

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 Ms. Susan Foster

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

Official School Name Fred Assam Elementary School - 06

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 7700 East Willowwood Street

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

City Sioux Falls

State SD

Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 57110-3159

County Minnehaha County

Telephone (605) 582-1500

Fax (605) 332-0947

Web site/URL <https://brandonvalley.k12.sd.us/fac/>

E-mail jarod.larson@k12.sd.us

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. Jarod Larson

E-mail jarod.larson@k12.sd.us

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

District Name Brandon Valley School District 49-2

Tel. (605) 582-2049

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mrs. Renee Ullom

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

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

Date _____

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

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

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

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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

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

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

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

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

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

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 6 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 8 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	33
K	92
1	88
2	88
3	91
4	91
5	0
6	0
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	483

*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
 - 0.8 % Asian
 - 2 % Black or African American
 - 5 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0.1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 90 % White
 - 2 % 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: 4%

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	8
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	8
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	16
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	438
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.04
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	4

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 5 %

Total number students who qualify: 26

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 16 %
Total number of students served 78

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. All students receiving special education services with an IEP should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

<u>3</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>5</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>1</u> Developmental Delay	<u>16</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>50</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>1</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 1 %
Total number of students served: 3

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 14

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.	21
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	6
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	5
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

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

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

Required Information	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
Daily student attendance	95%	89%	95%	98%	98%
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.

We will prepare our students to be lifelong learners and productive citizens through a positive learning environment with the cooperation of students, educational staff, parents, guardians, and community.

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

brandonvalley.k12.sd.us/district/home.htm

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

Fred Assam Elementary opened its doors in the fall of 2009. This 600-student capacity school is in the southwest portion of the Brandon Valley School District and the first of our schools to be located in the city of Sioux Falls. Fred Assam Elementary prepares each student to succeed in a changing world. The school first opened with 250 students in kindergarten through grade five. Over the course of fourteen years, we have seen half day kindergarten expanded to full day, grade five students shifted to an intermediate level school, and our boundary lines amended to route English Learning students to another campus. Even with challenging changes to our school culture, we have maintained a school family centered environment.

At Fred Assam Elementary, we strive to meet the needs of all students at all levels of their learning. Growth mindset and student achievement are woven into our daily interactions with students. While closely studying our student achievement results over the years, we recognized that our students demonstrated expected growth, but not all students were closing the gap with their peers. We have tailored our instruction in math and reading to meet the needs of students across the spectrum of learning. Early identification is key to this approach.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is an evidence-based, data driven framework that we use to improve school safety and promote positive behavior. A team of teachers meets monthly to identify and address the needs of students. Teachers enter behavioral data into School-Wide Information System (SWIS). This application is used to identify patterns in student behavior, develop intervention plans, and track the progress of individual students.

In Walk to Read, we provide structured, systematic intensive instruction for the learners most in need while supporting those who need additional practice as they approach mastery of their skills. For students who are at benchmark and above, we enhance their learning and level of independence through literacy groups, project-based learning, and novel studies.

In addition to the math curriculum, each grade level provides a Math Club designed to meet the needs of each student in their math knowledge and practice. At the kindergarten level, there are numerous subitizing activities. First grade students have fourteen levels for number sense activities. In second grade, students become number ninjas as they build accuracy and fluency in math facts. Third and fourth grades level their students for a 30-minute reteach, practice, or expand math concepts. As a direct result from this Walk to Read and Math Club approach, Fred Assam Elementary was identified as a Title I Distinguished School in 2017.

Teachers utilize weekly Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) for quality collaboration, brainstorm innovative classroom instruction, and analyzing student data. We have the systems and procedures in place that support student achievement and growth. Clear expectations and goals for staff and students have been established, shared, and reinforced. Teachers monitor student progress, problem-solving meetings are held with appropriate staff, and interventions are implemented when necessary. Student data is constantly analyzed to support decision making and drive instruction. Our most successful approach is our DATA DIG Retreats - held three times during the school year.

Throughout the Brandon Valley School District, we have The LYNX Way, which defines character traits to support students in achieving their full potential academically, emotionally, physically, socially, and culturally. We establish a foundation of a common language for these traits beginning with our youngest learners at Fred Assam Elementary. The students, staff, and community have a commitment to the expectations of The LYNX Way. We are the Lynx! We are respectful, responsible, kind, safe, and active learners.

Involving parents and community members is vital to student achievement. They are invited to attend multiple school events including Grandparents Day, Book Fairs, Veterans Day program, Muffins for Moms, Donuts with Dads, Lunch with a Loved One, award celebrations, and assemblies. We host an Open House for students in grade one through four prior to the first day of school. All junior kindergarten and

kindergarten students have a personal scheduled time with their parents and teachers prior to starting school. We are proud to recognize a 95 - 97% attendance rate at both fall and spring conferences.

Fred Assam Elementary School is in the business of creating learning environments that result in success for all students.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

The primary resource for literacy instruction is McGraw-Hill's Wonders curriculum. This comprehensive curriculum includes learning to read, reading to learn, writing for multiple purposes, speaking, and listening. The core instructional plan emphasizes direct, explicit, and systematic instruction in foundational skills including phonological and phonemic awareness, alphabet knowledge, and recognition of high-frequency words. District-wide supplemental resources vary by grade level however, teachers in most grades utilize Wonder Works by McGraw-Hill and the ELA component of IXL which is an adaptive online program that provides students with opportunities to practice specific skills taught previously during whole-group instruction. Fred Assam Elementary teachers reference student friendly learning targets when developing their daily lesson plans to ensure their assessments, instruction, and learning activities address the standards to the required depth and intention.

One unique component of our Walk to Read process is the use of our student data. We use multiple data sources to plan for reading success, student growth, and intervention. We continually evaluate the needs of our students and then design and modify our instruction to meet the sequence of instructional goals. Teachers work as collaborative teams to match specific curriculum to targeted skills for individual students. Even within small groups there can be different levels of student intervention.

For intervention curriculum at Fred Assam Elementary, teachers use Wonder Works, Heggerty Phonemic Awareness, 95% Group Multisyllabic Routine, and Word Work in Wonders Instruction in Greek and Latin roots. Our phonics instruction is enhanced with an Orton-Gillingham based approach, Vowel Oriented Word Attack Course (VOWAC), which was established in South Dakota.

Teachers routinely collect data through a variety of Wonders formative assessments. In addition, students receiving interventions are progress monitored weekly through Acadience Reading. Acadience Reading helps identify students at risk for reading difficulties and determines skills to target for instructional support. One of our keys to success has been the use of our data - we collect it and do something with it.

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

McGraw-Hill's MyMath (2018) curriculum is utilized by the teachers at Fred Assam Elementary as the core curriculum. Teachers reference the district developed scope and sequence documents when determining timelines. The unit plans center around the backward design approach that ensures that all grade level teachers have a shared understanding of each unit prior to teaching. In addition to the core curriculum, each grade level has identified priority areas to target instruction. These areas include subitizing, number sense, basic math mastery, and problem solving. Each grade level has a 60 minute block for math core content instruction in the master schedule. Beyond their core content instruction, teachers incorporate Math Club time to focus on their grade levels' priority areas. Teachers use their student data to determine targeted instruction and intervention for their class. IXL is also used as a supplemental curriculum. IXL is aligned with the South Dakota content standards and helps students master essential mathematical skills at their own pace.

Daily informal assessments identify problem areas and help teachers determine if students have grasped the concepts or if more targeted instruction or intervention is needed. Students take chapter assessments throughout the year to demonstrate their knowledge and skills of the South Dakota State Standards for Mathematics.

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

Mystery Science is our primary curriculum for teaching science in grades kindergarten through fourth. Students absolutely love viewing the "Mystery Doug" videos! These videos are viewed weekly and inspire students to ask questions about everyday phenomena. This curriculum focuses on hands-on learning experiences where students participate in engaging investigations. Each lesson is aligned to a topic, performance expectations, science and engineering practices, disciplinary core ideas, and crosscutting concepts. Each teacher has access to grade-level content and content-leaders have made experiment kits to go along with each Mystery Science unit. Curriculum-based assessments are used to evaluate student learning.

In today's technology-driven world, the need for communication, problem-solving, and collaboration skills is at an all-time high. A strong Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM) program can meet the needs by helping students become independent thinkers who can work together to solve complex problems. Fred Assam Elementary teachers collaborate with our District STEM/Technology Integrationist to create and deliver lessons that align with South Dakota ELA, Science, Social Studies, Math, and Educational Technology standards. Students often work with low-tech materials such as straws, paper tubes, and pipe cleaners to solve problems presented in the curriculum.

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

Fred Assam Elementary students are presented with lessons on history, civics and government, geography, and economics. Students in grades kindergarten through fourth utilize the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) Into Social Studies magazines. Students annotate their reading material and can take home their magazines at the completion of each unit. Junior Achievement, a community-based volunteer program is utilized in all grades to educate students on work-readiness skills, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy skills. Tour SD, a free web-based curriculum, is utilized by our fourth-grade teachers to teach students about South Dakota history and the basics of agriculture. Students take a virtual tour of the state, visiting 23 towns each year. Lessons, games, and hands-on activities within the curriculum are based on South Dakota content standards as well as the National Agriculture Literacy Outcomes. Fourth-grade students also visit the homestead of Laura Ingalls Wilder in DeSmet, SD to further solidify their understanding of state and local history.

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)

Art courses at Fred Assam Elementary are taught to grades junior kindergarten through fourth grade. Junior kindergarten is scheduled for 30 minutes per week and kindergarten through fourth grade receive 40 minutes per week. Through the Art curriculum, students obtain many essential skills including spatial awareness, creative problem-solving, time management, craftsmanship, and observation skills. Students achieve these skills by creating a project that focuses on a famous artist or art concept. Literature based lessons are developed to support cross-curricular learning. For example, after the art teacher read a book about monarch butterflies, students explored the concept of symmetry by drawing and painting one half of a butterfly. By folding and using the wet painted portion, they were able to reflect the line of symmetry. Students are exposed to a variety of art materials, supplies, and processes.

The art curriculum is intentionally designed to spiral the skills they have previously learned and encourage development of age-appropriate fine motor skills. The projects and lessons encourage creativity as each

project has a portion for students to create their own twist on the projects, within the given parameters. No two projects ever look the same with this curriculum design, and all students show improvement in their ability to create something from nothing. Mastery of the art curriculum allows students to apply what they learned in art class to their everyday lives.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

Physical education at Fred Assam Elementary is taught to grades junior kindergarten through fourth grade. Junior kindergarten is scheduled for 30 minutes per week and kindergarten through fourth grade receives 60 minutes each week. Physical education class provides cognitive content and instruction designed to develop motor skills, knowledge, and behaviors for physical activity and physical fitness. Children are taught the skills necessary to participate in a variety of physical activities. Reading vocabulary and math concepts along with the science of bones and muscles is incorporated into each lesson.

As students enter the gym, the verb of the day is posted to lead them into their warm-up activity. For example, instead of always running laps as a warm-up activity, students demonstrate the verb of the day such as to trot, skip, or gallop. An underlying theme of each lesson is the foundation of sportsmanship. Good sportsmanship is reinforced through the acronym of PLAY. P is for Participate, L is for Learn, A is for Accept All Abilities, and Y is for You are responsible for YOU.

The goal for all students in physical education is to develop physically literate individuals who have the knowledge, skills, and confidence to enjoy a lifetime of healthy physical activity.

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

2d. Technology/library/media

Computer class at Fred Assam Elementary is taught to first through fourth grades. First grade is scheduled for 30 minutes per week while second through fourth grade receives 60 minutes each week.

First grade activities focus on basic computer terminology, various icons, and proper use of the mouse. Computer classroom activities support classroom instruction. For example, students complete projects where they are required to type sentences remembering to include capital letters, spaces, and punctuation marks. Learning to keyboard at a young age allows them to be more efficient in completing their schoolwork throughout their education.

Second through fourth grade students focus on troubleshooting and the use of various applications. In Excel, students collect data and make graphs, in Word they research and type documents, and in Power Point they create brochures. An important part of the third and fourth grade curriculum is learning how to utilize knowledge of basic computer operations to prepare for the South Dakota Assessment of Content Standards platform. They practice specific skills such as highlighting, scrolling, and moving between windows.

We recognize that it is important to support students in the development of their digital world. Classroom teachers collaborate with the computer teacher and classroom projects can be completed in the computer lab that directly relate to the classroom curriculum.

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

At Fred Assam Elementary, all students in junior kindergarten through fourth grade have music class. Junior kindergarten has music once a week for 20 minutes and kindergarten students receive music for 30 minutes once a week. First through fourth grade students have music for 60 minutes each week.

In our music classroom, we use a great variety of curriculum and resources including Quaver, Orff, Kodaly, and Dalcroze. Music supports essential learning skills such as math, reading, community, collaboration,

creativity, and problem-solving. This is done in our music classroom by learning patterns in music, acquiring language by singing lyrics, purposeful movement, steady beat, reading rhythms, learning rhymes and poems, playing instruments, and performing together. All of these music skills play a significant role in providing our students a well-rounded education.

Students in grades one and three showcase their skills at the beautiful performing arts center at the high school. The production is teacher-created and includes songs that are choreographed. Every student has a specific role or part to play in the performance. Each year for Veterans Day, our music teacher orchestrates a moving performance that honors our Veterans. Several students from the fourth grade audition and are selected to participate in the Honors Choir where they join other students from the region to practice and perform a concert.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Decisions made about academic support for students are based on data collected through an assessment cycle that is completed three times per school year. The assessments that are used are Renaissance Place Assessments – STAR Early Literacy, STAR Reading, and STAR Math, Acadience Benchmark Assessments, and the South Dakota Assessment of Content Standards.

Once data from the assessments is gathered, organized and analyzed, students are placed into a pathway of progress in the areas of reading and math. Our main interventions are provided through push-in support

within our multi-tiered Walk to Read process and needs-based Math Clubs. Each grade level has specifically scheduled times to provide targeted instruction daily.

Students identified as below grade level receive core instruction from their classroom teachers as well as 60 minutes of reading intervention and 30 minutes of math intervention. During Walk to Read, the classroom

teacher is joined by the special education teacher, reading specialist, and an education assistant. Students are progress monitored weekly to closely track growth.

Using the South Dakota Assessment of Content Standards, in correlation with Renaissance Place STAR Reading assessment, students who earned a designation of “catching up” and are not demonstrating mastery in state standards are provided additional daily instruction with the reading interventionist.

If there is a lack of measurable growth in reading or math, a student may be referred to a Teacher Assistance Team (TAT) meeting, consisting of parents, principal, reading specialist, special education teacher, classroom teacher, school psychologist and any other pertinent individuals to the student’s education. Through the TAT process, interventions are documented, implemented, and monitored for progress over a six-week time period. If the student does not show progress, the team may decide to proceed with a special education evaluation.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Fred Assam Elementary meets the needs for students performing above grade level with challenging activities and enrichment to foster an environment of student desired continuous growth. Students above grade level receive targeted instruction to solidify and advance their skills.

In the area of reading, students identified as above level are more independent readers and participate in literacy circles, book studies, research projects, and higher leveled reading activities to enhance their reading

skills. These students are challenged to read text that will broaden their reading comprehension skills. Students in third and fourth grade use Storyboard to unleash the students' creativity and focus their thoughts for planning, decision-making, writing, and visually presenting information.

In the area of math, students identified as above level are challenged through the use of math clubs where students are leveled, grouped, and given the opportunity to develop and broaden their mathematical

knowledge. Students use IXL to dive deeper into math content beyond what is being taught in the classroom. Students are also assigned extension activities that tie directly to the core curriculum and state standards. These activities lead to higher levels of thinking and problem solving.

Even though these students have demonstrated that they have developed their comprehension, critical thinking, and/or mathematical problem-solving skills, we continually challenge them. We allow students to explore more in-depth topics to enhance their intellect and complex thinking skills. By doing this, our goal is to broaden their base of information and extend into the next level of standards.

3c. Students with disabilities:

Fred Assam Elementary has policies and procedures in effect to ensure that all children with disabilities who may be in need of special education and related services are located, identified, and evaluated according to all state regulations. A Teacher Assistance Team (TAT) process is used to allow parents and teachers to refer students for a special education evaluation if necessary. Child Find includes ongoing efforts to identify

pre-school and school-age students with disabilities throughout our referral and evaluation procedures.

Special education instruction in the resource room consists of direct, explicit instruction with research-based and reliable curriculum. Fred Assam Elementary's special education teacher strives to maintain the lowest

student-to-teacher ratio as possible when implementing interventions. Through direct, explicit instruction, Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goals are specifically targeted, and students are encouraged to strive for their personal best in all areas of need. Students are held accountable and involved in IEP meetings when appropriate. The students are directly involved in setting their own goals and tracking their progress. Personal growth is always a joy to celebrate at IEP meetings.

Relationships between students and the special education team are an essential part of the success of the students who receive special education services at Fred Assam Elementary. We are proud of our push-in

services with reading, where students are with their peers and receive direct, explicit instruction right at their level in the general education classroom. In this process, the special education teacher and classroom

teachers work as a team towards student growth and achievement.

The special education room is home to a team consisting of certified teachers, therapists, and educational assistants. The successful collaboration of this team is crucial to the success, progress, and emotional support for students.

3d. English Language Learners:

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

The goal of the STEM curriculum at Fred Assam Elementary, is to provide real-world challenges that allow students to build their problem-solving, collaboration, and creativity skills in an environment that is student

centered. Our district's STEM teacher visits each classroom once or twice per quarter to work with students using traditional STEM materials as well as robotic and coding technologies. The STEM challenges are

created in collaboration with classroom teachers and align with core curriculum standards allowing students to make cross-curricular connections.

One example of a STEM challenge presented to a third grade classroom involved reading a poem about an Iditarod dog sled racer. Through this cross-curricular challenge, students then participated in an Iditarod self challenge testing out three different materials to determine which one would create the fastest and slowest sled. Students collected data and used bar graphs to display their results, which directly connected the math standards they were working on in the classroom. During this STEM challenge, students also learned that the real Iditarod race was occurring and chose a specific racer to track throughout the various race checkpoints. This challenge tied a real-world problem (how to create a fast/slow sled) with math skills (bar graphs) and reading skills (poetry) while also allowing students to practice their problem-solving, collaboration, and creativity skills in the classroom.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

It is our responsibility to support all learners at Fred Assam Elementary School while maintaining high standards. Relationships are essential for creating a positive learning environment where all students are recognized in their learning pathway. Setting clear expectations and communicating them regularly is important to success. We need to hold students accountable in their actions and learning. Providing feedback and celebrating success will recognize students' hard work and dedication.

Students are actively engaged in their learning through The LYNX Way at our school. Students feel connected with the five character traits that supports their academic, social and emotional growth, and college and career readiness development. These traits set the groundwork for future success and help foster a lifelong love of learning.

Students in junior kindergarten through grade two receive a LYNX Way sticker when they demonstrate one of the five character traits. That student then gets to add a marble to the big jar in the office. Likewise, when a class displays a LYNX Way trait, they add a larger ball to the jar! When the jar is completely full, we hold a school-wide celebration. Celebrations may include sledding on our snow hill at school, visiting a corn maze or pumpkin patch, jamming with a drumline, or being amazed by a magician.

Third and fourth grade students earn points in the PBISRewards application when they display positive LYNX Way traits. Students use their points to gain entry to quarterly fun events such as dodgeball, volleyball, additional art/reading/computer time, or movie.

Each month, our school family does an Act of Kindness. Community services include getting warm socks to guests at a homeless shelter, providing paper products and food for the local food pantry, donating supplies to the Humane Society, sending valentines, recognizing Veterans, and serving a meal at The Banquet - a meal ministry.

Whether the need is academic, behavior, or social/emotional, we do our very best to provide avenues of support to everyone. When you visit our school, you might see sensory paths, calm down corners, and students walking in the commons area to relieve excess energy. We provide a safe and inclusive environment so we can focus on what matters most - kids!

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Involving parents, families, and community members is vital to student success and school improvement. When parents are involved, it creates a positive environment where students feel supported and valued. Community members bring different perspectives and talents that can enrich the educational experience for students.

Our Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is very active at Fred Assam Elementary School. Parents meet monthly to plan and prepare for special events at our school that bring numerous families together. The PTA sponsors roller skating parties, book fairs, pancakes & BINGO night, a fall carnival, and a very popular FUN RUN as a fundraising project. Community businesses sponsor t-shirts for all students and staff. PTA supports our staff in many ways also. They provide meals on conference evenings, supply books for classroom libraries, purchase classroom supplies when needed, and spoil us with gift cards and treats during staff appreciation week.

The Optimist Club directly helps our school with a donation to our Angel Account each year. With their assistance, we are able to provide bus passes, school lunches, and winter clothing for students whose parents need a little help covering those costs. Members of our school community also provide donations and sponsorships for students and school events.

Within our community, we are fortunate to have two universities that funnel student teachers our direction. These students are well prepared by the universities and ready to take on responsibility in the classroom setting. These novice teachers bring new ideas and innovative teaching techniques, provide an extra set of hands to help students, and allow for more one-on-one attention for students who may need additional support.

Whenever possible, we look for opportunities to bring our high school students over to model and interact with the elementary students. A kick-off assembly for The LYNX Way and March Madness behavior tournament was held having players from the varsity boys basketball team join us. Our students hearing The LYNX Way message restated by these highly admired young men, added to the excitement of basketball, was the motivation our students needed to make this event successful.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

As our school continued to grow with additional students and staff, we needed a way to meet our needs of grade level communication and collaboration. Over the past ten years, Fred Assam Elementary has utilized Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) as an opportunity for teachers to come together, share ideas to enhance instruction, discuss student data, and find ways to improve student learning. Our PLC time each week reaffirms a culture of collaboration, trust, and respect among teachers. Teachers feel valued, supported, and empowered, which leads to a positive and productive working environment.

The schedule is designed so that each grade level team has a 90-minute block of uninterrupted time one day each week. Based on the Richard Dufour model, each team has four questions to drive their discussion each week. Those questions are what do we want students to know, how will we know that they learned it, what will we do for students who need more support, and what will we do to enrich learning for others.

Along with those questions, each team shares their successes from the previous week, the PLC focus and data for the current week, and strategies and resources for the week ahead. Our teachers look forward to this collaboration time. Evidence shows that we have stronger, more powerful teams that work together to create a positive learning environment and promote student and adult success.

Classroom teachers equip educational assistants with teaching techniques and classroom management strategies. They model effective teaching practices such as differentiating instruction for diverse learners and review student progress with their assistants.

The Brandon Valley School District utilizes a teacher climate survey every other year as an opportunity for teachers to provide feedback on topics throughout the district. Based on teacher responses, Fred Assam Elementary has the highest positive scores in school climate, professional relationships, and academic success.

Next steps - Brandon Valley School District has made a three-year commitment in Professional Development to effectively implement Collaborative Learning Communities (CLCs) in every school across the district based on the survey results.

4. School Leadership:

At Fred Assam Elementary School, the principal promotes a shared vision that we are in the business of creating learning environments that result in success for all students. Teachers utilize weekly Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) for quality collaboration, brainstorm innovative classroom instruction, and analyze student data. As an instructional leader, the principal participates in grade level PLCs as an opportunity to build relationships with teachers, engage in professional conversations, and support the needs of students, staff, and parents.

Shared leadership is evident in teams of teachers because it provides a support system that allows teachers to collaborate and share resources. Teams also provide an opportunity for teachers to discuss classroom strategies and best practices. At our school, teachers are assigned and meet quarterly on four main teams.

Established teams are Data, School Improvement, Grade Level, and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS).

Data team - Our Reading Specialist collects data on the most recent STAR Early Literacy Assessment and STAR Reading Assessment. The grade level math content leaders bring data from STAR Math Assessment. The team looks at overall growth of student learning, identifies the best methods for teaching skills, and evaluates effectiveness of curriculum. This team's focus is to support teacher instruction and student learning overall.

School Improvement team - On this team, we monitor our goals on the School Improvement Plan. This is the team that reviews specific grade level data, strengthens communication and collaboration for student goals, and develops opportunities to celebrate student learning. Student Growth Percentiles (SGP) are utilized to increase student achievement. We celebrate students for showing growth by hosting third and fourth grade Growth Luncheons.

Grade Level team - one teacher from each grade level and other staff comprises this team. The purpose of the vertical grade level team is to provide a collaborative and supportive environment for teachers to ensure that students receive the best possible education. This team helps to provide a more unified approach to instruction and assessment across all grade and content areas.

PBIS team - is an evidence-based, data driven framework that we use to improve school safety and promote positive behavior. This team meets monthly to identify and address the needs of students. School-Wide Information System (SWIS) is the program that we use to identify patterns in student behavior, develop intervention plans, and track the progress of individual students.

Although we have well established teams, we continually seek out ways to improve and enhance current practices to support our climate and culture at Fred Assam Elementary School.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Service learning promotes active learning, as it allows students to apply their academic knowledge and skills to real-life situations, making their learning meaningful and relevant to the community. This approach also develops important social and civic responsibility, as students are encouraged to understand and address social issues in their communities.

Each year, we hold a Penny War at Fred Assam Elementary School dedicated to a specific project. This is an opportunity for our school, families, and community to bring an awareness to different dynamics of diversity. While we have brought awareness to a number of different areas, our top three, most popular projects have been the Khor Wakow School Project, Honor Flight for Veterans, and Meal Ministry to a homeless shelter. Once a project is selected, assembly speakers are secured, learning resources are identified, and classroom activities are prepared. It is our intent to make connections and provide opportunities for students to share their cultural experiences and knowledge.

Another avenue to address diverse needs and backgrounds at our school is through Lunch Bunch groups. Counselor directed conversations in these groups create a social environment for children to socialize with peers outside of the classroom setting. Students in lunch bunch groups develop communication, problem-solving, and social skills that can be applied in other areas of their lives. Most importantly, these groups help students understand and value diverse cultures and backgrounds in a safe and inclusive environment.

South Dakota Content Standards specifically address culturally responsive teaching and learning that supports the success of all students. Our teachers incorporate cultural awareness and sensitivity towards diverse perspectives and experiences into their lessons and foster a classroom environment that promotes respect, empathy, and inclusivity. Literature can provide insight into experiences and perspectives of different cultures, allowing students to better understand and empathize with those who are different from them. Our library is a great resource for culturally responsive literature. Students are motivated to read when

they see themselves reflected in the literature they are reading or when they are learning about cultures that interest them.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

At Fred Assam Elementary School, we strive to meet the needs of all students at all levels of reading. After much team discussion and research, we moved to a new and different approach to reading instruction. We call our process Walk to Read. This process allows for early identification of all students who need extra help with literacy. In Walk to Read, we provide structured, systematic, intense instruction for the learners most in need while supporting those who need additional practice as they approach mastery of their skills. For students who are at benchmark and above, we are able to enhance their learning and level of independence.

Walk to Read utilizes a 90-minute block of reading instruction. The classrooms are divided by intensive, strategic, benchmark, and above benchmark levels. Group placement is determined from universal screening and other data sources. At the end of each school year, teachers create pathways for every student for the fall. Once new students have been added and fall screening completed, teachers meet to reconfigure pathways. Team meetings are held each quarter to talk about students and their progress. At those meetings, changes to groups are made with evidence to support student movement.

The data on students in the intensive room indicates they have the greatest needs and would benefit most from direct, explicit instruction at their instructional level. The classroom teacher provides thirty minutes of whole group instruction. Then for the next sixty minutes, "push-in" services occur. The students are divided into four small groups and rotate every 15 minutes to a different teacher in that room.

The next level is the strategic room. The students at this level receive whole group instruction for thirty minutes and sixty minutes of small group "push-in" service.

The benchmark room contains students who are "on target" with their grade level skills. The goal in this classroom is to assist students in becoming more independent with skills and strengthen independent work habits.

The last group is our above benchmark group. These students are more independent readers and participate in literacy circles, book studies, and other reading activities to enhance their reading skills.

Before we created the Walk to Read process, end-of-the-year results showed 12 - 19 students still in the intensive and strategic groups. Since Walk to Read, our numbers have decreased significantly to only single digits between the two groups. We know from our data that Walk to Read does make a difference. We have numerous success stories and parent testimonials to support our evidence.