

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

Official School Name Heyward C Bellamy Elementary School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 70 Sanders Road  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Wilmington State NC Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 28412-2619

County New Hanover County

Telephone (910) 350-2039 Fax (910) 350-2036

Web site/URL <https://bellamy.nhcs.net/> E-mail john.kilpatrick@nhcs.net

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. Charles Foust E-mail charles.foust@nhcs.net  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name New Hanover County Schools Tel. (910) 254-4200

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 Mr. Pete Wildeboer  
(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):
- 26 Elementary schools (includes K-8)  
8 Middle/Junior high schools  
8 High schools  
0 K-12 schools
- 42 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              | 82            |
| 1              | 109           |
| 2              | 77            |
| 3              | 85            |
| 4              | 101           |
| 5              | 100           |
| 6              | 0             |
| 7              | 0             |
| 8              | 0             |
| 9              | 0             |
| 10             | 0             |
| 11             | 0             |
| 12 or higher   | 0             |
| Total Students | 554           |

\*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):
- 0.1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 2.6 % Asian
  - 5.7 % Black or African American
  - 12 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0.1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 75.5 % White
  - 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: 12%

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   | 39            |
| (2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year | 25            |
| (3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]  | 64            |
| (4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021   | 556           |
| (5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)   | 0.12          |
| (6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100  | 12            |

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

Arabic, Spanish, Chin, Russian, Vietnamese, Chinese, Burmese.

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 6 %  
35 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 39 %

Total number students who qualify: 218

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 12 %  
Total number of students served 65

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>3</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>4</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>7</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>26</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>20</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 3 %  
Total number of students served: 16

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 8

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.

|  | <b>Number of Staff</b> |
|--|------------------------|
| Administrators   | 2                      |
| Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.  | 31                     |
| Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.  | 8                      |
| Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.   | 12                     |
| Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc. | 3                      |

12. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 18:1

13. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

| Required Information        | 2021-2022 | 2020-2021 | 2019-2020 | 2018-2019 | 2017-2018 |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Daily student attendance    | 95%       | 96%       | 96%       | 97%       | 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.

To provide children with an opportunity for a superior education in a safe and positive learning environment where they are prepared with the skills to succeed.

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

<https://www.nhcs.net/non-discrimination-statement>

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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At Heyward C. Bellamy Elementary School, we provide students a superior education in a safe, positive student-centered learning environment. We focus on academic excellence, cultural and social-emotional awareness, and we enable student success through scaffolded rigorous instruction and high expectations. Since opening in 1983, Bellamy has had only four principals, allowing change to take root and flourish during each of their tenures. We serve a large geographic region that continues to grow and develop, with new homes being built every month. We are a true, sought-after neighborhood school with a supportive and diverse school community. Among our families, seven languages are spoken, and there has been a recent influx of Ukrainian refugees, including a surgeon and her children, who express their gratitude to our school for the sense of safety and community that we provide. Family and community volunteers are always welcome and present to support our students.

Historically, we have received Title I funding, yet over the years of Covid and redistricting, those numbers decreased slightly. Currently, 39.18% of our population qualifies for free/reduced lunch, demonstrating the need for connected family support, without the federal financial resources. Our staff, along with our strong, proactive parent teacher organization, embrace community partnerships to supplement the instructional, academic, social-emotional, and cultural resources available to our school. Together, we invite Communities in Schools volunteers to work with our students in reading, provide meals weekly to families in need, and engage stakeholders in community-wide events, such as STEAM Night and Random Acts of Kindness Night. Anonymous community members make annual donations to pay for outstanding lunch charges, citing their appreciation for all we do for our school community as the catalyst for their generosity.

Bellamy Elementary has exceeded growth expectations every year since 2014, due to the experience and expertise of the teachers and staff. Over 20% of our staff have their National Board Certification, with an average time at Bellamy of over 10 years, and an average of over 20 years in the field of education. We departmentalize in 3rd-5th grades, allowing our teachers to develop both a passion and a pervasive knowledge of their respective subject areas, so that they may support each other and teachers from other schools in the county. This stability and depth of content knowledge allows for a deeper understanding of and investment in the needs of our school community, including recent initiatives for broadening our understanding of academically and intellectually gifted (AIG) identification criteria; incorporating a weekly social-emotional learning course during K-3 specials; schoolwide professional development on the science of reading and conceptual mathematics instruction; and distributive leadership model driving school improvement efforts.

In an effort to support students in achieving their full academic, intellectual, and social-emotional potential, we have dedicated time and resources to strengthen our AIG program by 1) ensuring all teachers in our school earn AIG teaching credentials using the state provided Canvas training; 2) broadening our criteria for AIG identification, including providing greater opportunities to our underrepresented populations; 3) further developing our K-3rd nurturing program, including inclusion, pull-out, and collaborative instruction services; 4) expanding the resources available and utilized in our 3rd-5th AIG instruction, including coding and robotics; and 5) providing a wide bank of resources for differentiated instruction across K-5 classrooms. Bellamy strives to create an environment in which the distinct academic, intellectual, and social and emotional needs of gifted learners of all ages are understood, valued, nurtured, and supported.

We aim to celebrate the diverse experiences of our students, and to provide them the language and the opportunities to learn to communicate those experiences to themselves and others. Knowing that students cannot learn in an academic vacuum, we chose to designate one specials class a week as a social-emotional learning time, lead by a team of student support specialists. Instruction follows the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) framework, addressing the NC Professional School Counseling standards, and is informed by the grade-level and class specific needs as identified by the students and teachers. While our teachers facilitate morning meetings each day with their students, this targeted, explicit SEL instruction, integrated with academic instruction, develops the whole learner, and reminds our Bellamy students that they are seen as individuals and their voices are valued.



Our staff prides themselves on being lifelong learners, and they are dedicated to honing their craft and remaining current on relevant research-based practices. Recent professional development efforts have focused on a two year in-depth study on the science of reading, as well as ongoing professional development in teaching mathematics centered on advancing equity in the math classroom by helping students build enduring math knowledge. These efforts have included virtual and in-person training, collaborative cross-district small group training, weekly development during professional learning communities (PLCs) with the instructional coach and administration, and coaching and modeling from district leadership. Even though teachers are departmentalized, they receive training in all subject areas, strengthening their cross-curricular knowledge and increasing their capacity for remediation, intervention, and extension in all content areas.

Finally, we capitalize on our staff's experience, utilizing a distributive model of leadership that elevates staff voice in driving school improvement changes. All staff members are actively engaged in a school improvement subcommittee, developing action steps and timelines aligned with school improvement indicators. Schoolwide efforts are rarely top-down initiatives, but rather grassroots efforts gleaned from the needs of the students, the families, and the staff. At Bellamy, we believe in our people; we believe in their voice; and we believe in leveraging their strengths to let them lead.

## **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:**

Our English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum teaches the North Carolina ELA Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) and specifically targets the five components of reading instruction determined by the science of reading research (phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension). Through systematic whole-group, differentiated small groups, and data-driven one-on-one instruction, our 90-minute literacy block addresses grade-level appropriate, standards-based skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Science and social studies standards are integrated throughout literacy instruction. An additional 30-45 minute daily intervention and enrichment/extension period allows for further data-driven, flexible grouping differentiation to support student growth in ELA.

Our emergent readers engage in phonemic awareness and phonics lessons where they develop letter and sound recognition, introduce the phoneme-grapheme connections, and extend language awareness. Since we know that a child's skill in phonological and phonemic awareness is a good predictor of later reading success, our teachers use both Foundations and Heggerty programs to explicitly and systematically instruct students in phonemic awareness and phonics. Our teachers are using multi-sensory instructional techniques such as using their fingers to tap out individual sounds in words, chop syllables with their hands, and sing songs to point out the rhyming pairs of words. Our reading instruction is explicit, the objective of the lesson is clear, and the teaching is intentional at each grade level. Students engage in whole group and small group reading of engaging fiction and nonfiction texts, in order to build background knowledge and introduce students to new vocabulary and concepts through high quality literature. Students in grades kindergarten through second grade engage with a series of decodable texts, Great Minds Geodes, that align with the specific decoding skills they are learning in Foundations. These texts build content knowledge about science, history, and the arts to foster intellectual curiosity. Our students love collecting facts about different topics and making connections across multiple disciplines.

Our kindergarten through 5th grade reading instruction is grounded in research-based best practices that include print concepts, handwriting, phonics, fluency, and language. ELA priority standards for reading include literature and information, writing includes a focus on narrative, opinion, and informational standards. Using the "I Do, We Do, You Do" progression, mentor texts, and graphic organizers, teachers model, lead, and guide students to practice reading and writing strategies independently. Our older students in grades 3-5 engage in novel studies, book clubs, and reading passages from Social Studies Weekly, CommonLit, Readworks, and Discovery Techbook.

Our teachers use formative and summative assessments throughout the school year to identify students' strengths and target areas of need. Teachers use progress monitoring data, pre- and post-assessment data, Foundations test data, student conferences, and checklists as formative data to determine students' progress towards standards and skill mastery. This data helps us identify necessary changes for differentiated small group instruction, including scaffolds and extensions to meet students' needs. These groups are flexible as we determine what students still need to master or where learning can be extended, if learning opportunities are effective, and when instruction must be adapted. All students participate in a universal screener, Dibels (mClass), three times throughout the year. The upper grades give SchoolNet and NC Check-ins throughout the year to provide individual and classroom level formative feedback. Summative data includes the end of year K-3 MClass Dibels benchmark and the 3rd-5th end-of-grade assessments. Teachers work collaboratively with their teacher assistants, grade level team, coaches, and administrators to use this data to identify where students are struggling and address the areas of need as an ongoing basis in our Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings.

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

Our math instruction incorporates the Standards for Mathematical Practice that are in alignment with the NCSCOS. During a 60-90 minute math block, the whole group lessons feature math discourse, fluency routines, high level application problem solving, collaborative groups, and modeling multiple strategies and representations. An additional 30-45 minute daily intervention and enrichment/extension period allows for further data-driven, flexible grouping differentiation to support student growth in math. The math priority standards focus on counting and cardinality, geometry, operations and algebraic thinking, fractions, measurement, and data.

Our mathematics curriculum has undergone changes in recent years from a traditional math curriculum that focused on developing students' proficiency with facts and algorithms to a focus on developing students' conceptual knowledge and understanding of mathematical principles. We know that conceptual knowledge of mathematics allows students to use math more flexibly and better retain what they have learned. Our goal is for our students to develop the tools necessary to understand the "why" behind the math before the "how." In the last two years, we implemented a high-quality math curriculum, Eureka Squared Math, that promotes coherence across topics and grade levels; enables students to solve problems in a variety of important real-life settings; and explicitly links mathematical concepts, procedures, and ideas that build on one another and systematically expand and deepen students' capabilities. Through professional development and PLC meetings, teachers collaborate and brainstorm ways to deepen students' conceptual understanding of multiple mathematical representations, giving students multiple access points to develop mathematical understanding.

Our students are learning math through the Concrete-Pictorial-Abstract approach, where they begin by using concrete materials to visualize the concepts, then move onto seeing the problem in picture form. They are then able to see the numbers and solve a problem as an abstract concept. Starting in kindergarten, our students are being taught to "count on" using the fingers in the "math way", using ten frames, number paths, and breaking numbers down using number bonds. They build a foundation of conceptual understanding and represent a math problem in several different ways. Our students find joy in finding new ways to solve problems and using multiple representations and manipulatives to show their reasoning and flexibility in thinking. Teachers emphasize inquiry and project-based learning with students that need additional rigor.

At Bellamy, we use AimsWebPlus as a universal screener three times a year to identify foundational skill gaps that may need intervention or remediation during teacher-led differentiated small group instruction. Teachers use this data to make changes to core instruction for any large scale class or grade-level gaps in learning. Teachers formatively assess core instruction using progress monitoring tools, exit tickets, skills checklists, and observations of student discourse. Reinforcement and extension activities are planned for students based on the results of formative and summative assessment data. Schoolwide, we focus on math facts using the MathFactLab website where students engage in multiple models of math facts to enhance their number sense and construct a deeper understanding of the basic math concepts. Summative assessments are administered at the end of each Eureka Squared module, and our teams of teachers reflect on grade level, classroom, and individual student data to inform instruction. Additional benchmark data, both formative and summative, is collected during NC Check-In, SchoolNet, and end-of-grade assessments, allowing us to compare our student progress to that of other schools in our county for cross-school collaboration.

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

Science instruction at Bellamy incorporates a spiraling science curriculum built on inquiry, curiosity, and scientific investigations aligned to the North Carolina Science Essential Standards. Science strands are organized into three areas - earth science, life science, and physical science. Students explore and make discoveries, as well as engage with hands-on materials utilizing the county-curated science kits and resources. For example, our second grade students explore science concepts related to structures and functions of living organisms. They learn about animal life cycles, watching live chicks hatch in their classrooms and witnessing the life cycle of a butterfly through each stage of development.

Students attend field trips to local sites, thus creating a bridge between our families and community partners, and they learn about scientific concepts in our own community. First graders experiment with simple

machines at the Cape Fear Museum. Fifth graders travel to Masonboro Island to learn first hand the responsibilities of being North Carolina coastal stewards and taking care of precious protected land in our community. They also visit the North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher to explore the coastal ecosystems and learn about the interdependence of organisms that live right in our backyard through the Sea Scholars program.

Students who underperform in some core areas have reported increased interest and engagement in science, showing higher levels of academic success with scientific vocabulary and nonfiction texts. Since the 2014-2015 school year, Bellamy's student growth in science averages 4.3 growth index as evidenced by the SAS Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS), which represents greater than two school years of growth. A daily instructional resource that supports this growth is the Discovery Education Techbook, a digital learning platform that includes reading passages, digital labs, videos, and explorations that are aligned with the NCSCOS. Teacher-created, standards-driven review resources, quizzes, and tests are used for both formative and summative assessments in science. Teachers administer the Science NC Check-ins and district-created SchoolNet assessments to gather formative data on individual students and classroom performance on specific science standards. That data is used to inform instruction by identifying scientific concepts and vocabulary that need additional instructional practice and support.

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

The North Carolina Social Studies Essential Standards include the strands of history, geography, economics, civics, government, and behavioral science. In Social Studies classrooms at Bellamy, students build critical thinking, problem-solving, literacy skills, and oral and written communication skills. Students learn more about our world by sharing their stories and learning the stories of others. By studying the different cultures, traditions and histories of the world, students develop an appreciation of our global diversity, which enables them to think about different perspectives in an historical context.

Through inquiry-based strategies, teachers ask students questions to further their understanding of the social studies strands of civics, history, geography, and economics. Collaboration, communication, and cross-curricular projects that align with ELA standards are an essential part of our Social Studies instruction. Teachers facilitate peer work with students analyzing Primary Sources, reading articles and seeing history through multiple contexts and points of view. Differentiated reading resources are provided based on students' needs. Students use visible thinking structures like, "See, Think, Wonder" and "Think, Puzzle, Explore" to activate prior knowledge, generate ideas and spark curiosity, and prepare for deeper inquiry. The instructional resource, Social Studies Weekly, is frequently used by our teachers for reading passages, hands-on activities, videos, and assessments.

To engage our community, Bellamy teachers welcome visitors into our classrooms to share about cultures, customs, religion, food, housing, and clothing students are studying. In 2023, a Palestinian fourth grader and her parent walked students through what a typical student in the Middle East's day would look like during Ramaddan and Holi. Field trips are another way that our students make historical connections to their learning. Our 4th graders visit the Cape Fear Museum where they learn about Lower Cape Fear history, while our 3rd grade students participate in Tar Heels Go Walking, a tour of Downtown Wilmington where students learn about the local historical landmarks.

Formative and summative data is collected from tests, quizzes, and projects that are aligned with standards. With the Social Studies Weekly instructional resource, teachers customize standards-based assessments with questions that vary in complexity and rigor. Supplemental materials and extension activities are assigned to students based on pre- and post-test results.

#### **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)**

In every hallway of our school, visitors will see framed student artwork; bulletin boards showing the visual arts skill, style, or historical context of a certain project; or permanent installations, such as Van Gogh's *Starry Night* created out of marker caps. Students can expect to study the featured artist of the month, from Frida Kahlo to Romare Bearden, to create a common schoolwide language around art for the month. A typical lesson begins with a curriculum connection, such as the kindergarten lesson that used a National Geographic video to explore the ecosystems and animal adaptations of Africa, and how those elements are represented in African clothing, such as the Kente cloth. Students then develop their understanding of patterns, being asked to explain what a pattern needs in order to be considered a pattern. Students then begin crafting their artwork, being reminded that art is an ever-evolving and revised process, meaning drafts are created and revised across multiple class periods. As students look to each other for inspiration, the art teacher reminds students that artists share ideas, reinforcing the schoolwide community value, collaboration. Every period ends with students carefully returning the room to its original state, wiping down tables and putting away materials, while the art teacher reinforces how these simple tasks strengthen our school community.

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

Our school was built in 1983, and the plans did not include an indoor gymnasium or multi-purpose room. Instead, physical education (PE) classes can be found outdoors on our blacktop or hiking the Bellamy nature trail. Skill-based PE instruction is disguised as game play and team building. For example, kindergarteners practice overhand throwing with minute-to-win-it team games, and community partners, First Tee, teach students at all grade-levels the fundamentals of golf. In PE, students learn sportsmanship and the importance of communication, as well as how to be a supporter of their fellow students in competitive games and how to incorporate strategies for success. In all PE classes, our PE teacher incorporates moments of reflection, asking students what is working, how they can strengthen their teamwork, and how they can better develop their skills. The All Star Classes bulletin board in the hallway clearly displays the day's learning target, as well as how the PE classes are progressing on demonstrating schoolwide values and attaining health/PE goals. At the end of class, students high five the "How Did You Do Today?" chart, reflecting on their personal growth, and together decide if their class was an all-star class based on the day's learning target.

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

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

Our media center is always bustling with student activity. As the school day starts, students begin filtering into the media center: a kindergartener checking out a new book; a second grader adding a piece to the school-shared geography jigsaw puzzle; a third grader checking out the Ozobots makerspace kit; a fourth grader writing a book recommendation and maintaining a library shelf as a library helper; or a fifth grader practicing for the upcoming Battle of the Books competition. The media specialist invites family members, former students, and community volunteers to serve in the media center, asking them to take note of the most sought-after collection materials, as well as any student-requested items that we don't have on hand. Our media collection is constantly reviewed to identify topics, communities, and cultures that may be underrepresented. All new material requests, print and digital, are reviewed by the Media and Technology Advisory Committee, before being purchased or pursued. Students access more than collection materials during library instruction; they can also research and learn about digital citizenship, safe online behaviors, and career and college readiness. In collaboration with our digital teaching and learning specialist, our media

specialist ensures students engage in a range of school library and digital teaching and learning projects that are based on state-approved standards.

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

During K-5 nurturing, enrichment and pull-out groups, there is a blend of online and non-computer activities (games, art, and digital story-telling) to teach students about computational thinking, problem solving, critical thinking and programming concepts. Through these “unplugged” activities and robotics programs, students learn the basics of the coding concepts that are in every programming language, including sequences, functions, loops, conditions, and debugging. Students become familiar with drag and drop methods vital for coding and have the opportunity to watch their TinkerCad coded 3D models come to life on our 3D printer.

Bellamy’s learning community is not limited by a classroom’s four walls. Second graders connect through Skype or Google Meet with other classes around the world while learning more about our global community. Through these exchanges, intrinsically engaged learners connect to learn from each other, build relationships, celebrate, and embrace cultural differences. These connections remove classroom barriers and introduce students to new cultural and higher-learning opportunities.

## **3. Academic Supports**

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

Bellamy uses the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) as a framework for providing comprehensive systems of differentiated support based on the unique needs of our school and student population. MTSS is an evidence-based framework to address students’ needs in the areas of academics, behavior, and social-emotional learning, with layers of support based on student needs.

Tier 1, or core instruction, includes the instructional practices all students receive. These practices include differentiated strategies designed to meet the needs of students. We analyze MClass and AimsWeb universal screener data to determine whether more than 40% of students are not proficient in a certain area, at the classroom, grade, or school level. If so, we move that skill to the core or Tier 1 support for the population of students demonstrating that need. Additional instructional coaching is provided to strengthen staff capacity for serving students with those particular instructional needs. Grade level core plans are developed and revised three times throughout the year.

Students whose data indicates that they require additional support to experience greater success with core instruction receive Tier 2 supplemental intervention. In addition to the core instruction, these students receive targeted interventions that match their specific academic, behavioral, social-emotional, or attendance needs. Classroom teachers provide Tier 2 interventions for their students during the designated intervention block or instructional flex time. Examples of Tier 2 interventions include a double dose of the Foundations phonics lesson or participating in an NC Department of Instruction number sense fluency game. Tier 2 intervention can address both the reading and math foundational skills or the higher level skills, depending upon the needs of the student. Students are progress monitored biweekly on their Tier 2 intervention areas to identify what changes to intervention are needed, if any.

Tier 3 intensive intervention may be necessary for a few students who continue to struggle despite high-quality core and supplemental instruction as indicated by their progress monitoring data. Intensive intervention is an added layer of support with an interventionist who collaborates with the general education and EC team. Tier 3 interventions address the foundational skill gaps students have, focusing on remediating those below grade level skills. Students receiving Tier 3 support are progress monitored every week, and the data is reviewed every four to six weeks with the entire MTSS team.

Families are an integral part of our problem-solving team. We meet with parents regularly to discuss students’ recent data and ways they can support their student at home. We also communicate useful strategies that have been working at school. Our schedule at Bellamy is set up so that each grade level has a

reserved intervention block of time. Teacher assistants are assigned to each classroom during their designated intervention time so that we have additional staff that can help with students who are performing below grade level. By leveraging human resources, both at home and at school, we are better able to serve students with consistency and fidelity, to ensure we are closing any achievement gaps.

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

At Bellamy, we prioritize an inclusive giftedness identification model, seeking opportunities for all students, particularly those from underrepresented populations, to engage in meaningful, rigorous, and intellectually stimulating instruction. We believe all students have potential that should be recognized, nurtured and challenged. As early as the second semester of their kindergarten year, students receive whole class Academically and/or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) nurturing lessons, challenging them to develop their problem solving, deductive and inductive reasoning, and critical thinking skills. Across all grade levels, students demonstrating above grade level proficiency have the opportunity to attend pull-out AIG instruction up to five days a week in reading, math, and intellectual areas including standard-aligned instruction, challenging tasks, Project/Problem-based learning, STEM activities, and interest-based projects. A targeted social-emotional program that addresses the specific characteristics of gifted learners is integrated into the AIG pull-out services.

Pull-out groupings are flexible and are based on benchmark data, student performance and work samples, teacher observations, and family input. The goal of the groups is to challenge and strengthen the critical thinking skills of both identified students and students who are high achievers. Data regarding referral and identification criteria, as well as assessment results, are reviewed as a means of monitoring the representation of underrepresented populations. Our hope is to provide our students a strong foundation so that they can participate in a compacted curriculum in middle and high school, setting the stage for them to complete middle school with high school credits, and high school with college credits. Our gifted specialist collaborates with every teacher at Bellamy to ensure they have the training and resources to support the individual needs of the gifted learners in their classroom. The gifted education specialist promotes the development of future-ready skills using William and Mary curriculum units, ThinkLAW, Hands-on equations, ThinkerCad, coding, digital escape rooms, and robotics.

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

Our Exceptional Children's (EC) team serves students with individualized education plans (IEPs) who demonstrate need for resource level, intensive academic support (IAS), intensive behavior support (IBS), and speech and language support. Instructional supports consist of inclusion, pull-out, and self-contained instruction, with flexible, cross-grade level grouping based on the student's standards-based IEP goals. Our EC team aims to support our students in the general education classroom as much as possible, opting for scaffolded inclusion support when appropriate to ensure students have access to grade level content standards. Demonstrated gaps are addressed during individualized pull-out instruction with instruction from our English language arts EC Lead or our mathematics EC Lead. As with our 3rd-5th grade classrooms, our EC teachers departmentalize to the best the schedule allows based on student needs. In doing so, they are experts on the content standards from kindergarten through 5th grade, and are able to see not only the grade-level but also the vertical progressions in standards.

Utilizing a dual inclusion/pull-out model for support, our EC team has grown students over 8 points as evidenced in SAS's Education Valued-Added Assessment System (EVAAS), the equivalent of up to 4 years worth of growth in one year. Students supported in our IBS classroom receive social skills instruction, as well as inclusion support during specials, recess, and lunch, so that students can have immediate access to feedback and instructional support during unstructured learning times. We have three dedicated rooms in the building to support small group instruction in every grade level, as well as an additional room that is used to support small groups based on speech and language needs. Students are progress monitored on their IEP goals weekly, with frequent progress reports sent home to ensure the home-school connection. Our staff believe that every student can learn, and that it is our responsibility to meet and grow them where they are.

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

Bellamy Elementary supports our multilingual learners and their families, so that the students can become proficient in English and achieve grade-level academic standards. Upon initial enrollment, parents complete a home language survey. The English as a Second Language (ESL) department, along with the student's parents/guardians, work together to determine the student's primary language. Students with a home language other than English participate in the World-Class Instructional Design Assessment (WIDA) screener to determine if they are eligible to receive ESL services.

English Language Learners (ELLs) receive small group, WIDA and NCSCOS standards-based instruction. Instruction is based on the student's language proficiency and is designed to develop all four language domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Our ESL teacher collaborates with general education teachers to determine the specific content standards being addressed in the classroom and often preteaches the academic vocabulary and content knowledge so that ESL students can actively participate in oral and written communication in the classroom. Students also use the adaptive online program, Imagine Learning, to provide targeted, differentiated instruction based on their specific needs.

In late winter, English Language Learners take the summative ACCESS for ELLs assessment (ACCESS), which determines student proficiency across the four language domains and is used to calculate student growth and achievement scores. We have begun to draft ELL profiles, tracking a student's progress in each domain throughout each school year, identifying their expected date of exiting the ESL program, and using the WIDA Can-Do Descriptors to identify specific learning supports, strategies, and skills for each student. Our ESL teacher and administrator collaborate with our specials' teachers and each student's classroom teacher to review these profiles and create an individualized learning plan for each student to increase their overall language proficiency.

While we have 35 identified English Language Learners, many more of our students' guardians have limited English proficiency. Bellamy staff employ multiple methods of communication with our families to ensure that all families have equitable access to support their students' education. When necessary, we request the assistance of our district's parent liaisons to communicate with parents who have limited English proficiency. Our staff also uses Talking Points, a texting application that translates communication to the family's home language. Family engagement significantly increased when we began using Talking Points.

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

Recent years have highlighted the significant need for mental health support for all of our student populations. At Bellamy Elementary, we are fortunate enough to have a full-time school-based mental health therapist to serve students in need. Students who show signs that they are struggling with mental health are referred by our student support team members (school counselor and school social worker) in communication with the student's family. Intake meetings are scheduled with the family to better identify the student's family, schooling, and personal histories. Once services start, the mental health therapist works in conjunction with the student's teacher to ensure the student receives services at a time that will not disrupt academics. Ongoing communication, as allowed by parent release, enables the school staff and the mental health therapist to collaborate to best support the student's specific needs. If trends emerge across multiple students, the school-based mental health therapist communicates with the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) leadership team in order to inform school change.



## **PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE**

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### **1. Engaging Students:**

At Bellamy, we always say, “You cannot learn if you are not here.” When addressing student engagement, we first focus on how to ensure students are present at school, working with families to identify and remove barriers to attendance. If necessary, we leverage the support of the Juvenile Attendance Council, a team of local civic leaders (mental health, health and human services, social work, etc.) whose primary concerns are getting to the root of the problem, fixing it and getting the child back in school.

Once in school, we focus on meeting students where they are academically, social-emotionally, and behaviorally. Utilizing the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) framework, we use data to determine what instruction in each of these areas should be included in the core, in tiered supports, or in targeted individualized instruction. Data is consistently collected and reviewed biweekly in PLCs and by the MTSS leadership team and monthly during School Improvement Team (SIT) and subcommittees. PLCs and the MTSS leadership team focus on student specific data, and recommend immediate changes to be made to instruction based on current student data. The Family Engagement and Equity subcommittee analyzes attendance and discipline data to identify trends and makes recommendations for schoolwide behavior instruction. The Schoolwide Data and Professional Development subcommittee analyzes schoolwide growth and achievement data and makes recommendations for changes to core curriculum, interventions, and schoolwide instructional efforts.

Even though we are not an official Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) school, our staff created the Bellamy Soaring Eagles program to foster and maintain a positive school climate and culture. Schoolwide expectations and a system of acknowledgement provide positive reinforcement to students and staff who exhibit characteristics of being kind, responsible, respectful, and safe. Explicit instruction on the characteristics of these expectations is taught multiple times throughout the year and is informed by the trends in data identified by the SIT and the Family Engagement and Equity subcommittee. Based on that data, and the necessity of virtual learning in recent years, we recognized the need for an additional social-emotional learning class time for students in kindergarten through third grade to complement art, music, media center, and PE. The lessons are taught in cooperation with our on-site school counselor who uses the Harmony curriculum.

With respect to academic-related engagement activities, we center the student experience, providing students with on-site and off-site enrichment opportunities, including safety patrol, recycling club, library helpers, Kind Kids, Battle of the Books, chorus, and grade-level specific performances, and the science fair. In 2023, three of our students earned state-level recognition and awards for their science fair projects. Our staff organized author visits, local ecology guest speakers, and multicultural events. Project-based theme days, such as Ocean Day and Parade Floats, bring families into the school to become learners in their students’ classrooms. Field trips at every grade level allow students to expand their understanding of career opportunities, visual and performing arts, local history, and ecological stewardship.

At Bellamy, we understand that while our students live near the ocean, many of them have never set foot in the waves. We first support families and students' basic needs and then provide them with the social-emotional and academic instruction and experiences to enrich their lives and develop the whole child.

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

Communication is key for building and maintaining relationships. We utilize weekly newsletters, flyers, email blasts, text messages, phone calls, and our digital sign to ensure families have access to information about school events and important communication. Text messages and emails are translated into the family’s home language using SchoolMessenger and Talking Points. Parents are invited in for conferences after the three benchmark windows, and any additional times as needed. Students supported in the tier 2 or tier 3 multi-tiered system of support meet more frequently, every six weeks, to review student progress. Family members are encouraged to apply for level 1 or level 2 volunteer clearance so they can volunteer in

classrooms, chaperon field trips, and support school wide events.

Bellamy's staff and parent teacher organization (PTA) collaborate to create family nights that connect our school community with local resources and agencies. Family education nights led by local organizations focus on parenting topics, such as the Family Services Clinical Director from Coastal Horizons presentation on anxiety in children and the Wilmington Police Department night on child internet usage and cybersafety. These nights are partnered with dramatic and musical student performances and PTA meetings in order to increase parent engagement and decision-making for school fundraising and activities. Zoom events have also been offered, as many families report online opportunities to be more feasible given their schedules.

Additional family engagement activities address academic and social-emotional topics. Bellamy's afternoon Science Fest, in partnership with Duke Energy and the Wilmington Fire Department, featured 3rd-5th grade AIG science scholars leading inquiry-based experiment stations for families and students. The culminating activity, a Galilean Cannon launched from the top of a fire truck ladder, brought grandparents, cousins, and community members from far and wide. Family Service Night invites families to give back to the community through small, thoughtful acts of kindness. And some nights are for building culture, such as the October Trunk or Treat, the Valentine's Girls' Choice Glow Dance and the Mother's Day Boys' Choice Foam Party.

Bellamy partners with organizations that provide opportunities for community family events. We partner with the University of North Carolina Wilmington (UNCW), inviting families to attend UNCW basketball games at reduced prices and attend campus events with Seahawks Tomorrow! The Wilmington Sharks encourage students to "read around the bases" in order to earn free tickets to a Wilmington Sharks baseball game. Lifepoint Church brings their Saturday Serve Day to Bellamy, so that families can help beautify our school's memorial garden.

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

At Bellamy, we share a vision of excellence and hold everyone to high standards. Our top commitment is to improve student learning, and a positive school culture enhances the learning environment by encouraging greater collaboration, effort, and creativity. Walk-throughs and observations are a natural part of our staff's day. The instructional coach and administrators can often be found helping a student with a difficult math problem, running a small group, or participating in a Foundations lesson. Staff welcome constructive feedback, trying new instructional strategies or small shifts in instruction, and sharing the results with the evaluator or with their Professional Learning Communities.

Our Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) consist of grade-level teachers, the instructional coach, and administrators. We have a collaborative culture with a collective commitment to the learning of each student. Team members work together to clarify what each student should learn, monitor each student's learning on a timely basis, provide systematic interventions that ensure additional support, and extend learning for all students who have mastered the intended outcomes. Staff members have self-selected roles in PLCs, including a facilitator, timekeeper, notetaker, and "sister sunshine" who celebrates group successes.

Our PLC teams meet twice a week to plan lessons, review data, make adjustments to our instructional practices and intervention groups, and participate in differentiated professional development based on a grade level's unique needs. Through consistent instructional monitoring with feedback, intentional data collection, and strategic teacher leadership, we continue to modify our road map to offer each student the best route to success. Teachers have time during the PLC to collaborate and coordinate their growth efforts. They also communicate when individual work time is needed, such as during report cards, designated trainings, or special event days.

A culture of trust and mutual respect is required for our teams to all participate in collective inquiry and create small shifts to achieve continuous improvement and growth. Our professional development model is differentiated based on the needs of each grade level, content area, and individual teacher; needed improvements as revealed by our student data; and specific requests for site and district-level coaching

support.

We have a distributive leadership model that elevates the staff voice to drive school improvements. Teaching assistants, support staff, and administrators all work together to meet the needs of our students in any way we can. All staff participate on a School Improvement Team (SIT) subcommittee that meets once per month and are responsible for data-driven action items that guide school improvement planning. Rather than a top-down agenda, subcommittee agendas are determined by subcommittee members. By consistently having our staff engage in leadership roles and decision-making, we are able to get buy-in and informed support from our teachers and staff.

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

According to the quote by Edith Wharton, there are two ways of spreading light - to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it. Reflecting the light and strength within our teachers and students is a pleasure. Building strong teams at Bellamy and motivating individuals to take the next leadership step within the school, county, and state allows the administrative team to leverage our collective strengths and influence.

Bellamy's administrative team consists of the principal and assistant principal, our instructional coach, and our grade level teacher leaders. Our team embodies the principles of Jim Collins in his book "Good to Great" where we strive to emulate Level 5 Leadership. We consistently display a workmanlike diligence that is more "plow horse than show horse." We celebrate success as a group, and we take a shared responsibility for any endeavors that create subpar results, with the ultimate goal of learning from mistakes. We believe that if you're not making mistakes, you're not learning; when we succeed, there is always something that can be improved for the future.

Bellamy's leadership is not just confined to the school level, but we lead within the district as well. Our custodial manager that joined Bellamy less than a year ago has built one of the most effective and efficient staffs in the county based on their recent inspections. Our treasurer is instrumental in supporting members from other schools and is consistently asked to review procedures prior to sharing with the county. Our assistant principal participates in and leads a book study that includes administrators and teacher leaders from across the district. Our teaching staff are sought out by other schools and central office administration to model high quality student engagement and innovative instruction and have been sharing their classroom practices with the Level Up program for the district. Our principal mentors two principals and was featured in the UNCW Alumni Hawk's Eye View publication in November. The principal, along with a fellow leader, recently presented to the New Hanover County School Board to offer perspectives on how Bellamy has consistently exceeded academic growth.

This past year, Bellamy brought on several new staff members to complement our experienced staff; these new teachers bring a wealth of skill and expertise to Bellamy. The administrative team embraces and capitalizes on the abilities that new teachers and staff bring to our school. The success and ability of our teachers and staff are a major reason why teacher leaders seek to be part of the Bellamy Family. We are honored that the county looks to our school as a leader, and we are always humbled to be asked to share what is working at Bellamy.

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

Bellamy celebrates cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic diversity. Our Family Engagement and Equity school improvement subcommittee prioritizes building student and community knowledge of the many cultures represented here at Bellamy, with our most recent efforts focusing on year long, schoolwide multicultural studies. Each grade level has selected a culture represented by the students here at Bellamy. Grade levels dig deep into the culture's languages, customs, foods, traditions, and geographic areas through project-based learning. During Hispanic Heritage month, we collaborate with the University of North Carolina Wilmington's Centro Hispano and NourishNC to explore different hispanic cultures and traditions, as well as have students visit the "Farmer's MarKid" to shop for ingredients for a Hispanic-inspired meal. Winter brings the study of Chinese New Year, with our students from China donning their traditional attire and sharing how they honor their deceased while making space for good fortune. If you visit Bellamy in the

spring, you will find our second graders learning about the Hindu Festival of Colors, Holi, and Ramaddan from Bellamy students and their families, then cleaning and decorating our school as a way of welcoming spring. Fifth grade students learn the art of storytelling through West African drumming and dancing from member's of Chuck Davis' African American Dance Ensemble. Additional studies explored the Native American Lumbee and Waccamaw Siouan tribes local to North Carolina, and the Irish culture that influences the fairy and folk tales that our students know and love. Our committee reaches out to families, community leaders, family liaisons, and educational experts who can speak from authentic experience to share with our students.

Our students develop their sense of civic responsibility by participating in service projects that support our local community. During "Socktober" students learn about families impacted by unstable housing, and how they can positively contribute by donating new, warm socks to The Good Shepherd Mission. In November, our fourth grade honors the experiences of veterans, inviting them to be honored and celebrated through writing, speeches, and a parade around the school. As winter rolls in, students learn about food deserts, and how we can support local families with a food drive in collaboration with our local Lowes Food. Spring focuses on acts of kindness, the small ways we can make a big difference in our communities, such as decorating local grocery store bags, creating bookmarks for the county library, and writing thank you notes to our local firefighters and police officers.

A goal at Bellamy is to have relevant, culturally diverse texts that represent the range of the human experience readily accessible to all students. Our Media and Technology Advisory Council reviews our current resources, and makes suggestions for areas of improvement and materials for purchase, for both classroom and school libraries. Students also contribute, taking note of topics that need additional resources, specific titles they are interested in, and highly requested texts that need additional copies.

A dedicated morning meeting time is built into our master schedule. Classes come together to foster a positive classroom culture built on trust and mutual respect. Classroom teachers use the Harmony social-emotional curriculum as a starting point for morning meetings, but class conversations evolve based on the needs and interests of the students.

## **PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE**

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Creating a culture that supports and builds collective teacher efficacy has proven to be the most instrumental factor in our success and growth at Bellamy Elementary School. While our PLC meetings focus on the data collected on student progress and teacher instruction, teachers are always considered to be the first expert in their particular classroom.

We have discovered that giving teachers the ability to choose how instruction is delivered on a daily basis has created a staff that is highly motivated to succeed and support their students' success in the process. We understand that the state standards are our ultimate playbook for instruction, but encouraging teachers to take the curriculum and materials provided while using their expertise to tailor their lessons and approaches has truly created the spark that ignites our teachers' creativity. Teachers are able to take the curriculum, materials, and standards and make refinements that come from years of experience. Our 45 certified staff members have an average of 19.9 years in the field of education. Our 3-5 grade teachers have been at Bellamy for an average of 12.5 years and have an average of 22.1 years of experience in education. Even with this wealth of experience, our teachers are always motivated to make small adjustments in their practices to improve student learning. Bellamy teachers have the mindset that we can improve so that we can deliver instruction that will consistently help grow students academically. Teachers and support staff are encouraged to take risks, to take ownership of their respective classrooms, and to take pride in the incredible culture of learning and academic growth they create every day. Rather than operating under the assumption that there is only one way to accomplish a goal, or mandating a particular top-down method that should be used, the administrative team encourages our teachers to discover that there are multiple paths to success for their students.

The only mandate is that any changes teachers incorporate into their instruction on a daily basis must benefit student achievement and continued academic growth. In our PLC meetings and at staff meetings we routinely talk about making small course corrections, 3 to 5 degrees left or right, rather than having to make sharp, unexpected moves or full 180 degree turns. Similarly, we know that if teachers individually improve their practice by 1 or 2 percent, our collective success will be realized.