In addition to this, it also allows our teachers to spiral back on previous skills that were taught in past units to help reinforce students' understanding of the material and content.

Student mastery of math skills is assessed throughout the Everyday Math curriculum with periodic unit tests. Teachers review data through their Professional Learning Communities to provide re-teaching and remediation to ensure students are meeting the grade level expectations and essential learning targets for mathematics. Annual assessment of student performance in mathematics is completed through the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress. In 2022, 73.41% of elementary students scored at or above proficiency on this assessment. This is an increase of 12.06% from the 2021 ISASP administration in which 61.35% of students scored at or above proficiency in mathematics.

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

Perry Elementary teachers teach science through real-world learning opportunities of scientific inquiry, as aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and the Iowa Core Science Standards. In Kindergarten, students focus on aspects of the weather and the world around them, with an emphasis on making scientific observations. In first and second grade, students shift their focus to gathering data and making informed predictions based on what they see and the knowledge they possess. Second and third grade students plan and conduct experiments, where they are evaluating hypotheses related to different habitats and the life cycle of various organisms in the world around them. Students craft their skills of representing data in tables and graphical displays to draw conclusions, by thinking through their scientific lens. Fourth and fifth grade students deepen their understanding of scientific concepts by studying units related to energy and the Earth's resources. Many Perry Elementary teachers view science as an avenue to in-depth thinking and problem solving and use science to incorporate STEM activities and higher order thinking where students are in the driver's seat with their learning, making predictions, finding data to support their claims, and testing their hypotheses.

Students are assessed throughout the year in Science using formative and summative assessments developed by grade level teams aligned with the units of study that are presented. Students in 5th grade are assessed annually on the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress. In 2022, 55% of 5th grade students scored at or above proficiency on this assessment, an increase of 10% from 2021 ISASP administration in which 45% of students scored proficient in science.

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

The Social Studies curriculum at Perry Elementary allows students to embrace the cultural differences of our community to gain a deeper understanding of how we work together within our community, our state, and our country. In kindergarten, students begin exploring their unique roles in the different corners of their lives, at home, at school, in their family, and throughout their community. In addition, they investigate how their lives today may look different than their grandparents' lives and others in the past. In first grade, students deepen their understanding of different people in our community, investigating the different roles and jobs that are needed to make our community sustainable. Second grade scholars turn their learning in social studies to the natural resources and goods that are grown or produced throughout the community and around the world. Students begin to learn about the scarcity of some resources and the intended and unintended consequences of using Iowa's natural resources. As students enter upper elementary, by fourth and fifth grade they continue to deepen their understanding of the social order, how laws, rules, and

processes have changed over time to protect their rights, and how global distribution of goods affects us here in Iowa, but also across the country and throughout the world.

Student mastery of social studies content is assessed throughout the year with formative and summative assessments developed by grade level teams aligned with the units of study that are presented. Grade level teams work in their Professional Learning Community to develop common formative assessments based on the learning targets that are presented and gather data from their students to ensure that all students grasp the essential standards for each grade level within the social studies curriculum.

**1e. For schools that serve grades 7-12:**

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

At Perry Elementary School we offer statewide voluntary preschool that also serves three year olds with special education learning needs. We utilize Everyday Math, Handwriting without Tears, Second Step and Creative Curriculum, SEEDs strategies. Everyday Math we utilize Kindergarten through fifth grade in our building. Handwriting without Tears is utilized in our kindergarten classes. Using this in preschool helps prepare them for transitional kindergarten or kindergarten, since they have gotten exposure in preschool. Creative Curriculum is the mandatory curriculum for the statewide voluntary preschool program. Creative Curriculum is utilized for the whole group and small group for reading. This is based on the GOLD assessment. This sets students up to know how to do whole group carpet time and to listen to stories the teachers are reading. It also helps students prepare for assessments throughout their educational career as this ties to GOLD assessments. While utilizing Creative Curriculum we also have our preschool teachers trained in SEEDS, which was a professional development led by the Heartland AEA. This encompasses vocabulary, story rereads, finding words students know and talking to partners about what the teacher has read. Second Step ties to our social emotional learning program that our professional school counselors teach throughout our elementary building. This teaches students how to regulate their emotions to best support students to become good productive citizens. Using all of these curriculum sets offers a wide range of reading, writing, math and social emotional learning skills. Our preschool teachers meet with our transitional kindergarten teacher and kindergarten teachers to go over what is needed in the kindergarten setting and the preschool teachers discuss what they will be doing for the year to make sure all the needs are met before going to kindergarten. Doing this creates a safe and secure place for our preschool students to learn and grow to ensure learning for all.

**2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

**2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)**

Perry Elementary School has two certified Art teachers that serve every student 50 minutes every three days. This allows students to get a comprehensive fine arts background while attending Perry Elementary School. The K-5 Art program has implemented Teaching Artistic Behavior (TAB) which is a progressive pedagogy in which students develop critical thinking skills, problem solving, and creativity skills. In the art studio, students experience and explore through the lens of an artist when they are creating. This allows students to have choice in their learning with guidance from the teachers. This has created a high level of engagement and interest among our students with their learning. Our Art department implemented this practice in 2019.

In addition to this, students also can learn through the “Art Hub” which is a website that is on the Art specific I-Pads. This assists in the learning and inspiration of young artists during class. Students are able to view videos of child specific art, see a “how to” section, and view other inspirational and educational art specific projects. This has allowed our students to become more independent with their learning while an art teacher can assist more students on their essential standards.

Perry Elementary also is fortunate to have two certified music teachers that also serve students twice in every 6 day cycle. Students work on skills of building rhythm, creating musical ideas, and generating musical patterns. Students have the opportunity each year to perform on stage at the Perry Performing Arts Center, to share their learnings with their family and the community. For many students these musical performances are a highlight of their elementary years.

## **2b. Physical education/health/nutrition**

Our K-5 Physical Education (P.E) department grew to two teachers in 2022. Adding an additional P.E. teacher has provided students of Perry Elementary School an additional P.E. class every six day cycle. Students now receive P.E. every three days for 50 minutes. Our teachers pride themselves in using a collaborative co-teaching model where they both teach and assess asynchronously. By co-teaching, our PE Department is able to provide effective instruction while managing 45-55 students in the gym. Students follow a structured schedule where they begin with the objectives of the day, to a short warmup, and then onto the specific lesson that they are teaching.

Our PE department focuses heavily on fundamental movement skill games throughout their lessons. Each lesson between grade levels builds in a higher complexity of movement to build upon previous knowledge. This helps bridge specific skills through assessing and observing movement of the students throughout each unique lesson and through the years. The teachers are able to gain a better understanding of students skills by reviewing data in a PLCs on a weekly basis. This then drives weekly lesson plans to help assist students in mastery of specific skills and essential standards.

## **2c. Foreign language(s), if offered (if not offered, leave blank)**

## **2d. Technology/library/media**

Students visit the elementary library on a rotating 6-day schedule, similar to specials. All classes in grades K-5 have a dedicated library time. At the library, students participate in library lessons and check out books. Our library lessons focus on building foundational library skills, such as how to use the library digital catalog and how to find books on the shelves based on call numbers. Our lessons also focus on building reading-related vocabulary; we teach and review words that include: fiction, nonfiction, character, setting, genre, and many more. We also have educational activities that students have the option to use when they visit the library. Our educational activities include puzzles and STEM items, such as legos, IO blocks, and magnetic building tiles. The elementary library supports Iowa Core Reading standards, the American Association of School Libraries' standards, and 21st-Century Skills standards. Our library curriculum and activities strive to foster life-long readers, learners and wonderers; the foundational skills they learn in our library applies to their future years of education and rest of their lives.

## **2e. Any other interesting or innovative curriculum programs you would like to share**

## **3. Academic Supports**

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

At Perry Elementary, in the 2021-2022 school year, 29% of students performed below standards in English Language Arts and 27% of students performed below standards in mathematics on the annual Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Performance. With a population of 14% of special education students at Perry Elementary, 23% as English Language Learners and 66% as free and reduced lunch, our teachers continually strive to meet students where they are to ensure that they have access to curriculum that is rigorous but also provides them individualized instruction that they need. MORE time is a structured 30 minute common time for each grade level to provide intensive instruction in small groups based on student needs. During this time students are divided amongst their grade level so they can receive small group

instruction on skills that they need additional practice and intervention. In addition, students who are performing below grade level may receive Title 1 support in reading and/or mathematics, EL support for those students that qualify as English Learners, and specially designed instruction for those that require special education.

Perry Elementary has a robust MTSS (multi-tiered system of supports) model referred to as General Education Intervention (GEI). Through the GEI process, teachers refer students to a team to review data, problem solve strategies that have not closed the achievement gap, and determine what support might be needed to ensure students are making progress on their goals. This team includes administration, title teachers, school counselors, classroom teachers, and support service providers as applicable to ensure that all stakeholders who support the student brought to GEI are working together to ensure that each student receives an instructional package that is tailored to their unique learning needs.

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

The mission of the Perry Community School District Talented And Gifted (TAG) program is to provide equitable and comprehensive talented and gifted services for all students identified as demonstrating or showing potential for exceptional abilities K-12 across socio-economic and cultural groups meeting cognitive and social-emotional needs, moving them toward their individual potential. At Perry Elementary, this is accomplished through early enrichment and equitable identification using multiple criteria, qualitatively differentiated services designed to meet those exceptional needs, and individualized programming in the student's identified area of giftedness, and advocacy on behalf of identified gifted learners.

Perry Elementary students in grades K-3 enrichment activities are provided within the classroom as well as in small groups for referred students. These sessions are scheduled throughout the school year for the purpose of helping to identify students for TAG that begin in grade 4. Students in grades K-3 who are identified as showing need are placed in TAG to receive enrichment opportunities. Elementary students in grades 4-6 identified in either general intellectual ability or specific intellectual ability are served in TAG. The program format is partial pull-in of identified students and the TAG teacher collaborating with the general classroom teacher to provide differentiated lessons. Examples of programming options include enrichment activities, differentiated lessons and assignments, acceleration, academic competitions, participation in workshops and conferences, etc. Additionally, students can have their educational program within the regular classroom modified to meet their needs through the use of enrichment, curriculum compacting, and/or acceleration.

### **3c. Students with disabilities:**

Perry Elementary has a healthy special education department that is composed of eight Strategist I: Mild/Moderate teachers to serve students with a range of learning needs. These teachers serve students IEP goals in the areas of reading, writing, mathematics, behavior, and adaptive behavior. In addition, a Strategist II BD/LD teacher supports students with more complex learning needs and behavioral challenges for students who typically require the support of a Behavior Intervention Plan and frequent reinforcement throughout their day to be successful provided through paraeducator support. In addition, a Strategist II: ID/MD teacher supports those students with the most complex learning needs that require instruction on the Iowa Essential Elements, an adapted curriculum based on their individual learning needs. Students with disabilities at Perry Elementary receive support in the least restrictive environment, where the special education teachers and general education teachers work together to ensure that all students can learn at high levels and have access to the core curriculum. These students with disabilities have access to a variety of instructional methods that allow for multiple opportunities to respond, frequent reteaching and repetition, and explicit instruction at a level that is rigorous to close their learning gap, yet acknowledges their individual needs.

### **3d. English Language Learners:**

The English Learner population at Perry Elementary includes 23% of students which is served by 4 EL teachers. To ensure learning and success in and out of the classroom, the EL program provides students the necessary support to develop English language proficiency in order to meet or exceed grade level essential learning targets. Perry Community School District's English Learner program strives to embrace the cultural backgrounds of our community by providing high-quality language development and access to the core curriculum, by building upon the cultural and linguistic assets English Learners bring to the classroom. Students receive a combination of pull-out and push-in support to enhance their development and understanding of the English Language. Certified English Learner teachers use a variety of instructional strategies including intense instruction in academic vocabulary, use of visuals, sentence frames and prompts, and the National Geographic curriculum to ensure students learn and understand the English language for both social communication and academic enrichment.

**3e. Other populations, if a special program or intervention is offered:**

Not unique to Perry Elementary, but in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, students have demonstrated an increased need for mental health services in recent school years. Perry Elementary has many students that come to school each day with a continued need for emotional support, counseling services, and therapy in order to ensure they can perform and function in the school setting being respectful, responsible, and safe.

Perry Elementary has three school counselors that provide Tier 1 support to all students and teachers, with whole group/class-wide guidance lessons to help students become knowledgeable, skilled and productive citizens of character. School Counselors use a combination of the Second Step curriculum and other resources aligned to the American School Counselor Association and Iowa Social Emotional Learning competencies to provide social skills instruction to all students. Perry Elementary is fortunate to also have a school-based mental health therapist, as well as contracts with outside therapy services to provide access to counseling and mental health services that many students need. In addition, Perry Elementary has been identified as a Tier 2 PBIS school, where a check-in/check-out intervention is used daily with several students who need a strong connection to at least one staff member in the building. The PBIS support team meets with students at the start and end of their day to foster healthy relationships for students attending at Perry Elementary. In addition to meeting the social/emotional needs of students during the school day our school counselors work with students, families, and outside organizations to provide food bags and snacks to families for weekends and holidays when they might otherwise have food insecurities. Clothing drives, the Giving Tree at Christmas time, food baskets for holidays, and collaboration with outside resources are additional strengths of Perry Elementary's school counseling program.

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

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

Perry Elementary, home of the Bluejays and Jayettes, uses a bluejay feather program to support student engagement in the school setting. Students earn feathers for demonstrating behaviors that are respectful, responsible and safe, and can use those feathers to buy prizes, rewards, or activities from the Bluejay Cart and teacher prize boxes. Students that display age-appropriate respectful, responsible, and safe behaviors from each classroom are nominated monthly as Bluejay Leaders to be recognized by the school and throughout the community.

At the start of the 2022-2023 school year, Perry Elementary became a Tier 2 PBIS School. Through the PBIS program, student discipline data is tracked and reviewed each month by the PBIS team. Students who are exhibiting a higher number of office referrals are referred to Tier 2, where they participate in Check-in/Check-out (CICO) daily. In the CICO program, students have a daily behavior chart with explicitly defined behavior expectations, set goals to work for throughout the day, earn choice time or reward breaks based on appropriate pro-social behaviors, and form positive school relationships with school personnel. The frequency and intensity of office referrals has declined across the building since implementing a Tier 2 support for social and emotional learning. Students are forming positive relationships with adults across the building and are developing the coping strategies they need to be successful in the school setting.

In addition to the PBIS and CICO programs, the majority of Perry Elementary School staff have been trained in Capturing Kids Hearts (CKH). CKH is an immersive training program where all staff that work with students learn how to build meaningful, productive relationships with every student and every colleague within the building. Teachers use the principles of CKH to develop self-managing, high-performing classrooms using team building and social accountability. Many classroom teachers at Perry Elementary greet students at the door each day with a handshake or high-five. Classrooms develop a Social Contract where all students in the classroom mutually agree on the standards and expectations for social behavior in the classroom. In addition, students and staff routinely share “Good Things” and positive experiences in their lives inside and outside of the classroom with their colleagues and classmates.

Perry Pride is something that is felt from the moment one steps foot in Perry, IA, and the halls of Perry Elementary are no exception. Given the needs of our students and our community, our school counselors work tirelessly to ensure that all students have the basic needs of food, shelter, and clothing met before they begin each day of academic excellence. Our counselors and school personnel regularly provide food bags and snacks to families for weekends and holidays when they might otherwise have food insecurities, organize a Giving Tree for Christmas for families who might not otherwise have presents, and provide a wealth of resources and support to families in need so that students are able to shift their focus to academics in the classroom.

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

Family and community engagement is an area that Perry Elementary teachers begin working on before the school year commences. With letters or postcards from teachers over the summer and an open house night before the year begins, students and families are welcomed into their classrooms to meet the teacher and get a glimpse of their classroom that becomes a family each year. Teachers use a variety of communication tools such as Seesaw, Class Dojo, email, text messaging, Facebook groups and more to communicate with parents about upcoming events, new learnings, or class celebrations. With four nights built into the calendar for parent/teacher conferences, Perry Elementary strives for 100% parent attendance at conferences to ensure that all parents have a clear understanding of the success their child has made each year, and areas they can continue to grow.

In addition to the partnerships with parents, collaboration with community partners is another strength of Perry Elementary. Since Perry Elementary is 66% free and reduced lunch, many local churches and community organizations are active contributors of school supplies and donations for the Giving Tree each



holiday season. Perry Community members come in throughout the week to eat lunch with students and read with them as a part of the Everybody Wins program. Giving students a connection with a positive adult who models fluent reading over their lunch hour is a part of the week that many students look forward to. School counselors and teachers refer students who might benefit from a positive peer role model in the community as a part of this Everybody Wins program.

To help students build relationships with positive role models, many Perry Elementary students have a Big Buddy from Perry High School. High School students with availability in their class schedule come over to the elementary once or twice per week to meet with students in a non-academic setting to build rapport, play games, and build a sense of connection across the community. For many students, this is a chance to see what high school athletics or activities are all about, and having a familiar face when seeing them out in the community.

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

Perry Elementary School is committed to creating an inclusive and positive school culture by listening to staff's concerns when creating a comprehensive professional learning plan. Our guiding coalition acts as our building leadership team in making building level decisions while also discussing data pertinent to grade levels and our building. For 2023-2024 Perry Elementary's Guiding Coalition helped create a professional development calendar. Outside of PLCs each week there was a different targeted area in which staff discussion in our guiding coalition meeting. These thirty minute to one hour presentations before PLCs including areas include but not limited to: A safe and secure environment, cultural awareness, student engagement strategies, computer science, Social Studies curriculum work, vertical alignment, student and staff mental health, and child abuse training. These opportunities for professional learning helped enhance targeted professional development tailored to the guiding coalitions interests.

Perry Elementary School administration values individual teachers' interest in their professional learning journey. Very rarely does Perry Elementary School administration deny a professional development opportunity for staff. Investing in teachers' professional learning has been an important goal over the last few years. Teachers have been able to go to National Conferences such as "Get Your Teach On" in Las Vegas. In addition to this, over a dozen teachers have been trained in PRESS (Path to Reading Excellence in School Sites) and Orton Gillingham. Furthermore, many staff have been sent to learn more about social emotional learning, data disaggregation, talented and gifted instruction, English language learners, and many other professional learning opportunities.

Perry Community School District's Teacher Leadership and Compensation Program (TLC) has also provided many learning opportunities through coaching conversations, professional learning plans, and assistance in any professional learning a teacher is interested in. This program provides two full release teachers known as "Instructional Coaches" at the elementary to assist any teacher in our building. Instructional coaches work closely with administration and provide support through a bi-monthly coaching meeting to discuss ways Instructional Coaches can support teachers and administration initiatives.

In addition to these professional learning opportunities, our school has created a "Culture Committee" which includes administration and teachers. The purpose of this committee is to uplift staff members throughout our school with different activities and supports to improve school culture and mental health. Some of the last activities included a "Sweet Breakfast" which staff was provided with donuts, muffins, and beverages. In addition to this, staff also participated in a "egg hunt" throughout the school for special prizes from our Culture Committee. This committee has created a positive school culture and environment for all staff members to work in.

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

Perry Elementary's administrative team includes a Principal, Associate Principal and a Director of Learner Supports. The Director of Learner supports is responsible for special education and 504 needs across the district, is housed at Perry Elementary and works collaboratively with the elementary administrative team on the day-to-day operations of Perry Elementary. The administrative team at Perry Elementary has built a

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relationship of collaboration and trust with one another and with teachers, so that as a three-person team, teachers always have access to an administrator that is able to provide support, answer questions, or address parent or teacher concerns in an efficient manner. Perry Elementary School administration meets bi-monthly with district leadership and cabinet members. During these meetings, district leaders have rich discussions on the vision of Perry Community School district, keeping in mind the unique needs of Perry Elementary with over 800 students and more than 100 staff. These discussions include top cabinet members including Directors of Transportation, Nutrition, Facilities, Technology, School Business Office, Athletics and Activities, and Equity.

Although the administrators at Perry Elementary each have distinct roles and titles, teamwork and shared responsibility is key to making Perry Elementary a successful school building. Administration uses a distributive leadership approach in handling the vision of the school building on a day to day basis. Each administrator works cohesively in managing walkthroughs, evaluations, and discipline. In addition to this, each administrator oversees a specific program to help support the building in a specific way. The building principal oversees the Title I Department and Title I reporting for the school district. The Associate Principal oversees the Preschool Programs at Perry Early Learning Center, Perry Child Development Center, and Gingerbread House at Saint Patrick's. The Director of Learning Supports oversees Special Education and Section 504 Plans throughout the district. Each administrator works together with one another to handle day to day circumstances and duties. Frequent communication, similar administrative and educational philosophies and trust in one another's administrative responsibilities is what makes Perry Elementary's leadership exemplifying the Bluejay Way, striving for "Success, Success, Success."

In addition to this, Perry Community Schools utilizes the state of Iowa's Teacher Leadership and Compensation system (TLC) program. Through the TLC program, we are fortunate to have a full time instructional coach at our elementary school who assists teachers in coaching cycles to promote student achievement and student learning. In addition to this, each grade level has a team member who is PLC Facilitator and Data Team Leader. These leadership positions through the TLC program work with instructional coaches to disaggregate data during weekly PLC meetings and quarterly data meetings. In addition to this, we have two instructional technology integration specialists in which teachers can model technology integration and share resources with staff. Lastly, we have a PBIS and CKH Lead Teacher role. This role entails implementation of PBIS and CKH, organizing and leading PBIS meetings, assisting in monitoring behavior and collecting data. By creating teacher leaders through the TLC program, teachers at Perry Elementary have various levels of leadership support they can reach out to when needed.

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

The community of Perry, Iowa has a multitude of diversity that is a central characteristic of our school. With 10 different languages spoken at Perry Elementary in addition to English, including Arabic, Burmese, Chinese, Tigrinya, Spanish, Kuanyama, Dinka, Karenic, Creole, and Chamorro, students are immersed in cultural awareness and diversity throughout their day. Perry Elementary has 3 English Learner teachers who support students in and out of the classroom with strategies and skills to build their English language, but also cultural education for students to keep their native languages and culture. The English Learner department hosts family nights throughout the year to bring parents into the school for students to showcase what they are learning each day. In addition to our English Learner teachers, Perry Elementary has a school translator and a bilingual secretary who are able to communicate with parents in Spanish to answer questions, report absences, and provide clarification of school resources.

To support parents who speak and read different languages, all required school publications are sent home in Spanish and English. Teachers use a variety of translation services to send communication to parents in other languages as well, to ensure that all families have access to the information provided. The culture of Perry Elementary is to help one another, and our students often serve as the best translators and support for one another. When newcomers start in our building, many veteran students are first to offer support, translate when needed, and help students feel at home at Perry Elementary.

Perry Elementary School has also embedded cultural awareness through professional development. Over the last two years, staff have learned more about our student and family populations from Eritrea and Myanmar.

This has increased cultural awareness to our staff members to better serve students from all populations. This professional learning has been led by an EL teacher in our district and also community businesses such as Tyson.

Perry Elementary has three school counselors who work with students throughout the year to provide lessons and instruction related to inclusivity, equity, cultural awareness and respect. Perry Elementary is a PBIS school where students are continually reinforced for being Bluejay Leaders who demonstrate what it means to be Respectful, Responsible, and Safe. Weekly guidance lessons, monthly Bluejay Leaders, and reinforced expectations from all staff throughout the school ensures that all students have a solid understanding of how to be respectful to themselves, to others, and to their school and community.

## **PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE**

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Perry Community School District has made Professional Learning Communities the forefront of the district's professional development for the last several years, which has been instrumental in ensuring that all students can learn, with the caveat that all students can learn at high levels. What initially started with small teacher teams attending Solution Tree's Professional Learning Communities at Work conferences in surrounding states, Perry Community School District made PLCs a major district initiative by taking all certified teachers to a three-day Solution Tree conference in Des Moines, IA in 2019 and again for all teachers in October 2022. Adjusting the district calendar so that all teaching staff could attend the same conference, at the same time, to learn the same strategies to ensure all students can learn, made Professional Learning Communities the most important vehicle that has made Perry Elementary improve from a school that was rated 'commendable' to a school that is "high performing."

The work of Professional Learning Communities occurs each Wednesday afternoon throughout the school year when teams collaborate by reviewing student achievement data and work together to develop common assessments for their grade level or subject area. Teachers meet in job-alike teams with their grade level, content area, or subspecialty to answer the four questions surrounding PLC work: What do we want students to know and be able to do? How will we know if they learn it? How will we respond when some students do not learn? How will we extend the learning of those who are already proficient?

While the work of PLCs is ongoing, Perry Elementary teachers continue to review student achievement data, plan common formative and summative assessments, and collaborate with their teams to ensure that we are doing the right work for student success. Teacher teams have worked diligently to unpack standards and identify essential learning targets for each content area and grade level. Teams have vertically aligned their standards to ensure that what is being taught at Perry Elementary is a part of a guaranteed and viable curriculum aligned to the Iowa Core, which provides students the necessary prerequisite skills with an appropriate scope and sequence to promote student success throughout their educational career.

Ensuring that all students can learn at high levels has been the emphasis of the district's professional learning community work and has been instrumental in the increased student achievement at Perry Elementary. By creating common formative and summative assessments, continually reviewing data, and targeting the students needing additional support, Perry Elementary teachers continually work to raise the bar on student achievement.