

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name New Richmond Paperjack Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1011 E 11th Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City New Richmond State WI Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 54017-2591

County Saint Croix

Telephone (715) 243-7400 Fax (715) 888-1562

Web site/URL <https://www.newrichmond.k12.wi.us> E-mail ahoepfner@newrichmond.k12.wi.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. Troy Miller E-mail tmiller@newrichmond.k12.wi.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name New Richmond Tel. (715) 243-7411

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

Date _____
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Mr. Bryan Schafer
(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):
- 3 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
1 Middle/Junior high schools
1 High schools
0 K-12 schools
- 5 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	52
1	55
2	66
3	60
4	53
5	54
6	0
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	340

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1.2 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 1.6 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 94 % White
 - 2.2 % 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: 3%

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	5
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	4
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	9
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	340
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.03
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

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

Spanish

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 31 %

Total number students who qualify: 105

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 14 %
Total number of students served 48

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>6</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>7</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Developmental Delay	<u>5</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>3</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>16</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>11</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 2 %
Total number of students served: 6

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 3

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.	16
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	9
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	12
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	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 21:1

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	94%	96%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

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

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

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

Yes ☐ No ☒

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

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

Inspire every student to learn to his or her potential.

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

<https://www.newrichmond.k12.wi.us/Page/7813>

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

Students at Paperjack Elementary come from a close knit community despite its boundaries encompassing not only the city of New Richmond but miles to the northwest Star Prairie, northeast to Deer Park, southwest to include Richmond Township, southeast to Erin Prairie, and other outlying areas covering several miles. The vast majority of families are working class with the largest sector of employment in the area being manufacturing led by employers like Federal Foam Technologies and Phillips Medisize. The local hospital, Westfields, is another large employer along with the School District of New Richmond, St. Croix Press, and the New Richmond Centre. New Richmond boasts a large and proud veteran community and there is a strong support for the schools and district.

Students move from kindergarten through fifth grade in two and three sections in each grade at Paperjack, causing the students to be very familiar with their classmates and making for close relationships and strong bonds with their friends and the Paperjack staff as they head on to New Richmond Middle School and throughout their lives.

Paperjack emphasizes relationships at its core, and as stated above, the close ties help play a role in students feeling connected to the school and its people. Above all else, this “connectedness” allows students to feel a sense of belonging, and students always feel welcomed in their learning environment. Additionally, the WIN (What I Need) program allows all students to receive intervention (additional academic instruction) in a small group setting at their level with the ability to grow through a set of skills that may be a challenge and cause a barrier to their learning. This program is supported by all staff and throughout the district and has become a foundation of intense instruction. This success can be viewed through the school’s report card and the “Growth” area scores that show far greater scores for “Student Group Value-Added” across all groups in both English Language Arts and Mathematics.

Setting Paperjack up for success, there are a multitude of different components that have been created for each student to achieve their highest potential. It is not just the programs that are run, it is the heart and true passion of all the educators in the building. For delivering a small dose of culture, every year the fourth grade teacher will wear his authentic Irish holiday attire, kilt and all, and will put on a ceremony with his bagpipes for all the grades to experience on St. Patrick’s Day. Also, in March, since it is the month of music, the music teacher creates a variety of special lessons to engage all learners in how different cultures dance, sing, and play music. There are a mixture of ways that Paperjack goes above and beyond each and every day.

For academic and socio-emotional mixing, there is Reading Buddies. Each third through fifth grade student is paired with a kindergarten through 2nd grade student. Reading Buddies not only instills acceptance for all students in building diverse relationships with each other, but boosts the reading confidence of the 3rd through 5th grade students, while enhancing the vocabularies and reading abilities of the kindergarten through 2nd grade students. Another reading implementation used is called Reading Across America. It’s a fun week filled with dress up days and unique classroom activities based around reading. March also brings March Madness of battle of the books! The Title I teacher chooses 16 books, makes a bracket and all the classrooms get to participate by voting for their favorite. This runs for three weeks and ends with a celebratory video that is emailed out to all classrooms with the principal reading the winning book.

Socio-emotionally, all Paperjack students receive lessons in social-emotional learning (SEL) from both their classroom teacher and the school counselor. Paperjack’s SEL curriculum is designed to help students improve their academic performance, build emotional competencies, increase self-awareness, grow problem-solvers, create individuality, and instill responsibility to thrive in life. Within Paperjack’s SEL curriculum there is a variety of lessons from The Second Step Bully Prevention curriculum utilized throughout grades 2-5, where all students are taught skills on how to make friends, keep friends, and learn how to recognize, report, and refuse bullying. The Second Step SEL curriculum for kindergarten and first grade teaches the fundamental skills of what it means to be a lifelong learner filled with lessons that teach about your emotions, how to focus your attention, and how to share and compromise. The Zones of Regulation curriculum is used throughout grades K-3 to help all students to identify their feelings and learn

how to manage these emotions on their own. The school counselor also mixes into the SEL curriculum CASEL and ASCA accredited lessons that are developmentally appropriate for each grade level based on the current needs for the school year. These may vary from extra lessons in the primary grades on how to solve their small problems with I-Message statements to engaging the older students in lessons on what it means to have integrity and make ethical decisions.

The school counselor runs two week-long celebrations annually. In February, Paperjack has a full week that the school counselor runs called Random Acts of Kindness Week (RAK Week). The whole week is filled with daily dress up themes, a kindness quote of the day that is delivered over the loudspeaker by a Tiger Pride Leader (5th grade leadership team), daily kindness challenges for the students to complete, an at home Kindness challenge that can be returned for fun prizes, and a plethora of different kindness activities and books that teachers can do with their classrooms. In May, there is Screen Free Week. During this week, students are encouraged to be screen free when they are not at school. Each student is given an at-home challenge board to complete, there are guest classroom readers to come read a book to classes, a list of screen-free activities are given to all classrooms with things such as making an “I’m bored” jar, and screen time contracts are sent home to give parents a helpful resource for monitoring their child’s screen time.

The everyday small acts, universal curriculum, and school wide celebrations serve as the basis for many conversations that take place with students throughout the year and help to build our sense of “connectedness” as a foundation for all of the work we do.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

Paperjack Elementary has two main curricula for Reading and Writing. For reading, the school uses Fountas and Pinnell Classroom. Every day students participate in an interactive read aloud that has a diverse collection of books. These books range in genres from historical fiction to fairy tales. They diverge into topics and themes from finding friendship to dealing with loss. They travel the world to show the students cultures from all seven continents. While the students are reading they participate in discussions that promote higher order thinking about what the students read. These discussions encourage the students to take the skills they learn in the class book and apply it to their own reading, both at home and during read to self time at school. Many of the questions asked during these read-alouds lead to the students responding in writing and finding evidence to support their thinking.

Students are assessed three times throughout the school year to determine their reading level. This BAS test is a running record where the students read to the teacher. The teacher records fluency, comprehension, and any errors the students make or self correct. Once the students reading level is found, this helps the teacher with multiple parts of the students learning. For example, the curriculum provides the students with books as part of a collection that is organized by the reading levels that we determine. So the students can be recommended a book that is a good level for them. Another example is it allows teachers to put together small reading groups. These small groups allow the teacher to meet the students needs by grouping students that require similar skills to learn better. Teachers provide a book that is at an appropriate level for the students and can help each group master what they need.

From kindergarten through 5th grade the students are given a word study program that focuses on phonics based learning. They study syllable patterns such as “consonant vowel consonant.” This helps build their fluency while reading and can help them sound out words that they may not recognize by sight. It can also help them to spell words during writing.

Paperjack’s writing program is called “Lucy Calkins Units of Study.” It is focused on giving students explicit instruction and ample opportunities for practicing the skills they learn for writing. Students are given many examples of what they are writing so that they can understand what they are doing. We focus on making writing real for the students by providing them with the opportunity to write the kinds of text they will see in the real world such as stories, persuasive letters, poems, and chapter books. We have a strong belief in student choice so that students feel invested in their own creative process. Students are allowed to pick a topic that is important to them and that interests them. Throughout the process, it crosses reading with writing, and vice versa, in order to help students achieve the skills that they need.

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

Paperjack Elementary uses a math curriculum called Math Expressions (MX). This follows a series of learning progressions based on students' learning stages for mastering concepts such as computation and problem solving strategies. These stages are reflected in Math Expressions through the order of concepts, the sequence of units, and the positioning of topics.

Students from kindergarten through 5th grade participate in core instructional approaches such as “math talk” and “building concepts.” Math talk involves an environment of inquiry that helps students in practical discussion of problem solving. Students can participate in an activity such as a number talk where they are encouraged to share and teach their method of approach to a math problem. There is a focus on their process rather than the answer they found. During number talks, multiple students are given the same problem, but teachers choose students who solved in different ways to share their methods with the rest of the class. This provides students with the opportunity to discuss and formulate the best strategy that works for them when solving a math problem. Building concepts has students using manipulatives, drawings, conceptual

language, and real world scenarios to help students build mathematical concepts for success both laterally in education and in the real world. With access to these different mediums of learning, students can find the learning style that works best for them. For example, students that are kinesthetic learners are given opportunities to use manipulatives such as base ten blocks, fraction tiles, unifix cubes, ten frames, rekenreks, shape tiles, and many more. Visual learners can see drawings while interpersonal learners can learn through the number talks. Students in 3rd through 5th grade also participate in daily warm ups through a program called Building Fact Fluency, in which students build their math facts by applying their knowledge to real pictures depicting groups of objects in the world.

Paperjack assesses students through the use of curriculum quizzes and teacher-made assessments. After both quizzes and tests are completed by the students, grade-level teachers will meet in a professional learning community (PLC) to discuss where students succeeded and where students need improvement. During the PLC, the teachers will devise a plan of action to reteach when needed. These also allow teachers to discuss methods of teaching and common misconceptions that students may have throughout the units of instruction.

Outside of the MX curriculum resource, Paperjack tries the best we can to align everything to the WI State Standards, as we believe those are our true curriculum. Our goal is always to develop a deep understanding of these standards, one that is at the level of conceptual understanding, rather than rote memorization. We like to emphasize the use of hands-on learning experiences for our instruction and a heavy use of manipulatives, as we believe (and have seen) that there are tremendous benefits to this approach in building conceptual understanding. We strive to make our assessments reflect the standards first and foremost to use those assessments to drive instruction (rather than the other way around).

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

Science at Paperjack is taught using the Mystery Science Curriculum. All classrooms are equipped with Smart Panels which allows teachers to seamlessly use this digital resource that utilizes videos, and step-by-step directions for hands-on experiments within the classroom. The materials needed and prep work are clearly laid out to make this format very user-friendly for educators and students.

Kindergarten students learn about scientific inquiry, inventions and engineering, and weather. First graders enjoy lessons in Physical, Life, and Earth Science; these include plant and animal traits, day and night patterns, light, sound, and communication. Second grade covers biodiversity, plant adaptations, material properties, the Earth's surface and erosion. Third graders learn about fossils, animal survival & heredity, life cycles, weather and climate, along with forces, motion, and magnets. In fourth grade, students study the human body, vision, and the brain. They also learn about Earth's features and processes, sound waves, energy transfer, and electricity. Fifth grade studies ecosystems, the food web, water cycle, stars & the solar system, properties of matter, and chemical reactions.

These science lessons are reinforced by engaging experiments, videos, thoughtful reflection of what was learned, and field trips. For example, upper elementary students visit Interstate Park after learning about glaciers and erosion and also enjoy mucking for creatures in the St. Croix River while learning about ecosystems and invasive species. Students also visit the DNR seed farm to learn about sustainability, erosion, and growing seasons. We assess concepts using exit tickets and class discussions. All of these hands-on activities and supplemental field trips contribute to a rich, well-rounded science curriculum that students really enjoy.

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

Social Studies is taught in a variety of ways using cross-curricular materials while including hands-on projects, research papers, music, community involvement, and field trips. We teach according to the Wisconsin State Standards for each grade level.

In kindergarten, thematic units are used. The major topics covered are: responsibilities, local community, community helpers, geography, U.S. Holidays, U.S. symbols, presidential concepts, and wants versus needs. First graders continue to build on the same concepts taught in kindergarten while adding lessons about self

and family, holidays around the world, fire safety, important people in history, and map skills. Second grade goes more in depth by incorporating writing biographies about important people, studying types of communities, focusing on continents and map skills. At the third grade level students learn about consumer education, marketing, branches of government, and the history of New Richmond, Wisconsin. They also continue with map skills by creating their own maps and exploring the community of New Richmond by taking a walking field trip through town. Community businesses partner with the teachers and mini-lessons are taught at the different stops made throughout our community. In fourth grade project-based learning is utilized around the history and geography of Wisconsin, the regions of the United States, heritage, immigration, and important people. Fifth grade learns about the first Americans, age of exploration, colonies, American Revolution, and Government.

All grade levels take multiple field trips that supplement and reinforce concepts taught in Social Studies. Many grade levels visit our local Heritage Center. Students experience the History Museum, Fort Snelling, and many community outreach programs covering a variety of topics. Assessment is done by evaluating projects, discussions, and exit tickets. Overall, the Social Studies curriculum is engaging and fun for students incorporating hands-on projects to reinforce learning.

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)

Students in kindergarten through fifth grade attend elementary music classes on a regular basis. Within a 6-day cycle, students receive 70 minutes of music instruction. In music classes, students participate in lessons that correlate to Wisconsin State Music Standards that include: performing, responding, creating, and connecting with music. Students are also invited to participate in a concert to share their learning with their families and community. Lessons for kindergarten through fifth grade are focused on singing, playing instruments, dancing, creating music, and understanding standard and iconic music notation.

Students receive 70 minutes of art instruction in a 6-day cycle. In art classes, students participate in lessons that correlate with Wisconsin State Art Standards: create, present, respond, and connect. Students also have the opportunity to participate in the Spring Art show. Adaptive art is available for students in special education. As a fine arts department, a Fine Arts field trip is organized for fourth grade students to attend. The classes attend a professional orchestral performance at the Minnesota Orchestra and browse exhibits at the Minneapolis Institute of the Arts.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

Paperjack elementary students attend physical education classes on a regular basis; students in all grade levels receive 35 minutes of physical education every other day. Students participate in lessons based around the Wisconsin State Physical Education Standards. These are rooted in social emotional learning, skill acquisition, and promotion of safe, fair play. In cooperation with our local community center, a swim unit is offered to the students.

School breakfast and lunch meals are offered to all students. The nutrition team treats meal service times as extensions of classroom learning. Regular nutrition education teaches students about different fruits and vegetables, as well as food from other cultures. The school's kitchen features a hydroponic growing system that grows fresh lettuce and herbs. You will often see school nutrition administration working with students

to do weekly water tests and periodic harvesting. This hands-on experience increases student knowledge and vegetable consumption. Lastly, the nutrition department is dedicated to using regular scratch cooking, local foods, and adherence to strict local nutrition standards that keep many harmful food additives out of the food served to children. The food and dining experience provided to students is meant to teach and encourage healthy eating habits for the school day and a lifetime.

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

2d. Technology/library/media

Paperjack Elementary's Library Media program supports and extends classroom learning with research, application, technology and STEM opportunities. Students participate in Library Media lessons once every 6 days yet may use the resources provided daily. Students in kindergarten through first grade learn to use resources to follow their personal interests. They learn about many types of resources, authors and technologies to fulfill their needs. Second and third grade students learn to use resources to extend their learning. They use electronic tools to dig into topics, find and evaluate print and electronic resources, and apply them in projects. Fourth and fifth grade students apply media skills to create knowledge and resources. They evaluate resources and use coding and other technology to create new ways to present information. Students learn to be critical users of resources, learning to distinguish fact from opinion and evaluate quality of information. Students work together building and learning through STEM activities.

The Library Media program also provides a wide variety of print and electronic resources to children. Students find reading materials and, study authors and genres of fiction to help them become life-long readers. They study nonfiction and learn to read infographics to gain knowledge from nonfiction resources.

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

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Our teachers collaboratively participate in a multi-layered approach to instruction for all students. Teachers have been working to implement a new set of Tier 1 reading curriculum focusing on the initial instruction of all students in the classroom. Within that curricula implementation, teachers have high quality read-alouds to guide deep understanding of a variety of texts. Teachers also successfully incorporate small group reading and phonics instruction throughout their reading blocks. During Tier 3 instruction, when a student needs additional support, teachers use research based interventions for foundational reading skills during our intervention block. To determine the needs of all students, teachers analyze FastBridge screening data with our building interventionist and Title I reading teacher; these are specialized instructors who work with the students' main teachers to support reading development. Alongside the screening data, classroom teachers use collective formative and summative assessment data to inform their instructional decisions. Once these decisions have been made, student progress is tracked weekly and adjustments to instruction are made as needed.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Classroom teachers provide opportunities to students to participate in book clubs with above grade-level texts. They also work to incorporate challenging math problems, open ended math situations, and critical thinking exercises. Staff also work to advance student learning through project-based instruction. We continuously use our intervention block to provide extensions for students who are ready to take their learning beyond grade level standards. Students in first and second grade work on learning to think divergently, convergently, evaluatively, and using their visual/spatial perceptions. The basis for this work comes from the Primary Education Thinking Skills (PETS) curriculum. Throughout this work, students

work to solve problems with the notion that situations can be solved and approached in many different ways. Students in second grade also work to extend their skills with technology focused project based learning opportunities. These opportunities are ever evolving and changing based on student needs. Through the Tiger Quest program, students in third, fourth, and fifth grade have participated in the Battle of the Books and Math Masters, which provide opportunities to display learning in competitive situations. Students also work in teams on STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math) projects such as partnering with the Minnesota Zoo on their animal enclosure project. For this project, students had to research the animal, their needs, and the caretaker's needs to make modifications to the current enclosure to better fit all those needs. Students then created a model to display what the new enclosure would offer to all and had the opportunity for the zoo to choose their work.

3c. Students with disabilities:

We have a structured intervention block to focus on closing the achievement gap of our students who need specialized instruction. To do this, staff work building wide to accommodate schedule adjustments to give as much support to these learners as possible. Students with specialized instruction receive quality tier 1 classroom instruction, grade level interventions, and their specialized instruction throughout their school day. Special education staff, regular education teachers, and all support staff work collaboratively to ensure that students are receiving all the layers of instruction they need to make gains toward grade-level standards.

3d. English Language Learners:

Our district has a K-12 English Language Learner teacher. She is a great resource when working with students who need this support. Based on student needs, she works with a student in our building twice a week on expressive language with the goal of helping them the student being able to write in English at grade level. She also incorporates a building-wide, interactive wall display so all students grow in their knowledge about other cultures. As with any student in our building, we determine the academic needs of English language learners based on their current level of performance and receive the appropriate intervention with the most highly qualified staff. Student progress is monitored weekly as well to determine the success of their instruction and changes made based on their continued need.

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Paperjack Elementary does an excellent job to engage and motivate students in a positive environment, starting with building relationships with every student in our building. When we get to know the students, we engage them with their individual interests and focus on discovery and inquiry. We begin the year with a “Connectedness Survey”. This survey shows staff which students currently have strong, positive relationships with staff members within our building. In turn, the survey also identifies students who are in need of these connections with adults in our building. This allows us to be intentional to ensure that every student feels valued as a part of our school community.

In the classroom, we include activities that will help engage and motivate students. Brain and movement breaks are used to increase active student attention. Mindfulness activities such as deep breathing, stretching, and visualization help students regulate feelings and give them strategies to use when frustration sets in. We start lessons with introductory hooks using websites and songs. We encourage students to present and share work, encourage friendly competition, scaffold tasks with checkpoints, and ask higher-order thinking questions.

Our building Tiger Pride Leaders (TPL) are 5th grade student leaders who are positive role models for all students. They are in charge of setting positive examples, running our school store, and keeping students safe before and after school by holding students to building expectations. One of our positive rewards for students are tiger tickets which are then collected for schoolwide celebrations or spent at the school store. Our school store which is a crucial piece to our Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) structure helps to reward positive behavior.

Along with our student leaders, each student has the opportunity to be a buddy. We have reading buddies that meet once a week. An older student is paired up with younger students to read to each other and foster a relationship. This is very fun and motivating for all students involved. Another way students build relationships is through our Run and Read program. This program couples physical activity, reading, and relationships. Students spend some time running, then they find a good book and read with an adult or another student.

With all of the ways students are engaged, above all, we want them to be lifelong learners and positive members of our community, within the school building and beyond.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Paperjack Elementary builds family and community involvement in several different facets to address all student and/or family needs.

Books and Breakfast is a community event for students who are enrolled in the Title I reading program. Parents are invited to have a free breakfast, read books with their child, and choose books to take home. We partner with the New Richmond Public Library as an opportunity to explain their programs and the importance of family engagement with building a reader at home.

Paperjack’s comprehensive counseling program works with students, families, and the community. Our counselor bridges the gap between the school and community by offering counseling referrals and small group programs. We offer two programs to families. Coffee with Counselors seeks out all parents/guardians who collaboratively work to gain knowledge and give/receive advice for all parenting topics. Coffee and treats are generously donated from the partnerships with local shops. Additionally, the elementary counseling team puts together Tiger Dads to bring together positive male role models and their elementary-aged student(s) to strengthen relationships through a 30-minute program on family topics. During Tiger Dads, parents connect with others in the school community, learn about positive character traits, engage in relationship building activities with children, and win prizes through the community partners that fund the

program.

Paperjack partners with the local food shelf to meet the nutritional needs of our students. The Happy Kids Backpack Program (HKBP) provides families with healthy food options to prevent food scarcity over the weekend. It is a cooperative process between the School District, funding from Empty Bowls, and Five Loaves Food Shelf. This event pairs meeting the needs of students with educating families about healthy meals. Paperjack Elementary helps raise funds to support this cause by creating a week-long food donation drive and a penny drive.

Our partnerships with families and the community lends itself to a variety of events throughout the school year. Students at Paperjack Elementary perform an after school Winter Concert to share their talents with the community. A Halloween Concert (kindergarten) and the Opera for the Young (third grade) enrich the music curriculum and share our learning with our community. Kindergarten students participate in an afternoon of snowshoeing with Rivers Alive, an environmental organization working to get kids outside. Fourth graders participate in Safety Day, a partnership between our middle school and local civic departments where students participate in exploration stations that demonstrate personal safety habits such as understanding chemical product labels and safely traversing barbed wire fences while hunting. All of these facets of our school help to bring out the best in all of our students, families, and the community.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

The professional culture at Paperjack Elementary is primarily created from its leadership. The principal is very involved, focusing on positive relationships among students and staff. Our principal unites staff, encouraging teachers to recognize one another's strengths. One building tradition is the passing of the "drumsticks trophy," which was named after an inspiring video "Be a Mr. Jensen."; in which a teacher recognizes a strength in a student that others deemed as problematic by placing drumsticks in this child's hands.

Our principal supports our building culture with willingness to step in wherever needed to assist students and staff. He covers any classroom if a last-minute need arises, works with students who are having a hard time, sits in hallways, entryways, and under tables to meet students where they are and help them return ready to learn. These actions maintain the capacity of teachers to continue instructing and builds trust and community where, led by example, staff supports each other for student success.

This trust and collaborative community is also evident in our desire to support student success through our Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) and Professional Development (PD) opportunities. Paperjack staff meet monthly with district, grade-level, and special teams to review standards, align curriculum, analyze data, design assessments, and share strategies for increasing student learning. These meetings are conducted in a professional yet comfortable manner where all voices are heard, valued, and respected. Book studies, classes, workshops, and training are also regularly provided by the math and literacy coaches for staff to expand and hone their craft, thus enhancing student learning. The math and literacy coaches also provide team-teaching opportunities for staff to collaborate and learn from each other's strengths and positively affect student learning.

Professional collaboration between general and special education teachers helps to meet the needs of all students. The special education team consists of: special education teachers, a program support specialist, speech language pathologists, occupational therapists, and a school psychologist. This team collaborates bi-weekly regarding student plans, accommodations, goals, and social/emotional needs. The team supports a culture of high expectations to promote each student's individual potentials and help them perform to their greatest while promoting inclusion and access for all. This team has been incredibly successful in helping students to excel in school through differentiated lesson plans, organizers, and assessments. The general and special education teachers help monitor the student progress and modify when and where necessary.

4. School Leadership:

The school leadership philosophy at Paperjack can be summed up in two words: positive relationships! With a positive work environment along with a leader who focuses on relationships, Paperjack is a safe and welcoming place for all. Teachers are trusted as professionals who are capable of doing their jobs in the lens of doing what is best for kids.

Another philosophy is that staff take ownership for the success and well-being of all students in the building, not just those on their class roster. This blends into other leadership committees and programs in the building such as our Professional Learning Communities (PLC), Positive Behavior Intervention Systems (PBIS), and Student Support Team (SST).

We have a strong PLC structure where we discuss data and plan Tier I interventions or extensions based on what students need. Staff value this collaboration and come to meetings with agreed upon current data and ideas of how to improve instruction around the topic that is being analyzed. Once data is discussed, team members work together to find lessons or skills to practice that will advance student achievement.

We utilize PBIS by recognizing and rewarding positive behaviors with “tiger tickets” which students can save and spend on school incentives and at the Tiger Store. Any staff member in the building can hand out a tiger ticket to any student. Tickets are given out for a variety of reasons that focus on being a role model and making good choices in all areas of the building. When students are following the school expectations and are rewarded for making positive choices it contributes to a positive learning environment. This ensures that when instruction happens, students are ready to learn.

We use our Student Support Team to identify students that may not be closing gaps as quickly as expected. SST teams consist of teachers from all grade levels who share strategies and ideas with one another. Members participate in data analysis, discussion, and brainstorming. Teachers leave these meetings feeling supported and armed with new ideas to try out to help ensure student success.

Having a school where we believe in the power of working together, strong relationships, and shared ownership of outcomes leads to a cohesive system for all parties to succeed. All of these positive relationships build into student achievement through the students’ sense of belonging and desire to learn and work hard.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Some of our most diverse needs are with our students who come to school without their basic needs being met. We have many families that participate in our free and reduced lunch program. Through this we are also able to offer free breakfast to all students. Paperjack partners with the community’s Kiwanis Club to provide needed food and supplies through its Happy Kids Backpack Program for families in need. Through these opportunities, students enter the classroom more prepared to learn.

We have also assisted families with affordable before and after school care programs. This program is available for free to families who qualify for free or reduced lunch so they are able to work knowing their child is cared for.

During the pandemic, it became apparent that there was a discrepancy between families with and without technology resources available to them. We are able to provide previously used Chromebooks at little or no cost to families in need. Access to the internet is more readily available today; however if it is not available to families, we provide them the option of receiving information via a paper copy.

One of the biggest ways we ensure respect in the classroom and school is to always hold students accountable for their learning and to do all we can to ensure they are successful. Regardless of any of the factors mentioned above, when a student enters the classroom, they are welcomed for who they are and expected to work to be the best version of themselves.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

Our rigorous, data-driven intervention system has been most instrumental to our school's success. We use the FastBridge reading and math screeners to collect data three times a year: fall, winter, and spring. FastBridge offers a Screening to Intervention report that assists placing students in good -fit interventions. Along with the FastBridge data, we look at a student's reading fluency, classroom reading level (currently we use Fountas and Pinell's Benchmark Assessment), encoding skills (spelling), and all available formative classroom data. After analyzing all of this data, we are able to place students into small groups that best meet their needs.

The practice we use for our intervention instruction is a reflection of one of our core beliefs that all students in our building are all our students and all students can learn at high levels. Our academic intervention block is called WIN (What I Need) and consists of a daily, scheduled time per grade level. During this time all students in a grade level are placed into a small group based on their needs. Students are dispersed among our reading teacher, classroom teachers, interventionist, and regular education paraprofessionals during their grade-level WIN block.

The level of collaboration between teachers and staff displays that each student matters, across grades and classroom walls. Teachers hold to the belief that every student in the school is their student, regardless of which teacher they spend most of their day with. We celebrate the successes of all students and work as a team to meet the needs of every student. The staff in our building work tirelessly to build relationships with all students so that each student feels connected, valued, and important. When we are assessing the academic needs of our students we also consider the valued relationships staff have with students to help determine the best placement for intensive interventions.

Our academic interventions, used throughout our building during the intervention block (WIN), hold staff and students to high levels of learning and growth. Our most highly trained staff work with our students of greatest need and monitor progress of those students weekly. Believing that all students can achieve at high levels drives our need to work together through honest communication and data analysis. All of this pushes us to be innovative and responsive educators who value each and every student as people capable of doing great things.