

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

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

School Mailing Address 5020 Central Avenue
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Western Springs State IL Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 60558-1801

County Cook County

Telephone (708) 246-7678 Fax (708) 482-2589

Web site/URL https://www.wsd101.org/o/forest-hills E-mail rcorrough@d101.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. Brian Barnhart E-mail bbarnhart@d101.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Western Springs SD 101 Tel. (708) 246-3700

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 Mrs. Caitlin Sendaydiego
(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):
- 3 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
1 Middle/Junior high schools
0 High schools
0 K-12 schools
- 4 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	14
K	36
1	53
2	52
3	60
4	46
5	49
6	0
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	310

*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
 - 0 % Asian
 - 0 % Black or African American
 - 6.9 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0.7 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 88.1 % White
 - 4.3 % 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: 2%

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	3
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	2
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	5
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	310
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.02
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

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

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %
0 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 1 %

Total number students who qualify: 3

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

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>3</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>3</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>9</u> Developmental Delay	<u>3</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>6</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>1</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: 5 %
Total number of students served: 16

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 7

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.	5
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	10
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

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 22:1

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	96%	95%	95%	97%	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 ☐ 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.

Engage. Inspire. Empower.

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

<https://www.wsd101.org/o/d101/page/toc-series-4000-personnel>

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

Forest Hills has often been described as either a public school “with a private school feel” or a public school “that’s more like a large family.” The greatest asset within this large family is our students. The students at Forest Hills are the heart and soul of our school community and the core purpose for why we all come together each and every day. They come to school ready to learn, put forth their best effort, and take risks in order to be their best. Our students are connected—with one another and with their teachers and staff at Forest Hills. They’re the kind of kids who say thank you to their adults at the end of the day and who write notes of appreciation and gratitude to those in their school community. Lastly, they’re the type of kids who recognize that they are fortunate—fortunate to live where they live, go to school where they do and this isn’t something that they take for granted. Our students come to us with philanthropic ideas—raising money for the people of Ukraine, hurricane victims, and those locally who are in need of food, winter items or other essentials. We really couldn’t ask for better little humans to help shape and grow.

Another component of the family consists of well-educated, successful and extremely supportive parents. There is indeed truth to the saying, “the apple doesn’t fall far from the tree,” and our circumstances are no exception. This extraordinary group of kids comes from parents who are equally amazing. The parent culture is a positive one, where parents fully get the value of their children’s elementary education experience. They understand the need to balance academics with social-emotional learning and maintain high levels of trust with the staff at Forest Hills. Although the population of Forest Hills remains largely stable and with low mobility within the community, new members are quickly and intentionally embraced, and often report back to us that they feel like they’ve been a part of the family for quite some time.

Last, but certainly not least, are the amazing staff at Forest Hills. Our teachers and staff are the most caring, talented and dedicated group of people who I have ever had the privilege of working with in my almost 25 years in education. Aside from being masters of their craft and solid instructionally, the pervasive attitude amongst the adults at Forest Hills is that of “doing whatever it takes” to meet the needs of our students and of one another. The staff “shows up” each day in countless ways—whether it’s recording a lesson for a student who was absent, advocating for extra help or support for one of their students, attending a performance for a student outside of the school day, planning a luncheon to celebrate a colleague’s special occasion, or a shoulder to cry on when times are tough. These are the kind of people who work at Forest Hills.

It is the intersection of the personal attributes of these various groups, coupled with longevity and stability of all groups (parent/student community, Forest Hills staff and leadership, and District leadership) that has resulted in the exceptional culture and trusting learning environment that exists within the Forest Hills community.

Both within our District and specifically at Forest Hills, the focus for the last decade has been on high quality instruction and social-emotional learning. We have systematically utilized formative assessment strategies with descriptive feedback and constructivist teaching and learning practices to ensure impactful and engaging learning experiences for students. These expectations for our staff (and ultimately, students) have been detailed and are visible in our continuous improvement plan of Cultivating Student Ownership. (Internally, lovingly called our “D101 Continuous Improvement Wheel”.) Professional development centers around this focus on instruction, with staff trying new strategies, sharing with colleagues and iterating in their teaching practices. This focus on instruction, coupled with a profound desire to ensure every student (and staff member) feels safe, connected and valued at Forest Hills, has been our driving force and recipe for success.

The final component of Forest Hills’s story is our focus on the whole child. As I’ve already outlined, we’ve intensely focused on highly effective instructional practices and academics, along with social-emotional learning, but additionally, we are deeply committed to cultivating students who embody personal attributes that are essential for success. As a district, we’ve identified the following attributes as our priorities: Effective Communicator, Collaborative, Global Citizen, Reflective, Empathetic, Critical Thinker/Problem-Solver and Resilient/Perseverant. Each month, we focus on a specific attribute via principal push-in read-

alouds in every classroom, authentic “in the moment” examples, connected school-wide activities and parent messaging to reinforce these attributes at home. These are also attributes we encourage and hope that all adults within the Forest Hills and District 101 community also embrace for themselves and model for our students.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

Forest Hills teachers employ a district developed reading/English language arts curriculum authored by our District Pre-K through 8th grade teacher ELA committee representatives. This cyclical curriculum review process started with gathering teacher input about their present units of study, their understanding of expected outcomes, their current resources employed, and their perceptions of strengths and needs in each of the areas. We then gathered that data and correlated the current units of study and learning outcomes to the Illinois Learning Standards (CCSS) to ensure strong alignment and identify gaps and/or overlapping topics. Once we updated our learning outcomes and grade level targets by area (ie. fiction, nonfiction, vocabulary use, etc.)--again aligned to Illinois Learning Standards--we, as a teacher committee, engaged in vertical and horizontal articulation to ensure coverage, depth of content, and our students' local needs were addressed. Once learning outcomes and targets were finalized, our committee developed proficiency criteria (rubrics) that both described the attributes of successful learning (proficiency=3) and included prerequisite skills (levels 1 & 2) and enrichment opportunities (level 4) for students with a particular outcome or skills. These success criteria also correlate to standards-based reporting shared with students and parents each trimester in grades K-5. Finally, core instructional resources were selected and embedded within our curriculum for teachers to use. With regard to literacy specifically, we intentionally embedded varied and diverse texts to ensure students had both voice and choice and were appropriately challenged with “just right” texts as part of their learning.

At the time of our last ELA implementation, we worked with professional coaching consultants and our own instructional coaches to support both writing and vocabulary instructional methods, as these were identified as prioritized areas of need by teachers. At Forest Hills and in our district, our teachers have autonomy in how they employ researched-based practices to teach our curriculum (the art of teaching), but what is taught is commonly understood and commonly employed by all teachers. With regard to instructional methods, our district philosophy leans toward constructivist approaches. Specifically within ELA, our teachers use writing workshops, guided reading and structured word inquiry as their main instructional approaches. Effectively, within ELA, we strive to meet students' varying needs with differentiated instruction tailored to their current readiness levels. Formative and summative assessments are embedded within our units of study, and our locally developed proficiency criteria serve as the foundation for real time feedback to students and parents regarding students' progress and a real time lens by which our teachers can gather information about their students and shift instructional approaches or content accordingly.

Additionally, in order to ensure students are growing at appropriate levels within the areas of ELA, in addition to State required testing (grades 3-8), we employ NWEA MAP reading testing three times a year (grades 2-5), Fastbridge diagnostics screeners (all K-1 and as needed in 2-5), Fountas & Pinnell benchmarking (K-2 and as needed beyond) and several other informal and locally designed assessments. These assessments are reviewed at the student level, the grade level, the building level, and the district level, to affirm strengths and seek out opportunities to tailor resources and or instructional approaches. Because our three elementary schools are largely homogenous, we often rely upon local normative information to best understand the needs of our students. (Our students, on average, perform at the 85th national percentile relative to the national normative average performance on standardized tests such as NWEA MAP and the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)).

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

Forest Hills teachers employ a district developed Math curriculum that was authored by our District Pre-K through 8th grade teacher math committee representatives. This cyclical curriculum review process started with gathering teacher input about their present units of study, their understanding of expected outcomes, their current resources employed, and their perceptions of strengths and needs in each of the areas. We then gathered that data and correlated the current units of study and learning outcomes to the Illinois Learning

Standards (CCSS) to ensure strong alignment and identify gaps and/or overlapping topics. Once we updated our learning outcomes and grade level targets by area (ie. geometry, operations and algebraic thinking, measurement and data, etc.)--again aligned to Illinois Learning Standards--we, as a teacher committee, engaged in vertical and horizontal articulation to ensure coverage, depth of content, and our students' local needs were addressed. Once learning outcomes and targets were finalized, our committee authored common grade level assessments and determined common proficiency expectations for each assessment. Additionally, a series of formative assessment (ie. exit slips, mid-unit checks) were commonly developed for all teachers to use. At the time of this submission, our core district K-5 resource is Everyday Math 4.

In terms of instructional methods, at Forest Hills and in our district, our teachers have autonomy in how they teach our curriculum (the art of teaching), but what is taught is commonly understood and commonly employed by all teachers (the science of teaching). Our district philosophy leans toward constructivist approaches. Specifically within math, teachers predominantly use a math workshop approach. In this manner, lessons, which are 60 minutes daily, often start with a whole group mini-lesson and then students use self-reflection and teacher guidance to determine their next "just right" step, which might be small group instruction with the teacher, small group work with similarly performing peers, or independent work tailored to their needs. In grades four and five, we also offer dedicated advanced math classes, which happen concurrently to standard math classes, and in grade K-3, dedicated enrichment support is provided either as a push-in support to students or, rarely, as a pull-out intervention. Formative and summative assessments are embedded within each unit of study, and our locally developed common assessments and proficiency criteria serve as the foundation for real time feedback to students and parents regarding students' progress and a lens by which our teachers can gather information about their students and shift instructional approaches or content accordingly. Additionally, in order to ensure students are growing at appropriate levels within the area of math, in addition to State required testing (grades 3-8), we employ NWEA MAP math testing three times a year (grades 2-5), Fastbridge diagnostics screeners (all K-1 and as needed in 2-5), ERB out-of-level testing (optional), and several other informal and locally designed assessments. These assessments are reviewed at the student level, the grade level, the building level, and the district level, to affirm strengths and seek out opportunities to tailor resources and or instructional approaches. Because our three elementary schools are largely homogenous, we often rely upon local normative information to best understand the needs of our students. (Our students, on average, perform at the 85th national percentile relative to the national normative average performance on standardized tests such as NWEA MAP and the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)).

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

Forest Hills teachers employ a district developed, NGSS Science curriculum that was authored by our District K through 8th grade teacher science committee representatives. This cyclical curriculum review process started with gathering teacher input about their present units of study, their understanding of expected outcomes, their current resources employed, and their perceptions of strengths and needs in each of the areas. We then gathered that data and correlated the current units of study and learning outcomes to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) to ensure strong alignment and identify gaps and/or overlapping topics. Once we updated our learning outcomes and grade level targets by area (ie. life science, physical science, and earth and space science.), we partnered with Discovery Education to build common grade level units using their Techbook and streaming service as core resources. TCI's Science Alive was also purchased to support our primary grades. Each unit built also included common assessments, problem-based projects, common rubric criteria or a hands-on culminating project to ensure student mastery and/or proficiency of the unit's learning targets. As part of our curriculum work, our teacher committee also built fully developed materials lists by unit and grade, so that all necessary hands-on materials could be ordered well in advance of students needing them. These materials are all replenished annually to ensure the focus on hands-on learning throughout our science units of study is maintained. At Forest Hills and in our district, our teachers have autonomy in how they employ researched-based practices to teach our curriculum (the art of teaching), but what is taught is commonly understood and commonly employed by all teachers. Our district philosophy leans toward constructivist approaches. Science lessons vary by grade level at Forest Hills, due to limitations on instructional time and are 30-90 minutes per week in K-2 and 90-120 minutes per week in grades 3-5. Our 5th grade students take part, annually, in required Illinois Science Assessment (ISA) testing, and we use

this information, in tandem with our locally developed rubrics, criteria and/or assessments, to ensure students are successfully growing and achieving in the area of science.

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

Forest Hills teachers employ a district developed, social science curriculum authored by our District K through 8th grade teacher social studies committee representatives. This cyclical curriculum review process started with gathering teacher input about their present units of study, their understanding of expected outcomes, their current resources employed, and their perceptions of strengths and needs in each of the areas. We then gathered that data and correlated the current units of study and learning outcomes with a variety of existing standards including NCSS, the Illinois Learning Standards, the Ohio Learning Standards, and the Massachusetts Learning Standards to ensure strong alignment and identify gaps and/or overlapping topics. Our work also took into consideration the professional judgment of our teachers and the needs of our students.

Common outcome assessments were also developed locally as well as a suggested teaching order with assessments given on a set schedule to ensure alignment among classes. “The aim of social studies is the promotion of civic competence—the knowledge, intellectual processes, and democratic dispositions required of students to be active and engaged participants in public life” (NCSS). Like with science, we partnered with Discovery Education to build common grade level units using their Social Studies Techbook and streaming service as core resources. TCI’s History Alive was also purchased as a supplementary resource for multiple grades. At Forest Hills and in our district, our teachers have autonomy in how they employ researched-based practices to teach our curriculum (the art of teaching), but what is taught is commonly understood and commonly employed by all teachers. Our district philosophy leans toward constructivist approaches. Social science lessons vary by grade level at Forest Hills, due to limitations on instructional time and are 30-90 minutes per week in K-2 and 90-120 minutes per week in grades 3-5. We use our locally developed rubrics, criteria and/or common assessments to ensure students are successfully growing and achieving in the area of social studies, and we integrate social sciences topics into our ELA curriculum as often as we are able to do so successfully.

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

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

Forest Hills offers special education Early Childhood Education services for the District’s (Forest Hills and our two sister elementary buildings) three- and four year old students. Our instructional approaches are based in guided exploratory play utilizing constructivist practices and an emphasis on communication skill development, socialization skills and collaboration with peers. A priority within our 3-5 ECE program is the development of an initial positive educational experience for students and families alike, as this goal has provided for years of growth and development among our students whose initial foray into District 101 was via this program. The program support materials utilized is Creative Curriculum and includes their professional development components.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)

Forest Hills offers visual art classes in K-5th grades. Students get art from their classroom teacher in kindergarten thirty minutes a week, and students in first through fifth grades participate in 40-minute art classes taught by a certified art teacher once a week. Concepts include: identifying and drawing lines and shapes; color identification, categorization and blending; pattern design; drawing with dimension and the illusion of movement. Art skills progress over the years with the primary focus being on basic concept understanding to the intermediate grades expectation of application of skills. One aspect of art class that is

unique to Forest Hills due to its size, is that one, dedicated art teacher, teaches all of the classes. In this manner, our art teacher is able to deeply understand both our locally authored students' grade level standards and the typical developmental progression of our students from first grade through their fifth grade year. As a result, our students get embedded, differentiated art instruction no matter their skill level, and this growth and achievement builds a strong foundation for students choosing to continue with art electives when they move on to our junior high school. In fact, our art electives are among the most popular classes chosen by our junior high students year after year.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

Forest Hills offers physical education and health classes in kindergarten through fifth grades. Students get PE in kindergarten thirty minutes twice a week from a certified instructor, and students in first through fifth grades participate in 30-minute classes taught by a certified PE teacher three times a week. On the days students don't have scheduled PE, teachers provide "teacher directed PE" with students. Units vary by developmental readiness. Throwing and catching, locomotive movements, game skills, movement and movement awareness are units of focus in the primary grades. In grade three through five, soccer, football, floor hockey, volleyball, kickball, cooperative game play, and fitness units are included. Students also participate in rotational units of health and nutrition, and Candor Health, a local consultative health resource, also comes in annually to highlight a particular and developmentally appropriate health unit of study by grade (ie. 5th grade = Puberty 1). Students receive feedback as needed, and formally each trimester, on their progress in participation, cooperation and safety. On days where students do not have dedicated physical education classes, their classroom teachers supervise at least thirty minutes of "Teacher Directed Physical Education." This time includes experience such as cooperative game play, recess using the park district equipment located on a nearby playground and/or walking with peers outdoors whenever possible.

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

World Languages class is included in students' specials starting in first grade. The specific language explored in these classes, offered thirty minutes, three times a week, is Spanish. In first grade, the goal is for students to communicate material orally and follow verbal directions by using vocabulary words, simple phrases and simple sentences. Second grade build toward students independently producing simple sentences, written and orally, and applying vocabulary and grammar with teacher assistance. In third grade, we want students to spontaneously apply grammar and vocab to create original, simple sentences in written and oral forms as well as describe and discuss cultural similarities and differences. Fourth grade builds toward students applying isolated grammar structures and vocabulary in independently created sentences and translating and comprehending Spanish language as well as comparing and contrasting cultural differences in Spanish speaking countries. And finally, in fifth grade, students apply and evaluate previously learned complex grammar structures and produce conversations, written projects and translate a simple chapter book.

2d. Technology/library/media

Technology and library classes are included in students' special classes starting in kindergarten. Kindergarten students attend computer and library classes once a week for thirty minutes. Starting in first grade and continuing through fifth grade, students experience two technology classes per week, one a pull-out ISTE standards specific class and the other a push-in integrated class. Classroom teachers and our Technology Integration Specialist (TIS) co-teach the second offering as a way to embed technology into our existing units of study and also as a way to provide ongoing professional development for our classroom teachers. In library class, consistently once per week throughout students' tenure at Forest Hills, students are exposed to a rich variety of developmentally appropriate literature and learn about all facets of their library media center. A specific area of focus in library classes is building students' abilities to use search engines, databases, and print resources to conduct effective research and provide appropriate citations. A particular area of focus within our technology classes is for students to embrace Digital Citizenship through recognizing the rights, responsibilities and opportunities of living, learning and working in an interconnected digital world, in order to act and model in ways that are safe, legal and ethical. This focus is also aligned to state standards.

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

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Forest Hills utilizes the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) framework to proactively service and support students who are working below grade level or whose performance is discrepant from their grade level peers. Our process entails collecting benchmark screening data in all grade levels, three times per year. The assessments vary by grade level and subject area, but include standardized assessments such as Fastbridge Early Reading/Early Math, NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), and Fountas and Pinnell reading assessments. Once the assessment information is collected, the data review team (principal, classroom teacher, reading and math specialists, school psychologist, student services members) meet to review data. The entry point for conversation is a student who falls below the 50th percentile on a screener; however, data is triangulated to make more informed decisions about necessary interventions or support. Should the team recommend a student for intervention, the classroom teacher reaches out to parents to explain the recommendation and obtain permission for services. Tier II support is generally recommended for students who fall between the 30th-50th percentiles, and results in work with the reading or math specialist three times per week, for 30 minute sessions. Occasionally, Tier II support could also be delivered within the classroom, via the classroom teacher or specialist. Tier III support equates to work with the reading or math specialist five days per week, also for 30 minutes. Tiered support targets the specifically identified skill deficit (phonemic awareness, decoding, fluency, comprehension, math computation or application), using a research-based resource or program. Students receiving intervention are progress monitored and data is reviewed at 8 week intervals, with changes made to services as needed. Communication and collaboration between the interventionists and classroom teachers is an essential component supporting students receiving support. It should also be noted that in addition to intervention, differentiation within the classroom is standard practice in supporting students not yet quite at grade level. This is accomplished through constructivist teaching practices, allowing students to demonstrate knowledge in a variety of ways and providing them with resources and learning opportunities that are at their instructional level.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Because every child is unique, Western Springs School District 101 offers comprehensive and systematic support to meet the varying needs of students. First and foremost, D101 teachers hold themselves to the expectation of providing students consistent, differentiated instruction and materials that meet learning needs and provide appropriate challenges for all students. Additionally, rigorous, core curricula have been developed with consideration to our local students' needs. This means that D101's definition of "grade level secure" is also a local understanding, not a nationally-normed understanding.

Extensions to our standard curriculum are also offered by building enrichment teachers, on a flexible basis, to students who demonstrate the need for challenge beyond daily classroom differentiation to support their academic & behavioral success. These services, in an effective model, are appropriate for and should impact approximately 5-15% of the student population within the District. The remaining 85-95% of our students should experience success, appropriate challenge, and consistent growth through engaging in the delivery of core, differentiated classroom curricula.

For those students who show, through standardized assessment data and classroom performance, that they are ready for even greater challenges, they may be identified to receive support from the enrichment teacher. Similarly to our approach in identifying students for intervention, student assessment and classroom performance information (classroom assessments, FastBridge, Fountas and Pinnell, NWEA MAP, IAR, CogAT) is triangulated to identify those in need of enrichment support. In the primary grades (K-2), enrichment is more consultative and flexible, as students grow at different rates. Service in the upper grades

is more defined, where small groups of students are pulled out, several times a week, for deeper exploration of grade level targets in reading and math.

3c. Students with disabilities:

Forest Hills has a reputation of providing extraordinary support to students (and families of students) with disabilities, as this population has grown over the past few years. A number of families report they moved to Forest Hills specifically for this reason. District 101 and Forest Hills embrace our students with disabilities through an inclusive model of special education. It is our strong belief that students are best served in their home school, with their neighborhood peers. Students with all types of disabilities—both low and high incidence—are serviced within the classrooms of Forest Hills. Classroom teachers fully own and expertly support our students with special needs. Each child's profile and needs are different, as are their supports and plans. A multidisciplinary team (classroom teacher, resource teacher/inclusion facilitator, speech and language pathologist, social worker, occupational therapist, physical therapist, school psychologist, special education administration, principal) provides support, according to the individual child's needs. Even two students with the same disability have different needs, and therefore, different supports. Some services are delivered within the classroom, while others are delivered individually or in small groups outside the classroom. It is always our goal to facilitate growth and independence amongst our students with disabilities. Parents are valued members of their child's IEP team, providing partnership and support to students. We pride ourselves on our collaborative relationships, including parents-staff, within the special education team, and special education-general education staff, in order to support the diverse and changing needs of our students. This is evidenced through dedicated weekly team collaboration meetings. Lastly, as part of our ongoing efforts to ensure an inclusive and supportive environment for all students, but with a specific focus on those with disabilities, Forest Hills hosted our first All Abilities Fair. During this event, students rotated through four different stations that simulated what it's like to have a disability. It was an amazing experience and empathy builder for all as we continue to cultivate an inclusive environment.

3d. English Language Learners:

Forest Hills presently has no ELL students.

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

The first way we engage students is through building meaningful and deep relationships. When students are connected to their adults and peers, they are more likely to engage and learn. We utilize the Responsive Classroom framework to facilitate connection and community building within classrooms. Beginning each day with a morning meeting allows students to continually build relationships with one another and their teacher, while easing into their day. Additional components of the Responsive Classroom framework include teaching, practicing, and reinforcing expected behaviors to give students predictable and safe learning environments that further support their engagement.

In addition to the relationship building that occurs within classrooms, there are intentional, school-wide actions and opportunities to further promote connection and engagement. Post-pandemic, we have implemented a “buddy program,” which pairs younger and older students together for planned monthly activities, but authentically carries over into students’ daily experiences at Forest Hills. There are a myriad of extracurricular activities that further cultivate connectedness and engagement—Student Council, Tiny Philanthropists, Environmental Club, Coding/Tech Clubs, and Falcon Flyer Newspaper, just to name a few. Student Council sponsors a variety of activities and special events that further foster a sense of community and engagement. Just this year, the Student Council has engaged the student body through Spirit Weeks, Unity Week, Random Acts of Kindness Week, St. Baldrick’s and several other philanthropic efforts.

Once the foundation of solid relationships has been built, we are able to address academic engagement. This focus on teaching and learning has been the steadfast work of both Forest Hills and the entire district over the past ten years or so. Our district improvement strategy is Student Ownership of Learning—where students truly own their learning at the highest levels. Over the past decade, we have broken this effort down into deepening formative assessment practices, unpacking constructivist teaching methodologies, identifying attributes that efficacious students possess, and our post-pandemic work of cultivating thriving environments for students and adults within our organization. Professional development has been developed in-house and specifically aligned to deepening staff’s understanding of this work and implementation expectations within the classrooms. Some of the common practices one could expect to see within classrooms are things like student-friendly learning targets connected to a broader outcome (Why are we learning this?), success criteria, exemplars, varied formative assessment strategies—including student self-assessment and reflection, different pathways for students to show mastery of learning, and students having voice and choice in their learning.

The totality of these efforts within classrooms, across Forest Hills and throughout the district, have engaged students at the highest levels at a time when we need to leverage impactful strategies the most.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

First and foremost, we are incredibly fortunate to have parents who are terrific partners in every sense of the word. They share in our desire to ensure students are both growing academically and also as human beings. Forest Hills parents are well-educated, successful in their own pursuits, and deeply value the education their kids receive. They are appropriately involved, as they ask the right questions, understand the role they play, and ensure their children come to school ready to learn. We have 100% participation at Parent-Teacher Conferences and open lines of communication throughout the school year. Family events, such as Curriculum Night and Open House are both appreciated and well attended.

Additionally, we are incredibly blessed to have an amazing Parent Teacher Association (PTA) that works tirelessly to support and enhance the experience for students, staff and fellow parents within the Forest Hills community. The PTA sponsors social events for students and families, provides opportunities for parents to volunteer their time both within and outside of the school day, funds and secures assemblies to reinforce important school ideals, provides lunches and treats for staff, and ensures staff have additional resources to enhance students’ experiences at school. One specific example of this partnership that I’d like to highlight is

that of our Holiday Helpers effort. Holiday Helpers takes place the last day of school before Winter Break. The PTA provides funding and several parent volunteers to support our effort to give back to the local community. The entire student body at Forest Hills chooses from about eight different service projects, and we spend the morning working together on these service projects. A few projects from recent years include: assembling essentials packs for a local shelter, making handmade blankets for kids in foster care, making dog/cat toys for the humane society, creating canvas artwork for seniors and packing food donations for a local pantry. At the start of the day, representatives from these organizations come in to talk with students about the organization and clientele served, to help students better understand how their efforts benefit others. It is a favorite day amongst students, staff and parent volunteers and the community organizations are always supremely grateful for our efforts.

We are also most fortunate to have the support of a district-wide parent partnership, The Western Springs Foundation for Educational Excellence (WSFEE). Their mission is to acquire and distribute financial and other resources for the benefit of Western Springs' District 101 educational programs, projects and products that will extend and enhance the quality and depth of education, and provide students with unique learning opportunities. Examples of recent impactful efforts include funding extensive classroom renovations to support more progressive teaching practices, diverse books/resources for students and staff, technology enhancements, field trips and a district-wide STEAM Night, which was attended by over 500 district students and involved partnerships with local STEAM-focused businesses.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

The District and Forest Hills School use a systems-based approach for promoting and sustaining a professional culture focused on growth for staff. This is accomplished through a number of professional development structures and offerings including a districtwide, multi-year focus on cultivating student ownership. Student ownership at Forest Hills is defined as students exhibiting, at developmentally appropriate levels, the attributes of resilience and perseverance, being reflective, empathetic, collaborative, critical thinker and problem solvers, effective communicators and global citizens. We achieve these attributes in our students through using available inservice time and resources to provide ongoing professional development to our staff in effective uses of formative assessment, constructivist instructional approaches and strategies and conditions that build a thriving environment for all stakeholders. In sum, in order for our students to reflect our definition of student ownership, we must create the right conditions for our staff to reflect our definition as well.

The principal at Forest Hills supports her teachers and other professional staff through providing ongoing leadership grounded in the above. Her faculty meetings (once or twice/month), late arrival inservice meetings (two hours, every month or so), Building Leadership Team meetings (BLT), and her day-to-day leadership all model these attributes and cultivate an environment where staff feels both valued and inspired to always work toward continuous improvement. In terms of formal supports available to the teachers of Forest Hills, D101 offers, annually, a local National Board Cohort facilitated by our own Board Certified staff, job embedded coaching from fulltime instructional specialists, a two-year embedded mentoring program for all new staff, monetary incentives for ongoing formal education, paid "strand" classes taught by administrative leadership, and a Digital Innovators Corps focused on growth in instructional technology integration, to name a few. Forest Hills teachers are among the strongest and brightest in the District in terms of their capacity. Although frequently the smallest school in the district, Forest Hills teachers are disproportionately active in D101 leadership. They maintain the roles of District Math Curriculum Chair, District English language arts Curriculum Chair and Co-Chair, District Summer School Principal, District Anti-Bias-Anti Racist (ABAR) Committee lead, and District Social Emotional Learning Committee Chair. Beyond strong evidence of teacher leadership at Forest Hills, teacher attrition is minimal. Once teachers earn a coveted spot at Forest Hills Elementary, they often remain for the duration of their careers. As evidence of this statement, presently, only three of Forest Hills thirty certified teachers have not yet earned tenure in their positions. Forest Hills culture is unparalleled, and this positive, collaborative environment creates just the right conditions for maximizing student learning.

4. School Leadership:

In District 101, and most certainly at Forest Hills, administrators wear many hats. We are instructional leaders, coaches, confidants, counselors, substitute teachers, lunch supervisors, transportation coordinators, human resources, custodians, and nurses—just to name a few. The many roles we play are reflective of the pervasive District 101 and Forest Hills-specific philosophy of “doing whatever it takes” to meet the needs of our community, with our students being at the center of this community.

The foundation for being able to do this important work is strong relationships. Building and maintaining positive relationships affords us the opportunity to best serve others. Relationships are what allow us to have safe spaces in which to teach, learn, collaborate, have difficult conversations, take risks and be there for one another in good times and bad.

These positive relationships lead to an environment of trust. As the principal, I am often the first person staff and families come to for help or to share sensitive information. Whether it’s a family sharing they’re about to tell their kids they’re getting a divorce, asking for my professional opinion about their child starting Kindergarten or waiting one more year, or entrusting my professional judgment about securing outside support for their child—it’s all built on the core belief of trust. That trust is also a two-way street. That trust is extended to staff, students and families at Forest Hills. Staff are trusted to have solid professional judgment, and are empowered to make decisions that have the best interests of kids at heart. As the building leader, I regularly (weekly or bi-weekly) meet with grade level and/or student support teams to discuss periodic agenda items; however, my staff know that they have earned a great deal of both trust and autonomy to function independently as educational experts to best serve students’ needs.

The great responsibility of leading a school cannot be done by one person alone and thankfully, that is not the expectation within District 101. We are so very fortunate to have district leadership who have brilliantly designed a shared leadership structure that facilitates ownership and contribution amongst staff. We have a District Leadership Team (DLT), who assists with the strategic work of our district. Our Building Leadership Team (BLT) tailors our district work to the student and staff needs at Forest Hills. This group of teacher leaders has been instrumental in helping to operationalize our work in Student Ownership in classrooms across the building. Aside from the shared leadership with professional development, BLT also serves as a mechanism for monitoring adult culture and climate within the building. They’ve helped us take strides in making our already positive adult culture even better. It is through this shared leadership structure that Forest Hills has been able to be a place where both students and staff continue to thrive.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Cultivating Cultural Competence is the current work of our District Leadership Team (DLT), and a particular area of interest amongst many of the Forest Hills staff members specifically. Under the umbrella of cultivating an environment of Student Ownership, we are in the process of identifying and defining the components of cultural competence. This work centers around ensuring a welcoming environment for all, where similarities and differences are valued and accepted. Once the DLT completes the learning and work in this area, we will provide professional development to the broader staff on this topic.

Steps we’ve already taken to expand our collective knowledge and create more inclusive environments include providing staff with a series of professional development via speakers from Lurie Children’s Hospital on the topics of gender, identity and equity. We have a number of students within the building and district who identify as LGBTQ+, and we must ensure they are a part of a safe and supportive learning environment. Additionally, we have a district-wide group (with significant representation from Forest Hills), Anti-Bias, Anti-Racist (ABAR) who meet regularly and discuss issues around DEI, such as identity, privilege, bias and equity.

We have an increasing population of neurodiverse students and are actively working to learn more about their specific needs and how we can best support them through both general and special education. Recently, we’ve partnered with outside expert Emily Rubin, who has provided support to specific students’ teams, but also provided professional development to the entire district on the topic of supporting the needs of our neurodiverse students. Last month, she provided an additional session, at the request of the Forest Hills staff, as one of our collective goals is to better understand and support this growing population of ours.

Yet another way we have addressed these important issues is through expanding our collection of books and resources on these topics. In collaboration with both district and building leadership and the district librarians, a Forest Hills parent authored a grant proposal, “Open Books, Open Minds, Open Doors.” This 40K grant was approved and resulted in strengthening our student collection of books that represent diverse populations, as well as several wonderful selections for staff, which resulted in impactful discussions and future work. This grant was funded by WSFEE (The Western Springs Foundation for Educational Excellence), which is a district-wide, parent volunteer group whose mission is to enhance the District 101 experience. Their funding and support of this endeavor is a testament to our collective commitment to this very important work of better understanding and supporting the needs of diverse populations.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

Climate and Culture - Our Forest Hills Foundation

Although Forest Hill's most public acclaim is often connected to our students' outstanding academic achievement, the building's staff and leadership are convinced that much of the progress we have made in the areas of academic achievement and growth are the result of intentional, foundational work around cultivating amazing relationships. This climate and culture defining work includes student-to-student, student-to-staff, staff-to-staff and family-to-staff relationships, some of which is highlighted below.

Clearly Defined Goals Around Students' Sense of Belonging and Sense of Safety

Three times yearly, our students participate in a climate and culture survey that provides us with near real-time feedback on how they are doing - and feeling - with regards to safety and a sense of belonging within the building. We use multiple research-based questions that provide students (and their parents for our primary-aged students) the opportunity to tell us how their emotional and physical safety needs are being met, as well as how connected they are at school based on their perception of items such as relationships with peers, having friends, and having trusted adults who show that they care about them in a variety of ways.

Intentional and Efficacious Work

However, our commitment to these goals and ideals are only score-keeping measures if not supported by aligned, tangible and meaningful experiences within the classroom for our students that are equally as intentional as our data collection, monitoring and responses. Classroom teachers at Forest Hills commit to starting students' day with a positive relationship-building discussion based on the constructs of Responsive Classroom. Additionally, social emotional learning (SEL) lessons are more than a daily commitment - they are a commitment made by the teachers who helped create the District's SEL curriculum. Our Forest Hills staff is able to commit deeply to its goals because they are the co-authors of the working curriculum. Additionally, the building honors the voices of our students in a variety of ways, including those voices in academic planning. Some of the best culture building traditions within our building are those borne from student voices. Our annual St. Baldrick's all-school assembly and fundraiser was started by students in support of a FH student who was battling childhood cancer, yet the tradition continues many years later with twenty-six of our students agreeing, just this week, to have their heads shaved in front of a school full of screaming peers and their parents that raised over \$25,000. Our monthly school buddies program matches mentor fifth-grade students with their second-grade buddies, fourth-grade mentors with first-grade-buddies, and third-grade mentors--who graduate from buddy to mentor--with our kindergarten and ECE students. This looping program creates three-year relationships among differing ages of students that last well beyond their Forest Hills years.

Our list of available examples extends well beyond those highlighted in this small section, but regardless of whether they are included or not, they are all based on the strongly shared belief by Forest Hills staff that climate, culture and relationships are the foundation for everything we care about. The mental health and well-being of our students, the academic successes of our students, and the degree of joy and fulfillment that comes with performing the very challenging jobs of being an educator today are all reliant upon a strong culture and a strong climate. Our building's culture and climate are the cornerstones to all that we have done at Forest Hills and will continue to be the foundation for all that we will do together in the future.