

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mr. Dan Beert

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

Official School Name Lake Crystal-Wellcome Memorial Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 502 E Watonwan Street

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

City Lake Crystal

State MN

Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 56055-2063

County Blue Earth

Telephone (507) 726-2320

Fax (507) 726-2003

Web site/URL <https://www.isd2071.k12.mn.us/o/es>

E-mail dbeert@isd2071.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* Mr. Mark Westerburg

E-

mail mwestenburg@isd2071.org

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

District Name Lake Crystal-Wellcome Memorial School District Tel. (507) 726-2323

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mrs. Linda Leiding

(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

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

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

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

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

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

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

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
0 Middle/Junior high schools
1 High schools
0 K-12 schools
- 2 TOTAL

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

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

- ☐ Urban (city or town)
☐ Suburban
☒ Rural

3. Number of students in the school as of October 1, 2022 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Students
PreK	91
K	76
1	71
2	72
3	89
4	73
5	63
6	0
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	535

*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):
- 0.5 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 % Asian
 - 0.5 % Black or African American
 - 6.1 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 91.1 % White
 - 1.8 % 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: 6%

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	16
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	15
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	31
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	535
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.06
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	6

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 30 %

Total number students who qualify: 158

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 23 %
Total number of students served 122

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>8</u> Autism	<u>2</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>10</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>25</u> Developmental Delay	<u>43</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>3</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>25</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>4</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>2</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: 12

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

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.	27
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	6
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	31
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 20:1

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	93%	96%	97%	96%	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.

Educating for Tomorrow's World,

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

https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/2485/LCWM/2359491/521_STUDENT_DISABILITY_NONDISCRIMINATION.pdf

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

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Lake Crystal Wellcome Memorial (LCWM) Public Schools is a rural farming school district situated in southern Minnesota, encompassing six communities, namely Butternut, Judson, Garden City, Lake Crystal, Rapidan, and Vernon Center. These communities are home to many individuals who commute to the city of Mankato. The district is located in the Minnesota River Valley, which features beautiful lakes, rivers, and valleys.

On April 21, 1987, the LCWM School District was formed by consolidating the Lake Crystal Schools and the Wellcome Memorial Schools. All students were eventually transferred to the Lake Crystal buildings, which consisted of an elementary and a secondary building. To cater to the growing student population, the communities approved a referendum in 2004 to construct a new secondary building and add on to the elementary building. The district has received significant support from the communities since the consolidation, as evidenced by the contributions made through referendums, the elementary Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), and individual donors.

Community support also laid the foundation for a city-owned recreation center, the Lake Crystal Area Recreation Center (LCARC), which serves the surrounding communities and schools. It features a state of the art fitness center and pool and collaborates with the school district to provide numerous opportunities that support student success. LCARC offers an after school program called Fit Kids for elementary students from working families, providing homework assistance and exercise opportunities. On Fridays, these students go to the recreation center for swimming and other activities. LCARC also enlists local volunteers to provide yearly swimming lessons to elementary students and provides free individual and family passes to at-risk families and students as incentives.

LCWM Elementary serves preschool through fifth-grade students, with a student population of approximately 550. The majority of students are Caucasian, with diversity coming mainly from variations in socioeconomic status. The mission of the district is “Educating for Tomorrow’s World,” while the vision statement emphasizes a united and committed approach to achieving educational excellence. The core values of the district are grounded in principles of integrity, respect, accountability, and excellence, all of which serve as guiding principles for the elementary school’s educational philosophy.

Creating a positive school culture has played a significant role in the success of the school. Allowing students and staff to interact positively has resulted in a friendly and welcoming atmosphere. The members of the school community feel valued and respected, which creates an optimal environment for success. The school climate has been developed in many ways, with continuous improvement and creativity at the center of this culture. Staff members examine student data, allocate resources, research interventions, and promote strong connections. Additionally, a strong Response to Intervention (RtI) process provides leadership, knowledge, and support to students and staff.

There are two key programs that are critical to the RtI process: the school’s Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program and a robust Professional Learning Community (PLC). PBIS focuses on the behavioral aspects of students, while PLCs focus on academics.

PBIS is a program designed to promote positive behavior in students by providing a proactive and structured approach to behavior management in schools. The program aims to create a positive school environment that supports the social and emotional development of students.

The program emphasizes the importance of teaching and reinforcing positive behaviors, rather than solely focusing on punishment for negative behaviors. PBIS uses data to guide decision-making and measure progress toward behavior goals. Teachers, staff, and administrators work collaboratively to create a positive school culture that supports the success of all students.

The Elementary PLC Leadership Team is comprised of a group of teachers who convene monthly to establish grade-level and building-wide objectives, as well as departmental agendas, with a focus on

individual student academics and differentiation. These agendas serve as a roadmap for PLC group discussions, enabling staff members to work together, exchange knowledge and skills, and identify means of enhancing their instructional techniques to improve achievement levels. These high-performing teams play a crucial role in sustaining continuous improvement and are the cornerstone of elementary academic success.

In an effort for continuous improvement, LCWM Elementary is always looking for new creative and innovative programs. Several of our most recent programs include Knights Plus and STEAM Camp.

In 2016, the Knights Plus program was launched at the elementary school. The program offers a transitional kindergarten class that caters to students who are eligible but may not be fully prepared for traditional kindergarten. The objective is to provide an additional year of academic and social/emotional growth for the students. The Knights Plus class has a smaller class size, offers more one-on-one opportunities, and proceeds at a slower pace academically compared to a typical kindergarten class. As a result, students who complete the program are often more confident in their academic abilities and become leaders once they enter kindergarten. School data have impressively validated the program with Knights Plus students performing well on school assessments.

Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math (STEAM) Camp has been another successful program. It is funded through the Madelia Integration Collaborative (MAIC), which is made up of five area school districts. The goal of the collaborative is to integrate students from diverse demographic backgrounds to increase positive cultural awareness and foster positive peer relationships. Students from all MAIC schools in grades 6-8 are offered the opportunity to attend the STEAM Camp. This two-week summer program runs full days with free breakfast and lunch for students. Each student has the opportunity to choose four classes tied to their interests. Students are offered the opportunity to select four out of thirteen classes offered to tie their learning to their interest areas. All classrooms are project-based with hands-on learning opportunities. During the first week, a field trip is provided that extends learning from the classroom. Licensed teachers from all participating schools provide the learning modules. Various science concepts are the focus of each year's camp with a special emphasis on renewable energy. The camp ends with a parents' day to showcase the activities of the students. Pre- and post-surveys are taken with the students to understand their cultural interactions as well as the final survey of the students' learning. The success of STEAM Camp has been modeled in other collaboratives throughout the state.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

The core curriculum at LCWM is grounded on the Minnesota State Standards. The staff is highly knowledgeable about the standards and has made certain that they align with all curriculum resources. Instruction is driven by formative and summative assessments. There is a building-wide commitment to professional development and the effective use of curriculum resources.

LCWM employs a comprehensive ELA program that is guided by the five pillars of reading, which include phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. The school places a special emphasis on building a strong foundation in phonological awareness and phonics skills for primary grades, while also increasing students' vocabulary. This approach enables students to build on prior knowledge as they advance to upper elementary grades through vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.

The school has transitioned from a balanced literacy approach to a science of reading approach, which incorporates direct, small group, and multi-sensory learning modalities to cater to the diverse needs of the learners. Direct instruction is used to expose all students to grade-level content, including new vocabulary and sounds in a word, while small group instruction enables teachers to differentiate and accommodate student needs. Multi-sensory learning approaches, such as kinesthetic, auditory, visual, and tactile, are incorporated to ensure that the needs of all students are met.

The school gathers data through buildingwide benchmarking with Formative Assessment System for Teachers (FAST) testing three times a year to track student oral reading fluency. This determines if students require additional support with reading and may benefit from intervention. Students who require further support can receive it through Reading Corp, Title I, and special education services. The NWEA (formerly Northwest Evaluation Association) standardized test is administered building-wide yearly to, inform the development of intervention groups among grade levels and within classrooms.

Classroom teachers emphasize best practice reading strategies throughout the school day, including Read Aloud, which is frequently observed building-wide, and Buddy Reading for first through fifth-grade students. The school also celebrates I Love to Read Month and hosts reading challenges among grade levels. Students track their reading minutes in February to earn free books, paid for by the PTO.

The school is dedicated to integrating the ELA standards into all aspects of the school day, across all subject areas and content. Although the ELA grade-level standards serve as the foundation for core instruction, LCWM educators strive to go beyond these standards to provide students with opportunities for enrichment.

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

LCWM provides a comprehensive mathematical education by implementing The Math Learning Center's Bridges for Mathematics and Number Corner curricula. These curricula serve as the foundation for core instruction, allowing students to master Minnesota state mathematics standards and become competent mathematicians. The mathematical content is divided into eight units covering number sense, operations, algebraic thinking, measurement, data, and geometry. Through age-appropriate problems and investigations, students are encouraged to explore, question, test, and apply ideas. Daily sessions incorporate hands-on manipulatives and visual models to help students comprehend concepts and represent their mathematical thinking in a variety of ways.

Number Corner is comprised of a collection of brief activities that feature a calendar, data collection, number lines, and more. Workplaces are self-paced, differentiated, and engaging math centers that provide ongoing practice and reinforcement of key skills. Teachers introduce and practice new workplaces during math sessions. Various workplaces have students collaborating in small groups or playing partner games

while others provide independent skills practice.

Math instruction is delivered in a variety of ways that allow students to observe, discuss, and apply. Whole group instruction is presented through modeling, with a focus on student inquiry and problem-solving strategies. Instructional-based routines, such as problem strings and math forums, encourage students to build on past skills and share current or newfound mathematical approaches. Students are also exposed to specific and consistent mathematical terminology, resulting in fluid conversation through grade levels as students progress to the next grade level. Additionally, math manipulatives play an influential role in building mathematical understanding daily. To ensure mastery, students receive teacher feedback through formative assessments and individual workbooks. “Home Connections” serve the purpose of communicating current skills and providing extended learning opportunities.

LCWM students demonstrate routine personal growth and achievement on Minnesota state mathematics standards through daily formative assessments, bi-unit checkpoints, post-unit assessments, and quarterly Number Corner check-ups. These assessments, along with daily observations, allow staff to differentiate instruction and prepare students for personal success on state and normative assessments. Additionally, support for standards not yet met comes through correlating computer-based IXL and 99math programs that are practiced based on specific standards, differentiated classroom groups, and support services.

Communication with families, via standards-based progress reports following assessment, provides current insight to those supporting our students outside the classroom. Standards-based report cards allow staff to clearly guide instruction, communicate with students, and set rigorous expectations, allowing everyone involved in a student’s roadmap towards achievement to understand areas of growth and mastery, enabling each student to reach their full potential.

Furthermore, standards-based report cards enable LCWM to measure student progress against the expectations from the Minnesota Department of Education. This approach allows teachers to identify areas where they may need to modify their instructional approach or provide additional support to students who are struggling.

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

LCWM Elementary prides itself on offering high-quality science to its students. The school recognizes the importance of science in students’ lives and prepares them for future academic and professional success by incorporating science education into its curriculum in a variety of ways. Per the Minnesota Department of Education’s science standards, which were updated in 2019, LCWM Elementary has tailored its instruction at each grade level to cater to the interests of its students.

The school’s science program is designed to help students think like scientists, promoting scientific curiosity and helping learners understand the world around them. LCWM Elementary offers a variety of innovative, standards-aligned, hands-on science curricula such as Mystery Science and PLTW, to engage students and help them develop a love for science.

Mystery Science is a program that offers phenomena-driven instruction, allowing students to better understand and communicate about the world through writing, discussion, and explorations. PLTW is a Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) centered innovative program that teaches many of the K-5 state science standards. Every student receives sixty minutes of instruction through this program each week.

LCWM Elementary also offers science-based field trips to local attractions, such as the Sea Life Aquarium at the Mall of America, the Minnesota Zoo, and the Science Museum of Minnesota. Field trips are also taken to local sheep and dairy farms. These field trips provide students with opportunities to learn science-related concepts while promoting the farming industry that the local economy thrives on.

LCWM Elementary School prioritizes fostering students’ scientific curiosity through innovative, standards-aligned, hands-on curricula, weekly instruction through PLTW, and science-based field trips. By tailoring

instruction to each grade level, the school ensures that its students receive a comprehensive science education that prepares them for future success in academics and career readiness.

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

The strategic approach of departmentalized grade-level instruction is implemented by teachers to focus on social studies standards, which include economics, geography, citizenship, government, history, and ethnicities. The use of historical novels and various external resources, coupled with yearly field trips, enables teachers to build students' background knowledge and provide them with project-based and hands-on experiences that address social studies standards.

One of the notable field trips that the school organizes for its students is the History Fest held at a local farm. The experience allows students to engage in unique activities and visit authentic time period buildings, where they can immerse themselves in American history. Period reenactors, including Galileo, Abraham Lincoln, Jack Sparrow, Civil War soldiers, and famous explorers, provide mini-presentations with time for questions and answers, enabling students to interact and learn from historical figures.

The Jeffers Petroglyphs is another valuable field trip that empowers students by exploring Native American carvings. This experience enables students to envision life during that time and understand how farming, gathering, and hunting supported life on the prairie. Students also learn about the area's history predating the Ice Age.

Farm Safety Day and local sheep and dairy farm trips are essential in teaching students about farm safety and the work involved in running a farm. Given the school's rural location, these experiences offer students relevant opportunities to learn about and participate in farm-related activities.

The Department of Natural Resources naturalists also provide various environmental presentations, including topics like owls and photography. These opportunities help students understand the importance of preserving the environment and the role they can play in doing so.

Junior Achievement volunteers visit the school to educate students on financial literacy, career readiness, and entrepreneurship. These volunteers bring classroom learning to life through presentations and games connecting students with real-world scenarios.

The elementary school also hosts a student-led weekly video production that offers upper-grade students the opportunity to learn about the technology involved in creating a broadcast while communicating school news. The segment "Time Traveler" offers historical perspectives and is shared school-wide and with parents upon request.

Finally, fifth-grade students participate in a cumulative project-based assessment opportunity, where they research, create a presentation, and teach younger students about an influential historical figure. Student work is evaluated by the teachers they present to, providing an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of historical events. These varied experiences and opportunities provide students with a well-rounded and immersive education that prepares them for real-world scenarios.

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

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

LCWM Little Knights Preschool is a comprehensive and all-inclusive preschool program that is designed to provide early learners with a hands-on learning environment. The program implements Creative Curriculum, which is supplemented with the Stimulating Maturity through Accelerated Readiness Training (SMART) Pre-K program and Conscious Discipline to enhance the learning experience. The curriculum is embedded through play experiences and encompasses all subject areas, aligning with Minnesota Early Childhood

Indicators of Progress and kindergarten through third grade Minnesota academic standards. The program offers early intervention services to create a smooth transition as students enter kindergarten.

Located at the elementary school, Little Knights Preschool follows the district calendar, providing cohesion for the community. This allows students and their families to become familiar with the school building, staff, students, expectations, and transportation services, ensuring that students start and stay with the district. This is evident in 90 percent of kindergarten students attending the program.

LCWM Little Knights Preschool aims to promote growth in the community by providing a safe and welcoming environment for early learners. By laying the foundation for a successful start to education, Little Knights Preschool helps students become confident and prepared learners ready to tackle the challenges of kindergarten and beyond.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)

LCWM Elementary strongly believes in promoting creativity and self-expression through the arts. As Picasso famously said, “Every child is an artist,” and the school strives to foster and develop this innate creativity in its students. Beginning at a young age, students are encouraged to use shapes and colors to express themselves through various art forms, including drawing, painting, and sculpture. Through its focus on art education, LCWM Elementary not only promotes creativity and self-expression but also helps students develop important skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication.

A licensed art instructor at LCWM Elementary provides all students with a dedicated 60-minute art class every week. This ensures that each student has access to quality art education and instruction, regardless of their grade level or skill level. To further inspire and ignite a love for art, students at the elementary school are also introduced to various artists and art history. They learn about the stories and context behind famous works of art, such as the Mona Lisa, and develop an understanding of the different ways in which art can be perceived and interpreted.

To celebrate and showcase students’ artwork, the school has established the LCWM Elementary Art Gallery, where every student’s artwork is displayed during music concerts. Additionally, the school hosts an all-school art show in May, in which students have the opportunity to display their artwork for the entire school and community to admire.

The music program at LCWM Elementary is centered on the belief that every voice is important and everyone can make music. All students receive music two days per week for thirty minutes per class. Students are exposed to a variety of lessons and songs that not only promote music literacy but also help develop literacy skills. The curriculum is designed to foster creativity, performance, and evaluation using new music skills. As students advance, they are introduced to a range of instruments such as Boomwhackers, bells, and recorders while developing age-appropriate music reading skills.

In addition to the regular curriculum, students also participate in various concerts throughout the year such as seasonal concerts and a Veterans Day program. The music program is based on standards that encourage multicultural education and appreciation for music. The program is designed to create lifelong musicians who not only enjoy music but also understand its cultural significance. The music teacher strives to create a positive learning environment that encourages participation and develops a love of music.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

LCWM Elementary Physical Education and Health department plays a crucial role in promoting student health and safety through a holistic approach. All students receive physical education four days per week for thirty minutes per class. Physical education teachers engage students in a wide variety of activities. To

incorporate multiple subjects, the department has developed a life-sized board game called Fitness Land, which encourages younger and older students to read, add, collaborate, and exercise together.

The Physical Education and Health Department at LCWM Elementary provides students with numerous physical activities, including jump roping, cargo net climbing, bowling, and rock climbing, which is the most popular among the students. In addition, the department organizes events outside of the classroom, including swimming lessons, track and field day, Kids Heart Challenge, Minnesota Bike Fleet, and Family Fitness Night. The department also applies for and regularly receives Fuel Up to Play 60 grant funds annually, which have allowed for multiple field trips to learn about farm-to-table nutrition, as well as school-wide assemblies featuring Viktor the Viking.

The LCWM Elementary Physical Education and Health department is committed to empowering students to understand the benefits of regular physical activity, with the full support of the school's administrators. By providing a variety of activities and experiences, the department fosters a love of physical activity in students, laying the foundation for a healthy lifestyle in the future.

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

2d. Technology/library/media

The LCWM Elementary Media and Library program incorporates technology and media into the classroom, focusing on the importance of transitional techniques to prepare students for success in future years. The program includes one-to-one computers for students, voice amplifying systems in classrooms, a rich library program, and school-wide coding opportunities.

The one-to-one computer initiative is a critical component of the media program. By providing students with individual computers, students can access digital resources to help them learn at their own pace. This approach fosters an independent learning environment, in which students personalize their learning experience by accessing a wide range of digital resources.

Voice amplifying systems in all classrooms are used to project teacher voices, making it easier for students to hear and comprehend lessons. This research-based technology also helps teachers avoid straining their voices, leading to better health and energy throughout the day.

The LCWM Elementary Library is fortunate to have over 17,000 books organized by genre. This approach helps promote a love of reading by making it easier for students to discover new authors, book series, and topics to read. Students have thirty minutes of time in the library each week to choose books that align with their interests. To help foster an interest in and love for reading, primary students engage in weekly read alouds with the librarian.

School-wide coding opportunities, available to students through the media specialists develop critical 21st-century skills such as problem-solving, creativity, and innovation. The coding activities and competitions are integrated into the curriculum, allowing students to develop their coding skills and compete with their peers.

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

Project Lead the Way (PLTW) is an innovative curriculum that immerses K-5 student engineers in a range of energizing, hands-on activities and projects that build upon one another and have real world relevance. This approach enables learners to develop highly sought-after skills that are not typically found in traditional classroom settings. By combining computer science, engineering, and other disciplines, students benefit from an integrated learning experience. Throughout the course modules, students apply math and language skills, as well as science standards.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Students are given a Formative Assessment System for Teachers (FAST) assessment three times a year. After the school data are analyzed, the Title I teacher meets with classroom teachers to implement a ten day class intervention when more than half of their class is not meeting grade level standards. The students are then reassessed. Students who continue to not meet the benchmark will then receive pull-out services either one to one or in a small group through Title I or Reading Corps. The Title I teacher creates an individualized plan for students based on an in-depth decoding inventory. Research-based interventions are implemented daily and progress monitoring is conducted bi-weekly. When students make adequate progress and meet grade level goals, they are exited from the intervention.

Throughout the school year, students are ability grouped across the grade level based on FAST data. Classroom teachers collaborate with the Title I teacher to formulate a plan, adjust, and problem solve as needed. Instruction is provided four times a week. Students are provided with additional instructional time throughout the week during what I need time (WIN). Students who need extra support have the opportunity to test in a variety of settings for classroom assessments and standardized tests and read the questions aloud to staff in a preferred environment.

Once a month each grade level team meets with the problem-solving team which includes a social worker, school psychologist, speech pathologist, Special Education staff, Title I teacher, and principal. Individual students who are needing more support academically or behaviorally are discussed and a plan is created to better support that student.

Using assessment data or teacher referral, students are given the opportunity to attend summer school or tutoring. During summer school, teachers focus on reading, math, and social skills instruction. During summer tutoring, the Title I teacher or trained paraprofessional delivers reading interventions in a one to one setting.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

LCWM Elementary is committed to meeting the unique needs of students who perform above grade level. The school recognizes that it may not have the resources to hire a full-time instructor for such students, but has designed a program to support their academic, social, and emotional development. The program takes various forms, including pull-out programs, advanced classes, and enrichment activities.

High-performing students in math and reading are provided with pull-out programs geared toward their abilities. Students in fourth and fifth grade have the opportunity to be part of Math Masters. This program gives students a chance to meet after school to engage in rigorous activities throughout the year. The program culminates into a contest where students can compete against other talented math students from the area.

Enrichment classes for art, music, and theater are also offered through Community Education after-school programs and are open to all students. LCWM Elementary identifies gifted and talented students through a variety of methods, including achievement tests, teacher recommendations, and student portfolios. Once identified, students are given access to advanced learning opportunities tailored to their individual needs.

Furthermore, classroom teachers have been trained on how to use the mathematics and reading curriculum to enhance the learning of the most advanced students in the classroom. By providing these opportunities, LCWM Elementary ensures that students who demonstrate exceptional abilities are challenged and empowered to reach their full potential.

3c. Students with disabilities:

LCWM Elementary School has an outstanding special education program that identifies and provides services to students with exceptional needs. The school offers a hybrid model of service delivery based on each student's individual strengths and needs that ranges from full inclusion and push-in services to pull-out services as well as one self-contained classroom. With a team of dedicated staff who connect with students and work creatively to help them achieve at their level, LCWM Elementary is an excellent example of inclusive education.

The Special Education Child Study Team meets biweekly to review intervention data of individual students who are struggling in the classroom. The team then decides if more interventions are needed or if special education testing is appropriate. If a student qualifies for special education services, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is written for that student based on their specific needs. The special education teachers collaborate with classroom teachers to implement accommodations and modifications for students to succeed in the classroom. The special education teachers provide supplemental instruction in small group or one-to-one settings. Goals and objectives on the IEP are monitored and reported to students' parents three times per year. Every month the Special Education Coordinator provides professional development training to elementary paraprofessionals, which aids in promoting student success.

Full inclusion and push-in models involve the special education teacher coming into the classroom to provide support to students in their regular classroom settings. This allows students to be fully included in the classroom and promotes social interaction with same-age peers. The pull-out model involves students being taken out of the classroom for a specific period to receive specialized instruction from the special education teacher in a resource room setting. This model allows the teacher to provide intensive instruction on specific skills targeted in students' IEPs.

LCWM Elementary's Special Education program utilizes a team approach to service delivery. The special education teachers work closely with the general education teachers to ensure that all students are receiving the support they need to be successful. Additional collaborators include speech language pathologists, a school psychologist, occupational and physical therapists, school nurse, and a developmental adapted physical education instructor. This team provides a comprehensive support system for each student.

3d. English Language Learners:

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Positive school climate and culture are the cornerstones of success at LCWM Elementary. The staff prioritizes resources to create an environment in which members of the school community feel welcomed and supported. As a PBIS school, LCWM recognizes the necessity of creating a school community in which everyone has a role in achieving success. The PBIS model has evolved and strengthened at LCWM Elementary since its inception in 2008. Reflecting the core values of “Respectful, Responsible, and Safe,” the LCWM Elementary PBIS team determines a school-wide theme yearly (“Every Knight, Every Day,” “Together We Can,” “We Belong”) From PBIS Fun Days (Turkey Bingo, Carnival, Outdoor Field Day) to incentives that promote positive behaviors (Noble Knight pride slips at the individual and classroom level, Citizenship Awards, Custodian Club, Sportsmanship Award, Positive Referrals, Golden Garbage Can, VIP seating at assemblies, and opportunities to be the school mascot), the PBIS team is constantly seeking new ideas to motivate and inspire staff and students to be their best.

The PBIS team is composed of a diverse group of school staff members who meet monthly to review behavioral data and evaluate interventions and supports used with students. The data collected are utilized to determine strategies to support students’ social-emotional learning and development. These meetings also provide an opportunity to plan school-wide celebrations and events that are meaningful and relevant to LCWM Elementary students.

Building a strong community fuels LCWM’s passion for all students to achieve at high levels. In addition to robust academic performance, the elementary school prioritizes perseverance and a growth mindset both in and out of the classroom. The academic and extracurricular programs offered at LCWM Elementary provide a wide range of opportunities targeting a variety of learning modalities as students begin to explore career paths, including Math Masters, The Young Writers Conference, Knight Squad (a student-led technology tutoring and weekly video news production group), Enrichment Reading Groups, Title I services, STEAM Camp, band, choir, dance, and Prairie Fire Children’s Theater.

Classroom teachers and paraprofessionals work collaboratively to support all students as they foster a love of learning in conjunction with a drive to succeed. Some of the many opportunities at the classroom level include end-of-unit celebrations, grade-level reading and math challenges to prepare for statewide assessments, themed learning activities, field trips (Agriculture Safety Day, Environmental Learning Day, Fire Station Visit, History Fest, Science Museum, Southern Minnesota Children’s Museum, Sea Life Minnesota, Minnesota Zoo, local sheep and dairy farm experiences, and Earth Day), and outdoor classroom settings.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

LCWM is incredibly fortunate to have built a foundation of reciprocal support between and among the families and community members in the district. Starting at a young age, children reap the benefits of the district’s close ties to the community. LCWM students enjoy PTO sponsored events (Morning with Moms, Donuts with Dads, University of Minnesota Raptor Center presentations), the generous donations of funds, time, and talents from community partners (Junior Achievement program, Mankato Clinic grant to support PBIS programming, United Way and Lions Club book donations, Wal-Mart school supply donations, individual and anonymous donors for swimming lessons and field trips to the LCARC, Country Financial donations to support student and staff experiences and incentives), and the various opportunities provided by the Community Education Program.

LCWM’s Community Education department provides a multitude of extracurricular youth programming opportunities for students of all ages including Fit Kids after-school care, art classes, sports camps, foreign language classes, field trips on non-school days, Daddy-Daughter Dance, Mother-Son ShamRock, Touch-a-Truck event, Holiday Creations craft activities, and a district-wide baby shower. A strong facet of LCWM’s Community Education program is the Parent Aware-rated Little Knights Preschool program, which is

housed within the elementary school and closely linked to the Early Childhood and Family Education (ECFE) program. These two programs offer a variety of special events and opportunities, including the Jungle Boogie fundraising fair, Camp Midnight kindergarten transition camp, and parent education opportunities and resources.

Engaging families and community members is a critical building block to the educational success of LCWM students. This begins with effective communication. LCWM utilizes a variety of platforms to keep families connected to the school including Seesaw, ClassDojo, Google Classroom, Schoology, Peachjar, Infinite Campus, Facebook, the annual spring newsletter, Celebrate Success publication, and the Lake Crystal Tribune. These tools allow parents and the community to be even more involved in children's educational experiences as they see students grow and learn in real time.

LCWM Elementary School boasts a friendly, child-centered atmosphere that is often commented upon by visitors. Many factors contribute to family and community engagement at LCWM, including the welcoming front office staff and the variety of face-to-face interactions between staff and parents, including parent-teacher conferences, Scholastic Book Fair, music programs, art shows, parent-involved classroom activities, and Kindergarten Roundup orientation. The appeal of LCWM Elementary School to families in neighboring communities is further highlighted by strong open enrollment numbers and many family members who choose to coach youth activity groups in the district.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

LCWM employs a variety of approaches to foster a culture of enjoyment and professionalism among staff members. District employees access relevant professional development opportunities embedded in staff development days as well as those that are pursued based on individual interests. Each month during PLC late start days for teachers, staff and paraprofessionals are offered training on a variety of topics based on their requests and interests. A new teacher mentorship program, led by a former Blue Ribbon school-awarded principal, supports non-tenured teachers as they bolster their skills as educators. In addition to the varied opportunities that strengthen teachers' professional credentials, LCWM Elementary School staff members have access to a multitude of opportunities to show their appreciation for others including anonymous submissions to recognize staff members' acts of kindness weekly as part of Thankful Thursday and special staff appreciation days/weeks to acknowledge the many individuals who are integral parts of LCWM's school community (paraprofessionals, school social worker and school counselor, bus drivers, police liaisons, school nurses, cafeteria staff, custodians, and administrative assistants).

Staff members are encouraged to nominate others to be recognized for their time and talents through Teacher of the Month, Staff Noble Knight Parking spot, Teacher Tip of the Month, Staff Noble Knight Pride tickets, and the Staff Shout-Out Notebook. The Sunshine Committee aims to comfort colleagues experiencing difficult life circumstances through flowers, cards, and gift cards. LCWM Elementary staff is also afforded opportunities to simply enjoy the company of their colleagues during the many staff outings throughout the year, including holiday gatherings, potlucks, curling, and Mankato MoonDogs and Minnesota Twins baseball events. The biweekly Friday Fun breakfast group provides food and fellowship to participants, the Appreciation Station Cart visits staff members at random to offer coffee and other refreshments, Secret Pals arranges a year-long opportunity to give/receive anonymous treats and kind notes to/from a coworker, and Best Week Ever organizes participating staff into teams for a week of fun activities and friendly competition.

4. School Leadership:

LCWM Elementary follows a site-based management leadership philosophy that centers on valuing all members of the school. This shared leadership style promotes a sense of belonging among all students, staff, and families. The LCWM Elementary School principal recognizes the many strengths of the teachers and faculty in the school. Through the delegation of leadership roles, staff members are empowered to innovate and problem-solve in ways that are effective and relevant to each situation. The principal honors staff members as educators as well as individuals and considers their unique talents when determining assignments and committee placements. All staff members prioritize families first, which is at the heart of

student success.

The leadership at LCWM works with staff to implement new curricula, directives, and initiatives thoughtfully and deliberately, pushing for growth while also allowing for progress at a comfortable pace. The goal is always to improve student achievement, and the leadership teams provide support and guidance in this pursuit.

There are several leadership teams at LCWM Elementary, each with a specific focus. The PLC Leadership Team provides direction in decision-making related to building goals and initiatives, with representatives from each grade level, special education, specialists, and the principal. The PBIS Team is responsible for driving the school's positive culture, consisting of staff from around the building and is committed to maintaining a supportive environment. The RtI Team works to brainstorm behavioral and academic interventions for students in need, collaborating with teachers to develop effective interventions and supports. Additionally, the RtI Team meets monthly to review academic and behavioral data for all students, ensuring that every student's needs are being met.

LCWM Elementary PLCs also focus on specific student data and goals related to curricular areas. These teams meet informally during the week and formally for two hours once a month, providing an uninterrupted time to discuss student data and progress and develop plans to address concerns. In addition to these teams, individual staff members take on leadership roles within their grade-level teams, utilizing their strengths to support the school community.

Overall, the leadership philosophy at LCWM Elementary prioritizes building positive relationships, empowering staff, and utilizing data to drive student success. By fostering a supportive and collaborative environment, the school community can work and grow together toward the common goal of improving student achievement.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Most of LCWM Elementary School's diversity comes in the form of approximately 30 percent of its students receiving free and reduced lunch. School staff members work closely together throughout the year, especially during the holiday season, to identify underserved students and their families and coordinate donations to help those in need. The school partners with the United Way to support the Backpack Food Program, which provides food packs each week for students in kindergarten through fifth grade over weekends and extended breaks. Retired community volunteers transport the food packs to the school and deliver them discreetly to students' backpacks. The school also participates in the annual Climb to Feed Kids fundraising event to support the Backpack Food Program.

LCWM Elementary School places great importance on the mental health of its students and provides comprehensive school counseling services. The school district employs a mental health therapist, a counselor, and a social worker, in addition to partnering with outside agencies to provide additional resources for students in need. To further promote students' social-emotional growth, LCWM utilizes the REAL Essentials Curriculum, which focuses on healthy relationship development, cultural differences, communication, and decision-making skills. The school staff has also received training in various programs including Boystown school social skills, Conscious Discipline trauma-responsive social and emotional learning, and SMART to enhance neurological and physiological functioning in all children.

Various academic support services are offered by LCWM Elementary School to help students succeed, including the Knight Plus transitional kindergarten, targeted services summer school, and summer reading tutoring programs. Students also benefit from opportunities for peer mentorship and special events such as the school-wide Unity Day celebration, which raises awareness for bullying prevention, and the Kindness Retreat for fifth grade students.

All students are welcomed and encouraged to attend school assemblies and celebrations regardless of their behavioral performance. LCWM Elementary School strives to provide a supportive and inclusive learning environment for all students.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

LCWM Elementary is known for its exceptional academic performance, and the key to its success lies in its positive school culture. This culture is built on a shared set of values, beliefs, and attitudes that guide the interactions and practices within the school community. At the heart of this culture is a deep love for all students, which is reflected in the strong relationships that staff members build with their students and families based on trust, respect, and empathy. The school's PBIS program is a cornerstone of this culture, and the PBIS team works tirelessly to create a school environment in which students and staff feel supported and enjoy coming to school.

Collaboration, communication, and teamwork are essential components of LCWM Elementary's culture, and these skills are actively fostered among staff and students. The school invests in training to help teams function effectively, and teachers and staff work collaboratively to develop effective solutions to any challenges that arise. This coordinated teaming creates a positive environment in which staff members can share ideas and talents and work together towards a common goal.

Fostering a growth mindset for staff and students is another critical component of the school culture and has taken years to develop. Teachers encourage their students to adopt a mindset of continuous learning and improvement. Staff members lead by example, modeling a growth mindset through language and shared personal examples of grit and perseverance.

The school's core values of respect, responsibility, leadership, and integrity ensure that all voices are heard, and that everyone is held to high standards of behavior and performance. Grade level and department teams work together to provide all students with the support and resources they need to succeed, regardless of their background, abilities, or challenges.

The positive school culture at LCWM Elementary is a key strategy for achieving excellence. This culture prioritizes love for students, hard work, perseverance, a growth mindset, and teamwork, and has created a learning environment that is supportive, engaging, and empowering.