

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 700 Robertsville Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Oak Ridge State TN Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 37830-8235

County Anderson County

Telephone (865) 425-5701 Fax _____

Web site/URL <https://www.ortn.edu/linden/> E-mail hfjenkins@ortn.edu

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* Dr. Bruce Borchers E-mail btborchers@ortn.edu
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Oak Ridge Tel. (865) 425-9001

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 Mr. Keys Fillauer
(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):
- 4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
2 Middle/Junior high schools
1 High schools
0 K-12 schools
- 7 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	96
1	99
2	104
3	119
4	123
5	0
6	0
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	541

*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):
- 0.2 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0.7 % Asian
 - 11.2 % Black or African American
 - 5 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0.2 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 73.5 % White
 - 9.2 % 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: 17%

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

Linden Elementary attributes the high mobility rate to the increase in housing available in our zone.

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	53
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	27
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	80
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	483
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.17
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	17

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

Chinese, Spanish, Ukraine, Pohnpeian, Gilbertese

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 2 %
11 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 18 %

Total number students who qualify: 100

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 17 %
Total number of students served 90

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>13</u> Autism	<u>3</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>17</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>11</u> Developmental Delay	<u>22</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>29</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>2</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 0 %
Total number of students served: 1

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

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

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	25
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	11
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 22:1

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%	95%	98%	95%	95%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

14. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2022.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

15. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes ☐ No ☒

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

16. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

Our mission is to provide an adaptive and challenging learning environment and instruction that prepares each student for excellence in education and the workplace, while cultivating integrity, responsibility, and a sustained passion for continued learning.

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

https://tsbanet-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/policy_tsba_net/EbOQTWY9KC1LiIug0qS4ZC0BisZ4zoVgL45rVFzDc4bCaA?rttime=38gnOEaq20g

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

Linden Elementary is honored to teach approximately 550 kindergarten through fourth grade students. The long tradition of our caring, compassionate staff and overwhelming parental and community involvement continues to contribute to our overall academic success. We enjoy working with each and every child and family throughout our school environment. All students at Linden are challenged daily with strong academic rigor that is an expectation at every grade level. We have a continued focus on the “whole child” as we ensure that every student is prepared for college, career, and life success. Our Oak Ridge Schools’ Portrait of a Graduate ensures that Linden students will exhibit key competencies as they move through each grade level that predict success in work, citizenship, and life. We use our Portrait of a Graduate to communicate our shared vision with all stakeholders and to clearly communicate what we hold as hopes, dreams, and aspirations for our Linden students. The Portrait of a Linden Graduate highlights our efforts to ensure successful learning in life-ready indicators that reach beyond typical academic measures. At Linden, we strive to provide an adaptive and challenging learning environment to prepare each student for excellence in education and the workplace.

Linden is known for the open and welcoming culture that permeates throughout the whole school. The feeling of being welcome in the Linden community is fostered by the school leadership year after year, and spreads to the individual teachers and staff. The willingness of our administration and teachers to engage with parents shows the strong desire we have to strengthen the school-community relationship. We are often told by parents and community members that it is a great feeling to walk into a school and be overcome with the sense that everyone who is there WANTS to be there. In the classroom, it’s obvious that Linden’s excellent teachers and staff feel supported and respected by the Linden administration and that positivity carries over in the attitude and energy they bring to the classroom. Teachers regularly communicate with families regarding student successes and challenges, and every year many school events are organized to enhance the school-community partnership. Due to the continuous efforts of Linden’s leadership over the years, Linden is home to teachers who feel supported and appreciated. It is home to students who feel cared for and challenged to do their best. Most importantly, it is home to Linden families who feel valued and connected as part of the Linden community.

Linden Elementary is proud to be a school that promotes School-Wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (SWPBIS). SWPBIS allows the teachers and staff at Linden Elementary to collaborate with our students to help them make appropriate behavioral choices. Students are taught to recognize, remember, and practice a consistent set of school expectations. At Linden Elementary, students are taught to be respectful, responsible, ready, and safe. Each day during morning announcements we recite together our school motto: “I am respectful. I am responsible. I am ready. I am safe. Willing to work, grow, and learn for a better tomorrow. Through assemblies, classroom instruction, specific verbal feedback from staff, and incentives for making appropriate choices, all Linden students can demonstrate an understanding of school expectations.

Linden Elementary was one of the first schools in Tennessee and the nation to go through a rigorous internal and external review process to maintain the prestigious Cognia STEM certification. Every teacher at Linden is a STEM teacher and every student is provided opportunities to gain experience and practice STEM. STEM education allows our students to make real-world connections through the curriculum and project-based learning opportunities. We want our students to be able to answer questions that do not have an obvious answer, create solutions to relevant problems, successfully collaborate with peers and community members to find answers, and be able to effectively communicate their findings. STEM is one of the powerful tools to help every student at Linden be prepared for college, career, and life success.

Linden Elementary hosts a Family Art Night each year. Family Art Night at Linden Elementary is a night of community and collaboration. Local artists demonstrate and lead a range of activities from fiber arts, pottery, painting, and photography. Students bring their families and friends to create art, play art games, and explore ranges of art mediums. The Linden Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) helps organize food to feed over 600 guests. Besides having 25 art stations, there are face painting rooms with high school volunteer artists. Summer Art Camps are given away as door prizes thanks to the symbiotic relationship

Linden has had with local museums in our community. The night features a balloon artist, a selfie-station and you can even get a picture with the Children's Museum's mascot! The art teacher explains art night like this, "Linden's Family Art Night is not a typical school art show...instead think of it as an art carnival...with plenty of art for everyone of all ages!"

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

Linden Elementary values the importance of researching curriculum and forming a team of educators to provide feedback with new text adoption arises. It is through this process and the expertise of content supervisors that curriculum and resources are purchased. Choosing the best standards aligned curriculum with embedded teacher support lays the foundation for implementing engaging, rigorous lessons.

Linden Elementary uses EL for grades K-3 and Guidebooks for fourth grade. K-2 EL is comprised of two, one-hour blocks: Skills Block for foundational literacy instruction and practice and Modules for reading, discussing, and writing about high-quality, content-rich text sets within a unit of study to support building knowledge about the world. Together these blocks teach and assess all strands of the language arts standards for each grade. Third grade EL is comprised of two, one-hour blocks: Modules and ALL Block. ALL Block complements Modules by giving students additional instruction and practice in word work and vocabulary, writing, fluency, and grammar usage and mechanics.

Linden Elementary uses EL and Guidebooks because both curricula were reviewed and passed our Department of Education's rigorous textbook adoption process and EL is highly rated on EdReports, an independent nonprofit organization that reviews instructional materials.

We know from reading research that it is important for English Language Arts (ELA) standards to be taught through an integrated approach. Instruction should include reading, thinking, speaking and listening, and writing about texts. ELA instruction and materials should address the shifts in the ELA standards- regular practice with complex texts and its academic language, evidence grounded in both literary and informational texts, and building knowledge through content-rich texts. The science of reading is clear that foundational literacy should be taught explicitly and systematically. Both EL and Guidebooks' approach to instruction is grounded in reading research.

With the right curriculum and focused professional development, teachers provide rigorous instruction allowing students to grapple with text. When you walk into a classroom, you will see engagement versus compliance. Teachers take the time to build solid foundations for peer and group collaboration, data driven flexible small groups, hands-on literacy-based learning stations, and whole group lessons that fluctuate between teacher centered and student driven with teacher supports. With each reflection and school focus, staff are working hard to provide students with the tools to understand the learning goal, why they are learning that goal, and how they will know they have learned the goal.

One thing that allows remarkable success within the classroom is the willingness of our educators to collaborate, seek support, and utilize student data to guide instruction. Teachers not only meet weekly with their grade level teams, but they also attend weekly professional development, and coordinate district grade level meetings to share resources and learn from one another. It is through these practices that Linden can yield positive results for our students.

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

Linden has worked closely with content coordinators to develop a plan to meet the needs of teachers and students. This strategic plan begins with the guidance of our math coordinator. ORS is a small district that places an emphasis on coordinators being accessible to teachers at any point. Fostering this type of open relationship has created a dynamic where teachers are empowered to seek support and allow coordinators into the classroom to model teaching practices, support planning, and develop resources. The trust and openness promoted allowed Linden to explore a unique opportunity with the math curriculum. Linden educators were provided the opportunity to meet with administration and determine the best curriculum for their students. Teacher autonomy and knowledge of student needs is the driving force behind curriculum

decisions. Through the discussions and exploration of the two curriculums presented, it was determined that each grade level would be permitted to pick the curriculum to utilize within their classroom.

Illustrative Mathematics (IM) is a problem-based curriculum rooted in content and practice standards to foster learning and achievement for all. Students learn by doing math, solving problems in mathematical and real-world contexts, and constructing arguments using precise language. Teachers can shift their instruction and facilitate student learning with high-leverage routines that guide them in understanding and making connections between concepts and procedures. Illustrative Math is highly rated on EdReports, achieving the maximum score in all categories.

Eureka Math is a holistic curriculum that carefully sequences mathematical progressions for rigor, coherence, and focus in the classroom so students gain a deeper understanding of the why behind the numbers, all the while making math more enjoyable to learn and teach. Eureka Math is highly rated on EdReports, meeting expectations in all categories.

When you enter a classroom, you will observe students engaged in math concepts that promote peer to peer collaboration, whole group instruction that encourages shared student thinking and explanation of the steps taken to solve problems presented, purposeful math stations to extend previous lessons with feedback, and flexible teacher directed small groups. Teachers utilize active panels to display content and allow students to model their thinking process for other students. Peers engage in high quality, focused accountable talk to support and extend knowledge. You will often see students working with peers in groups to utilize vertical spaces to collaborate and solve problems presented. The intentional practice of peer collaboration and purposeful, immediate feedback has contributed to the success in the student understanding of content presented. Teachers also utilize a variety of math applications to support instruction. Teachers utilize Zearn, 99math, Nearpod, and Amplify.

An additional element that is crucial to student success is teachers and students reviewing data, creating action steps for non-mastery of items presented, and student goal setting. Allowing students to be a part of the process and creating tangible action steps with them, increases their ownership and understanding of the process. Data is a driving force for classroom instruction and reteaching.

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

Linden utilizes the Tennessee State Standards to guide daily instruction and lesson planning. Our goal is to immerse students into the scientific content while fostering a love and curiosity for STEM activities. We strive to teach a solid foundation of the practices while building background knowledge and vocabulary. The standards focus on a progression with each grade level. The standards consist of four disciplinary core ideas: Physical Science; Life Science, Earth; and Space Science, and Engineering, Technology, and Applications of Science.

Linden utilizes a variety of resources to present content. STEMscopes is a digital curriculum that promotes hands-on learning with an emphasis on technology. Through this curriculum teachers are able to provide lessons that promote inquiry and curiosity while working together to solve problems. Students are often doing STEM lessons weekly in addition to the science content being embedded into reading and math lessons. In addition to STEMscopes, teachers utilize an online resource called Nearpod. This platform allows teachers to present lessons, provide video resources, and create games that deliver student data instantly.

When you enter a classroom, you will often see teachers building background knowledge through vocabulary building, exploration of materials and concepts, and group discussions. Students are at the forefront of the learning by exploring solutions and designing spaces based on concepts provided. Teachers utilize fieldtrips, outdoor exploration, online virtual resources, and collaboration to present content.

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

Linden values the need to immerse students in history to help them better understand how the world is shaped today. Social studies, history, and civics curriculum is based on the TN State Standards for Social Studies. The curriculum broadens with each grade level. Though Oak Ridge Schools did purchase Studies Weekly for all kindergarten through fourth grade classrooms to support instruction in Social Studies, TN standards for social studies are woven within Reading Language Arts and throughout other content areas such as art, library, and physical education. Within professional learning communities, teachers work together to build common formative assessments and to analyze district benchmark assessments. These assessments allow teachers to adjust instruction and meet student needs.

Teachers at Linden do a wonderful job of utilizing interactive teaching approaches to support proficiency in the standards presented. Teachers provide opportunities for students to create presentations, act out time periods, create timelines, hear from various speakers, take field trips and so much more to make learning fun.

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)

The art program at Linden Elementary has a curriculum designed around four main components: art history, cultures, geography, elements, principles of art, and art exploration. The art history explores the theme of going back in time with art, starting with prehistoric art (kindergarten through second grade) and ending with African cultures. Third and fourth grade students build upon previous knowledge as they progress from Medieval to Modern Art. The geography component starts with kindergarten and accompanies the art history so that they begin to know where the art from the past comes from. All students explore the concept of continents and where they live. By fourth grade, students' awareness of all seven continents should be concrete. The elements and principles of art are integrated into each lesson and are designed to teach students elements are the artists' ingredients for making art and the principles of art are the directions that direct artmaking. The program ranges from drawing, sketching, painting with various types of paints, printmaking in different forms, collage, multi-media, and sculpture projects with clay. Each student at Linden comes to art on a rotation for one hour every eight days and all mediums are explored by all students.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

Linden's Physical Education (PE) is a skills-based program that serves more than 540 kindergarten through fourth grade students. Following a rotational schedule, children mostly receive two thirty-minute sessions per week, and occasionally an extra 45-minute lesson. With skill development being the primary focus, children can regularly be found practicing physical and cognitive abilities in curricular areas such as gross motor control, manipulatives, gymnastics, movement concepts, rhythm/dance and fitness. The primary elementary physical education outcome is to help our students build a certain level of skill competency as to comfortably enter middle school instruction where sports, games and more dynamic practice may be found. Assuming a proper vertical progression extends into the high school years, our educational philosophy is one of providing children with the early tools to become adults who are confident in their abilities, enjoy movement and are physically active for life.

The Linden PE program also highly prizes the mind. From creating pathway treasure maps to designing a gymnastics apparatus routine, our children experience frequent opportunities to analyze, plan, problem solve

and evaluate. In addition, the repetitive nature of practicing physical skills often allows for the integration of classroom content. A younger student might be observed skip-counting while self-catching or spelling high-frequency words to the beat of a dribbled ball. The challenge of “thinking while doing” is not uncommon in the gym. Furthermore, this cross-curricular infusion has recently become more strategic as our school’s PLC coach acts as a liaison between grade-level and encore teachers. This allows classroom teachers to seamlessly communicate impactful and feasible academic skills that may be practiced during special area instruction. At Linden, all staff work together to collaborate and support students across all areas of their instructional day.

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

2d. Technology/library/media

Linden is a one-to-one technology school. Students in kindergarten and first grade have an iPad assigned to them. Students in grades second-fourth have a Windows 11 notebook computer assigned to them. The student devices are kept at school. All students have a Computer Technology special area rotation they attend once a week. Students are taught Digital Citizenship, coding, and computer skills. All students have access to digital tools that support and/or augment the adopted curricula. Some of these tools are BrainPop, Nearpod, and Zearn.

The Linden Media Center serves all children in grades kindergarten through fourth grade on a five-day rotation that equates to seeing students approximately three times a month, sometimes four or five depending on the number of days within a month. The media center supports student’s learning in numerous ways such as teaching students how to navigate the internet, as well as online safety. Students also learn library etiquette and how to use the online catalog to then find books to check out. The librarian teaches research skills and how to find credible resources to use while doing research. Finally, the media center is a wonderful place for students to get ELA standards reinforced as the Linden librarian often collaborates with classroom teachers to teach skills such as main idea, character, setting, plot, theme, and many more.

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

Linden Elementary School uses Character Strong’s PurposeFull People curriculum. This is a research-based pre-K through 5th grade social and emotional learning and character curriculum. This curriculum provides grade-level specific low-burden, high-impact lessons and activities built by educators, school counselors, and play therapists. The content is aligned with CASEL competencies and vertically aligned from pre-K through 5th grade to support students to apply skills and character traits beyond the lessons. These character-focused lessons seek to lead students to three powerful outcomes: Be Strong, Be Kind, and Be Well. The Be Kind lessons focus on social skills and conflict-resolution, the Be Strong lessons focus on

the executive functions of focusing, organizing, and goal setting, while the Be Well lessons focus on wellness strategies for emotion regulation. We utilize this program in all kindergarten through fourth grade classrooms to play games, teach content, and practice the character presented. Each month teachers identify one student from their classroom that has represented that character. The student receives a button made by fourth grade students, an award, and gets their picture taken as a group. We work hard to reference the character in all school settings and grow the whole child.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Linden Elementary School uses professional learning communities (PLCs) to guide academic instruction to meet the needs of all students with an intentional focus on students scoring below proficiency. PLCs and collaborative team meetings occur weekly and are facilitated by Linden’s PLC Coach who assists teams by analyzing student data from common formative assessments to provide feedback and guidance to grade level

teams. Each week, the team answers the question, “How will we respond when students are not proficient?” along with identifying students who need additional time mastering a standard. Once students are identified, they are pulled into a flex group where they spend extra time with an educator working on standards/skills not yet mastered. Flex grouping occurs across all grade levels during Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI) time with the purpose of providing extra support and instruction for all students scoring below the twenty-five percent on benchmark assessments as well as students struggling on specific skills in tier one instruction. Along with receiving additional instruction, these students also receive academic and formative feedback on specific standards that have not yet been mastered. Teachers hold the same expectations for all their students, believing that all students can learn.

In addition to flex groups, Linden Elementary also uses the RTI block for students falling below the twenty-fifth percent on benchmark assessments. These students receive extensive intervention provided by reading or math interventionists for forty-five minutes, five days a week. Linden Elementary uses a school-wide data wall to monitor the students’ progress on benchmarks, CFAs (curriculum and assessments for learning), and end-of-the-year assessments. This allows educators, coaches, interventionists, and administration to quickly identify areas of concern and track the progress of tier 2 and tier 3 students while also keeping an eye on tier 1 students too. Student data is reviewed quarterly by grade-level teams during Data Snapshot meetings. These meetings are led by Linden’s PLC Coach and provide an overview of individual classroom and grade-level performances on Master View Predictive Assessments, AimswebPlus, and STAR math. Summative and formative assessments provide guidance for educators by identifying students performing below grade level, standards not yet mastered, and best practices.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Linden Elementary believes that meeting the needs of all students is our first priority. This is accomplished by providing access to various programs during our daily RTI “Lion Time.” This time dedicates forty-five minutes of tiered instruction for all students based on data. Students who score four on ELA and Math benchmarks are afforded the opportunity to attend daily enrichment class. Our enrichment program serves students in grades first through fourth daily. Gifted and Talented teachers work closely with the grade-level teams to identify standards and curriculum alignment to extend lessons while bridging the work occurring in the classroom. Problem-based lessons allow for students to take ownership of the learning and share their thought process with one another to increase peer to peer learning. Students are presented with real world scenarios and tasked to develop plans of actions to solve the problem presented. Students engage in STEM-based activities, novel studies, word study, and much more.

3c. Students with disabilities:

At Linden Elementary, students with disabilities are supported in many and varied ways during instruction, interventions, and assessments. Students with disabilities are included with their general education peers to the greatest extent possible, allowing them access to the general education curriculum and standards. This increased time in class is achieved by providing inclusion services from special education teachers. These teachers work with only a few grade levels so that they become content-area experts, thereby improving their practices. For students in Comprehensive Development Classes, this exposure to general education peers and curriculum raises expectations for them and what they can achieve and provides positive behavioral and language role models.

To make these inclusive practices successful, the special education staff works together to schedule enough support in the general education classrooms so that instruction and interventions can be implemented, sharing teaching assistants so that the classrooms with the most needs receive the most support. For example, a student with autism may require adaptations such as sound occluding headphones or picture prompts and schedules in the general education classroom in order to participate in whole and small group activities. The special education staff provides these supports and instructs the general education teacher on how to use them with the student. Further, the special education staff works together to ensure appropriate coverage in the general education classroom so that students with special needs can be successful.

as flexible seating and presentation of material by students so that all students have a way to share what they know. For example, a student with apraxia can type and use voice output to present research.

At Linden, we are careful to provide the same accommodations and modifications to all assessments including CFAs, local assessments, and state-standardized testing. For example, if an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) requires a student to receive testing in a small group setting, he/she would receive that same accommodation for all classroom assessments.

3d. English Language Learners:

At Linden Elementary, we understand that English Learners (EL) come from a variety of cultural, academic, and linguistic backgrounds, and each has their own individual learning needs. To meet these diverse needs, we tailor our instruction, interventions, and assessments to build on English Learners' background knowledge and support students in obtaining the academic language skills needed to be successful in school and beyond.

EL and content area teachers collaborate to differentiate instruction in order ensure that each student receives the support needed to access grade level content and texts. They use a variety of teaching methods and resources to engage all students, including visual aids, manipulatives, technology, and targeted language instruction. All English learners have access to tier 1 instruction. EL and classroom teachers use data from multiple assessments to make decisions regarding whether further intervention in addition to EL services would be appropriate.

Our school is committed to providing a student-centered learning environment. ELs are encouraged to take ownership of their learning by setting measurable and attainable language goals. Students work alongside teachers to evaluate their progress in certain areas using the WIDA ELD Standards Framework and the WIDA Speaking and Writing Rubrics. We use a variety of assessments to monitor student progress and adjust instruction accordingly. These assessments include authentic formative assessments, benchmark assessments, and standardized tests. We analyze student achievement data to identify areas of need and determine which students require additional support.

Our teachers participate in ongoing professional development, including annual WIDA training, to improve their instructional practices and meet the diverse needs of our student population. We work closely with families to ensure that they are aware of their child's progress and provide support at home. We incorporate culturally responsive teaching practices to create an inclusive and welcoming learning environment for all students. This includes incorporating diverse perspectives and experiences into our curriculum and instruction.

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Student engagement is a high priority at Linden Elementary. Linden recognizes and works hard to create an environment where students want to come to school and be the best they can while there. Our focus is not primarily academic, instead it is to meet the needs of the whole child. To promote engagement and a love for school, Linden plans a variety of activities to have fun and celebrate their accomplishments. We utilize cub cash to highlight desired behaviors and common expectations throughout the building. Students save their cub cash to spend at their weekly class store, buy desired items from vending machines filled with trinkets, and buy special time with administration and encore teachers. We host quarterly Cub Cash Bash days where students get to attend a preferred activity to highlight the magnificent work they are doing on a daily basis. Each activity is tiered to allow everyone a chance to participate. We host art creations, physical activity, reading with the librarian, music exploration, movie room, and extra recess.

In addition to our focus on school behaviors and expectations, we plan a variety of field trips to immerse learning in the real world. Such activities include Ijams Nature Center coming to the school or providing virtual field trips, animal exploration at the Zoo, STEM Day at the local park, middle and high school visits to explore the arts, dual credit options, and career-technical programs. Oak Ridge Schools (ORS) collaborates closely with schools to foster a shared vision for college, career, and life readiness. Through this initiative our students participate in a Capstone project that allows students to explore different careers. This allows Linden to bring in various speakers, incorporate research, and foster a student's love for their future goals.

Setting goals is a focus that yields immense success with our students. Teachers take the time to meet with students one on one to review academic and behavior goals. Students work with teachers to identify a goal and create an action plan on how to achieve those goals. This allows students to take ownership and pride in their learning. We incorporate this initiative into our morning announcements. We announce student names daily in our "Goal Getter" segment. Students love hearing their names and goals achieved announced. Students love to bring their paper to the front office where office staff celebrate. Each child receives a "Goal Getter" sticker to add to their collection.

When we think about whole-child needs, we cannot forget the celebration of birthdays at Linden. We announce student and staff birthdays daily. We will tell them happy birthday and ask their peers to make their day extra special. Students get to come to the front office where we wish them a happy birthday and give them a pencil. The joy displayed on students' faces throughout the day is priceless.

Engagement encompasses many forms throughout the educational day. Teachers and staff work hard to make learning fun, rigorous, and differentiated. We do not view students as certain teachers but as ours. We all take responsibility for each and every student and their growth.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Family engagement and community involvement are key factors in the success that Linden Elementary has experienced over the years. The Linden Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) meets on a monthly basis. This organization allows our Linden parents to be directly involved in the decision-making processes of the school. Our principal communicates with families each week via a Parent Newsletter. The newsletter allows parents to be informed of upcoming events that will be taking place at Linden, along with any other communications that need to be shared with Linden families. Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled on a regular basis to allow our teachers the opportunity to share information to parents about their child's learning and development within the classroom. The conferences are scheduled at times that are convenient to the needs and schedules of the family. Linden Elementary works closely with Oak Ridge High School to allow high school students that are interested in elementary education the opportunity to come and volunteer in our classrooms. This allows for a strong community bond to be created between our Linden students and the students at Oak Ridge High School. Tennessee Technological University (TTU) consistently places

students that are majoring in Elementary Education at Linden Elementary to complete their practicum hours and student-teaching requirements. This allows our Linden teachers to serve as mentors to the TTU students, while giving our Linden students the opportunity to develop positive relationships with the TTU students. Linden Elementary partners closely with the Boys & Girls Club of Oak Ridge and Girl's Inc. of Oak Ridge. Both of these organizations provide after school care for our students of working families that may not have other childcare options. Boys & Girls Club and Girl's Inc. both provide activities including basketball, baseball, football, and other opportunities for our students to remain active after school. Throughout the school year there are multiple opportunities for families to come and participate in activities specifically designed to engage both the students and their families. Some of these activities include the Fall Festival, Family Art Night, and Family STEM Night. Linden Elementary also has been given the opportunity to participate in the Lion's Club Dictionary Project. Each year the local Lion's Club comes and distributes a dictionary to each of our 3rd grade students. This has created a strong bond between the Lion's Club and the teachers and students at Linden Elementary. We are very proud of the community partnerships that we have developed at Linden Elementary.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Linden Elementary School maintains a positive school culture by supporting educators professionally through monthly professional development delivered and facilitated by district coaches and coordinators. Educators at Linden Elementary participate in monthly systemwide professional developments that highlight key components in the PLC at Work process. This specific professional development guides and supports educators by providing strategies and vetted best practices to raise student proficiency and reach all students. The PLC PDs at Linden Elementary also provide opportunities for growth and empowerment for educators. Educators may share their work and vetted practices during a section of the professional development titled, "The Experts Down the Hall." During this part of the professional development, teachers share practices that align with the professional development topic and provide realistic examples that can easily be transferred and adapted to fit the needs of various learners and classrooms. In addition to PLC PDs, faculty and staff at Linden Elementary also partake in curriculum-based workshops such as Quill, 95 percent, Sondag System, and Amplify. Professional development at Linden Elementary builds craftsmanship among educators while increasing their efficacy in the classroom which helps them to problem solve and find the best solution for their students. The goal of all professional development is to improve knowledge and skills for the purpose of increasing student achievement.

Linden Elementary also strives to support educators during the work week. The PLC coach checks in with teachers weekly to see what supports they might need professionally and/or emotionally. These check-ins build relationships and allow opportunities for teachers to feel heard and valued. Educators also have time set aside in each week's collaborative team meeting to voice concerns and discuss barriers to student success. These conversations prompt a quick response to delays on growth while encouraging solution-oriented discussions. Moreover, Oak Ridge Schools also provides technology support to Linden Elementary staff through an Instructional Technology Coach. Linden's IT Coach pushes into classrooms to problem solve and provide supports for tier one instruction such as piloting a K-1 math program, My Math Academy, creating Clever badges for easy student access, assisting with ESGI students' assessments for grades K-1, and building EL lesson links to provide additional practices for students in grades first through fourth. Lastly, staff at Linden Elementary receive support and encouragement through Linden's Parent Teacher Organization. Linden's PTO is present during school hours and after hours to help maintain a positive school culture for staff and students by volunteering and providing helping hands. It is through these various supports that Linden can maintain a positive and professional culture for teachers and students.

4. School Leadership:

Linden's administrative team is made up of the principal and assistant principal. The principal has been serving the staff and students for 18 years while the assistant principal (AP) began as a teacher and transitioned to the AP role seven years ago. The success of the administrative team is built upon the commitment to the students, staff, and community. Linden Elementary's administrative goals are to create an environment where teachers feel safe to share and ask questions, trusted to make professional decisions for their students, and valued as individuals.

The administrative team is built upon seeking feedback to help support the vision of the school. Linden Elementary utilizes a Leadership Team comprised of grade-level representatives, school counselor, STEM teacher, special education teacher, and encore teacher. The team helps provide feedback into decisions surrounding curricular needs, fiscal matters, scheduling, and school concerns. The team meets monthly. Once the team meets and decisions are made, the representative will take the information back to their grade level. The administration also relies heavily on the feedback and insight of the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). The principal meets monthly with the PTO board and parents to share updates and seek feedback on school decisions. The PTO provides a tremendous level of support with daily operations and financial assistance.

Communication is key with all stakeholders. The principal provides a daily announcement for students with a moral. Students begin their day by reciting the school motto "Be responsible, respectful, ready, and safe. Willing to work, grow, and learn for a better tomorrow." Administration utilizes emails, text, one on one conversations, and weekly updates to build clear lines of communication. The administration believes that being visible and having an open-door policy is the foundation to the culture of the building. It is equally important to develop clear lines of communication with parents and the community. Parents and community stakeholders receive a monthly newsletter as well as email communication when events arise. The school also utilizes an exterior sign to highlight campus events, celebrations, and community updates. Linden is fortunate to have a wonderful partnership with the school board to highlight "Good News" during monthly meetings. Communication is at the forefront to ensure all stakeholders are informed, welcomed, and included.

While the culture and climate of the school are key priorities of the administrative team, it is equally important to facilitate a clear curricular vision based on data. The administration works closely with the instructional coach and teachers to review data, set goals, and check-in weekly to monitor progress. Linden utilizes weekly PLCs and professional development to support the process of targeted goals and grade-level collaboration to create assessments and lessons.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Linden Elementary serves a diverse student population in regard to economic and academic status. We strive to support students, families, and staff on an individual basis in order to remove potential barriers to academic success. Our economic supports can vary from Friday Food Bags to housing and electric bill assistance. Linden partners with multiple community stakeholders to ensure we have the necessary resources to help our students and families. Resources change throughout the year and academic season as needed. For example, at the start of the year Linden offers school supplies and clothing assistance so every child feels ready and prepared for the new year. Throughout the year, we partner with Second Harvest to provide weekly snacks to our families in need. Linden also partners with Ridgeview Behavioral Health Services to provide weekly therapy to identified students which takes place in the school building. This partnership is invaluable as it offers the much-needed opportunity for individual therapy, reduces student absences due to its location, and alleviates the need for parents to miss work for travel time. Well child health visits are also offered in the building at designated times for these same reasons. We want to support our students and families in as many ways as possible.

At Linden we believe each childhood experience is unique and brings opportunities for growth. Our newly implemented social emotional curriculum called Character Strong, promotes a culture of respect and empathy for everyone who enters our doors. This curriculum focuses on the individual character traits needed to promote healthy social interactions and build a culture of acceptance. Lessons are taught weekly by the classroom teacher and reinforced through monthly school counselor visits. Our goal is to develop an atmosphere in the classroom where all students feel welcome and accepted as individuals. In addition to creating a respectful culture, the Linden staff received trauma informed training to better assist our students who have experienced adverse childhood experiences. Through trauma informed training, teachers and staff better understand the impact trauma and adverse experiences can have on emotional regulation and academic progress. In order to see our students as individuals and cater our approach in the most meaningful way possible, we must first understand how their experiences shape brain development and impact behavior.

This knowledge is essential to understanding the whole child and building meaningful relationships. Every child needs at least one positive adult connection to feel safe and supported at school. In the past, Linden has used a ‘Caring Adult’ program to ensure every child has that support person. These connections are also made through our daily “Check-in, Check-out” program should a student need more frequent, positive interaction. We have found that collaboration and open communication with family allows us to see the whole child and not simply view them through the lens of academics.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

At Oak Ridge Schools we believe that targeted instruction, high quality aligned curriculum and assessments for learning, CFAs, are accomplished through the work of effective PLCs. We believe that systematically developing our PLCs will support our district vision of preparing every student for college, career, and life success.

In 2014, Oak Ridge began our vision of supporting the work of PLCs. At that time, PLC Coaches were also fulltime classroom teachers, which did not allow them to meet with teacher teams on a regular basis to help build a strong understanding of the characteristics and action steps of an effective PLC. We knew this was the right work, but we needed to put the structures in place to make the work successful. We had to create a system that provided the support needed for all teams to perform at high levels. During the 2021-22 school year, we now have a full-time PLC Coach in each building supporting the work of Collaborative Teams and a district coordinator to help support the coaches and the vision of the district. Through our focused and intentional work as a district PLC, our monthly district data meeting has become a true Collaborative Team where each building shares their data, areas of focus (glows and grows), and their improvement action steps to meet the needs of all students. As a district, we focus on a continuous cycle of improvement that has shown to have great success.

With PLC coaches in place, Linden Elementary's collaborative teams were able to intentionally focus on student learning, collaboration with collective responsibility, and results orientation with consistency and accountability. Prior to collaborative team meetings, Linden's PLC Coach analyzes the data to allow educators to quickly reflect and answer the question "Are students learning?" This intentional shift in thinking asks grade-level teams to focus on what students are learning versus what students are being taught. With this strong focus on learning, teams work to ensure that all students are learning and working towards proficiency. This work is not done in isolation. Teams share thoughts, strategies, and best practices to help grow all students in their grade level. They are also learning from each other as they work together to find the best way to meet their SMART goals and the needs of all students. There is a clear understanding of collective responsibility among teams and all school staff. Furthermore, collective responsibility and collaboration extend past the walls of Linden Elementary with the support of district coordinators. Guidance from Oak Ridge's PLC, ELA, and math coordinators helps teams stay results oriented. Coordinators and Linden's PLC coach encourage teachers to consistently monitor results from microphases, benchmarks assessments, CFAs, and summative assessments to examine evidence of student learning while also supplying teams with instructional resources. The implementation and intentionality of the PLC at Work process has been influential to Linden's student success.