

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

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 603 15th Avenue SW  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Rochester State MN Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 55902-2009

County Olmsted County

Telephone (507) 328-3220 Fax (507) 328-3225

Web site/URL <https://folwell.rochesterschools.org> E-mail [krengbrecht@rochesterschools.org](mailto:krengbrecht@rochesterschools.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.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\* Dr. Kent Pekel E-mail [kepekel@rochesterschools.org](mailto:kepekel@rochesterschools.org)  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Rochester Public School District Tel. (507) 328-3000

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board  
President/Chairperson Mrs. Catherine Nathan  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

*\*Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, leave blank.*

## **PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state's performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2023 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2018 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2022.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 or 2022.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. The nominated school has, or is subject to, a nondiscrimination policy (provide either a link to the policy or submit a text of the policy), is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff consistent with applicable law and does not have any outstanding findings of unlawful discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

12. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

**The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if one of these eligibility requirements is later discovered to have not been met or otherwise been violated.**

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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**Data should be provided for the current school year (2022-2023) unless otherwise stated.**

**DISTRICT** (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools. For charter schools: If a charter school is part of the public school system, information should be provided for the public school district. If a charter school is considered its own district or part of a charter district, the information provided should reflect that.)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 17 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 4 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 3 High schools
  - 1 K-12 schools
- 25 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	0
K	52
1	62
2	51
3	50
4	55
5	46
6	0
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	316

\*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):
- 0.3 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 7.8 % Asian
  - 5.4 % Black or African American
  - 8.6 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0.3 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 72.2 % White
  - 5.4 % 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: 14%

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

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

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	26
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	18
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	44
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	313
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.14
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	14

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):  
Amharic, Arabic, Bosnian, Catalan, Croatian, Czech, Danish, German, Hebrew, Hindi, Japanese, Mandarin Chinese, Norwegian, Spanish, Telegu, Tulu, Urdu

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 7 %  
22 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 13 %  
 Total number students who qualify: 42

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 14 %  
Total number of students served 45

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>4</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>4</u> Developmental Delay	<u>0</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>4</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>22</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>3</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>1</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: 5

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 1

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.	14
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	12
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	8
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

12. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 23:1

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	90%	94%	93%	95%	95%
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.

The Folwell Family is an encouraging collaborative community who supports growth for all learners.

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

<https://www.rochesterschools.org/discrimination-policy>

18. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

## PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

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Folwell Elementary School is a neighborhood school in the Rochester Public School (RPS) District. Rochester is a growing community of just over 125,000 residents, making it Minnesota's third largest city. We acknowledge that RPS sites are situated on ancestral lands of the Dakota people. We acknowledge and honor the Dakota Nations and the sacred land of all Indigenous peoples. Rochester has been named one of the best places to live in the United States by various publications and has been called one of the most educated cities in the world. Rochester's largest employer, the Mayo Clinic, employs over 34,000 workers locally.

When walking up to Folwell Elementary School, it is impossible to miss the distinctive Italian Medieval architecture. The Harold H. Crawford designed building opened on December 1, 1930, and features salmon pink brick and a beautiful clay roof. At the time of its opening in 1930, the local newspaper ran an article under the title, "Beauty and Practicability Combined in Building Nearing Completion." The article shares a design goal of opening a "beautiful building in which every possible foot of space is utilized for educational purposes," adding, "The kids get a lot these days." Over the past 93 years, Folwell has seen multiple building additions that have helped the student population grow from 74 pupils to today's community of over 300 learners.

Our school is named after educator and historian William Watts Folwell, the first President of the University of Minnesota. Mr. Folwell was described as kind, liberal, tolerant, humorous, and polite, qualities that our school still believes to be important in preparing students for today's world. As the Folwell community has grown, the school mission has stayed relatively consistent. Folwell's mission is centered on the belief that all children can achieve at the highest levels with the goal that all families should feel valued and connected as partners in the learning process. By working together, we can accomplish great things and soar to new heights for our students.

Our Folwell families come to us from diverse backgrounds with 17 different languages spoken at home. While some of the families who attend Folwell have had three generations attend our school, we have many families who have only lived in our community for a short time. We strive to make Folwell a home away from home for everyone. Even many years later, it is not uncommon for past students to come back and volunteer, complete field experience and/or student teaching requirements, and even work as staff members.

We work hard to ensure that all Folwell students and families feel safe, welcome, and supported. We utilize a building PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) committee, equity team, site leadership team, PTSA (Parent Teacher Student Association), and Student Council to empower all stakeholders in helping us meet our academic and social/emotional goals.

A cornerstone of our success over the years has been the family and community volunteers that give their time and talents to our students. Thanks to volunteers, our students have participated in Math Masters, worked with teams of Mayo Clinic doctors to learn more about the human body, written to a retired teachers club at a local nursing home, and participated in our biannual morning running club. These are just a few of the enriching learning experiences our students have due to connections with our larger community.

Folwell Elementary also boasts an active PTSA. The PTSA supports Folwell staff and students with the resources to plan and participate in authentic, innovative, and meaningful learning experiences. The PTSA, in partnership with Folwell staff, organizes several school community events throughout the school year like welcome back picnics, movie nights, bingo night, school parade, lantern walk, talent show, school carnival, and fifth grade recognition. Together we work hard to make sure these events are accessible by keeping down costs and providing transportation.

Being a Folwell Falcon is significant. With pride, stakeholders cultivate a connection to this school community which endures long after their time spent in the physical building. This can be attributed to one of our mindsets: "Always a Falcon." Our students, families, and staff are best served when everyone feels a



strong sense of belonging. Here at Folwell, we truly strive and succeed at making those lasting connections every day.

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

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

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

At Folwell Elementary School, all students have daily reading instruction provided by their classroom teacher. Staff uses a variety of assessment tools to determine each student's reading growth throughout the year. This helps us to differentiate the supports each student will need. For the past three years, our district and our school have been learning and implementing the Science of Reading. Student proficiency in phonemic awareness is Folwell's schoolwide continuous improvement plan (SCIP) goal for reading. In primary classrooms, this also includes a daily routine of Heggerty and Kilpatrick phonemic awareness oral instruction, phonics lessons from Really Great Reading curricula, and reading decodable Geodes books to practice foundational reading skills.

Students in grades 3-5 utilize a daily reading and English/language arts Collect Interpret Apply (CIA) curriculum, which focuses on a shared whole group reading. CIA provides opportunities for students to grow their skills collecting critical information, interpreting text through themes, finding evidence, and identifying the author's message, all while being encouraged to apply what they read to their lives. This curriculum is designed to help students read longer, more complex texts to support the transition from early readers, to persons who can read more independently and with confidence. Time is spent in whole group discussion, direct vocabulary instruction, writing to convey understanding of concepts specific to the book's genre, and small group work where student learning, perspective, and experiences are shared.

Students who are performing below grade level on FastBridge assessments and other classroom assessments are provided small group instruction, which targets phonemic awareness skills. Students who are at or above grade level are also part of small group instruction based on their individual skill development. Below level students may also receive additional instructional time four times per week with our reading specialist. Older students and community volunteers provide additional support and time working with at risk students. We use weekly formative assessments to track and to monitor student progress. Weekly progress monitoring determines next steps with small group instruction, and aids in our discussions with students and families. Our multi-language learner (ML) teacher and reading specialist teacher's instruction is aligned with our ELA curricula to ensure students have multiple practice opportunities with learning skills.

Every learner at Folwell is able to self-select books from our school library, as well as grade level books in each classroom for daily use during independent reading. Teachers read aloud daily, which models fluency and practices comprehension standards.

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

Folwell's math instruction focuses on number talks, collaborative problem solving, and explaining mathematical thinking through the use of our Everyday Math curriculum and supplemental lessons designed to teach our Minnesota math standards. Everyday Math has a "spiraling curriculum" model and encourages students to continually review and apply previous skills. Students are challenged to link math to everyday situations, past experiences to new learning, and move from basic number calculation to developing conceptual understanding. Math skills, concepts, and strategies from each lesson are often practiced through math games, problem-solving experiences, and additional exposures in small group instruction. These skills are transferred to other curricular areas from counting the sounds and syllables in words, to adding or multiplying various numbers as a self regulation strategy, to data analysis in science.

We supplement our Everyday Math curriculum with other academic resources, such as IXL, Khan Academy, and Rochester Accelerated Math Program (RAMP) to enrich student learning and provide students and educators with immediate feedback. Through IXL, teachers select skill plans to reinforce concepts when individual students need more practice. This personalized approach is similar to Khan Academy and RAMP, meeting both student learning needs and enrichments. When direct instruction and

independent work is completed, students use these outlets to further their individualized learning by completing assigned skills from their teacher. Teachers can view student progress by accessing data provided to be intentional about further practice. Our Gifted Services teacher pushes into entire fourth grade classrooms to work with hands-on equations curriculum using a balanced scale, dice, and pawns to physically represent number equations. Fifth grade students have the opportunity to enrich their math skills by participating and competing in Math Masters, a regional math competition that enhances problem solving abilities, critical thinking skills, and promotes math skills and interest among all students. Each year twenty Folwell students join our Math Master teams, which results in over one third of our fifth graders participating in the activity.

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

Our science curriculum is rooted in the Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards for science. This year, we are transitioning to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Science lessons focus on observation, data collection, and analysis. The Full-Option Science System (FOSS) curriculum is implemented across grade levels. This curriculum is supplemented with a variety of materials and lessons including science/engineering lessons from Mars Starbase, Bubbleology variables lessons (in conjunction with Winona State University), animal science (partnership with the Minnesota Zoo), and scientific methods units provided by our gifted specialist.

Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) activities are integrated into classrooms across all grade levels. Lessons focus on the design thinking process and include coding, computer aided design, and 3D printing. We are a 1:1 iPad school, with students having access to iPad technology daily. Staff use the SAMR (substitution, augmentation, modification, redefinition) model to enhance learning, particularly in science. The 1:1 devices also allow students to create a portfolio of their learning that can be shared with families on the Seesaw interactive learning platform.

Every Rochester Public School elementary student visits Quarry Hill Nature Center two times each year as part of our science curriculum. Most of the classes at Quarry Hill take place outdoors in their 329 acre park. Rochester Public Schools employs licensed teachers at Quarry Hill to facilitate these lessons, providing hands-on, authentic experiences for students.

At the end of each school year, our Folwell 5th grade students spend three full days at Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center. This is a trip our students look forward to as they progress through their elementary years. The experience centers on “providing students in-depth experiences in: ecology, nature identification, earth and physical science, history and people, outdoor adventure & recreation, challenge skills, and more.” Classes are based on Minnesota science standards and provide students with an engaging and fun conclusion to their elementary experience with us.

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

Our social studies curriculum is based on the Minnesota State Standards. The main concepts of history (then and now), geography, economics, government, and citizenship are woven into the grade levels. We also strive to incorporate historical read-alouds and literacy activities to enhance background knowledge of different units. Often throughout the building and hallways, student art projects based on social studies lessons are on display.

Educators at Folwell create various hands-on activities throughout each grade level, many of which are favorite learning activities. For example, our kindergarteners spend all year learning about The Big Wide World. All subject areas take part in helping our kindergarteners learn this ambitious concept. A special activity for our first graders is taking a virtual field trip to each of the continents as they study the world around them. First graders then looked to their own community as they took part in a community project to help our local animal shelter by doing a supply drive. In second grade, students enjoy taking a close look at Native American Nations in Minnesota with a project based unit. Second graders play and create homemade games for entertainment, and make a variety of arts and crafts. As grade three learns about ancient civilizations, they incorporate music into their learning. Families from other countries have shared music

and songs from their homelands. Grade four enjoys using Scholastic News to bring current events into the classroom. Learning about our present time in the world enhances how fourth graders study and discuss history. Fifth grade has reached out into the community to Bear Creek Services, a local nonprofit dedicated to serving persons with developmental disabilities and traumatic brain injuries. Students build relationships by spending time together with residents, playing games, and enjoying a meal. Many of these activities help students understand not only their role in belonging to a community, but how to include others by practicing good citizenship.

Folwell incorporates many social studies concepts into our regular school life. All educators have students participate in rotating jobs to support classroom efficiency and a sense of belonging. Students regularly take part in voting as part of general classroom planning. Our school has an active student council including third, fourth, and fifth grade representation. Student council leaders plan and promote events that take place in and outside the building. One such event that produces sizable results is our schoolwide snack drive, ensuring that students who need extra food throughout the day can receive it, no questions asked.

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

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

**2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

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

Music education at Folwell Elementary School not only provides every student with the tools they need to understand, perform, and create a variety of music, but also provides space for social emotional learning and community building. Folwell operates on a six day rotation where students have music class for 30 minutes, twice per rotation. In order to make the most of our music lessons we follow a strong daily routine: students enter, greet one another, review our tasks/activities for the lesson, and sing the welcome song. In addition to academic success, students are encouraged to work together as an ensemble. When using classroom materials and instruments, we work to ensure that students understand these instruments are shared between all of us. This creates a sense of community that holds students accountable and encourages them to look out for one another. We provide many opportunities for students to break out of their shells and recognize the bravery of others. When a class has shown continuous respect and care for one another we go on “tour” singing songs for classes throughout the school.

Art education at Folwell Elementary School combines the study of art history, art criticism, and art production. The main component of our curriculum is art creation with the focus on an exploration of new materials and techniques. Instruction combines the study of art works, styles, and movements so that students learn to see and connect art with events across time and cultures. Art education is based on the belief that looking at, talking about, and making art are processes essential to the well educated student. Our students create masterpieces during their 45 minute art class once every six days, and our creative community is showcased throughout our school with murals, framed projects, and a collaborative “doodle door.” Our students absorb new artistic methods through exploration and medium experimentation. In order to continue to grow their appreciation and curiosity for art, we have added ceramics into the curriculum. After producing our art, students do gallery walks, share circles, or individual reflections.

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

The Folwell Elementary physical education (P.E.) program provides emphasis on health, physical fitness, and the development of skills and habits necessary for a lifetime of health-related and recreational activities. This program also provides enjoyment, challenge, and social interaction through a variety of activities.

Folwell students in kindergarten through grade five have 30 minutes of P.E. two days out of our six day cycle. The students will receive a physical education report card after each trimester that reflects their progress. We assess body control, loco-motor skills, strength, endurance, and a variety of skill work.

In physical education class all students are expected to come prepared, show respect to all, respect the equipment, be great listeners, use safe body control, be positive toward others, and try their best! Our goals in P.E. are to be physically active, improve motor skills, learn from playing, to learn how to correct a mistake, and how to bounce back and persevere. All students at Folwell learn that fitness can not only be fun, but it can build one's capacity to enjoy and cooperate with others, and lead to a healthy lifestyle.

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

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

Our library media center at Folwell strives to positively impact the learning experience of students. The library is available daily for whole classroom book check out times, as well as individual student exploration. Media classes with a licensed library media specialist occur once per six days for 30 minutes. The focus during media lessons is to promote digital literacy, build critical thinking skills, and engage students in lifelong reading for information and pleasure.

Students at Folwell engage in coding skills with robots, learn and discuss appropriate online behavior, analyze credible sites and information, use databases to conduct research, and utilize digital resources to share information. These media skills translate positively to influence deep learning in the classroom.

The Folwell media collection is thoughtfully curated to allow all students to see themselves and others in the books that surround them. Student and staff book requests are granted when possible to keep our library collection vital and appealing to all. The media center is a place for our students to feel welcomed, heard, and seen by their Folwell community.

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

## **3. Academic Supports**

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

Folwell's reading intervention program provides a positive learning environment that aligns with and reinforces classroom instruction and concepts to give students a boost in academic achievement and confidence. Reading intervention students are identified by a compilation of FastBridge screeners, formative assessments, diagnostic surveys, and teacher recommendations. The diverse learners within the reading intervention program at Folwell receive explicit and systematic phonics instruction based on the Science of Reading.

Lessons reflect differentiated instruction in small groups and individualized settings that target each learner's needs. Intervention support also focuses on the five pillars of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension to provide the reader with the foundational skills necessary to be a successful reader. Classroom teachers and intervention staff meet regularly in weekly PLCs to collaborate and align instruction within the classroom and intervention settings. In addition, we progress monitor students regularly to ensure that we are meeting the needs of the individual learner and identify when students need additional interventions or no longer need services. The reading plan is customized to each student and based on specific reading skills needed to fill the literacy gaps.

The ultimate goal of reading intervention is to develop confident readers who can be successful citizens in a

world in which literacy is essential.

In both reading and math, classroom teachers conduct formative assessments as a way to keep track of student growth. Teachers work with small groups of students to help them become proficient and monitor student growth. Teachers often use the diagnostic tool from FastBridge Learning. After students are placed in groups, specific steps are taken to help move students along in their phonemic awareness journey. Teachers in kindergarten through grade two may also track students by using Heggarty and Kilpatrick. These programs assess phonemic awareness, which is a foundational skill of reading proficiently.

Often students who receive academic interventions also benefit from confidence building or other self awareness and self management skills. Our school counselor and school social worker make up our building's Emotion and Mental Well-Being (EMW) team. They also participate in the weekly Intervention PLC meetings, providing relevant insight or background information as we strive to educate and support the whole child. Small groups focused on growth mindset or on strategies to cope with academic stress and anxiety are also provided to students. Individual skill building to strengthen these vital social/emotional skills for classroom endurance is also led by our EMW team.

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

Folwell's gifted services program is designed to meet the academic, creative, and affective needs of advanced learners through a collaborative partnership between staff, students and families. This begins with all first and second grade students receiving the Primary Education Thinking Skills (P.E.T.S.) curricula. These weekly meetings focus on developing different ways a child can think, developing convergent and divergent thinking skills to brainstorm and solve problems and puzzles. Students also focus on using their visual/spatial perception and their evaluative thinking skills to solve issues that may have multiple answers to them. These lessons give students an opportunity to develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Targeted gifted and talented education start at third grade and continue through fifth grade. Rochester Public Schools uses the Cognitive Abilities Test (cogAT) and the FastBridge (FAST) assessments to identify gifted students. Another identification pathway is for a student to complete an open-ended portfolio assessment which showcases their abilities. Over half of third through fifth grade students at Folwell qualify for gifted services.

There are two small group instruction classes per grade level. Verbal gifted services focus on English, reading, and social studies. Verbal curricula involve students working with inventions, giving speeches, learning and creating civilizations, focusing on different perspectives through writing and debates, and performing mock trials. Non-verbal gifted services focus on math and science curricula. Non-verbal curricula involve Project M3 (which focuses on the use of number systems), performing experiments using the scientific inquiry/method, a unit curriculum that focuses on the brain anatomy, and "What Are Your Chances," a unit that involves understanding mathematical probabilities by performing experiments.

In addition to gifted services classes, Folwell has several students who are subject accelerated in mathematics. These students use Assessment Learning and Knowledge Spaces (ALEKs), a self-paced and interactive tool for students that are math accelerated above their grade levels. Khan Academy is used as an additional enrichment activity in 4th and 5th grade to allow self-paced learning to help prepare students for success who will elect to accelerate in mathematics at the middle school level.

This group of learners, too, often struggle with anxious tendencies as they balance the various emotions of learning in class with others, and productive struggle that can be achieved through gifted services. Our EMW team works closely with classroom teachers to ensure students are also learning and applying adaptive individual coping skills as well as positive interpersonal skills. These skills can be built through classroom lessons, small groups, or 1:1.

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

Folwell staff support and encourage students with a variety of abilities and disabilities. Special education services at Folwell occur within their general education classroom as well as in the special education classrooms. This approach provides the least restrictive environment for each child to learn. We believe that most students can access grade level curriculum in their general education classrooms with appropriate accommodations and modifications. During small group times, we provide specialized instruction for each child's identified learning needs.

Our Folwell service providers include special education teachers, speech/language pathologist, occupational therapist, developmental adaptive physical education consultant, physical therapist, augmentative and alternative communication specialist, Deaf/Hard of Hearing consultant, and early childhood special education consultant. These service providers work as a team with families, administration, classroom teacher, and outside agencies to customize Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) to best meet the needs of our students. We offer specialized instruction in the areas of social emotional learning, functional skills, reading, writing, and math. The specialized instruction is monitored through goals and objectives designed to address the educational needs determined by a student's comprehensive evaluation and are reported throughout the year to families. Students are supported and provided with a variety of evidence-based curricula and strategies to be successful in their general education classrooms.

Additionally, Folwell has a child study team and a special education PLC team to help collaboratively address the concerns of our students. The team meets bi-monthly to determine the most appropriate special education testing measures. The goal of these teams is collaboration in order to ensure each student receives free and appropriate public education.

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

The Multi-Language Program at Folwell provides English language support for our K-5 learners. Folwell is fortunate to have a culturally diverse student body; however, not all of our multi-language students qualify for ML services. This year, approximately 25 students qualify for ML services. They come from over 10 linguistic backgrounds and with a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds. Because of our proximity to the Mayo Clinic, up to 50% of our ML caseload changes yearly. Many families are connected to the medical community as either patients themselves, relatives of patients, or children of visiting researchers from around the world. Some students begin with us as newcomers, while others have had prior English instruction. The other 50% of our ML caseload have made their home in our Rochester, Minnesota neighborhood.

Academically, ML students receive intervention based on their language level and needs. We do a variety of services: pull-out, push-in, co-teaching, or indirect support through monitoring and consulting. There are small groups and one on one sessions. Lessons are focused on all four language modalities: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The ML teacher is involved with PLCs and the student intervention team. The ML teacher collaborates closely with classroom teachers and other interventionists to make a well-rounded program.

Outside of academics, ML students and families sometimes come with other needs. Examples of other support include connecting with the social worker, finding community resources, or gathering food, clothing, and school supplies. District bilingual liaisons are available to support students, families, and teachers when necessary. The most common native languages of our ML students at Folwell are Arabic and Spanish.

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

## PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

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### 1. Engaging Students:

“Together We Will.” This is Folwell’s guiding principle that students, staff, and families work together to achieve in order to make our school climate and culture admirable. This motto encourages and motivates all students to reach their full potential while contributing to our school community and instilling values that promote involvement in a greater community. This belief is woven into our school culture through quality instructional support systems, building relationships, and nurturing relationships.

At Folwell we SOAR, which stands for Safe, Own Our Behavior, Always Learning, and Respectful. Our building-wide Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) focuses on these principles. This schoolwide system encourages a common language through the use of SOAR expectation matrices that are explicitly taught and posted in common areas. When students display these characteristics, they are given a Falcon Flyer to be entered into a weekly drawing to be acknowledged by our principal in a schoolwide Google Meet. Students can also be awarded an Above and Beyond certificate monthly for regularly displaying our SOAR expectations. These acknowledgements are displayed on a picture wall for students to view as they line up for meals. The pride students feel as they identify themselves and classmates along this wall is evident. Families see these achievements posted to our Folwell Facebook page, too.

Our expert teaching staff who come to Folwell with diverse backgrounds consistently reach all students utilizing Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning (CLRT). By immersing students in CLRT communication and engagement strategies, learning is developmentally appropriate, allows student choice and voice, cultivates opportunities for students to collaborate, and actively engages students through hands-on learning. This ensures students from all backgrounds and abilities are learning at high levels.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is a vital component to our school’s climate and culture. All students receive direct instruction on SEL skills with our evidence-based Tier 1 curriculum, Second Step (Digital Program). Second Step lessons are led by classroom teachers to ensure quality instruction and to connect best with students. Lessons cover areas such as growth mindset and goal setting, emotion management, kindness and empathy to others, and problem solving. These classroom lessons are enriched with monthly, differentiated lessons from our school counselor, as well as supplemental lessons from our equity specialist. Our counseling program is designed to compliment and deepen the concepts students learn in Second Step. For example, kindness and empathy to others shifts more to how students can show themselves self compassion and kindness when needed.

Students also have the chance to self refer to our EMW team using our “I want to talk with a helper” QR code. With this method, students are able to reach out directly to our school counselor and school social worker when they experience changes or feel larger emotions. Identifying and describing feelings, as well as asking for support is normalized daily at Folwell. SEL is also a strong theme in our monthly assemblies to reinforce prior learning in a consistent, building-wide manner.

At Folwell, all of our learning and engagement relies on our strong working and personal relationships. These are established and nurtured through educator, student, and family connections. Another phrase often heard in our halls is, “Always a Falcon,” which sustains our connections within our walls, and when students transition on to new chapters. Students also build connections with each other through kindergarten and fifth grade buddies, and various peer tutoring opportunities. Our close-knit school community events such as Running Club, Fall Parade, Fifth Grade versus Staff basketball game, school carnival, Folwell Follies Talent Show, movie nights, and play events give students a sense of belonging.

Folwell has such a desired climate and culture. The experiences during students’ time at Folwell are instilled in their core memories. This regularly brings previous students and their families back to experience the feelings and magic of their elementary years. “Together We Will” continues to make connections that SOAR for a lifetime.



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

Folwell's relationship with its neighborhood is central to its identity. From mornings when most students are walking to school with their siblings, families, dogs, and next-door neighbors, to the evenings when families return to participate in PTSA events, to the weekends and summers where students are found on the school playground with friends, the story of Folwell is the story of a neighborhood.

The Parent Teacher Association was founded in 1931, and has acted as an outlet for dedicated families and staff ever since. Several of the events sponsored by the Folwell PTSA have become neighborhood-wide traditions. Costumes are fully on display during one of students' favorite events of the year: the Fall Parade! Students and their families also love bingo night, the ice cream social, and Running Club, also led by family volunteers. To raise funds for the fifth grade overnight trip to Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center, the PTSA sponsors a book sale and a long-standing tradition of a fifth grade students versus staff basketball game. The Folwell Follies talent show and school carnival are highlights of every spring.

Community partnerships offer students a way to collaborate and connect with people beyond the school walls. Fifth grade students at Folwell are afforded opportunities to engage with and practice their maturing perspective taking. This year, students formed penpals with retired teachers at Shorewood Retirement Community. This year will also mark the 16th annual Folwell fifth grade dinner with adults from Bear Creek Services, a non-profit organization that provides services to individuals with developmental disabilities and traumatic brain injuries. Students prepare questions and talking points to keep the conversations flowing. The evening concludes with students sharing the commonalities they discovered while talking to their dining companions.

At Folwell, trust and connection power academic success. There is a direct pathway from trust and connection, to action and impact. Families trust the community of educators and staff in this building. This trust leads to partnership and strong working relationships. When families and educators work together, real and impactful action leads to learning. "Together We Will."

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

While individual classroom communities remain essential, educators and staff share the belief that all students are our students. "Together We Will." At Folwell, we work together to problem solve and support one another. We have cultivated a culture in which all staff members value and participate in open dialogue to share ideas, gain feedback, and focus on professional improvement. We are fortunate to be able to enrich teaching practices by a simple conversation with a coworker, since each member of the Folwell team has their own diverse lived experiences and teaching background. Having a common focus on professional development allows our staff to learn from one another and feel supported.

Each year staff members create academic and social emotional School Continuous Improvement Plan (SCIP) goals that guide our professional learning. Our site leadership team, which includes grade level teaching representatives, support staff members, and our building administration, create professional development opportunities to achieve these goals. In previous years, we have concentrated on integrating strategies to promote innovation and student engagement. At other times, we have conducted book studies and participated in instructional rounds to provide and gain feedback on our implementation of math number talks.

Our SCIP goals and professional development also guide our work within our professional learning communities (PLCs). Grade level teams hold weekly PLCs to collaborate with one another, targeting student learning and making data driven decisions. Every six weeks, grade levels consult with the Intervention PLC which consists of our instructional coach, reading interventionist, multi-language teacher, school social worker, school counselor, and our building administrator. Through discussion and data analysis, our Intervention PLC works to identify and assist students who require modifications or Tier 2 instruction. Notably, Intervention PLCs always start with grade level celebrations.

In addition to our planned professional development and learning, our staff has a great strength in supporting

one another in new learning in the face of changing circumstances. This is evident in our most recent staff and teacher Panorama Education data, where Folwell ranks in the highest percentile range for professional relationships and sense of belonging. Anecdotally, during distance learning staff supported and learned from one another to deliver instruction and best engage students.

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

Leadership at Folwell is a shared responsibility. Students, families, and staff work together to make data-informed decisions to support student learning. We work together under the shared belief that students learn best when their needs are met. “Together We Will.”

Students have multiple opportunities to grow their leadership skills. In the classroom, students learn from day one that responsible decision making affects their lives and learning. These skills are strengthened as students grow and mature. Our intermediate students put these skills to work in a number of leadership roles. All of our fourth and fifth grade students are paired with younger students that they support and mentor throughout the year. Students at Folwell know they have a voice and they know that their community of peers and staff will listen and act on feedback. Folwell has a student council that meets several times throughout the school year. This group organizes school events, charity drives, spirit days, and meets with the principal in small groups to discuss our school and the needs of our students.

Folwell families play a large role in the leadership and decision making of Folwell through PTSA. They organize events early in the school year to ensure that all families feel supported and connected to the Folwell community. Monthly PTSA meetings are a place where Folwell families and staff meet to make decisions about initiatives, events, and support. This joint decision making is an important tool that connects our school with our most important stakeholders.

All Folwell licensed staff are members of professional learning communities (PLCs). These grade level and “job-alike” teams center their work around DuFour’s four critical questions. “What do we expect our students to learn? How will we know they are learning? How will we respond when they don’t learn? How will we respond if they already know it?” This collaboration time is data driven and leads our instructional next steps for all three tiers of instruction.

Folwell has a site leadership SCIP team that meets regularly throughout the school year. The team is composed of a representative from each of Folwell’s PLCs, along with the school administrator, instructional coach, and staff development chairperson. This team creates our school’s focus for the year through our SCIP goal setting process and then works to align our staff development with this SCIP plan. Staff that are not on the SCIP team serve on our building’s Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) team, child study team, or social committee. The work on all of these committees is centered on the learning and wellbeing of our students, families, and staff.

The administrator at Folwell leads our building through inspiring high expectations for teaching and learning, encouraging and supporting all our stakeholders, and monitoring our systems. Folwell has weekly grade-level intervention PLCs, Tier 2 social/emotional/behavioral intervention, and special education child study where the needs of individual students and staff are discussed and support plans are put in place. The principal, along with key support staff lead these meetings. Our principal has high levels of trust and empowers staff, students and families to be active roles within our school community. She is collaborative, listens and responds, and builds meaningful relationships. She is visible within the building: in classrooms, lunchroom, playground, hallways, breakfast line, and dismissal time. She is also a learner alongside staff as we grow our skills and strengthen our school.

Leadership is shared, and students, families, and staff are empowered. However, it is important that we don’t do our work in silos. The administrator helps foster a culture of belonging, shared decision making, and empowerment, while bringing stakeholders together around our goals.

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

At Folwell, we pride ourselves on building strong relationships with students, families, and staff. One of our SCIP goals is to support students' sense of belonging. We have done this by breaking our school year down by trimester. We started with a focus on “I Belong”, where every classroom had an emphasis on doing a name activity to explore the culture or meaning of each child's name. This work was displayed in the hallways of Folwell for all to see and learn about students. For the second trimester we shifted to “You Belong,” where we displayed student created artwork that was viewed by all students and staff in the cafeteria. To emphasize this theme even more, we swapped out our regular PBIS incentives to “kindness tickets” where students were recognized for practicing empathy, compassion and inclusion. Lastly, the focus of “We Belong”. Last spring, this focus was especially highlighted during our 49th annual 5th grade vs. staff basketball game. At this event, we recognized the founder of the annual basketball game who had recently died. We also invited the two alumni classes who missed participating in this event due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Alumni students were invited to shoot hoops with the staff during half time.

While the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions were at their height, our school community, along with our state experienced and grieved with protesters around the country in the wake of the murder of George Floyd and subsequent trial. Our school hosted optional virtual listening sessions for families, and our school counselor and equity specialist worked together to provide space for all students. This effort culminated in weekly small groups of fourth grade students who were struggling to make sense of the current events. Our ML teacher also teamed with our fifth grade classroom teachers to dive deeper into discussions of race, ethnicity, and identity through a whole group reading project.

During this time too, an intentional effort was made to diversify representation not only in our books available to read, but in the media and images that adorn our hallway walls. Now students walk amidst large, canvassed photos of themselves, and various posters of diverse and significant figures in history, both past and present. By intentionally hanging these images throughout the building, students can see themselves with change makers, and perhaps, see themselves as change makers, too.

We continue to build strong relationships by using a VABB (validate, affirm, build, and bridge) framework when talking with students and using techniques based in CLRT. Through modeling, our professional development helped us learn and practice strategies of how to intentionally implement diverse learning opportunities for all students. Not only are we planning equitable practices in our classroom, we are providing schoolwide activities. We have celebrated our uniqueness by having students and staff create an identity board for “Identity Day.” At this event, students and staff shared their hobbies, interests, talents, or culture. These were displayed in classrooms for a gallery walk for families to attend in the evening. We also did a gallery walk within a grade level partnership. Another notable and family favorite way we celebrate our diversity is our annual Folwell Follies “talent show.” Hundreds gather and applaud the variety of musical, comedic, and expressive performances.

We are proud of the community we have built and continue to build at Folwell. “Together We Will.”

## PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

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“Intentionality” is the strategy that stands out. When a new student walks through our doors, they are immediately at the center of several powerful rings of support which include not just school staff, but families and peers. Visitors, guest teachers, and staff new to our school say that there is something special about Folwell-something you can feel while walking the hallways and stepping into our classrooms. The feeling is warm, friendly, accepting, and purposeful. This feeling and the culture it stems from doesn’t happen by mistake.

Folwell families trust their student’s needs will be met in a kind, thoughtful, and professional manner. Our staff works to make sure each student gets what they need and deserve, whether that be food to eat, winter gear to wear, or differentiated learning materials and strategies to succeed. We are intentional about understanding and addressing barriers with solid systems of communication and collaboration. Our intentionality stems from our love of educating, which cultivates a community of support.

Our collective actions and beliefs permeate all that we do at Folwell. We speak a common language that promotes belonging and inclusivity. Grade level teams share teaching strategies and insights with each other and families to support a tiered approach to learning. We plan and participate in school events and activities that strengthen our bonds to one another. The assemblies we hold help our students understand that caring for, respecting, and helping one another are what makes our school such a wonderful and safe place to learn, and grow up.

At Folwell, we decided early on that being intentional about how we spend our time and limited resources was key to student learning. This is evident everyday, but especially rang true during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our school community strived for 100% engagement with our students, virtually and during our hybrid schedule. Knowing this was a challenging time for our students and their families, engagement looked like phone calls, texts, video chats, bilingual support, conferences on driveways, food distribution, extra SEL lessons, and more. Now, as many things are getting back to normal, we are using the lessons learned to keep a focus on what our priorities are.

Perhaps one of the best indicators of the powerful community at Folwell is evident in the number of individuals that come back. This looks like a current Math Masters volunteer whose children attended Folwell over a decade ago, middle school students showing up to serve on panels answering questions from anxious fifth graders, hundreds of former families cheering on the 5th grade vs. staff basketball game, or nearly a half dozen staff members that roamed the halls of Folwell during their elementary days and are now giving back to the school where they got their start. Folwell is a place, a happy memory, and a foundational chapter of countless lives.

Our mantra is embraced by our students, staff, and community and has become our mindset. Together we will overcome obstacles, because we have already weathered storms and are stronger for it. Together we will learn, because it is through education that we grow and thrive. Together we will strive for excellence, because we have a deep desire to improve our practices in order to best serve our school community.

Folwell is a small neighborhood school, but our collective efficacy knows no bounds. We embrace our “smallness” and make it big. Our sense of self as a whole is well grounded and strong.