

U.S. Department of Education
2023 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 Ms. Celeste Shoppa Ms.
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

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

School Mailing Address 1000 Kennedy Parkway
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Coralville State IA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 52241-2806

County Johnson

Telephone (319) 688-1155 Fax (319) 688-1156

Web site/URL
https://www.iowacityschools.org/Domain/182 E-mail shoppa.celeste@iowacityschools.org

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. Matt Degner E-mail degner.matt@iowacityschools.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Iowa City Community School District Tel. (319) 688-1000

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 Ms. Ruthina Malone
(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 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

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):
- 21 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 3 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 4 High schools
 - 1 K-12 schools
- 29 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	37
K	46
1	63
2	55
3	56
4	51
5	67
6	59
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	434

*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):
- | |
|--|
| <u>1.2</u> % American Indian or Alaska Native |
| <u>14.3</u> % Asian |
| <u>34.6</u> % Black or African American |
| <u>6</u> % Hispanic or Latino |
| <u>0.2</u> % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander |
| <u>38.4</u> % White |
| <u>5.3</u> % 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: 25%

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

Borlaug Elementary welcomes new families throughout the school year for many reasons. The Iowa City Community School District is organized by attendance zones, so when families move to a new home within our district, they may need to relocate to another school. In our area, there are job opportunities and family needs that may cause families to come and leave the Borlaug zone. For example, Iowa City is home to the University of Iowa, which brings students and staff with elementary-aged students. This school year, Borlaug Elementary welcomed 56 students who have immigrated to the United States. No matter the circumstances, we embrace our new students into our Borlaug Community.

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, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	70
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	44
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	114
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	460
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.25
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	25

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Ukrainian, Russian, Korean, Saho, Kinyamulenge, Lingala, French, Arabic, Portuguese, Spanish, Kinyarwanda, Swahili, Japanese, Tamil, Thai, Malayalem, Turkish, Chinese, Khmer

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 21 %
92 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 40 %
 Total number students who qualify: 173

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 7 %
Total number of students served 32

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>5</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>0</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>2</u> Developmental Delay	<u>19</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>39</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 2 %
Total number of students served: 8

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 11

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.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	18
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	17
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	14
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

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 24:1

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	94%	97%	97%	97%	98%
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.

At Norman Borlaug Elementary School, we provide all students and staff with a safe, culturally responsive, collaborative, and emotionally healthy environment in which to grow. We believe, 'Every child, every day, whatever it takes to be Borlaug Best!'

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

<https://www.iowacityschools.org/Page/1128>

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

Our school song starts, “Welcome, welcome to Borlaug School. We hope you like it here. We’re a group of people from many, many countries, cultures, and colors, and we mix well,” Borlaug Elementary has welcomed students and families each school year since August 2012. Our mission ensures all students will become responsible, independent learners capable of making informed decisions in a democratic society as well as in the dynamic global community. We challenge each student with a rigorous and creative curriculum taught by a diverse, professional, caring staff and enriched through the resources and efforts of our families and the entire community. Our vision is to provide all students and staff with a safe, culturally responsive, collaborative, and emotionally healthy environment in which to grow, as we celebrate our diversity and inclusiveness in the Borlaug Community.

Our Borlaug staff holds each other accountable through our collective commitments. We treat each other with dignity, respect, and equity, and we advocate the same for others. Each colleague communicates in a solution-focused, goal-oriented, strength-based, and purpose-driven way. We respect all contributions, both in ideas and time, and we value colleagues’ levels of expertise. We embrace our Borlaug Community with compassion, positivity, kindness, and empathy, and we lead by example. We invest in our continuous development through learning, enacting, reflecting, and improving. We balance the right to privacy and confidentiality with the right to be advised of significant information. We believe in each other, and we believe in every student!

Our morning routine serves as an example of our character and sets the tone for each day. Staff members greet students outside, at the front door, in the hallways, and as they walk into the classroom daily. Our students comment on how many teachers smile, talk to them, and know their names and interests. Then, classes start with a morning meeting focused on building relationships and developing interpersonal skills. We value these connections, in the morning and throughout each day, as an opportunity to improve overall achievement through student engagement and a positive school climate.

At Borlaug Elementary, we pride ourselves in our systematic approach to data analysis and overall progress. One exemplar element of this work is our student support team (SST). SST follows the framework of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) and meets weekly to share, discuss, and problem solve for our students identified as needing Tier 2 or Tier 3 services and instruction. Prior to each SST meeting, our instructional design strategist (IDS) sorts our academic data by students’ progress monitoring trend lines so we know which students are making accelerated, adequate, limited, or no progress in their interventions. The team (composed of our IDS, school counselor, behavioral interventionist, student family advocate, school facilitator, school social worker, academic school consultant, and principal) discusses the data to celebrate student achievement and make suggestions for instructional changes when students are not showing growth. Then, the IDS shares notes with general, special education, Title I, and English language teachers so they are aware of any adjustments to instruction and are recognized for their unwavering diligence. The SST also reviews behavioral or social/emotional plans and notes students with attendance concerns. The result of SST is a cohesive school approach to data collection and analysis, adding another layer to the work of our professional learning communities (PLCs). We work proactively to meet the needs of our students, leaving nothing to chance.

We highly value student voices in the decision making at Borlaug. For example, our student council meets twice per month to share input about schoolwide efforts, record our weekly Borlaug Broadcast video series, and plan spirit events for the school. Each member of our student council serves as a representative and liaison for their classmates.

Norman Borlaug Elementary School is a school like none other, due to the commitment of our students, families, and staff to be a welcoming learning environment for everyone. We are proud to be the Borlaug Bulldogs where we believe, “Every child, every day, whatever it takes to be Borlaug BEST!” We often speak of our namesake Norman Borlaug, a native Iowan. Historically, people call Borlaug the “father” of the Green Revolution, an effort through which agronomists developed crops which were more resistant to a harsh environment. Borlaug used his talents to save billions of people across the world from starving. One of

Borlaug's favorite quotes was, "Reach for the stars. Although you will never touch them, if you reach hard enough, you will find that you get a little 'star dust' on you in the process" Likewise, we at Borlaug Elementary School inspire our students to "reach for the stars" and positively impact their community and world around them.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) provide the foundation for Borlaug’s balanced literacy approach to teaching Language Arts. Our district provides guidance for the amount of instructional time to devote to phonological awareness, phonics, advanced phonics and morphology, comprehension, writing, and oral language (vocabulary and fluency) based on K-2 and 3-6 grade levels. The guidance highlights the shift in learning to read in K-2 to reading to learn in 3-6. We also take care to integrate the teaching of the standards across the instructional day. Teachers at Borlaug consistently incorporate the teaching of writing, for example, into science and social studies. Students practice their understanding of language arts skills and use them in authentic situations when we take an interdisciplinary approach. Continuing to follow the guidance of the Common Core State Standards, each classroom intentionally exposes all students to complex text. Differentiated levels of scaffolding are crucial for some students to stay engaged and feel successful while reading grade level, rigorous text. We believe that every student deserves to hear, see, and be exposed to challenging, rich text.

Borlaug teachers use a variety of teacher-directed and student-centered methods to educate students during language arts instruction. Each day, we engage our classes in whole-group lessons focused on grade level core standards. Teachers in grades K-2 spend much of their time teaching the “code” of reading, focusing on foundational skills such as phonological awareness, print concepts, phonics and word recognition, and fluency. They teach comprehension through read-alouds and shared reading activities. Writing instruction occurs during whole-group instruction through a series of explicit modeling and shared practices. Teachers in grades 3-6 spend less time on foundational skills during whole group time and, instead, focus on comprehension, vocabulary, morphology, fluency, and writing skills. No matter the grade, we start with explicit instruction, then gradually release into engaging partner/group work, games, and technology for guided and independent practice.

Daily, teachers cluster students with similar skills for small-group instruction. We use research from the Iowa Reading Research Center (IRRC) to guide small group practices. We use benchmark assessments to form groups and diagnostic assessments to plan for the groups. Our small groups are flexible and allow students to move in and out of groups as needed. This approach allows differentiation for all students. Teachers create meaningful independent practice opportunities for students based on the small group lesson, increasing the time students are focusing on needed skills.

Several types of assessments guide our work. Informal assessments during whole-group instruction include K-2 students showing their work in SuperKids Student Books and 3-6 students writing “responses to reading.” Diagnostic assessments help teachers pinpoint areas of need for individual students and guide instruction for reading small groups. All grade levels work in their teams to create and administer common formative assessments for comprehension and writing standards at each grade level. The data is analyzed and used to reteach or, at times, extend learning.

Borlaug’s commitment to excellent language arts curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices supports our district’s goal of preparing students with life-long communication skills.

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

Borlaug’s mathematics curriculum prepares students to address complex issues in society through problem-solving and independent thinking skills. The K-6 curriculum focuses on encouraging number sense, problem solving, mental computation, estimation, and application. We strongly emphasize the development of concepts through experiences in concrete, representational, and abstract thinking. Our curriculum is based directly on the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the Standards of Mathematical Practice.

Teachers at Borlaug use problem-based and visual learning for instruction. We begin by posing a problem, and students solve the problem either in small groups, with partners, or individually. Students work to analyze information, form strategies, select the most helpful tools, and communicate their ideas. This engaging start to the lesson invites all students' participation and allows for differentiation. Once students are ready to share their ideas with the class, teachers use questioning strategies to elicit responses and deeper thinking.

Next, teachers use visual learning (often a video) to introduce new ideas. We insert carefully timed and crafted questions to check for understanding throughout the lessons. Through explicit modeling of new learning, students have the opportunity to watch, ask questions, and take notes.

After the class engages in guided practice with the teacher, they try out the new learning as a whole group. This critical portion of the lesson helps the teacher gather information about who is understanding the content, who is struggling a little, and who still needs a lot of support. Finally, the teacher assigns differentiated independent practice, based on students' proficiency during the day's instruction and previous lessons. Teachers make many decisions about how the practice will be completed; for example, they may ask the students to use hands-on (concrete) materials or visual representations to show their work depending on each student's needs. We utilize flexible groupings during the practice as well, so teachers may decide students can work independently, with a partner, or in a small group with the teacher to provide support and scaffolding for some learners. We trust that our teachers know students well and make those instructional decisions based on data and observations.

Math screeners are given three times per year to check for grade-level proficiency. If students are not proficient, we often give a diagnostic assessment to pinpoint any unfinished learning for a student. Many teacher teams also give fact fluency assessments to aid in making decisions about materials and resources to use for additional math instruction. At the culmination of each unit, teachers administer topic assessments to check for understanding. Grade level teams analyze this topic assessment data and reteach students who are far from and below proficiency with the goal to see students' growth in targeted skill areas. Daily work is also an important informal assessment measure for teachers; for example, they might check for specific answers and for the methods students are using to solve problems on the independent practice.

At Borlaug we are preparing students to be problem solvers and independent thinkers, in part by offering a strong mathematics program.

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

Borlaug's science education is guided by the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and their three-dimensional approach to instruction through science and engineering practices, crosscutting concepts, and disciplinary core ideas. Our scope and sequence ensures that students in all grade levels engage in all dimensions, but these elements are interwoven and grow in complexity from kindergarten through sixth grade. It is our hope to contribute to the mission of science education in our district: to develop citizens who will have the skills to apply the principles of science, engineering, and technology in addressing humanity's current and future challenges.

Our science lessons are student-centered, minds-on, and activity-based. Each begins with a focus question that guides the inquiry. As a class or in small groups, students use critical thinking to plan and conduct an investigation to answer the focus question. After collaborating to collect and analyze their data, create a claim, and support their thinking with evidence and reasoning, students discuss their inquiries and reflect on the process. We genuinely believe that students at all levels can be actively involved and engaged in science.

Additionally, we are proud to partner with organizations in our community to enrich our science instruction. For example, to supplement their investigation of the environment, weather, and the changing seasons, kindergarteners plant a tree at our school each year. These experiences help students apply our science learning in the classroom to the world around them.

In science, students are assessed using formative and summative checks for understanding. These evaluative

practices include anecdotal note-taking and questioning during investigations and discussions, reviewing science journal entries, and traditional tests. By assessing students regularly, teachers continuously monitor students' learning, provide feedback, and adjust instructional pacing to meet the needs of the group.

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

Borlaug's social studies education is guided by common district standards that address history, government (political science/civics), geography, economics, and social (behavioral) sciences. We follow the Iowa Core Curriculum, the National Council of Social Studies, and the C3 Framework when teaching social studies.

Our social studies instruction K-6 is divided into inquiry-based units that follow a common pattern. First, we pose a focus statement and generate questions that guide our learning within each unit. Then, we investigate and answer our questions. Through literacy-rich lessons, we access information from authentic contexts (in mentor texts, videos, maps, and audio clips) and speak or write about our newfound knowledge, integrating our language arts standards as well. The instructional activities require students to think critically, make connections across content, and collaborate to reach common understanding. We implement culturally responsive instruction that recognizes and celebrates multiple perspectives and viewpoints.

Each unit culminates with an action project. We identify a community need and use our learning to create solutions. Though students drive the instruction from start to finish, the project allows the greatest amount of learner voice and choice in the impact they make on their world. For example, after learning about communities, our second graders collected and donated pull tabs to benefit our local Ronald McDonald House. Sixth graders Zoomed with people who rescue dogs and raised awareness about being responsible pet owners and why showing empathy to living creatures is important to our community.

In addition to our summative action projects, students complete embedded formative checks for understanding throughout each unit. These practices can be as informal as teacher note-taking during discussions to more formal methods, such as a written response to a posed question. Assessing students daily allows teachers to monitor and guide learning while addressing and integrating their natural curiosities and perspectives.

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

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

Borlaug's preschool is a nurturing, safe, and inclusive environment for children ages three and four years old. The preschool curriculum and activities are based around the Iowa Early Learning Standards which cover eight specific areas: social and emotional development, physical well-being and motor development, approaches to learning, social studies, creative arts, mathematics, science, and communication/language/literacy. While there are numerous standards within the eight Iowa Early Learning areas, our district has collaborated and established fifteen priority standards. Frequent review of the data gathered has allowed teachers to focus on what are considered to be the most important foundational skills for students to master before moving ahead to kindergarten and beyond. One of our primary objectives is to make sure we are preparing our students appropriately and giving them a strong foundation for the academic years ahead.

The students of Borlaug's preschool are immersed with their peers and receive large group, small group, and one-on-one instruction throughout the preschool day. Our activities emphasize helping students master social and emotional skills, large and small motor skills, and academic skills. For example, students are able to express their feelings and identify the feelings of others during carpet time Second Step lessons. They are able to connect the experiences of the children in the scenarios to examples in their own lives in and beyond the classroom setting. Some lessons we do to help grow small motor skills are scissor exercises, Play-Doh, and pre-writing practices using all types of writing utensils. Students also engage with letters, numbers, colors, shapes, etc. throughout the entire day, such as during our calendar and weather time, small groups

focusing on counting various manipulatives or number and letter formations, whole group read-alouds, and so much more!

We strive to nurture our preschoolers in all facets of learning and help them to become curious, self-confident, and independent learners who can work well with others and grow in their achievements daily. We learn through play, the preschool way!

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)

At Borlaug school, our music courses foster students' creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking skills. The students have opportunities to play many instruments through our K-6 general music classes. They may also join our band and orchestra program starting in fifth grade.

In general music, students are invited to participate through responding, creating, connecting, and performing. We sing, dance, and play Orff instruments, ukulele, and recorder, along with a large variety of auxiliary percussion instruments. We also take pride in incorporating music of many genres and cultures into our class to give students a chance to learn about different cultures and time periods.

Our music classroom is a place where students feel safe to be creative and collaborate with their classmates. Students learn skills that help them participate in ensembles, create music, and develop foundational knowledge of music that they can apply when they move on from our school and into the community.

Students are welcome to join band and orchestra when they reach fifth grade to enhance their musical experience. Students receive individual, small, and large group instruction to help them develop their musical skills. Our band and orchestra teachers offer several formal and informal performing opportunities for our community.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

The Iowa City Community School District's physical education program contributes to the development of students in a holistic manner, so that students move to learn and learn to move. The program is divided into three broad learning areas: fitness/wellness, basic movement skills and concepts, and movement forms. Each area has a cognitive, psychomotor, and affective component. We work with our students to develop a variety of basic skills that are well grounded in movement, including space awareness, quality of movement, and body awareness. In addition, our health instruction includes a range of topics, namely personal health, food and nutrition, environmental health, safety and survival skills, family life, substance abuse and non-use, human sexuality, self-esteem, stress management, and interpersonal relationships.

The individual needs of the students are met through appropriate developmental activities. Our kindergarten through fourth grade students participate in three 27 minute sessions per week, whereas our fifth and sixth grade students attend physical education class four times a week. Stressing basic movement in the early years with little importance given to competition helps promote self-esteem and confidence. Thus, physical education is important now and for the future as students prepare for a productive adult life.

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

2d. Technology/library/media

The Borlaug library mirrors our district's commitment to a strong library program. Staffed by a certified teacher librarian and media secretary, our library provides a welcoming, inclusive space for students to pursue their interests and learn how to access online and print resources that support their learning. During NBRS 2023

weekly library lessons, all classes engage in a variety of learning experiences. These include listening to high quality literature, developing technology and digital citizenship skills, practicing information literacy and inquiry, and learning about computer science. Borlaug's teacher librarian collaborates with teachers, helping to strengthen curricular connections between standards and to build vertical connections as students progress through grade levels. Ongoing collection curation using qualified review sources ensures students have access to current, relevant, and engaging materials.

Library staff are the first point of contact for technology help, a critical need because all students have a district-issued Chromebook. The library remains open during all school hours, enabling students and staff to utilize its collection and services when needed. Furthermore, there is a protected, flexible time built into the teacher librarian's schedule, allowing her to meet with students and teachers as needs arise throughout the year.

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

As part of the Iowa City Community School District (ICCS), Borlaug Elementary is very fortunate to receive the benefits of Any Given Child. Any Given Child Iowa City, a program of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, uses local arts resources to provide diverse and interactive experiences during the school year for every student.

This year, our kindergarteners traveled to the Iowa Children's Museum for a storytelling experience that helped students strengthen their abilities to communicate thoughts and feelings with confidence. Second graders traveled to the James Theater for the ballet of Penny and the Wolf, presented by Nolte Academy. Prior to the ballet, the students learned about music and movement. Our third graders toured the Stanley Museum of Art on the University of Iowa campus and explored African artwork. Trained docents facilitated thought-provoking discussions of historical and contemporary African art. Fourth graders traveled to the University of Iowa Voxman School of Music for "Symphony Goes to School," where they heard a concert performed by the school of music students. Finally, Opera Iowa performed for our whole school. Opera Iowa features young professionals from across the country who are committed to inspiring audiences through exceptional theatrical experiences.

We know that early and consistent participation in the arts develops creative problem solvers, fosters interdisciplinary learning and cross-cultural understanding, and cultivates lifetime participation in the arts. Borlaug Elementary students are privileged to be given such inspiring arts experiences.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Three times per year, all students participate in Fastbridge testing, and students in grades 3-6 complete the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress. Students who score below benchmarks and are considered at-risk or persistently at-risk on these measures meet with a general education or Title I teacher during common grade-level reading and math intervention times. Our ELL teachers may pull students who are learning English during these intervention times as well. Using additional diagnostic assessment data, Borlaug teachers work as a team to carefully group students and plan for their interventions, being sure to pinpoint students' exact areas of need. We use research-based curricula and instructional practices to help students achieve accelerated growth. Teachers recognize the importance of providing students with any tool necessary to shift their learning from concrete to symbolic or from a lower level of understanding to a higher degree of application. Students have immediate access to materials such as sand, counters, tactile tools, charts, and visuals while working in their intervention groups. During this time, teachers utilize direct instruction and predictable routines to maximize students' participation. This also allows teachers to use modeling and corrective feedback and praise to fully engage students and gives learners the confidence to try new skills within a safe environment.

While these groupings are flexible based on students' needs and rate of progress, often our academic support teachers have the special opportunity to work with the same students over time. We build relationships with

our most at-risk students, even after they progress to a higher grade. When we see them in the hallways, we converse with them, and they know that we are on their team rooting for them and their continued success. We motivate them to work to their Borlaug Best, and they motivate us to be better educators.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

At Borlaug, the Extended Learning Program (ELP) serves gifted and high ability students. The mission of the Extended Learning Program is to provide challenge, enrichment, and/or acceleration to meet gifted students' academic needs. Programming is designed to enable students in grades K-6 to participate in differentiated learning options that meet their diverse and unique needs. The goals for these students are to become independent, life-long learners, develop their intellectual and academic abilities through challenging instructional activities and materials, work with others of similar abilities, receive appropriate academic guidance and counseling, receive career counseling and exploration opportunities, and strengthen skills to develop their social/emotional responses.

Students at Borlaug who score in the top 5% on the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP) and the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) participate in ELP. They meet twice a week, outside of the general education classroom, to work with peers on high interest topics such as chemistry, aerodynamics, and architecture. Time is spent on activities that further students' critical and creative thinking skills. During ELP, they have autonomy to explore topics in-depth to gain deeper understanding of concepts.

In addition, high ability students at Borlaug receive in-class support from their classroom teachers who extend students' learning opportunities through a myriad of activities such as Genius Hour (a time when students pose an essential question, research using credible sources, and create an artifact to represent their learning) and Shark Tank. Teachers may create menu boards that allow students choice in their extended learning. Teachers differentiate the pace of instruction and provide extension activities to support students' learning needs. At Borlaug, we pay close attention to each learner's particular needs, including the needs of our gifted and high ability learners, and we are committed to ensuring that all students have the opportunity to grow and succeed.

3c. Students with disabilities:

Borlaug Elementary has a robust special education program, designed to meet our students' unique and changing needs. We know that special education students are, first and foremost, general education students who deserve access to core instruction. Therefore, special education teachers work closely with the general education teachers to ensure differentiated programming for our students occurs within the general education class.

For our students with special education needs, teachers write comprehensive individualized education plans (IEPs) and follow them closely. They use data from classroom assessments, district-wide assessments, and general observations to design instruction that is specific to each student and research-based. Borlaug special education teachers follow the district's service delivery plan by providing instruction in innovative ways. Students may receive their individualized instruction in the general education setting, the special education setting, or a combination of both. The IEP team, composed of teachers, the principal, parents, and education agency staff, considers the individual student's needs and preferences, current functioning, discrepancy data, and needed accommodations for each goal area to determine and utilize the least restrictive environment for each special education student.

Recently, Borlaug special education teachers have taken part in a district-wide initiative to receive training and professional development on Iowa's social-emotional learning core standards, which in turn enables them to instruct and support students with social emotional needs. Borlaug's special education teachers also train and guide paraprofessionals as they support their students with their unique needs, following their specific plans. We value our paraprofessionals and know they are critical to our students' progress and overall participation in school.

Special education, general education teachers, paraprofessionals, and our families work in partnership. We provide a comprehensive learning experience for all students. Borlaug's commitment to educating every child, every day, is evidenced by the commitment and dedication of the special education team.

3d. English Language Learners:

At Borlaug Elementary, we take great pride in meeting the unique needs of our English Language Learners (ELLs). Our four ELL teachers work alongside school and district staff to support our multilingual students. ELL teachers facilitate pull-out learning in flexible small groups determined by language proficiency level. We collaborate with classroom teachers and interventionists when creating the ELL schedule to ensure students can access as many opportunities as possible within and beyond the classroom to maximize support throughout the day.

Our ELL instruction is focused on the four domains of language: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Our instruction and assessment are aligned with the English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards. We use National Geographic's REACH curriculum which integrates language with science and social studies content. This allows us to guide our students in personalized project-based learning while supporting academic language acquisition. We supplement with additional texts to differentiate and increase background knowledge. Our newcomer English learners use the Imagine Learning Language and Literacy online program for independent learning opportunities. Our ELL teachers work closely with classroom teachers to support language learners during general instruction. We provide grade-level guides that outline specific skills and ideas for differentiation at every proficiency level. We provide tools and visuals to ensure every student can access grade level standards.

A hallmark of our program is communication with families. We develop strong home-school partnerships that allow families to participate in school activities. We host a special gathering during Borlaug's Back to School Night to welcome our ELL families. We secure interpreters for schoolwide events. ELL teachers attend students' conferences and share about their English progress with families. And teachers utilize translation services to contact families using their preferred language.

We are actively reducing the achievement gap for our English language learners by working closely with classroom teachers and families to help students fully participate at Borlaug.

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

At Borlaug Elementary, we benefit from a unique partnership with nearby West High School's Peer Assistance Leadership and Service (PALS) program, an initiative committed to matching elementary students with trained high school peer helpers. Each PALS member is considered a positive leader and role model both at their school and when they enter Borlaug Elementary. The members of the PALS program promote healthy decision-making and strive to help particularly identified Borlaug students benefit from an encouraging and affirming older student's influence. PALS promotes tolerance, non-violence, and a drug, alcohol, and tobacco-free lifestyle.

In offering this opportunity to select Borlaug students across kindergarten through sixth grade, our students create meaningful relationships with their high school PALS. We work to match our elementary students and their PALS based on shared common characteristics and experiences. Each member of PALS shares a bio which includes a photo, schools attended, activities and interests, and what they bring to their role as a PAL. Inherent to the peer helping program is a fundamental trust and belief in the capabilities of youth, who when empowered, forge bonds that contribute to the lives of our students.

The PALS program members work with our students to enhance social development and promote the importance of academic achievement and setting goals for their future. The relationships between our Borlaug students and their PALS also provide time to understand the significance of our diversity as individuals and as a school population, paired with understanding the importance of acceptance and mutual respect.

Our Borlaug students benefit from this special program because our PALS represent the West High community with honesty, integrity, and pride. Our students are seeing what their future can look like through the trusting relationships made with their PALS.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Borlaug Elementary utilizes the Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS) framework to help students know success at our school. The PBIS framework provides a sustainable, multi-tiered system of support focusing on safe, healthy, and caring learning environments that include well defined systems, practices, and data at each tier, resulting in improved behavioral and academic outcomes. Through the use of various positive reinforcement practices, students are recognized and supported for being respectful, responsible, and safe - our “Borlaug Beliefs,” taught to students first by our mascot, Norm the Bulldog.

There are many strategies and practices we use to create a safe and collaborative culture that celebrates students as a PBIS school. Students receive Borlaug PBIS tickets for demonstrating respectful, responsible, and safe choices. Ticket drawings allow us to randomly select students to participate in a weekly reward. Teachers and staff members write “Positive Acknowledgement Woof!” (or PAW) certificates right-in-the-moment to acknowledge students for exceptional behavior; when students receive a PAW, they celebrate with a choice form of “pawsitive” acknowledgement, such as a special phone call home from the principal to their families. Teachers also recognize monthly “Top Dogs,” students who are role models of our Borlaug Beliefs. Recently, we surveyed students to gauge how they feel about these and other forms of recognition at Borlaug, and we received positive feedback regarding our efforts.

Three key initiatives are imperative when connecting the academic, social, and emotional learning at Borlaug: mySAEBRS, school counseling, and morning meeting. Borlaug utilizes mySAEBRS (My Social, Academic, and Emotional Behavior Risk Screener) for second through sixth graders. It is a brief, norm-referenced tool for screening students and identifying those who are at risk for social-emotional behavior (SEB) problems. According to Illuminate Education, SAEBRS is one of the only SEB universal screening tools built to assess both the absence of problem behaviors and symptomatology (e.g., internalizing and externalizing behaviors) and the presence of well-being and competencies (e.g., social-emotional skills). Our comprehensive school counseling programs focus on equity through the promotion of conditions and systems that support the well-being of students who most experience inequity and injustice. The core beliefs in our counseling classes are that every student can learn, succeed, and receive a high-quality education, and that all deserve to feel safe, heard, and seen at school. Additionally, every classroom has a protected half hour of time for morning meeting. During morning meeting, classes learn lessons to support their academic, social, and emotional growth while building community and becoming global thinkers and action takers. Through these and other efforts, we create a positive environment for students that supports their success at and beyond Borlaug Elementary School.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

At Borlaug Elementary, we take pride in the welcoming environment we create for our families. Our stakeholders see welcome signage in different languages as they enter Borlaug and walk through our classrooms and school. We work diligently to display visuals throughout our classrooms that proudly reflect Borlaug’s diversity. We want what hangs on our school walls to mirror who we are as a community of learners.

We are respectful of our families’ first languages. We communicate with our families in their preferred languages when sharing our school and classroom newsletters, writing emails, and making phone calls. We secure interpreters for IEP meetings, parent teacher conferences, and back-to-school nights. We know that parental involvement in school creates a stronger connection to Borlaug and, in return, greater levels of achievement for our students.

Our student family advocate, school facilitator, principal secretary, and teachers support our new Borlaug families with the registration process. Borlaug’s principal makes a point to welcome new families and answer any questions they may have when they first visit the school. We offer school tours so our new families can see our school and discuss protocols, ranging from their preferences in communication to

arrival and dismissal procedures. We encourage our families to get involved and volunteer if they can.

Our student family advocate (SFA) acts as a liaison between families and resources they may need. Our SFA helps families grow stronger with school and home connections, parenting information, mental health resources, public and emergency assistance, clothing, food, school supplies, and other community referrals. Our SFA supports Borlaug's staff by helping them understand the barriers their students may face and teaching them strategies to grow the home and school connection. Our SFA also organizes Operation Backpack, a partnership with St. Andrew's Church. This program provides Friday food packs for our students in need of additional nutrition options over the weekends.

Borlaug Elementary has an active Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). Our PTO meets monthly to create opportunities for our school community and serves as a way for Borlaug parents to connect. They support our classrooms by financing grade level field trips and needed classroom and library items. Our Borlaug PTO also organizes highly attended events including our ice cream social, science night, student talent show, fall and spring book fairs, and spring carnival. Teachers attend PTO meetings as well to show appreciation for our PTO's involvement in our school.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

At Borlaug Elementary, teachers and staff maintain a high standard of collaboration which results in a positive climate and culture for our school community. One aspect of this collaboration is continuous professional development. Through professional development, our goal is to understand and implement best teaching and learning practices for our students' benefit.

We organize Borlaug's professional development (PD) through three avenues: district PD, building PD, and PD through our Teacher Quality Plan. We engage in professional learning facilitated by the Iowa City Community School District which creates continuity in programming across all elementary schools. As a district this year, we have studied the progression of math concept development through the grades, social emotional learning (SEL) priority standards, and English/language arts (ELA) priority standards. We are also pursuing a certification as a High Reliability School (HRS), so we are studying ways to create a safe, supportive, and collaborative culture (HRS Level 1) as part of our professional development. Furthermore, at Borlaug specifically, we spend time in professional development studying topics related to our Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP) goals.

We individualize our professional development through our Teacher Quality Plan. Each year, our Building Leadership Team (BLT) representatives solicit ideas from their colleagues, determine our professional focus, and write our Teacher Quality Plan. This year's plan is a series of professional learnings about HRS using the book *Leading a High Reliability School* by Marzano, Warrick, Rains, and Dufour.

Teachers read and prepare for PD during contract time and use collaborative time to apply new learning to their team's efforts with a common goal of our school's continual improvement. This year, this means we are working within our teams to apply the tenets of HRS to our school and PLC processes, deconstruct SEL and ELA priority standards, and apply the math progression learning.

In addition to our learning, professional development efforts at Borlaug include creating and completing action steps to continuously improve our school. This year, our Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) used staff survey data about the characteristics of a high functioning school to organize and facilitate the collaborative completion of these action steps. For example, through the *Leading a High Reliability School* book study and district professional development, we developed an electronic family survey, student survey, and virtual staff suggestion box that our BLT use to spark continual school improvement based on stakeholder feedback. Through professional development, we practice our commitment to continuous learning for both students and staff to improve our students' Borlaug experience.

4. School Leadership:

At Borlaug Elementary, we work as a community to feel productive and supported at school, and our collaborative culture is essential to this effort. Leadership opportunities exist for all stakeholders, highlighting our philosophy of collaboration. Our work is structured through a set of committees, and all teachers take part in at least one. This allows each person to share their thoughts and ideas as well as grow in their professionalism and teaching abilities. Though the principal participates at all levels of the collaborative work, leadership in the committees is shared among colleagues. Such shared leadership is what makes Borlaug Elementary successful in accomplishing our goals for student achievement and a welcoming environment for students, families, and staff.

Our Building Leadership Team (BLT) supports our school's optimal functioning. Led by the principal, team members are grade-level team leaders, our instructional design strategist (IDS), school facilitator, and teachers of music, physical education, library, special education, and English language learners. Due to the wide array of representation at BLT, during these meetings we discuss items that affect the entire school. We also plan events and opportunities that celebrate each other and our successes. One such event is our Cultural Heritage Day. Borlaug Elementary is extremely proud to be a diverse school, and each year we take time to celebrate each other's cultures and heritage by sharing items that are meaningful to our students and their families. This event is fittingly tied to our namesake, Dr. Norman Borlaug, who worked tirelessly to support people around the world.

Borlaug Elementary's team leaders, IDS, and principal are also members of our Instructional Leadership Team (ILT). This committee focuses on the work of our Professional Learning Community (PLC) processes and has addressed common issues regarding student achievement. ILT provides further support for our team leaders in connecting PLC efforts to our High Reliability School (Marzano, Warrick, Rains, Dufour, 2018) initiative. Our ILT members also take on several leadership opportunities, including creating and leading professional learning.

Our Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) team plays a key role in keeping our school environment safe, supportive and orderly. Our school counselor leads this work, which focuses on behavioral data, action steps to see improvement in areas of need, and celebrations of our students and staff. Through our schoolwide reward system, we are able to set goals and celebrate when our students reach them.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

A school's vision statement declares what it hopes to achieve if it has successfully completed its purpose. Borlaug's school vision states, "We will provide all students and staff with a safe, culturally responsive, collaborative, and emotionally healthy environment in which to grow." Our environment is grounded in the Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (PBIS) framework, in which cultural responsiveness is a core component. Our staff is trained in PBIS, and we have a school PBIS leadership team that meets regularly to review school behavior statistics and ideas for behavior support. Our culture and climate survey of students helps us measure our efforts, such as whether students feel stakeholders value diversity and respect each other's differences. One goal the PBIS team has developed as a result is to decrease discipline referrals and suspensions for discrepant subgroups by focusing on teachable moments and building relationships rather than on punishment.

As a staff, we have studied Zaretta Hammond's Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain to learn about the components of culturally responsive teaching and ways we can implement this in our school. We have learned that a student's culture and background experiences create a frame of reference for the learner, so culturally responsive teaching leads to enhanced engagement and enjoyment in school, greater academic achievement, and overall improved outcomes for the student. We have many efforts in place to enhance student development through culturally responsive initiatives. For example, staff use the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) framework to plan and conduct daily morning meetings that celebrate students' diverse backgrounds and perspectives while building a community of learners. Another example is when professional learning communities (PLCs) meet weekly to monitor students' learning, make plans for instruction, and identify targeted needs of students, the PLCs also specifically discuss efforts they can take to reduce proficiency gaps in reading and math across all

demographic groups.

One of our staff norms is “We will treat one another with dignity, respect, and equity. We will advocate the same for others in the Borlaug community.” Borlaug Elementary ensures a culturally sensitive and welcoming environment for our families in addition to our students and staff. Our efforts include using accessible tools to communicate in families’ home languages, offering opportunities to welcome families into our school, and celebrating our school’s diversity through our annual cultural heritage day. Overall, our hope is that all people in our Borlaug community, regardless of role or background, feel that our school is a safe, supportive, inclusive, and culturally responsive place of learning.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

At Borlaug Elementary, the one strategy that has been most instrumental to our success and excellence is our systematic approach to Professional Learning Communities (PLC). We are organized into meaningful grade-level teams, each led by a team leader. Our principal and instructional design strategist attend all PLCs as collaborative and active participants. Each PLC meeting is 50 minutes and scheduled during the school day, so we are guaranteed our time to work in partnership weekly. This allotted time is essential to our work as it benefits our instruction and results in improved student achievement.

Through the precedent set in our schoolwide norms, all grade levels create and adopt their own sets of norms for PLC meetings. Common threads across grade levels include coming prepared to our PLCs, working efficiently to accomplish our agenda goals, and sustaining our high level of trust and professionalism. A large part of our success at Borlaug Elementary is due to our commitment to our PLC process, as reflected in the teams' norms.

At Borlaug, we focus on the right work, using the "Critical Issues for Team Consideration" (Professional Learning Communities at Work Plan Book, 2006, Solution Tree) as our guide. As outlined in the four critical questions of the PLC (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, Many, & Mattos, 2016), we work through the planning cycle to identify what our students should learn and how we will know when they have exhibited the expected level of proficiency. This work includes unpacking our district-selected priority learning standards, adapting or designing common formative assessments following our district-created proficiency scales and scoring rubrics, and discussing effective teaching strategies prior to instruction.

After instruction and assessment, we meet in our PLCs again to determine teachers' next steps. We respond with urgency when our students experience difficulty learning, and we extend further opportunities for our students who need additional enrichment. We thoroughly analyze our assessment data through responsive revisioning (Brasel, Garner, Kane, & Horn, 2015) by asking ourselves what to reteach, how to reteach, whom to reteach, and why our students struggled with the assessed content. This allows us to plan our next steps to either remediate or to extend student learning. We create SMART goals to measure the impact of each reteaching and reassessing cycle. At the end of each PLC cycle, we reflect on our instructional practices.

Through our Professional Learning Communities and the use of our PLC processes, Borlaug Elementary teachers do not leave students' progress to chance. Instead, we use our reflective practices, collaborative conversations, and solution-focused planning to continue our commitment to learners' growth and achievement.