

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Luther Lee Emerson School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 15 Columbus Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Demarest State NJ Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 07627-2031

County Bergen

Telephone (201) 768-6060 Fax (201) 784-6093

Web site/URL https://crslle.demarestpublicschools.org/ E-mail mazzinif@nvnet.org

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

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent* Mr. Michael Fox E-mail foxm@nvnet.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Demarest Tel. (201) 768-6060

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

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

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

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

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date _____

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

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

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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

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

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

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

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

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

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 2 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
1 Middle/Junior high schools
0 High schools
0 K-12 schools
- 3 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	0
1	0
2	72
3	82
4	92
5	0
6	0
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	246

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 39 % Asian
 - 0 % Black or African American
 - 3 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 54 % 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: 5%

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	7
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	3
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	10
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	217
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.05
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Hebrew, Hindi, Korean, French, Portuguese, Turkish, Urdu, Spanish, Ukrainian, Japanese and Russian

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 4 %
11 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 0 %

Total number students who qualify: 0

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 7 %
Total number of students served 18

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>1</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>7</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Developmental Delay	<u>3</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>4</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>3</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</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: 0 %
Total number of students served: 0

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

11. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	12
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	10
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	8
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	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	96%	98%	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.

Luther Lee Emerson School strives to provide a safe and solid educational environment that is caring and nurturing.

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

<https://www.straussesmay.com/seportal/Public/DistrictPolicy.aspx?policyid=1530&id=7bb5308be8e34a51ba72f01ae40696d1>

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

The Luther Lee Emerson School community works collaboratively to create a safe and educationally sound environment. Our community is a diverse one with students of many different backgrounds. However, there is one commonality amongst the Demarest community, that is education. Our students and their progress, being academic, social and emotional, is at the forefront of this community. We believe in providing our children with the tools they need to succeed in life while practicing the skills that a good citizen should possess.

To address the academic needs of our students, Luther Lee Emerson school utilizes the Aimsweb universal screener as a method to monitor student achievement. The assessment is given in both reading and math three times per year. Teachers utilize this data to provide interventions and enrichment to students where appropriate. Additionally, we have a full STEM program in grades 2-4. A dedicated STEM teacher pushes into classes on a quarterly basis and engages students in activities involving the engineering design process. Luther Lee Emerson also has pull-out gifted and talented program that is criteria-based in nature, and provides students who meet the criteria with opportunities to explore different problem-based learning activities. Additionally, Luther Lee Emerson has developed a fourth grade newscasting program. Under the guidance of two educators, students brainstorm each episode, write the articles, film footage and interviews, and anchor the newscast. This newscast is released each Monday for all students and staff at Luther Lee Emerson to watch. One aspect of this program that has made it so amazing is the way that it allows students to work independently, collaboratively and utilize their creativeness to put together a weekly news program for the entire school to watch.

Addressing the social and emotional needs of our students is also at the forefront of our educational practice. Our Guidance Counselor utilizes accredited Second Step curriculum, which is a program that meets these needs. The Guidance Counselor visits each classroom to teach about emotional regulation, healthy relationships with our peers and most of all self-care to name a few. We also have a program called Kids4Caring. It is offered to all fourth grade students. Kids4Caring is a club that meets once a month where students learn about the importance of giving back to their community and school by engaging in hands-on activities. Projects in the past include collection drives, school wide kindness challenges and an end of the year lemonade stand where students donate funds to a charity of their choice. Finally, in partnership with the PTO, we work collaboratively throughout the year to provide assemblies to promote kindness, respect and mindfulness.

Another initiative that sets our school apart from other schools is the Principal's Challenge. This is an annual event whereas the Principal and staff work with the students to prepare them for the Demarest 5K. We meet weekly over the course of six weeks for this program. The mornings start with warm-ups, which are followed by an outdoor run. During this time, they are taught perseverance, responsibility, team work and remembering that trying your best is all matters. This initiative is one that the students and families truly enjoy and look forward to each year.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

Luther Lee Emerson is proud of its robust Reading and English language arts program. All instructional materials and strategies are aligned with the current New Jersey State Learning Standards in English Language Arts. The Phonics First program is utilized in second grade to deliver structured, sequential, and multisensory phonics instruction. The Into Reading program is implemented at this grade level to support education in vocabulary and comprehension strategies in both literature and informational text with the use of diverse stories and characters. This program also supports the writing curriculum, in which students learn methods for writing narrative, informational, and opinion texts, as well as a variety of other types of writing intended for different audiences. These types of writing include, but are not limited to, literature responses and poetry. Within this framework, students also have explicit grammar instruction. Instruction is delivered in a variety of ways, including whole group, small group, and one on one conferencing in all areas of language arts. Students are assessed using both formative and summative assessments. These assessments include phonics assessments through the Phonics First program, teacher-created summative unit reading assessments, as well as administration of the Teachers College reading benchmark assessments three times throughout the year to monitor student progress. Additionally, all students are given a universal screening reading benchmark using the universal screener platform three times per year to monitor student progress. Writing assessments are based on teacher-created unit rubrics for narrative, informational, and opinion writing. Students in grades 3 and 4 continue with a spelling program that is aligned to a phonics scope and sequence. Vocabulary instruction is provided through reading instruction, where students learn a variety of rich vocabulary through novels and texts being read in class. Reading instruction is primarily focused on novel and author studies. Teachers deliver mini-lessons around foundational reading and comprehension strategies for both literature and informational text. Students are offered choices as to books in the particular genre that is being taught. Additionally, they participate in independent reading, partner reading, and in book clubs. This includes students participating in guided and independent reading discussions, as well as writing literature responses using evidence from the text. Assessment includes the Teachers College benchmark assessments given to students three times per year to monitor progress, as well as teacher-made reading and vocabulary assessments. Writing instruction is taught in a similar fashion, with teacher-delivered mini-lessons around narrative, informational, and opinion texts, as well as embedded language and grammar instruction. Students participate in teacher-student conferences and peer conferences around their writing. In all three grade levels, students are exposed to a variety of reading and writing genres, including diverse cultural stories and characters, in an effort to fully develop them as critical thinkers and well-rounded readers and writers.

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

The goal of mathematics instruction at Luther Lee Emerson is to develop critical mathematical thinkers who excel in the application of concepts and problem-solving. All instruction in math is aligned with the New Jersey State Learning Standards in mathematics, with a focus on embedding mathematical practices throughout instruction. In grades 2 through 4, the Big Ideas math program is used as a resource to supplement the New Jersey State Learning Standards. Throughout the year, students progress through units on numbers and operations, place value, measurement and data, fractions, and geometry. Embedded within these units is work on math fact accuracy and efficiency. Each lesson also features a spiral review where students are able to access and practice previously learned concepts. Students and teachers have access to online tools and resources to supplement instruction. This includes the Big Ideas digital platform, the IXL platform, EdPuzzle, and Brainpop, among others. Delivery of instruction is done through a variety of methods, including whole-class mini-lessons, partner work, small group work, and independent work. Additionally, teachers have utilized a math station approach where there are multiple ways for students to practice a particular skill, including teacher-led small groups, math games, and online practice. The use of manipulatives, as well as math-based projects with real-world applications, allows students to fully explore the mathematical concepts being learned. There is a focus on real-world problem-solving, and supplying

students with the necessary strategies and skills to be critical thinkers. This includes ensuring students are able to explain their mathematical thinking and methods both verbally and in written form. Fourth-grade students engage in a math-related Career Day, where they research and present about a career where mathematical skills are involved on a regular basis. Classrooms also focus on the use of mathematical language, ensuring students understand and use math vocabulary correctly and appropriately. In grades 2 and 3, general education classroom teachers are responsible for mathematics instruction. Grade 4 is departmentalized with a dedicated math teacher for the entire grade level. Learning is assessed with both formative and summative assessments. Teachers use teacher-made quizzes and activities as well as assessments created by the Big Ideas program. Additionally, online programs, such as IXL, provide assessment opportunities and ways for teachers to monitor the progress of individual student skills. All students are given a universal screening mathematics benchmark using a universal screener platform three times yearly to monitor student progress.

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

Science instruction at Luther Lee Emerson is aligned with the New Jersey State Learning Standards in Science. In grades 2 and 3, the general education classroom teacher is responsible for science instruction. Grade 4 is departmentalized with a dedicated science teacher for the entire grade level. Teachers use a variety of resources to supplement the curriculum. This includes but is not limited to, the Mystery Science platform, Generation Genius, Brainpop, NewsELA, and a variety of informational texts. Science is taught through whole-class instruction with many opportunities for hands-on activities and problem-solving with partners and small groups. Students are encouraged to “think like scientists” as they explore the world around them. Assessments include teacher-made quizzes and tests, as well as project-based assessments. In addition to regular science instruction, all students in grades 2-4 receive a quarter of STEM instruction each school year. Luther Lee Emerson has a dedicated STEM teacher and dedicated STEM lab where students participate in solving real-world problems using the engineering design process. The units taught during STEM classes are aligned with the New Jersey State Learning Standards in Computer Science and Design Thinking. Scientific concepts are embedded throughout the various activities in which students participate. Students participate in activities such as the Paper Airplane Challenge and creating simple circuits using a variety of programs such as Google Drawing and pHet simulations. STEM lessons are taught with whole-group mini-lessons, with students having the opportunity to explore and work in a partnership or collaborative group. The combination of classroom science instruction and STEM instruction has given Luther Lee Emerson students a chance to solve real-world problems and become critical scientific thinkers.

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

Luther Lee Emerson teachers pride themselves on delivering a social studies curriculum that invites students to be participants in real-world problem-solving and to be critical thinkers. The curriculum is aligned with the New Jersey State Learning Standards for social studies. In grades 2 through 4, this includes units on civics and government, economics, and learning about people and cultures. The curriculum is delivered through teacher-created materials as well as recommended resources such as Brainpop, NewsELA, icivics, and KidCitizen. A focus throughout is on developing critical and lateral thinking skills in students. Additionally, current events are also a topic that is addressed when appropriate. In grades 2 and 3, social studies is taught by the general education classroom teacher. Grade 4 is departmentalized, with a dedicated social studies teacher responsible for instruction for the entire grade. Instruction is done through whole-class lessons, as well as opportunities for students to work in collaborative groups or partnerships. There is a focus on informational text, with students working to locate information and cite textual evidence both verbally and in written responses. Fourth-grade students create and perform a “Wax Museum”, where they read a biography and research a historical figure. From this research, they create a brief speech. During a day-long event, students dress up as their historical figures and perform their speeches for their peers and parents. Assessment is done through teacher-created quizzes and tests, as well as project-based learning. The thinking skills developed during class discussions and real-world problem-solving activities give Luther Lee Emerson students the opportunity to practice important competencies that are necessary to be life-long learners.

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)

Luther Lee Emerson has a robust visual and performing arts program. Students in grades two through four receive art instruction one period per week. The curriculum delivered is aligned with the New Jersey State Learning Standards. In art class, students have the opportunity to work with a variety of media and they also learn artistic techniques. Additionally, students are introduced to the work of culturally diverse artists. All students in grades two through four receive music instruction one period per week. The curriculum delivered is aligned with the New Jersey State Learning Standards. Students receive instruction in music theory, basic music composition, and basic vocal instruction. Students in all grades have the opportunity to participate in a choral program that rehearses outside of class time that performs twice yearly at concerts. Students in grade four can sign up for instrumental music lessons on an instrument of their choice. Instruction in these instruments takes place one time per week, and the students perform twice yearly as a concert band. Finally, all second-grade students perform in a rehearsed play. This involves singing, speaking, and dancing. The art program also contributes to the scenery for this production.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

All students in grades two through four at Luther Lee Emerson receive physical education instruction two periods per week. The curriculum is aligned with the New Jersey State Learning Standards. The physical education program is skill-based and also allows students to learn important social skills and sportsmanship through cooperative learning games. The health curriculum is aligned with the New Jersey State Learning Standards. Units include personal safety, nutrition, as well as growth and development. Students also learn about the effects of drugs and alcohol, and how to resist peer pressure in a variety of situations. All students receive health instruction two periods per week. Additionally, the school nurse delivers lessons periodically throughout the year on wellness and disease prevention. The school guidance counselor also delivers lessons on wellness and social-emotional learning. These lessons have been of the utmost importance as we work to give students the skills to develop coping mechanisms and regulate their emotions. This extends to the general education classroom teachers, who incorporate brain breaks throughout the day to prioritize student wellness. Physical education and health instruction focus on helping children develop the knowledge and skills that are necessary to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle.

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

The Demarest School District employs a full-time world language teacher for grades PreK through fourth grade. All students in grades two through four receive world language instruction in Spanish for one period per week. The curriculum delivered is aligned with the New Jersey State Learning Standards. In elementary Spanish instruction, students learn basic vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and conversational skills. Students have received world language instruction since Kindergarten. Learning a second language at a young age has been shown to improve cognitive abilities, such as problem-solving and critical-thinking skills. Additionally, world language instruction allows students to expand their cultural awareness. Students learn about a variety of holidays, traditions, and famous people from Hispanic cultures. By having students participate in world language instruction at an early age, students have the opportunity to develop a strong foundation in the language, which can help them continue their language learning journey throughout their school careers.

2d. Technology/library/media

Supporting elementary technology is crucial in helping students develop the necessary competencies to be successful in the digital age. The Demarest School District employs a full-time technology teacher for grades PreK through fourth grade. All students at Luther Lee Emerson receive technology instruction for one period per week. The curriculum delivered is aligned with the New Jersey State Learning Standards. Through technology instruction, students learn and practice keyboarding skills, basic computer skills, and how to use a variety of different tools, including the Google Suite. Students also learn media literacy and research skills. The goal of this is to help students become responsible digital citizens in all areas. Coding has also been a focus of technology instruction. The Demarest School District employs a full-time library media specialist for grades PreK through fourth grade. All students at Luther Lee Emerson receive library media instruction for one period per week. The focus of this instruction includes research skills, reading and listening comprehension, and exposure to a variety of authors and genres. Library media instruction is essential in fostering a love for reading and learning in students, which in turn can have a lasting impact on a student's academic and personal growth.

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

Luther Lee Emerson offers fourth-grade students the opportunity to participate in a Newscasting program. The newscast is run in a partnership between the Gifted and Talented / STEM teacher and the technology teacher. The newscasting program produces a weekly newscast that is shared and viewed throughout the school each Monday morning. Students begin each week by brainstorming potential stories to include in the program. From there, they work either independently or collaboratively to write the stories and interview important school personnel with the use of iPads. Green screen technology allows students to choose a variety of backgrounds for the newscast. The weekly anchors, which change for each newscast, record their parts. All of this is then edited in iMovie and shared with all classes to be viewed during homeroom. Any fourth-grade student who would like to participate has a chance on a rotating basis. The LLE News has grown throughout the past few years and has become a Monday morning staple.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Education interventions for students below grade level are of the utmost importance to ensure that students do not fall behind in their academic progress. These interventions are designed to support students who are struggling with specific academic areas and help them to reach grade-level expectations. All students in grades two through four are administered a universal screener three times per year in the areas of reading and math. This data is analyzed, along with other data points such as classroom performance, tests, and quizzes, to determine a student's strengths and areas for growth. The school follows a Response to Intervention process that has a multi-tiered system of supports. A student can be referred to the Response to Intervention committee, with referrals and information from teachers who have contact with the student, as well as the parents or guardians. All staff has been trained on Universal Design for Learning, which allows for the implementation of Tier 1 supports in the general education classroom. Students who qualify based on specific criteria may receive pull-out small group instruction for basic skills in the area of math, reading, or writing. Additionally, students who qualify may receive supplemental literacy instruction, which focuses on a multisensory reading approach. Students who receive these services are progress monitored throughout the year to see if either further interventions are needed, or if they no longer need the provided service. Within the general education classroom, students have access to a variety of technology-based interventions, which include audiobooks through sites like Epic, as well as Chrome extensions like Read-Write which offer a speech-text and text-speech function. Overall, these interventions are essential to support the progress of students who are below grade level at Luther Lee Emerson.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Elementary interventions for students who are performing above grade level are important to ensure that these students are challenged and engaged throughout the school day. Luther Lee Emerson utilizes multiple data points to identify these students. In grades two through four, we have a pullout gifted and talented program that is criteria based. This criteria includes multiple measures, giving students multiple avenues to

qualify for the program. Among the data points considered are universal screening data, Teachers College reading assessments, and the Cognitive Abilities Test. Students who qualify have a pullout session with the gifted and talented teacher one time per week. During these sessions, students work on a variety of real-world projects and problem-solving activities. These have included creating an audiobook website for the district's Kindergarten and first-grade students, developing and recording a podcast, and creating instructional how-to videos using Adobe Spark. Additionally, the gifted and talented teacher has time built into his schedule to work with classroom teachers and give them differentiation strategies for students performing above grade level. Teachers can incorporate these strategies into their lessons in all curricular areas to meet the needs of these students. These interventions ensure that Luther Lee Emerson is challenging and engaging these students in their academic work.

3c. Students with disabilities:

Luther Lee Emerson provides a continuum of services to best meet the needs of students with disabilities. We have an in-class support model, where a special educator teaches collaboratively with the general education teacher. This is provided in the areas of English language arts and math. For those students who need more support, we have replacement mathematics and English language arts classes. Students who receive this service are pulled out of the general education math or English language arts setting and receive small group instruction as per their individualized education plan. This is taught by a special education teacher. A support instruction class is also offered to students. This class offers students a chance to enhance organizational and time management skills, work on executive functioning skills, and receive extra help when needed. In addition, Luther Lee Emerson offers speech and language pathology services as well as occupational therapy services to those students who qualify. The district's child study team works on a 3:1 model, with three weeks of direct services and one week of indirect services. The indirect service week allows team members to meet with teachers to get progress updates and provide interventions. During this time, case managers and related service providers also push into classrooms to conduct observations of students. Additionally, the district has a behaviorist who is available to observe students and provide teachers with strategies for behavioral interventions. Luther Lee Emerson offers a variety of assistive technologies to assist students. Classrooms are outfitted with speaker systems, with the teacher wearing a wireless microphone. Resources such as Bookshare and Epic provide audiobooks for students. Chrome extensions such as OpenDyslexic and ReadWrite are also available. This variety of services is essential to ensure that students with disabilities receive the support they need to succeed.

3d. English Language Learners:

Interventions for English Language Learners are critical to support their academic and language development. The district employs a full-time English as a Second Language Teacher. Students who qualify receive pull-out instruction. Depending on the needs of the student, this could range from one to five times per week. Additionally, the district uses Imagine Learning as a platform that students can access both at school and at home for further practice. Students also have access to Google Translate through Chrome should they need additional assistance. The ESL teacher has a community breakfast annually to welcome families and review the program and its goals. This also gives parents the opportunity to view their child's work and discuss progress. Parent communication is done regularly through a variety of means, including the use of TransPerfect to translate written communication that gets mailed home. The understanding and appreciation of different cultures are also emphasized throughout the school day. All teachers provide resources and materials that are culturally diverse to create a more welcoming and inclusive classroom environment. Programs offered throughout the year also strive to make all families feel included and welcome, including the annual Lunar New Year assembly and the annual International Heritage Day. Additionally, the guidance counselor conducts "Lunch Bunch" sessions where students can practice both the English language and social skills. Through these supports, Luther Lee Emerson ensures both the academic and social growth of our English Language Learners.

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

A positive environment is one that our school community takes pride in. This starts with our staff as they work each day to encourage and model a nurturing and safe atmosphere for our students to inhabit. Positivity is a seed that is planted at the beginning of the year. Our teachers reach out to the parents before or immediately after the first day of school to welcome their child to the classroom. This is carried over into each of our classroom settings where students are welcomed with warmth, kindness and an understanding that each student can contribute so much to our school.

The Guidance Counselor creates lessons that she teaches in each class about how we interact in kind and respectful ways. Additionally, she conducts small group lessons with students on these topics when a concern arises. Some of these small group lessons can occur during “lunch bunch” sessions where students eat and play games with the Guidance Counselor. This time is also utilized to teach valuable social skills. Accordingly, we also work collaboratively with our PTO to provide school assemblies based on positive relationships amongst our students.

Preparation for lessons is taken seriously at Luther Lee Emerson School as our teachers plan with their other grade level colleagues, as well as cross grade level, to prepare engaging lessons that will peak the students interest while differentiating for a variety of learners. Being able to reach all students is one of our primary goals. We strive to engage our students who are above, on and below grade level by creating lessons that allow for whole group and small group instruction. We utilize data that we gather from the different formal and informal assessments that we use to understand where our students academically. This is done utilizing a variety of materials and technology. Teachers also invest a great deal of time working with students one on one in order to enhance and enrich their learning experience. Many times our staff will collaborate with the parents as well in order to create a sound home and school experience for our students.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Luther Lee Emerson has partnered with Demarest Middle School and County Road School to create a School Climate Committee. This Committee consists of teachers, administrators, counselors and parents in the community. Their role and function is to provide the schools and district leadership with feedback on the climate of the schools. Parents provide common themes or trends brought to them by other parents in terms of school climate and together the committee makes recommendations to help support the schools.

Luther Lee Emerson has also participated in food drives every school year to help support local food pantries. Students across different grade levels are encouraged to bring in specific items to help support others in need that live within our community. Luther Lee Emerson has partnered with The Center for Food Action, The Closter Food Pantry and The Office of Concern food pantry which is part of St. Cecilia’s church.

Luther Lee Emerson has a strong relationship with the Demarest Fire Department and Demarest Police Department. The Fire Department comes to Luther Lee Emerson every October to talk about fire safety. They present the students with a poster contest and provide hands-on activities for the students to engage in throughout the day. The police department assists administration on keeping the building and grounds of the school safe at all times. The police and fire department also partner with the school’s parent teacher organization (PTO) and have provided family fun nights which include stories being read by the principal, tour of emergency vehicles, refreshments and free resources for families and students from the departments.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Luther Lee Emerson, as part of the Demarest School District, is a member of the Northern Valley Curriculum Consortium (NVCC). The consortium offers an extensive catalog of professional learning opportunities in a variety of areas, including curriculum connections, social-emotional learning, instructional

strategies, and technology. All teachers are granted two days of professional learning opportunities at NVCC each year, where they are given release time to attend workshops of their choice. Additionally, all teachers new to the school are enrolled in a 3 year Professional Learning Academy through NVCC. Teachers attend workshops on a variety of topics throughout the three-year period, which includes sessions on classroom leadership, differentiated instruction, and assessment. Teachers enrolled in the Academy also receive an instructional coach, who visits 2-4 times throughout their first year in the district. The Demarest district also provided in-house professional learning opportunities. There are days set aside throughout the year in which teachers participate in professional development on a variety of topics. This has included sessions on technology tools used within the district, collaborative teaching, and diversity, equity, and inclusion. Teachers also participate in a program entitled Professional Learning Pathways. This program set aside 6-7 staff meeting times per year, allowing teachers to choose a pathway that they were interested in learning more about. Topics included social emotional learning, integrating technology tools, a book club around infusing social emotional strategies into lesson plans, diversity and representation, and a “Genius Hour” pathway. Teachers who chose “Genius Hour” had the opportunity to choose a passion project that they would research and develop throughout the school year. As with all provided professional learning opportunities, administration supports the ongoing learning of teachers. Observations and post-conferences are a tool in which administrators discuss and support teachers in their learning endeavors.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership philosophy at Luther Lee Emerson School is one of empathy, kindness and respect for everyone that inhabits our school. The structure is made up of the building Principal who works collaboratively with the Supervisor of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment (CIA), Director of Special Services and the Superintendent to create a strong educational environment for our students. However, one of the other members that the Principal works with is the Guidance Counselor. They speak throughout the day to discuss and provide guidance to the staff and students on many levels. However, the main goal is to ensure that the social and emotional levels for all are where they need to be. If not, they work together to create solutions that may involve parents if needed.

The Supervisor of CIA works with the Principal to ensure that the curriculum is being followed in the classrooms. This is done by conducting meetings with grade level PLC’s as well as during faculty meetings. We work collaboratively with the Northern Valley Curriculum Center on professional development for our staff members in order to provide them the tools that they need to successfully educate their students.

The Director of Special Services is involved to assist those students who primarily have IEP’s. The Principal will work with the Director to help those students and the staff members that they are learning under. The collaboration is such that both administrators are available to the staff and students in order to make sure that their IEP’s are being followed and to provide any support needed. These two administrators also work closely with the the Response to Intervention (RtI) Committee to assist and provide interventions to the general education population.

As stated, the combination of these administrators do not solely work together. Instead, it is in conjunction with staff and students. The purpose of this is to keep communication lines open and make ourselves available.

There was a time that administration was a top-down approach. At Luther Lee Emerson School, we believe that everyone who learns and works in our building should play a role in helping to make decisions that define who we are and how we can work collaboratively to help our students achieve their goals and try their best while doing so.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Luther Lee Emerson (LLE) prides itself on acceptance of others and educating the students and families on the importance of embracing diversity. LLE has an English as a Second Language (ESL) program that offers international students the chance to learn English or improve their English Language skills. The ESL teacher works closely with international families, the school counselor and teachers to ensure the students feel

comfortable. The ESL teacher hosts a yearly breakfast where new international families moving into the district can connect with teachers, other staff members and other families. International students are also provided with access to online translators at all times and the school counselor invites them to attend “lunch bunch” where they can eat with their peers in a quiet setting and get to know others on a more personal level.

The importance of equity and the respect for others is taught on a daily basis through the social and emotional learning criteria provided in the curriculum and also through classroom guidance lessons conducted by the school counselor. Students are frequently asked to share their cultural traditions through projects, writing pieces and presentations.

Each year, LLE hosts a Lunar New Year celebration which is a day completely dedicated to learning about the many different Asian cultures. Students are encouraged to come to school wearing traditional Lunar New Year clothing. Students and families are invited to perform in front of their peers. Performances include traditional dance, songs, martial arts and skits. Activities are held for the students in the classroom as well that teaches them about this special celebration.

LLE also addresses cultural awareness by partnering with the Parent Teacher Organization and hosting an “International Heritage Day” where students and families set up displays based on their culture to educate other families about traditional food, language, clothing, music, and other information that makes their culture unique. International Heritage Day will continue for the 2022-2023 school year, unfortunately it was postponed during the 2021-2022 school year due to COVID-19.

LLE also hosts a school-wide initiative “One School One Book” where the entire school engages in reading a book together each night with designated chapters being read by online mystery readers. *Save Me a Seat* written by Sarah Weeks and Gita Varadarajan was chosen for the 2021-2022 school year. *Save Me a Seat* is about a family that just moved to America from India and it talks about the struggles of trying to fit in. This book has led to many classwide discussions on diversity and acceptance and has helped the students to become more self aware of their actions toward others.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

At Luther Lee Emerson School we are extremely proud of the practices that we have in place to make our school the success that it is. Amongst the many practices that we have created one of them that has been quite instrumental is the use of a universal screener.

A few years ago we adopted this practice as a way to assess student growth throughout the year. It is given to the students in September, January and June. The assessments cover skills in English Language Arts and Math.

The amount of data that it has provided us has been insurmountable in many areas. First, we are no longer saying that a student may have need of support in math or ELA. Instead, this screener has provided us with a more clear picture of the exact skills where a student may be deficient. At LLE a teacher may bring a student to the attention of the Response to Intervention Committee for academic, social, emotional or behavioral reasons. This screener is one of our main data points that we utilize in order to provide the student with the support that they need. That may include attending class with the Basic Skills teacher for either ELA or math for a certain amount of times per week. The student may also be referred to our Reading Reinforcement teacher if their skills are below a certain level. It also provides vital data to the Child Study Team should a student be sent their way after interventions have not met the goals that the team set forth.

This tool alone has allowed the RtI Committee to make crucial decisions while working collaboratively with the staff and parents. Those decisions are done to create a sound educational experience for our students so that they can succeed in our school.