

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 8100 School Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City La Grange State IL Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 60525-5225

County Cook County

Telephone (708) 246-4700 Fax (708) 246-4625

Web site/URL <https://www.d107.org/> E-mail ktomei@d107.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* Dr. Dave Palzet E-mail dpalzet@d107.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Pleasantdale School District #107 Tel. (708) 784-2013

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. Arlene Cabana
(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):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
1 Middle/Junior high schools
0 High schools
0 K-12 schools
- 2 TOTAL

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

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

☐ Urban (city or town)
☒ Suburban
☐ Rural

3. Number of students in the school as of October 1, 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	41
K	92
1	80
2	91
3	81
4	96
5	0
6	0
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	481

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 7.8 % Asian
 - 0.9 % Black or African American
 - 14.9 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 73.2 % White
 - 3.2 % 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: 3%

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

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	6
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	9
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	15
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	461
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.03
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

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

Albanian, Arabic, Bengali, Bulgarian, Croatian, Farsi, Ga, Greek, Gujarati, Hindi, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Mandarin, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Spanish, Tagalog, Tamil, Thai, Ukrainian, Urdu

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 19 %
93 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 12 %

Total number students who qualify: 60

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 26 %
Total number of students served 124

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>13</u> Autism	<u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>9</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>36</u> Developmental Delay	<u>25</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>33</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>5</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: 6

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.	23
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	21
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	15
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 21:1

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	95%	96%	96%	95%	96%
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 X No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 1997

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

Create a community of inspired learners.

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

Student nondiscrimination policy: <https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/9359f18d/files/uploaded/7.10.pdf>

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

One would be hard pressed to find Pleasantdale on a map, but you will find it in the hearts and minds of its community—its students, its staff, its parents, and its local neighbors. Pleasantdale’s name was crafted on the philosophy of combining local areas to create an ideal neighborhood, a neighborhood where everyone would want to live and send their children to school. It is a place where people think of others before themselves and where people embrace and celebrate that which makes us different. Pleasantdale Elementary, our school, was born from this vision.

Pleasantdale Elementary School serves 491 students from preschool through fourth grade in the communities of Indian Head Park, LaGrange, Burr Ridge, Willow Springs, and Countryside. There are 23 languages other than English spoken in our school, and our parent community not only values education, but is actively involved. In fact, our school strives to build and foster cultural relationships by cultivating a library of books in many languages for both families and students to share and enhance their linguistic backgrounds. Community members worked diligently to build this robust library by donating books in dominant languages, and our school librarian continues to add high-interest books to our shelves for all children. In addition, we have a highly involved Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). This hard-working group helps to plan community-building events like Welcome Back to School Fair, Halloween Trunk or Treat, The Shamrock Shake, multiple book fairs, and Cultural Night. These events bring the community together to celebrate with and to learn from each other. The Pleasantdale community truly understands the meaning behind being a partner in a child’s education. We are ALL committed to putting children first, and every action, program, and decision is dedicated to this belief. It is the shared vision of all stakeholders that enables our students to be valued, nurtured, challenged, encouraged, supported, and empowered to be the very best version of themselves. Our guiding philosophy of All-in means that everyone in our school community focuses on doing whatever it takes for students to be successful. This philosophy of being All-in is embedded into the fabric of our daily school life and our community events.

This child-centered approach takes into account the whole child and sees each child as an individual. Our school’s small size and dedicated staff allow for each child to receive personal attention, education, and celebration. From the very first day, students feel welcomed into a community of learners who strive for academic and personal growth. Beginning in the summer our teachers plan curriculum, participate in professional development, and prepare the classrooms for learning. We also decide on a whole school theme. This powerful tradition provides clarity of purpose and unity in our efforts. It culminates with a whole school picture in the yearbook and past year-end photos grace our main hallway. Another highly anticipated tradition is the school-wide assembly held to kick-off the school year. Our school mascot, Eddie the Eagle, makes an appearance, and we review The Eagle Way, our guiding behavioral framework. Students leave this assembly with excitement and the anticipation of being an integral part of something wonderful. This shared vision was especially helpful during the period of COVID where finding common ground was essential to our community.

Pleasantdale continues along the pathway of “student-first” by having grade level data meetings to analyze academic and social-emotional needs for students. Continually revisiting students’ needs every six weeks allows our administrators, specialists and teachers to monitor and adjust interventions as needed and to celebrate successes. These considerate dialogues lend themselves to purposeful planning that can help fuel W.I.N. (What I Need) time within our classroom schedule. Students have shown significant growth through this targeted instruction. In addition, W.I.N. time also provides students, who are ready for enrichment, opportunities to explore individual interests and passions. During this time students can explore, research, read, craft, build, write, and create.

Pursuing passions continues well past the dismissal bell. Every year Pleasantdale staff assess the interests of students and facilitate clubs that cater to these interests. Students are offered and encouraged to participate in different pathways to build upon their common interests and passions. Coding, STEAM, Chess, Lego Building and Design, Stage Stars, Multicultural Club, literacy clubs, Girls on the Run, and Student Council are just some of the extensive offerings. Our Student Council is second to none and provides many opportunities for leadership and contributions to our community. From food drives to book collections,

students are part of the process to help give back to the community and school. The partnerships that are formed create a bond with our community, and students know they are making a difference.

Pleasantdale Elementary school is truly a special place, and we strongly believe in our mission to create a community of inspired learners.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

We rely on the Illinois Learning Standards in ELA for reading, writing, speaking and listening, language, and reading foundational skills to guide instruction. Ours is a balanced literacy approach that adheres to the science of reading research. We use best practices to teach comprehension, vocabulary, fluency, phonemic awareness, and phonics each combining whole group, small group, and 1:1 instruction.

We begin with a research-based phonics/foundational skills curriculum in K-3. The mindset is every student will become a fluent reader. Our foundational skills program was developed through researching best practice during summer committee meetings and implementing those practices with resources including "From Phonics to Reading" by Wiley Blevins. We also incorporate knowledge from research-based programs including Orton Gillingham and Wilson to differentiate and intervene when students struggle in the core instructional program. We are committed to finding the right resources to make sure each student becomes a fluent reader.

It takes more than a packaged reading program to reach the goal of students achieving excellent reading comprehension and writing ability. We research best practice, look at what materials/programs are available, choose programs/units to pilot in classrooms, engage in professional development to initiate the curriculum, and then plan how we will teach. Our curriculum review cycle is fluid and responsive to student outcomes and research developments.

In early childhood instruction, the connection between pictures and text is paramount. While we teach letters and their accompanying sounds in isolation, we must also guide students to discover the elements of a story. Students learn how to blend letters to make words and how the combination of words lead to sentences and a story. Teachers foster student understanding of informational texts by combining text with hands-on and play activities to reinforce vocabulary and literary features.

In primary grades students advance from learning to read to reading to learn. Differentiation stands at the forefront of our educational model. We feel there is no limit to what a primary student can achieve when pushed to their absolute best. We lead all students toward immersion and comprehension of complex texts.

In the intermediate grades we support students in their transition from learning to read to reading to learn. Students build knowledge on a variety of topics from science, social studies, and literature so that they are better able to comprehend texts and write about what they are learning. While vocabulary instruction is a key tenet of K-4 ELA instruction, our 3rd and 4th grade students dive deeper into content-specific vocabulary and break down words using Latin and Greek roots. Students also show what they have learned through performance tasks that utilize writing, creating, and presenting skills.

Understanding students' progress is a continual process. We use targeted assessments to identify foundational skills that students have mastered and still need to learn. This practice allows us to form skills-based small groups for quick review and monitoring. We use assessments such as NWEA MAP, Fastbridge probes, and common unit assessments to track all students' progress towards mastering the ELA standards in literature, information, vocabulary, and writing. These assessments allow us to see where each student meets and exceeds standards based on their grade-level and national peers and inform our daily instruction.

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

Pleasantdale adopted the Illinois Standards for Mathematical Practice and Standards for Mathematical Content and chose Bridges Mathematics and Number Corner as our core resource to teach mathematics. This resource meets the requirements of the Common Core Standards and our students' needs based on reviews by our teachers, parents, grade-level coordinators, Curriculum Council, and School Board Review

Team. In Bridges, students engage in Problems and Investigations and Work Places daily, engaging in hands-on learning 2-4 times per week (depending on the grade level). Number Corner focuses on daily skill practice and helps students develop broader mathematical concepts. Assessments from both programs are tracked through the Forefront data warehouse. Teachers and interventionists meet regularly and use the data to support instruction and determine needs for both intervention and enrichment.

Beyond the Bridges lesson plans, Pleasantdale staff differentiate concepts for students based on informal (formative) assessment. Our team of mathematics educators: classroom teachers, EL teachers, classroom instructional aides, and specialists work together to engage students in differentiated instruction. Within a single classroom students are grouped based on needs including: language, interest, enrichment, and reteaching.

Teachers strive to foster independence but also continue to support students who need more time to master a concept. The Gradual Release Model: I do, we do, you do together, you do alone (independent practice) is central to our mathematics teaching. One of the featured teaching/learning models in Bridges instruction is students “talk” mathematics strategies in whole-class, small group and paired group settings. We believe that explaining how you arrive at the answer is as important as the answer.

In grade four, we are fortunate to have many students achieving at a high level and have determined their best placement is an above-level learning classroom for the school year. While those students enjoy a curriculum matched to above-level needs, the fourth grade teachers excel at differentiating within the on-level classroom setting.

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

Pleasantdale Elementary School has created a teaching environment that embraces The Next Generation Science Standards. Through the NGSS, students prepare to be independent, responsible, and proactive learners. We have an inquiry-based curriculum with a focus on hands-on learning and application of skills.

Students need to develop inquiring minds and a curiosity about science. They explore the natural world and develop skills of scientific inquiry to design and carry out scientific investigations, and they draw conclusions by evaluating scientific evidence. Through these investigations, we see our students think analytically, critically, and creatively to judge arguments, solve problems, and make decisions in scientific contexts. Science lesson instruction has units developed through NGSS workshops, Mystery Science investigations, and lessons developed that study experiences from the students' local environment. For example, students engage in hands-on learning of plants through the planting of various grasses in different areas to study which seeds grow best in particular settings.

Integrating scientific readings in our K-2 ELA curriculum provides additional opportunities for students to learn about scientific topics. ELA topical units include: plants and care for the Earth, astronomy, insects, animal classification, and the human body. In grades 3-4 science is a separate subject where students engage in experimentation and experience the wonder of discovery.

Assessment and grading are developmentally appropriate and aligned to standards. In the primary grades, science topics are integrated into the ELA block through a range of activities including hands-on learning, research, whole-class discussions, and journaling. In third and fourth grades, teachers assess student learning via formative student observations and rubrics for class activities in addition to more formal assessments.

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

The social science curriculum follows the Illinois Learning Standards based on inquiry skills, civic standards, geographical understanding, economics, and historical integration. Our students use their inquiry-based skills to ask and research essential questions, find evidence to support these questions, and understand the difference between facts and opinions in regards to historical events and occurrences. Creating conclusions and communicating reasons encourage high-level applications of skills and concepts.

Geographical literacy is taught to our students through map skills exploring places, regions, and cultures of the United States and beyond. Students use these skills to examine each region to understand the economic interdependence that these regions have on each other and the global supply chain.

Literacy and social-emotional learning permeate the social science curriculum. These informational passages focus on culture and civics virtues and core values in society. This integration helps students focus on making connections to real-life experiences and situations.

As in our science curriculum, subject integrations provide many opportunities for our students. Some of our ELA units are based on social studies themes. Some ELA topical units include: A New Nation: American Independence; Fighting for a Cause; and American Revolution.

Assessment and grading are developmentally appropriate. As with science in the primary grades, social studies topics are also integrated into the ELA curriculum, so no formal grade is given. Students in these grades learn content through informational readings, hands-on activities, research, and class discussions. In third and fourth assessment is completed through PBL (Problem based learning), informal assessment, and application of concepts. These types of assessments allow for students and teachers to work together to ensure understanding and application.

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

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

Our Bright Beginnings preschool program is a leading child-centered program that provides educational services to preschool-aged children through screening and evaluation, half-day preschool programming, community partnerships, and parent outreach. The program includes research-based practices based on the Illinois Early Learning Developmental Standards using a play-based model and intentional instruction with a focus on language, social-emotional development, self-directed learning, and developmental readiness. The multi-certified teachers, program assistants, speech pathologist, and occupational and physical therapists all serve children of varying abilities and backgrounds in a developmental, transdisciplinary, blended model of no more than fifteen students.

Unlike many traditional preschools, Bright Beginnings uses robust curricular and assessment resources. The philosophy is to utilize direct instruction and at least one hour a day of play at centers to prepare students to thrive in kindergarten and to develop a strong educational foundation for future learning. Teachers assess progress and note interests in order to tailor learning activities to meet the needs of all of the students.

A foundation of content, process, and professional collaboration starts with our preschool teachers and continues throughout the elementary grades. The school holds a shared vision for high-quality, developmentally based learning for young children in both the early childhood and elementary school classrooms. The district and school strategic plans have specific strategies for improving the professionals' skills that contribute to preventing achievement gaps and evaluation strategies that help to ensure that the activities and structures put in place impact student outcomes.

Prior to entering kindergarten, our students attend Kindergarten Kickstart. Here incoming kindergarteners meet 1:1 with a staff member who assesses their early learning skills. Results from this screening provide valuable information as we look to align services for our students and create class lists. Data from this screening indicate that approximately 50% of our students have readiness skills including rhyme recognition and can correctly identify lowercase letters, and this past year, 73% of our incoming kindergarten students demonstrated mastery of uppercase letter recognition.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)

Our music and art curriculums were developed based on the guidelines for the Illinois Arts Learning Standards. Students create, perform, and respond to music through singing, dancing, listening, and playing instruments from a variety of cultures and time periods. Kindergarten through fourth grade students attend music and art class twice a week for thirty minutes. First and second graders perform a concert in December and third and fourth graders perform a concert in May. Fourth graders also have the opportunity to participate in beginning band and orchestra.

Students explore different art media and experience self-discovery through creativity during their art class. The art teacher facilitates young artists as they navigate the creative process. During this creative exploration students develop problem-solving techniques that enable them to establish a level of comfort within themselves to tackle difficult tasks in the future. Students are encouraged to use art as a catalyst for self-expression. Students display their art at various local establishments and the annual West Suburban Consortium of Young Artists.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

Physical education at Pleasantdale is a training ground for freedom of movement, social interaction, analysis of personal and group skills, and verbal and nonverbal communication. These skills make us not only good at PE but carry over to anything we learn in life. Our students attend physical education classes twice a week. During that time they are encouraged to try new activities and interact with their peers to the best of their ability.

Our curriculum keeps our students on the path of developing healthy exercise habits, which teaches them the importance of daily physical activity. We follow state standards related to physical education and use them as guiding principles of our curriculum. Our students have a voice in determining which units are of interest to them. One example is our gymnastics unit. Our students wanted to learn and improve tumbling skills. We needed safety mats and other gymnastics equipment. The principal contacted our PTO that then procured the needed equipment. As part of this unit students use coaching software to analyze their movements frame by frame and refine their technique. This targeted feedback helped gymnastics become one of the favorite units in our school.

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

We use authentic reading, writing, speaking, and listening activities to introduce students to the language and cultures of Spanish-speaking countries. Kindergarteners attend Spanish classes once a week. First and second graders attend Spanish twice a week, and third and fourth graders attend three times a week for 30 minutes. The Spanish content reinforces SEL and math skills, and increases students' understanding of their own language(s) through studying Spanish. For example, the culminating project for first grade is a cross-curricular simulated Mexican Market. In Spanish class students learn how to introduce themselves, to ask how someone is doing, the numbers to 30, and how to bargain for a lower price. In art class the students make authentic Mexican “artesanía” or crafts. First graders earn Pleasantdale Pesos for following The Eagle Way (our school’s positive behavior system of support). The Spanish classroom gets decorated and set up like an outdoor market, and students take turns being sellers and buyers. They use the pesos they earned to buy the artesanía to take home. The Mexican Market reinforces number sense, communication, art, behavior expectations, and culture.

2d. Technology/library/media

As part of our technology and media team our district librarian and innovative teaching coach (ITC) collaborate on lessons and resources for students and staff. The team has developed a technology skills scope and sequence for students starting in kindergarten identifying twelve components and the level of mastery expected for each grade level. Our librarian and ITC then integrate these components (e.g. digital citizenship, internet use and research, keyboarding) into their weekly lessons with students. Our librarian and ITC work to balance exposure to print media and on-line content. While our students have the

traditional experience of checking out books, they also gain research skills that can be applied to content area assignments. For example in the upper grades, students analyze various non-fiction texts to identify primary and secondary sources as well as to understand copyright laws and restrictions on use.

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

Pleasantdale Elementary School has many innovative curriculum programs benefiting our students. Our K-4 students have WIN (What I Need). During this time students receive specialized instruction individualized to their specific needs. Another unique curriculum experience our students encounter is a talent development program provided by the enrichment learning specialist. During these weekly lessons, all students engage in challenging activities involving the 4C's: communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity. These lessons align with Bloom's taxonomy levels of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. During instruction, the classroom teacher remains in the classroom to observe students and notice characteristics of high-level thinking using a checklist provided by the enrichment teacher. Our belief is that providing access to advanced thinking skills for all students reduces any unintentional bias from our screening process for advanced placement in later years. Finally, students in fourth grade receive STEAM instruction. This class has been co-taught by the district's ITC, enrichment learning specialist, resource teacher and art teacher. Students learn coding and stop motion animation, as well as explore physics concepts. They also participate in a variety of STEAM challenges such as designing, building, and testing a wind-resistant house. Our innovative programs ensure our students receive a well-rounded educational experience.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

High-quality, equitable standards-based instruction, screening, interventions, and service are available to all students at Pleasantdale. Personalized education using differentiation, accommodations, and a multi-tiered support system advances the academic and/or behavioral development of all learners. Our multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) model incorporates an increasing intensity of instruction through progressive levels of intervention and services in direct proportion to individual student needs. Pleasantdale's model of intervention and service delivery includes the universal screening of all students, systematic data collection systems, continual progress monitoring, a formal problem-solving process, and a collaborative team approach that includes parents.

All students receive core academic and social-emotional support. Additional interventions, services, and extensions are provided to students through an implementation plan by trained professionals as determined by data and collaborative problem-solving. Students move from intervention to intervention, or between service models, as their progress and needs dictate and without prescribed timelines. Plans for implementation use research-based instructional practices and interventions. Our Data Review Team considers universal screening and benchmark data, data from state assessments, special education evaluations, and classroom formative and summative data to identify specific areas of need. After identifying the target area(s), the team selects an aligned intervention or program and creates a plan for implementation and service. Each plan details the data used to identify the area of need, the person(s) responsible for delivering the intervention and administering progress monitoring probes, the targeted intervention(s), an intervention schedule, a measurable goal, and any specific adaptations or modifications necessary for the student.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Pleasantdale Elementary School has a robust program in place for students performing above grade level. All teachers at Pleasantdale have been trained in the differentiation model created by Dr. Carol Ann Tomlinson. We differentiate to enrich the curriculum for students in all academic areas using pre-assessments, formative assessments, and observations to help determine when and how to enrich. Teachers recognize that every student learns differently, and some students may require specialized services to reach their full academic potential. Our school provides individualized advanced learning services, including enriched and accelerated instruction, as necessary for students' assessed academic and developmental

readiness. The need for advanced learning is not limited to those who are already achieving at high levels but also includes students who have shown evidence of high potential and the need for talent development interventions including students who have an identified disability, English language learners, or students who have yet to achieve at the level of their potential as identified on formal assessments or other measures.

Our Talent Development model, developed in collaboration with Northwestern University, focuses on nurturing the skills needed to support high achievement in academic domains. Students in grades K-3 receive direct instruction from the enrichment learning specialist in the 4 Cs: communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity once a week throughout the school year. Teachers also have the opportunity to extend the 4 Cs lessons in the classroom. Students who demonstrate a need beyond whole-group instruction may receive more targeted skill instruction in small groups. Fourth grade students are provided with opportunities to participate in both extended ELA and extended math classes. These placements are determined by several criteria. Classes are built around the students who meet the criteria, therefore the number of students varies from year to year. Extended ELA covers fourth grade standards while extending to some fifth grade standards through the use of more complex texts. Extended math covers both fourth grade standards and fifth grade standards. Fourth grade students who successfully complete extended math are prepared to start the sixth grade curriculum in the fall.

3c. Students with disabilities:

At Pleasantdale, special education services are a natural continuation and expansion of the individualized attention and programming we provide to all students. We value an inclusive philosophy, collaborative relationships, effective communication, and evidence-based educational practices. We have established clear action steps to address this achievement gap for students with disabilities involving a combination of programs, services, and supports including co-teaching at every grade level and extended instructional options in the building and in cooperative programs to positively influence outcomes for students with disabilities. We use clear, measurable targets and goals to evaluate student progress and program outcomes.

The multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) model referenced under 1a includes all students. Incorporated within the model is the increasing intensity of instruction through progressive levels of intervention and services in direct proportion to individual student needs. The defined processes and consistent use of data-based progress monitoring and evaluation, collaborative problem-solving, and data-driven dialogue build consensus, commitment, and a shared focus on instruction and strategies.

Pleasantdale utilizes a High-Leverage Instructional Practices framework to address the need for more intensive and specially designed instruction. These practices are an impactful and effective way to reach a broad range of students, regardless of disability status. Professional development coaching is ongoing and embedded in the generalization of skills for staff.

We emphasize timely and clear communication and collaboration for the IEP process, individualized resources, and special programming. A parent committee facilitates the sharing of ideas, resources, and input on special services and related goals and activities. Increased opportunities for parents to engage in related discussions and activities further support school and family partnerships.

3d. English Language Learners:

To enhance the outcomes for English Learners, we have made extensions to the programs and practices for English Learners (ELs) going beyond established practices and providing for increased innovation and implementation of research-based practices. A team of teachers and administrators collaborate to identify priorities and develop action steps to eliminate the achievement gap. Some of these priorities include: offering a greater variety of research-based instructional programs for ELs, adapting the way outcomes are reported, using resources to attract and retain highly skilled, fully credentialed teacher assistants, supervisors, and substitutes who are bilingual and have experience working with EL learners, and increasing professional development for these staff members. In addition to these priorities, we provide EL students with supplementary materials to be used at home with parents. These supplementary materials increase parent involvement and ensure EL students have full access to rigorous academic content in all core content

areas and enrichment courses.

Students in our EL program have access to rigorous academic content across all areas. Full integration of students in our EL program begins in our preschool program with teachers who are trained to address their cultural and linguistic needs. Throughout the building, instructional programs utilize student's primary language whenever possible combined with high-quality English-only programs for increasing English literacy. Across all language instruction programs, we document students' academic growth. We employ assessment tools designed specifically for EL programming that focus upon diagnosing students' needs.

Parents are a critical component and resource for both the student(s) and the school. Having a school-wide strategy to engage parents, providing clear information about the programming options for their student(s), and conveying the importance of parental involvement and support has increased the parents' confidence regarding how to participate in their child's education. In the past year, outcomes from family involvement include an expanded bilingual student library and expanded opportunities for families to learn about the languages and cultures represented in our community.

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

At Pleasantdale we take pride in the community spirit and sense of belonging fostered by our All-in philosophy. Students come here not only to learn, but also because it is a place where they know they belong. We take into account students' past, meet them where they are, and prepare them for a successful future. Staff members make sure students feel welcome and safe from the moment they arrive at school until the moment they leave. This sense of community begins with setting a school-wide theme, consisting of growth mindset and student achievement components, that is woven into many different aspects of our school throughout the year.

Building a school community is essential at Pleasantdale. At the start of each school year, kindergarten staff host a Kindergarten Playdate where students and their families gather on the playground to meet their teachers and play with their new classmates. We also host a Meet the Teacher event before school starts. Preschool through fourth-grade families visit the classroom and meet the teacher to ease the transition and prepare for their first day of school. We have a Buddies program where students are paired up with a student from another grade. Buddies meet monthly to do an enrichment activity together.

At Pleasantdale, students follow The Eagle Way of being responsible, respectful, and safe. When a staff member recognizes Eagle Way behavior, students are awarded eagle feathers that are then displayed throughout the school. For each eagle feather earned, the student receives a ticket to vote for an all-school reward. Working together towards a common goal is just one more way that our school promotes community, acceptance, and teamwork.

We proudly offer our students many different extracurricular activities. Our school Post Office consists of students writing letters to other students and staff. Students act as mail carriers delivering the letters. This group is a great tool for community building and fostering relationships across grade levels. Student Council is another way Pleasantdale students work to be responsible citizens. Students practice and hone leadership skills that will enable them to be successful in their future educational and career endeavors. They participate in philanthropic work throughout the community. Students host book, food and school supply drives. They also raise funds for local charity organizations and create events such as spirit weeks and activities to bring the whole school community together. We purposefully host a range of clubs, including chess, math, running, cheerleading, nature, science, drama, lego, coding, and reading, to appeal to our diverse group of learners and pique their interest in different areas, as well as offer opportunities for each child to be connected to school outside of the classroom.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Pleasantdale is not only defined by the students who walk our hallways, but by the families and community who support these students through their lifelong journeys. Continuing the idea of All-In, we look to the families and communities around our school to help facilitate and encourage the home - school connection.

Our partnerships are vast and engaging. At the forefront is our Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) that provides experiences through a variety of activities and community events. These events are held throughout the year and are available to all students and families. The PTO works to ensure alignment to the mission of Pleasantdale. The PTO works with the administration to offer support to the teachers with various supplies for their classroom including, but not limited to, flexible seating options, classroom libraries, mobile Apple TV carts for small group instruction, and physical education equipment as noted earlier.

The PTO also coordinates events to celebrate the students and families of our district. These include a back to school celebration to kick off the year, book fairs throughout the year, family involvement nights, and holiday experiences such as Trunk and Treat and Spring Sock Hop.

Traditions are an important part of Pleasantdale. Each year on Veterans Day we partner with Quilts of Valor

and the True Patriots Care Foundation to honor family members of our students and staff who have served in the U.S. Military. These veterans share their experiences and help our students gain appreciation for the freedoms they enjoy. Our students express their gratitude through song, poetry, art and prose.

Pleasantdale partners with Lyons Township High School in providing a practicum for seniors interested in a teaching career. The University of Illinois, National Lewis University, Lewis University and Illinois State University have placed their student teaching candidates at Pleasantdale to learn from our highly qualified teachers and paraprofessionals. These mutually-beneficial opportunities provide a pathway for future educators as well as a source of applicants for vacant positions.

Pleasantdale Elementary School is a featured site for the Illinois Green School Alliance which works with our kindergarten students as they learn about composting and how they can help keep our planet clean. The compost is then used in our butterfly garden. Students experience hands-on science and see the impact of their composting efforts.

We recognize that many of our neighbors do not have school-age children, however they are an integral part of our community. To help connect our entire community, we share our students' passion in various community locations. This sharing includes displaying artwork at local bakeries and contributing decorations to the family holiday festivals at our local park district.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Pleasantdale Elementary School prioritizes a culture of professionalism. All teachers are encouraged and supported to continue their professional learning in many unique ways.

Professional learning is part of our curriculum-adoption process. We train our teachers in content area standards, best practices in each subject area, and various types of assessment and curricular resources.

Pleasantdale teacher representatives from grade levels and specialty areas attend conferences and workshops that support their professional growth each year. These learning opportunities include, but are not limited to: IDEAc, Illinois Association for Gifted Children Conference, IASCD Kindergarten Conference, math institutes through Metro Chicago Math Initiative, institutes through the Midwest Principals' Center, ILASCD workshops, and various national conferences.

We offer a personalized professional development plan, Pdale Expeditions, which empowers teachers to select a learning path that is right for them. The current choices are differentiated instruction, SEL, and instructional technology integration. Teacher teams work through these learning activities at their own pace and are given opportunities to reflect on their learning through shared documents. These documents are reviewed and are used as discussion pieces to improve teaching and learning practices.

Teachers share their learning and teaching practices with each other at staff meetings, curriculum meetings, and grade-level monthly after-school meetings. Our school has incorporated monthly learning cafes for targeted professional development that teachers can immediately apply to their teaching practices within the classroom. Recent cafes have included math cafe, writers' workshop cafe, and phonics cafe. Staff-led book clubs on self-selected titles help support teacher learning and camaraderie across grade levels.

Knowing we learn best from each other, we have our own teachers trained as instructional coaches through Northwestern University's Educational Coaching Network and Jim Knight. Our coaches are master teachers who aim to support the development of their peers. Through their expertise in various curricular areas, they are able to work with teachers individually on their chosen area of focus.

Pleasantdale has a two-year mentoring program in which mentors and proteges have the opportunity to observe each other and collaborate, as well as receive coaching from district administrators. Supporting our teachers along their professional journey and throughout their career is a priority of the administrators and supporting staff members. Continued education is a priority for our school and teachers are encouraged to take advanced learning courses to further their professional and personal learning.

We recognize that we can learn from other educators outside and arrange in-person and remote site visits to other districts who are implementing resources and programs we are piloting and/or implementing. Our teachers and administrators engage in reciprocal exchanges of ideas through our involvement in the Midwest Principals Center, Metro Chicago Mathematics Initiative, and the West40 Intermediate Service Center professional networks.

4. School Leadership:

When approaching the principal with a new idea, teachers commonly open with, “I know you are going to ask me how this benefits students” and for the principal to respond, “You know it!” This exchange embodies both the leadership structure and the guiding philosophy of our work at Pleasantdale. Students sit at the center of all we do. We are not a top-down organization, but rather a boots-on-the-ground family of education professionals who intertwine our experience and expertise to lift up the entire school community. The All-In philosophy empowers each member of our school community to feel that they have a real and important role in serving our students. The structure of the school’s decision-making process is inclusive by design. School and district leaders empower teachers to work collaboratively in creating and implementing solutions, and to trust that they have the support of administrators.

The building leadership team is an 11-person team including representatives from each staff group within the school. Through bi-weekly meetings, this team provides direction for the school through problem-solving and planning. This structure ensures all stakeholder groups and varied viewpoints gather at the table and provides a direct way to disseminate information to, and gather feedback from, all constituents.

This inclusive structure allowed us to make changes required by the COVID-19 pandemic effectively and efficiently. We brought students back for in-person learning in August 2020, months before our surrounding school districts, who ultimately used our practices as a model. By having representative voices at the table from the beginning and by design, we were able to implement safe practices quickly.

Teachers are empowered to lead curriculum changes through our Curriculum Council. This team of administrators and teachers meets monthly to identify and plan for curriculum needs. This council identifies professional learning opportunities for our teachers and leads their grade-level teams through the curriculum review process for each content area. In addition, this committee meets periodically with representatives from the middle school thus providing an avenue for curriculum alignment and articulation.

Our content specialists lead decision-making as they facilitate student data review meetings. Rather than annual or bi-annual, these meetings are held five times a year and bring together our content specialists, classroom teachers, administrators and our school psychologist. During these data review meetings, our content specialists lead the discussions on student learning including identification of interventions for individual students.

At Pleasantdale, our approach to leadership is more than just a school belief. As a district, we believe in bringing many voices to the table and using the talents of everyone to improve learning for students. Our belief that we are all an integral part of creating a community where students thrive, teachers and administrators are driven to grow, and parents feel valued as partners in their child’s learning, allows us to make decisions that focus on what is best for students.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

At Pleasantdale we create a learning community that celebrates the diverse backgrounds of our students, families and staff. Overall, there are 23 languages spoken by students and staff. We are proud of the many backgrounds and cultures of our students. Our staff and administrators work consistently to provide our students with opportunities to share their backgrounds and thrive in their learning community.

At Pleasantdale we provide our diverse student and family population with enrichment opportunities inside and outside of the classroom. We currently have a multilingual library collection for students and their

families to use and enjoy. These books enrich literacy development by fostering cultural and linguistic engagement. Our students have access to almost 300 hardback and paperback books in 18 languages, specific to our student population, as well as over 1600 digital/audio books offered in 14 languages. Our Pleasantdale families have also donated almost 100 books in Serbian, Macedonian and Polish, which represent 50% of all of our students in our EL program.

In our classroom libraries teachers provide students with many different books that celebrate different cultures and holidays celebrated by our students. Every month our librarian and tech specialist provide our teachers with a monthly digital choice board that includes holidays, historic and cultural events happening in our country and around the world. These digital choice boards are then given to the children to explore. Teachers also provide opportunities for families to share what holidays they celebrate and information about their student's cultural backgrounds in surveys given to families at the beginning of the year. This information is then used to connect with students, enhance learning experiences, and celebrate the diversity and interconnectedness of our school community.

Every year we host Cultural Night, sponsored by our PTO, gathering to share food, games, traditional dress and photos. On this night Pleasantdale families, along with teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators, come together and celebrate the many cultures represented in our school community.

Our Bilingual Parent Advisory Committee (BPAC) meets throughout the school year to support the needs of our bilingual families. It provides opportunities to discuss topics that inform families of ways to help their children to grow socially, emotionally and academically.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

As shared throughout this narrative, Pleasantdale is All-in for student success. Student success guides our work, unites our efforts, and pervades our culture. No individual alone holds responsibility for the development of our students. All-in means that everyone does whatever it takes, whenever it is needed, to support our students. Everyone in Pleasantdale: the administrators, teachers, and other staff share the common goal of educating our students. Helping all students achieve their individual goals is key to our common success. Here at Pleasantdale we are dedicated to providing our students with the instruction and resources they need in order to succeed not only academically, but socially and emotionally as well. We work together as a school-wide team to prepare our students for middle and high school; we help facilitate a sturdy foundation to support all of their future endeavors. We prioritize collaboration in order to achieve our school-wide mission.

This All-in philosophy is more than just words on paper; it is a commitment from all people who are part of the Pleasantdale community to work together to ensure student success. Through programs, experiences, encouragement and engagement, our students know that no matter what, we are here for them. As you walk the hall of Pleasantdale Elementary School, you will find classrooms buzzing with excitement and dedication to student achievement. Collaboration among teachers, support staff, specialists and students empower our young learners to reach out and ask questions, inquire about passions, and forge their paths through their own educational careers.

All-in commits us to each student, to our work, and to each other. It guides our focus and shapes decisions both small and large, short-and long-term. It builds community throughout our school, within and across employee groups, and spills out into our community. It allows all students to know they are welcomed, supported, and valued. All-in defines who we are as individuals and as a school community.