

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2014 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mr. Richard Dale Brubakken

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

Official School Name Medary Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 718 5th St South

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

City Brookings                      State SD                      Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 57006-3398

County Brookings County                      State School Code Number\* \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone 605-696-4311                      Fax 605-696-4362

Web site/URL http://brookings.k12.sd.us/medary    E-mail rich.brubakken@k12.sd.us

Twitter Handle \_\_\_\_\_ Facebook Page \_\_\_\_\_ Google+ \_\_\_\_\_

YouTube/URL \_\_\_\_\_ Blog \_\_\_\_\_ Other Social Media Link \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\* Dr. Roger DeGroot, Superintendent    E-mail: roger.degroot@k12.sd.us  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Brookings School District 05-1    Tel. 605-696-4311

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board  
President/Chairperson Dr. Marysz Rames  
(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 that it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

*\*Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

## **PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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**Include this page in the school’s application as page 2.**

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, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made its Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) or Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state’s AMOs or AYP requirements in the 2013-2014 school year and be certified by the state representative. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2008 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, or 2013.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
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. 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.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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All data are the most recent year available.

**DISTRICT** (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools)

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)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
  - Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
  - Suburban
  - Small city or town in a rural area
  - Rural
3. 18 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.
4. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	60	63	123
1	64	76	140
2	61	64	125
3	67	61	128
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	252	264	516

5. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 3 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 2 % Asian
  - 2 % Black or African American
  - 2 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 86 % White
  - 5 % 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.)

6. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2012 - 2013 year: 3%

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2012 until the end of the school year	12
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2012 until the end of the 2012-2013 school year	2
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	14
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1	516
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.027
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

7. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %  
5 Total number ELL  
 Number of non-English languages represented: 4  
 Specify non-English languages: Spanish, Dinka, Arabic, Somali
8. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 32 %  
 Total number students who qualify: 173

If this method is not an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

9. Students receiving special education services: 15 %  
75 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

4 Autism	0 Orthopedic Impairment
0 Deafness	3 Other Health Impaired
0 Deaf-Blindness	22 Specific Learning Disability
3 Emotional Disturbance	28 Speech or Language Impairment
0 Hearing Impairment	0 Traumatic Brain Injury
5 Mental Retardation	1 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
2 Multiple Disabilities	7 Developmentally Delayed

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of personnel in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers	24
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	11
Paraprofessionals	10
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

11. 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

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Daily student attendance	96%	97%	98%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools)**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2013

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
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%

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

Yes                      No X

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

## **PART III – SUMMARY**

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“Working Together. . .Educating With Excellence. . .Inspiring Learners For Life” is the mission statement for the Brookings School District. All schools within the district, including Medary Elementary School, strive to make this mission come to life on a daily basis. Teachers and staff, students, and parents work together to make the educational program meaningful to the students as they move on to the next level of learning.

Medary Elementary School serves approximately 540 students in grades K-3. Our school community would still be classified as a rural and our student population, although changing, is predominantly comprised of Caucasian students. We do see a growing number of Hispanic students and our English as a Second Language population is growing. This is one of the opportunities we face while we celebrate what this diversity adds to our school culture. Another opportunity we have is the growing student population in the district. While many of the schools in rural South Dakota are losing students, the Brookings School District has been gaining. Last year we enrolled over 50 more students in kindergarten than were expected. Due to this fact, the district was successful in passing a bond issue to add another K-3 school in our district. This school will not open until the fall of 2015, so we are experiencing more students in our building than it is designed to hold. Our school board has made it clear that we want to keep our class sizes to about 20 students. We are now having classes up to 25 students. Our challenge is to make sure that all of these students receive the best educational foundation that they can.

We are blessed to have parents who support public education while demanding excellence for their students. It is not uncommon for our school to have many parent and community volunteers coming into our school on a daily basis. We also have an active PTA. Our community is also the home of South Dakota State University. Medary Elementary School has worked collaboratively with this institution’s education program and we have served as a learning hub for many of their future teachers. Additionally, we have housed one of our kindergarten classes on the SDSU campus as a learning lab. Teaching staff at Medary Elementary School and faculty at SDSU have worked closely to find opportunities that are beneficial to both entities and the students they serve.

Furthermore, Medary Elementary School has served as the home of Brookings School District’s social skills (behavioral program). K-3 students in the district come to Medary for these services if they are determined eligible on an IEP. We are especially proud to have been able to offer physical education, art, and counseling to all students in our school. Full-time staff persons have been hired in each area to provide these services.

Medary Elementary School has a proud tradition. In the past, the school was seen as one “south of the tracks”, meaning that it did not have as good a reputation as the other schools in the district. When we went into school improvement through NCLB, this stigma was enhanced. The whole school community has worked hard to alleviate this perception. Our reputation for excellence is now the guiding principle.

In the last five years, our school transitioned from a K-5 school to a K-3 school due to the changing demographics of the community. Historically, as stated earlier, Medary Elementary School has been on school improvement through NCLB for our special education sub-group. Through a detailed school improvement plan, a comprehensive reading plan which includes RtI and connections to the Common Core, and implementation of a math curriculum that focuses on investigative processes rather than rote skills, Medary Elementary has not only worked out of school improvement but has also been recognized as a “Status” school by the State of South Dakota. This put Medary within the top 10 percent of all schools in the state. The State of South Dakota nominated Medary Elementary School as a candidate for the National Blue Ribbon School Program under the Exemplary High Performing Schools category.

Medary Elementary School has focused on collecting data that helps drive our instruction and our curriculum processes. While not an easy process, the staff and school administration have watched for trends in our data and have made instructional and curricular changes that have proven successful by numerous measurements, including both internal and external assessments.

We are proud of our whole school community and its efforts to make our school better. While this process has been hard work, the students have been the beneficiaries.

## **PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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### **1. Assessment Results:**

A) As South Dakota has worked on a waiver for NCLB, the process by which schools have been evaluated has changed. During 2008-2010, the AMO for Medary Elementary's third grade students for reading was 69% and for math was 72%. During this time, 95% (2008-2009) and 88% (2009-2010) of Medary's third graders were proficient or advanced in reading. In math, the results were similar. 94% (2008-2009) and 86% (2009-2010) of Medary's third graders were proficient or advanced.

In 2010-2011, the AMO of the state went up to 76% for reading and 79% in math. The Medary third grade results showed that 90% of our students were proficient or advanced in reading and 88% were proficient or advanced in math.

In 2011-2012 and 2012-2013, the State of South Dakota changed its accountability process that was eventually reported in the SD-STARS system. The school year 2012-2013 also brought with it a State School Performance Index based on academics and school attendance. The Medary Elementary third graders did well on both of these measures. In 2011-2012, 87% of the students were proficient or advanced in the area of reading and 85% were proficient or advanced in math. Both scores were above the state expectation. In 2012-2013, 92.56% of Medary's third graders were proficient or advanced in reading and 89.26% were proficient or advanced in math. This, along with the attendance rate of 95.85% put Medary in the top 10% of schools in South Dakota or at the "Status" level.

B) When reviewing the data tables for reading/language arts and math over the past five years, the following trends were found.

No less than 87% of the total third grade population at Medary Elementary School was at the proficient or advanced level in reading/language arts for any of the five years listed. This percentage went as high as 95% in 2008-2009. If one were to average the percentage of students performing at the proficient or advanced level in reading/language arts over this period they would find this percentage to be 91%.

No less than 85% of the total third grade population at Medary Elementary School was at the proficient or advanced level in math for any of the five years listed. Again the highest percentage of 94% was achieved in the 2008-2009 school year. If one were to average the percentage of students performing at the proficient or advanced level in math over this period they would find this percentage to be 88%.

When looking at both the reading/language arts and math scores, no significant gains or losses over the five years of data were noted. It should also be noted that the data for each of these years represented a different

Three subgroups had the necessary student numbers to be considered for comparison on these assessments: Economic Disadvantaged Students, Students Receiving Special Education Services, and White Students. The only subgroup that showed a significant achievement gap when compared to all students is Students Receiving Special Education Services. During the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 school years, this same subgroup did not have enough students in it to be used for comparative data.

Medary Elementary School has continuously worked to find ways to bring our students with disabilities scores closer to the general population while realizing that these students have diagnosed reasons why this may be a difficult process. When comparing the 2012-2013 data, the gap between the total school population and the special education population is much more pronounced in the area of math. Our school has made strong efforts to diminish the gap for these students in the area of reading through our intensified RtI program. We saw a dramatic jump from 2011-2012 to 2012-2013 in the number of students who were proficient and advanced from 50% to 74%.

Within the special education program continual curriculum changes have been attempted to assist students in the area of math. We have also worked harder to include more students in the regular classrooms for

math instruction. This has been made more possible due to the fact that we do achievement leveling in our third grade math programs in an attempt to challenge students at all levels of performance.

The State of South Dakota has also realized that students with academic delays will have a hard time maintaining the same levels of performance as their non-disabled peers. We have been able to apply confidence intervals to the testing data. When this is done, our students with disabilities do reach the expectations of the State of South Dakota.

## **2. Using Assessment Results:**

As was stated in the first section of Part IV, the SD-STEP assessment is given to third graders in April of their year. Results are not received until the summer and the students have gone on to fourth grade. While this data is important and show trends in our K-3 instructional program, the results are more meaningful for the staff in fourth grade.

Due to this fact, we collect information from a variety of assessments in Grades K-3 that is able to be watched over the child's progression through his/her four years at Medary Elementary School. Common assessments include DIBELS testing, Fountas and Pinnell Book Levels, High Frequency Words, STAR Reading, STAR Math, Facts Assessments and teacher generated tests based on the Common Core Standards. What is important to realize about this data collection is that this data starts in kindergarten and continues through third grade. We are able to trace where a student is at in comparison to where he/she a year ago and perhaps project what each child's individual needs will be in the future.

The data from these assessments are collected every quarter and teachers within and between the grade levels meet and talk about the patterns they see. Teachers have deep conversations about the patterns they are seeing and this trend data is compared across all of the classrooms in a grade level. If one of the classes is particularly higher or lower than another class, educational strategies within the team are compared and contrasted.

These assessments also bring about changes in the delivery of the curriculum. DIBELS, for instance, is used to help place children into strategic learning groups as we conduct our RtI process. Other reading assessments assist classroom teachers when they work with groups of students who have similar needs. Probably the most important element of the data collection process is the fact that all grade levels and teachers are involved in the collection of data that can be compared to the standards that we are teaching across grade levels and as a school. We are able to see which standards have been successfully met or which standards need more work just by comparing this collected data.

Once the data is collected for the year, it is compiled by grade level and passed along to the next grade level as a baseline for their students. This data is also crucial when formulating reading and math instruction and intervention groups.

Parents are the main stakeholder group that sees the results of this data collection. Teachers sit down with parents frequently to go over the data for their individual child to let them know the child's current progress in relationship to the standards that he/she needing to meet.

This data collection is also used as a measurement of the goals listed in our school improvement plan. Parent/community members are part of the school's school improvement team and they are key players when the group reviews this data.

## **3. Sharing Lessons Learned:**

The Medary Elementary School staff is extremely proud of the successes we have achieved and have shared ideas with others around us in various ways. Our school has developed a reputation for high achievement so many times other schools will ask us what we are doing in certain areas of our curriculum or general processes. Here are some of the examples of where we have shared our successes.

Our school administration has shared how we do data collection to other school administrators in the district. Data collection is the foundation of our school improvement process and we have shared what has worked for us. Our administrator is also a trained lead evaluator for AdvancED. In his work with other schools dealing with school improvement he has given these schools ideas that they may want to try when it comes to data use for school improvement. Our building leader is also very active at the state level in the principal's organization. He has presented information about projects that our school has undertaken including teacher evaluation, Common Core implementation, and the RtI process.

As was stated in our summary, we work very closely with the students and staff at South Dakota State University. The staff at Medary School is constantly working with students who are in training to become teachers. They share their professional expertise on a daily basis. The teaching staff at SDSU also looks to Medary Elementary for leadership in teacher evaluation, implementation of the Common Core, and RtI. Many staff persons have presented information to the teaching staff in an attempt to help them show how educational theory can become practice.

When staff attends regional and state workshops they are often asked to share their expertise and experiences with the others attending the workshops. Many times the topics shared are centered on our approaches to teaching reading and more specifically how we implement the RtI process. This is due to our school having a reputation for excellence in the region and state.

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

Medary Elementary School is fortunate to have very involved families who are interested in making the school experience the best that it can be for all students, not just their own. We also have a community that is extremely supportive of the educational programs in the district. Our community holds high expectations for the school system and it looks for ways to be involved in the educational process.

The staff engages the families of our students in a variety of ways, but the most foundational element is the development of a communication system between the classroom teacher and parents. We use a variety of methods to make sure that parents are informed on a daily basis. Technology and email have made this endeavor more possible. With our change to the Common Core and the investigative processes used in teaching math, we have worked hard to help parents understand how teaching and learning has changed since they were the learners. We also use Infinite Campus to help parents watch for student grades and assignments.

Medary Elementary has a strong PTA and we have parent volunteers in our school all of the time. Parent involvement is embraced and encouraged in our classrooms. Our parents provide a yearly Spring Fling, a day filled with educational experiences for all of the students. This day is completely planned and implemented by parents.

Our community is also involved in our school. Junior Achievement brings businesses into our classrooms and we have had a number of businesses that have offered their expertise in different curricular areas from banking to professional career exploration. Again, South Dakota State plays a key role in the community involvement in our school. Many organizations on campus have found ways to interact with our students, especially in the areas of math and language arts. An example of this would be the student athlete readers who come into our schools to work with reluctant readers. We have also had male students engaged in our Reading With Him program, a program designed to get male role models into the school.

Parents and community members serve on our school improvement planning team. We have also engaged parents as we have explored adding elementary school facilities to our growing district.

## **PART V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Curriculum:**

Medary Elementary School provides a full range of the curriculum for its students. The foundation for our curriculum and instruction is the South Dakota Content Standards. South Dakota has recently adopted the Common Core Standards for Reading/ELA and Math. This new adoption of these standards has had an impact on classrooms approach instruction.

At the primary level, our curriculum emphasis is on building a base for both reading/language arts and math. We spend the majority of our instructional time in these two areas. Up to third grade, our social studies and science curriculum is often integrated into our language arts program. At third grade, we have formal instruction in both science and social studies.

We are fortunate to offer support through music, library, art, physical education and counseling services. All students in Kindergarten through third grade receive these services. The Brookings School District has hired persons specialized in each of these areas to provide these services. Along with these services, we provide computer instruction to each of these grade levels. This area is of particular interest as we will be starting our state assessment using the Smarter Balance Assessment this spring. This assessment requires students to have technology skills to perform this assessment on line.

Our reading/language arts curriculum focuses on phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension and fluency. Medary Elementary School has developed a Comprehensive Reading Plan to support these elements and it includes strong connections to the Common Core and Response to Intervention. Spelling and English are included in the language arts program.

Our math program includes development of the following math-related abilities: concepts and reasoning (e.g., basic number concepts, meaning of operations such as addition, geometric concepts); automatic recall of number facts (e.g., memorization of basic addition facts such as  $3 + 4$  so that children know answers instantly instead of having to count); computational algorithms (the written procedure or series of steps for solving more complex types of calculation, e.g., for two-digit addition with regrouping, calculation starts in the right-hand column and tens are "carried" from the ones to the tens column); functional math (e.g., practical applications such as time and money); and verbal problem-solving (e.g., solving word problems). Our emphasis in math has changed to an investigative model where students are required to verbalize their thought processes as they are learning.

Our social studies and science curriculum in Grades K-2 are incorporated into non-fiction materials used during guided reading sessions (maps and globes, life cycles, wind, senses, weather, plants, holidays animals/habitats dental health/germs, insects, physical, life, and earth sciences, resources, communities, government, world). Formal social studies in Grade 3 covers Native Americans, geography, economics, the City of Brookings, and government. Formal science instruction at Grade 3 covers plants and animals, planets, matter, and rocks and minerals.

Health, wellness and nutrition are immersed in our K-3 health curriculum as well as in the school district's wellness plan. Our physical education program enhances the wellness aspect of our school by encouraging movement and giving students options for life-long exercise.

Our music program includes opportunities for students to perform for parents while our art program gives students an opportunity to express themselves visually. Our PTA has also supported a visiting artist program for our students each year.

Counseling services include classroom instruction on positive character traits. These traits are used as our student recognition program called the "Medary Kid of Character".

Although foreign languages exposure is important for our students, our district does not have the money to support a language program. Our PTA has worked to offer students before-school language programs in French, German, and Spanish. We have had a large number of students who have participated in this program.

## **2. Reading/English:**

2a) The Medary Elementary School reading curriculum is founded on the critical areas of effective reading instruction, the components of a comprehensive literacy framework, and a classroom/intervention schedule. Our reading curriculum isn't founded on a particular curriculum, but any formal reading series could fit our curriculum process.

The five critical areas of effective reading instruction found in the Medary Elementary School reading program include phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency

The components of Medary Elementary School's comprehensive literacy framework include assessment, differentiated instruction, collaboration and professional development. The purpose of assessment is identify student reading and writing strengths and needs, to inform instruction, and monitor progress. This includes a universal screening, formative and diagnostic assessments, and progress monitoring. Differentiated instruction is designed to meet the reading and writing needs of all students by adjusting instruction in a variety of settings. Medary utilizes a three tiered delivery model. The first tier of this model consists of whole group instruction, small group instruction and individual instruction. The second tier is strategic intervention instruction in small groups and the third tier is intensive intervention instruction where there are individual lessons in a one-on-one or 1:2 setting. Collaboration is designed to help professionals make decisions about student instruction based on student data. Teachers, working together, are perhaps the most powerful force when it comes to developing reading strategies and approaches. The Medary Elementary School reading plan recognizes this fact and stresses opportunities for teachers to work within their grade level, school-wide, and sometimes in other arrangements.

Medary Elementary has also developed a classroom intervention schedule which includes the following elements:

- 90 minute reading blocks
- RtI Intervention Time (Minimum of 30 minutes/4 times a week) for all levels
- Title I and Special Education Interventions

Medary Elementary School has shown success in the area of reading as 93% of our third grade students were proficient or advanced as measured by the Dakota STEP Assessment and 93% of our outgoing third graders in May of 2013 were at benchmark as measured by the DIBELS assessment.

## **3. Mathematics:**

Medary Elementary School has embraced the Common Core standards in their implementation of the math curriculum. While this has been a huge departure from the processes used to teach math in the past, these revised teaching strategies help students to become much more adept at explaining their learning. By using this process, proficient math students can:

- explain to themselves the meaning of a problem and looking for entry points to its solution
- analyze givens, constraints, relationships, and goals
- make conjectures about the form and meaning of the solution and plan a solution pathway rather than simply jumping into a solution attempt
- consider analogous problems, and try special cases and simpler forms of the original problem in order to gain insight into its solution
- monitor and evaluate their progress and change course if necessary

- explain correspondences between equations, verbal descriptions, tables, and graphs or draw diagrams of important features and relationships, graph data, and search for regularity or trends
- check their answers to problems using a different method, and they continually ask themselves, "Does this make sense?"
- understand the approaches of others to solving complex problems and identify correspondences between different approaches.

As we progress through the transition, we have had growth opportunities for students, parents, and teachers. This methodology was adopted because for some of the first times, students are more interested in the processes used to solve problems than just getting the answers. Also, this process allows students to talk about their thinking as they solved the mathematical problem. Students learn from each other and there is more than one way to solve a problem.

At the third grade level, students are arranged in differentiated groups. Students are held accountable for their learning within these groups. Students with special needs are also given extra support as described in their IEP.

#### **4. Additional Curriculum Area:**

At Medary Elementary School we stridently pursue our mission statement of working together as a staff on our district goals, to educate our students to the highest level possible and to develop each of our students into life-long learners by integrating our encore subject learning with regular classroom curriculum. Whether its kindergarten math, second grade reading or physical education we strive to connect each curriculum with genuine experiences to meet the needs of our students.

Many parents, and some educators, tend to look at physical education as a time just to run and play games. However, there is much more skill and content embedded into our curriculum that fits throughout our entire K-3 curriculum areas. In our physical education lessons we incorporate geometry, problem solving, informational reading, arithmetic and conceptual math, physical and biological science, and fine motor and gross motor skill development. For example, as a class routine, each day our students count by multiples when they stretch, individually read and are accountable for their warm-up routine from a bulletin board on the wall, and learn their physical anatomy through scheduled science mini-lessons. Students develop both fine and gross motor skills and knowledge in lessons as they write, solve puzzles, learn to tie shoes, learn ball-handling skills with hands, feet, and body, skip, hop, jump, gallop, and run.

Like many schools, all encore classes, not just physical education, have the opportunity to work with every student and staff member in our building. Uniquely though, the encore teachers at Medary Elementary School regularly collaborate and formally plan to incorporate subject area curriculum skills and content from every grade level to help provide a comprehensive educational experience. With these efforts, we hope students will connect the skills and curriculum previously taught in the classroom with different and genuine learning experiences in their encore classes thus enriching their educational experience at our school.

#### **5. Instructional Methods:**

Medary Elementary School serves a school population with a very diverse set of student needs. While there are more rigidly defined modifications for students in the IEP or 504 processes, there are other modifications and methodology changes that take place in a less formal fashion.

The majority of the instruction that takes place at Medary Elementary School is through whole group instruction in a classroom setting. One of the most common changes in this methodology is when paraprofessionals assist individuals or small groups of students once whole group instruction is completed. It is also very common for classroom teachers to assist smaller groups of students once large group instruction is given. Teachers also work with students on a one-to-one ratio when it is necessary for support.

We have placed technology in each learning environment. Smart Boards can be found in each area. It is very common for this technology to be used as an instructional tool, including online video support and interactive large group activities. We have reduced the amount of pencil and paper activities in every environment. Our school also utilizes a mobile computer lab and an iPad lab to assist in the learning process. As we look forward to testing using the Smarter Balance Assessment, we are finding ways for students to use these forms of technology when completing their work. We have also modified environments for students with disabilities through the use of computers. At least one of our classrooms is also using an enhanced speaker system to help a hearing impaired student.

In reading, we also break students into learning groups for Response to Intervention. All students, regardless of level of performance, receive extra support for at least a half hour per day for four days a week.

At the third grade level, we differentiate our math groups by the needs of the students. All students are accountable for the same curriculum, but the pace by which students progress through the materials is modified. This is done for all performance levels in the grade level.

## **6. Professional Development:**

Professional development takes on many different faces at Medary Elementary School. Initially, we think about professional development as going outside our environment to learn about something or support a current practice.

During the 2012-2013 school term, our school was selected to be part of training group through the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. One of our school goals was to work with RtI and improve our reading levels. This opportunity was called "Project Readers". We spent the whole year working on scientifically based reading interventions, including being coached by an outside group. Our whole school embraced this process and our reading gains were phenomenal.

Each year, our building is granted a dollar amount for staff to attend workshops outside of the school setting. The only requirement for the use of this money is that these activities be supported by our goals listed in our school improvement plan. Staff persons are also required to share what they learned at these workshops with the rest of the teaching staff.

However, our most meaningful professional development takes place within our school walls. Most of the uniform professional development for Medary Elementary School is planned at the district level. Our major emphasis over the past two years has been training in and application of the Common Core standards and also with the Danielson Framework for teacher effectiveness. We have had outside consultants and we have also done book talks and internal group discussions. We have found that the most dynamic professional development takes place when teachers have the opportunity to work within their grade levels/departments to reflect on their teaching, curriculum, and student learning. Every Wednesday, our school dismisses an hour early for staff to plan school improvement activities. In fact, this planning opportunity is called School Improvement Planning Time. While only an hour and a half per week, this time has been extremely valuable in the process of professional development.

In order for professional development to have the structure that is necessary and still allow for a variety of processes, we make sure that all professional activities can support the goals of our building's school improvement plan.

## **7. School Leadership**

School leadership at Medary Elementary is not one person. While there is a school principal who leads the school, many staff persons are engaged in the leadership activities of the school. The school is served by a Principal's Advisory Committee, a group that is represented by all grade levels or departments. This

committee meets with and discusses key opportunities and issues with the school administrator and the team plots out a plan of action or support. Decisions for students take place within this group.

The basic foundation of our school, the Medary School Improvement Plan, is designed, written and reviewed by a team. This team includes school leaders and also parent/community members. Very few decisions need to be made by the school principal in isolation. Within this plan are the goals for the school. Because all elements of the school have a voice in the goal setting process and the activities to be used to meet these goals, there is more buy-in to the process. School improvement at Medary Elementary is not a top-down process and neither is leadership.

Medary Elementary School leaders are involved in many different district processes. Teachers can volunteer to serve on district committees of their choosing. They become the voice for our school at the district level. The building principal encourages all staff to become leaders in this capacity.

The building administrator encourages and supports the staff at Medary Elementary to become leaders for children. By uplifting them in their instructional journeys, he makes sure that they have the tools necessary to make choices that are positive for children. He is also a model for the teachers to follow when dealing with curriculum. He does not pretend to have all of the answers, but is willing to do whatever is necessary to make sure that the teacher's leadership in the classroom is able to reach its full potential.

In some ways, the students at Medary Elementary School are also empowered to become leaders in the school. The children have a voice in our school and they are encouraged to become positive role models for the others around them. By recognizing our students based on different character traits each month, we reinforce the positive leadership impact they have on other children.

# PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

## STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Math

Test: Dakota STEP

All Students Tested/Grade: 3

Edition/Publication Year: 2013

Publisher: Pearson

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES*</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	89	85	88	86	94
% Advanced	31	34	34	40	38
Number of students tested	121	130	119	93	88
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment	1	2	0	0	1
% of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	83	72	84	82	93
% Advanced	17	19	17	27	25
Number of students tested	35	32	36	22	24
<b>2. Students receiving Special Education</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	53	50	61		
% Advanced	20	14	15		
Number of students tested	16	14	13		
<b>3. English Language Learner Students</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. African- American Students</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Asian Students</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>7. American Indian or</b>					

<b>Alaska Native Students</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>9. White Students</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	90	84	89	85	93
% Advanced	58	36	32	40	39
Number of students tested	106	114	106	85	84
<b>10. Two or More Races identified Students</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>11. Other 1: Other 1</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>12. Other 2: Other 2</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>13. Other 3: Other 3</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

**NOTES:** The special education subgroup did not have the 10% necessary for the 2008-2009 and the 2009-2010 school years.

**STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS**

**Subject:** Reading/ELA  
**All Students Tested/Grade:** 3  
**Publisher:** Pearson

**Test:** Dakota STEP  
**Edition/Publication Year:** 2013

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES*</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	93	87	90	88	95
% Advanced	49	49	41	53	61
Number of students tested	121	130	119	93	87
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment	1	2	0	0	1
% of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	88	79	83	86	100
% Advanced	34	38	19	27	50
Number of students tested	35	32	36	22	24
<b>2. Students receiving Special Education</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	74	50	69		
% Advanced	27	29	23		
Number of students tested	16	14	13		
<b>3. English Language Learner Students</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. African- American Students</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Asian Students</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					

Number of students tested					
<b>8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>9. White Students</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	93	87	91	87	95
% Advanced	48	51	39	52	60
Number of students tested	106	114	106	85	83
<b>10. Two or More Races identified Students</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>11. Other 1: Other 1</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>12. Other 2: Other 2</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>13. Other 3: Other 3</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

**NOTES:** The number of students in the special education subgroup did not meet the minimum number of students to have a score for that population in 2008-2009 and 2009-2010.