

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2016 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 Mrs. Michelle Blackley

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

Official School Name Daniel Wright Junior High School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1370 North Riverwoods Road

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

City Lincolnshire State IL Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 60069-2402

County Lake County

Telephone (847) 295-1560 Fax (847) 295-7136

Web site/URL http://www.dw.d103.org E-mail mblackley@d103.org

Twitter Handle https://twitter.com/District103 Facebook Page http://tinyurl.com/zrdhwbn Google+ \_\_\_\_\_

YouTube/URL http://tinyurl.com/qz7jwrg 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, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

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

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\*Dr. Scott Warren Ed.D E-mail swarren@d103.org

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

District Name Lincolnshire-Prairie View District #103 Tel. (847) 295-4030

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. Gary Gordon

(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, write N/A in the space.*

## 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. 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 public school has met their state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) using the most recent accountability results available for the year prior to nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) for the year in which they are nominated (2015-2016) 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 2010 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: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, or 2015.
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

---

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2015-2016) unless otherwise stated.

### DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 2 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 0 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 3 TOTAL

### SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

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. Number of students as of October 1, 2015 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	89	92	181
6	109	103	212
7	115	99	214
8	113	101	214
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	426	395	821

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 40 % Asian
  - 1 % Black or African American
  - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 51 % White
  - 4 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2014 – 2015 school year: 3%

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, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	15
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	12
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	27
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	839
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.032
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 4 %  
31 Total number ELL

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

Chinese, Hebrew, Japanese, Kannada, Korean, Mandarin, Marathi/Hindi, Romanian, Russian, Spanish

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 1 %  
Total number students who qualify: 6

8. Students receiving special education services: 13 %  
103 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 conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

<u>10</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>25</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>39</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>4</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>21</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>1</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>2</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 2
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	3
Classroom teachers	31
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	35
Paraprofessionals	21
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	9

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 26:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
Daily student attendance	96%	97%	97%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **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 2015.

<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

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2010

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

To create a developmentally responsive community which will foster confident, enthusiastic, responsible, lifelong learners prepared to make a positive impact on their world.

16. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

## PART III – SUMMARY

---

Daniel Wright Junior High School serves approximately 800 fifth through eighth grade students from the diverse communities of Lincolnshire, Prairie View, and portions of Buffalo Grove, Vernon Hills, Mettawa, Riverwoods, and Lake Forest. Our student population represents a rich and growing trend of diversity. Over the past five years, our Asian population alone has grown from 24% to 40%. Our work cultivates a culture of preparing students for the world they live in today and the one they will work in tomorrow.

The rigorous educational program personalizes and differentiates instruction through the use of a 1:1 Teaching and Learning Initiative. Core classes in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies and Spanish are complemented by a creative arts/physical education rotation that includes health, family & consumer science, performing arts, music, visual arts, service learning and STEM. All curricular areas center on rigorous learning standards to develop college and career readiness skills.

Teachers design learning experiences that allow students to apply knowledge and collaborate with peers both locally and globally. Experiential learning is the norm through hands-on lessons (e.g., Hour of Code, Fraction Café, Colonial Days, Botany Field Study). Guest speakers include author visits, Holocaust survivors, and Skyping with scientists in the field. Chicago and Illinois resources are accessed for field trips (e.g., Illinois State Capital, Loreda Taft Outdoor Education Facility, Chicago Field Museum). The Rivershore Park & Nature Center provides all students with hands-on, cross-curricular experiences by accessing a 15-acre local site developed through an Intergovernmental agreement.

Significant student participation in a variety of after-school activities and clubs develops the whole child. All students have access to an after school activity bus which increases overall participation. Our student body has a large number of talented musicians who consistently receive high marks in Illinois Grade School Music Association contests; and the Show Choir has earned a first rating for over 20 years! Daniel Wright boasts both state and national level winners in the Geography Bee, History Bee, Scholastic Bowl, Science Bowl, Science Fair, Science Olympiad, Spelling Bee and MathCounts competitions. Also, we field two athletic teams of equal talent in multiple sports to provide opportunity for more students to participate. Daniel Wright consistently outperforms other conference schools.

Learning is supported and extended through comprehensive student services programs and highly qualified teaching specialists. Supervised study opportunities are available before and after school through our Providing Academic Success for Students (PASS) program. Robust Response to Intervention (RtI) programming and an after school Homework Club provide additional support for at-risk learners.

Special Education services range from consultation services through an Intensive Instructional Program. Our diverse student population receives scaffolded support through English Language Learner instruction. Enrichment specialists work with classroom teachers to deepen and extend the grade level curriculum objectives based on student needs. Differentiation is an integral component of this enrichment model. Licensed Clinical Social Workers and a Nationally Certified School Psychologist counsel students and lead problem solving teams. A full-time certified school nurse provides health and wellness services.

Daniel Wright recruits and retains highly qualified teachers, who are leaders in their profession. Over 79% have obtained at least one master's degree. Eleven teachers have achieved National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification. Most recently, one teacher was recognized with the Symetra Heroes in the Classroom award for outstanding leadership and instructional skills. Additionally, four Daniel Wright staff members are currently enrolled in an ELL endorsement cohort through Benedictine University, hosted by our school district.

We believe a collaborative school community extends beyond our school walls. By partnering with local businesses, the District 103 Learning Fund Foundation is a catalyst for innovation and enrichment. Our Parent Teacher Organization organizes and sponsors numerous programs, including: cultural and fine arts assemblies; teacher grants that fund innovative learning methods to enhance the curriculum; volunteer

support in our school. Music Boosters provide substantial volunteer and financial support for our music programs.

Daniel Wright is one of the most celebrated junior high schools in the State of Illinois. The Chicago Tribune recently ranked Daniel Wright in the top two middle schools in the State of Illinois for our students' performance on the PARCC assessment. As one of the five feeder districts in the Stevenson High School Consortium, Daniel Wright students continually rise to the top. As a National Blue Ribbon Schools recipient in 1987 and 2010, our school is revered and celebrated for its academically talented students, who also possess great character and embody positive social and emotional virtues. We have pride in our many accomplishments, however, it is our students who truly deserve the recognition. They are leaders who volunteer their talents, time, and treasures for numerous service and charitable projects, including Toys for Tots, Make-A-Wish Foundation, Free the Children, Public Action to Deliver Shelter, food drives, recycling, and more. Many individual students have also received the Lake County Excellence in Character Award. We are proud of the talent our teachers and students bring to the classroom every day, and we are honored to be nominated as a Blue Ribbon School.

## PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

---

### 1. Core Curriculum:

At Daniel Wright, we prepare students for the world they live in today and the one they will work in tomorrow. Multiple facets of instructional change have been integrated throughout the curriculum as teachers have aligned curriculum to Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA) and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Teachers refine common assessments, summative, formative, and pre-assessments to allow for data driven decisions when clustering students and adjusting content as necessary. Classroom teachers collaborate with the Literacy, Math, Enrichment, ELL, and Learning Behavior Specialists to ensure each student is appropriately challenged. Technology is integrated by students and teachers using iPads as a tool to collaborate, assess understanding, provide feedback, model problems, and collect and analyze data to find solutions.

Our ELA curriculum fosters, above all, a love of learning. Its strength is demonstrated by the 2014-2015 PARCC results with 83% of students meeting and exceeding expectations; in stark contrast, just 38% of the students in Illinois achieved at this same level. Learning experiences are vertically aligned. Students engage with novel units where they have the opportunity to write for various audiences and purposes. For example, in class simulations for "The Giver," 6th graders craft persuasive responses to questions about their own place in society, deepening their understanding of the story. In 8th grade, students use primary source images identifying text evidence for narrative writings, thereby enriching the novel study of "Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry" across the social science curriculum. As students extend their love for literacy, our students have swept the local competition in Our Battle of the Books Club, which centers on Rebecca Caudill nominated books.

Daniel Wright has one of the most high achieving math programs in the state of Illinois. The 2014-2015 PARCC results for Daniel Wright highlighted this strength with 79% of students meeting and exceeding expectations, while just 28% of Illinois students achieved at this same level. Our math programs utilize hands-on, discovery-based approaches that allow for extensive differentiation and facilitate a deep understanding of math concepts (e.g., students design and construct a fish tank that minimizes surface area and maximizes volume). The mathematics program at Daniel Wright offers multiple levels of placement to ensure student understanding and provide appropriate level of challenge for all students. Students demonstrate strong conceptual understanding and computational skills in solving problems. They apply these skills to meaningful real-life situations, enhancing motivation and comprehension (e.g., proportional reasoning is taught through the exploration of the Fibonacci sequence; students discover the golden ratio looking at people, architecture, and logos). Our extra curricular math groups and competitions extend student skills and include: 5th ICTM competition, 6th MASTORS Club (robotics), 6th grade math team, 7th/8th math team, 7th/8th math consortium competition.

The science curriculum at Daniel Wright strengthens students' scientific inquiry and engineering skills in addition to deepening their knowledge base in physical, earth, and life sciences. These skills and content knowledge provide foundations in science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) to prepare students for future success. Students demonstrate skills aligned with NGSS and CCSS, as they formulate claims, explain reasons, and provide supportive evidence while investigating scientific theory and phenomena. Students use science notebooks to communicate their thinking and maintain a focus on verbal and written communication skills. Outside the classroom, students compete nationally and regionally in Science Bowl, Science Olympiad, Science Fair, and You Be the Chemist.

The social studies curriculum focuses on the big ideas, skills, and concepts in Ancient Civilizations, World and U.S. History. Curriculum is currently being aligned to the new Illinois Social Studies Standards, which are using the College, Career and Civic Life Framework as a guiding document. Daniel Wright teachers in collaboration with the Stevenson High School Consortium, are unpacking, aligning and enhancing curriculum. Throughout the process, social studies teachers receive professional development on the Inquiry Standards, which will serve as a foundation for each new unit. Additionally, informed action will be a

component of the social studies curriculum asking students to use their attained knowledge as model citizens and contributors to society in meaningful, age appropriate ways.

Our exceptional student achievement validates the hard work of our students and teachers, the successful integration of more rigorous content into our curriculum, and the critical support students receive at home. Through this collaborative approach, Daniel Wright is forming the leaders of tomorrow!

## 2. Other Curriculum Areas:

The Illinois Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance has awarded both the Health and Physical Education programs the “Blue Ribbon” award. The Health program has recently received this honor for the second time. The Physical Education department was awarded the Presidential Physical Fitness Demonstration Center status by the United States Department of Education in 2008, becoming the first junior high school in Illinois to be so recognized. Students receive formal health and physical education instruction daily in fifth through eighth grades. The curriculum spirals upward in each grade level using the understanding by design format to meet the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical needs of the growing and maturing student.

The Foreign Language curriculum addresses each of the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages — communication, cultures, connections, comparisons and community. Fifth and 6th grade students receive 30 minutes daily of Spanish instruction. In 7th and 8th grade Spanish, students learn an equivalent of one year of high school Spanish. Students acquire proficiency in speaking, writing, listening and reading. After the completion of the two-year sequence, and based on results of a placement exam, over 90% of 8th graders are placed in Accelerated Spanish 2-3 or Spanish 2 in high school.

Using iPads as technology tools, our 1:1 Teaching & Learning Initiative enhances learning through increased student collaboration, creativity, and communication while increasing student engagement. Evolving from a computer lab experience to on-demand access to resources beyond the classroom, current learning environments focus on facilitating and inspiring student creativity, and promoting rich digital-age learning experiences.

The Performing Arts program is a unique program at Daniel Wright and revolves around the 3 C's: confidence, collaboration, and cooperation. This program is at the heart of 21st century learning. Fifth graders develop skills in listening through cooperative and competitive theatre games while learning introductory acting skills. They also develop storytelling skills with a creative shadow puppetry unit. Students also learn the basics of pop and modern dance by producing their own choreography. Students in 7th and 8th grades explore cross-curricular studies through a Shakespeare unit and perform scenes from "A Midsummer Nights Dream." They also produce a rhythm project that is cross-curricular with music. Improvisational skills are developed to help students in other aspects of life. They learn to think on their feet, be creative, flexible, and team oriented. The class is based around student ideas, and they truly "create the textbook" in this class!

Family and Consumer Science offers hands-on application of Common Core and 21st century skills to 6th - 8th graders. Skills taught throughout this course further develop reading, science, and mathematical abilities. The Family and Consumer Sciences course follows standards created by the National Association of State Administrators of Family and Consumer Sciences. The curriculum covers leadership skills, nutrition and wellness, fashion and textile construction, and consumer awareness. From traveling throughout history with food and fashion to calculating equations and finding chemical reactions, in Family and Consumer Sciences, the students experience first-hand how all of the Common Core standards apply to everyday life.

General Music classes offer hands-on experiences as well as a historical perspective of music. Students play drums from around the world, piano/keyboards, ukulele, and the guitar. This fosters an understanding of chord formation and progressions, creating and performing melodies, tuning and transposing. They also discover music technology that includes terminology, sequencing, sampling, and peripherals, primarily through the use of iPad-based apps such as GarageBand. Students investigate composers from the 15th century forward as well as American classical and pop music from 1900 to today. This includes a study of

American Musical Theater, Jazz, Blues and the history of Rock'n'Roll. All students are invited to augment their musical education through participation in band, jazz band, chorus, orchestra, show choir, and the school musical.

The Visual Arts program offers students in grades 6-8 an opportunity to create projects in two and three-dimensional art. Students learn the principles of art and apply those to drawing, sculpture, graphic design, ceramics, collage, printmaking, painting, and technology-based artwork. Lessons include art history and cross-curricular connections. Students make cultural and historical connections through creating art and responding to art to deepen their understanding. Students self-assess their work and learn how to critique other works of art. The art curriculum offers hands-on exploration, student collaboration, and opportunities to present work to peers and to the community.

### 3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

Daniel Wright staff implement varied instructional strategies to ensure that each student excels academically, socially, and emotionally. Small and large group instruction, hands-on kinesthetic activities, visual presentations, projects, problem-based learning, critical thinking exercises, literature circles, interactive study guides, and assorted note taking structures, are some of our many instructional approaches. Our goal is for students to better understand themselves, our society, and the world around them.

Teachers facilitate students' construction of knowledge through engaging active learning experiences. Students explore experiential learning through programs such as Colonial Day, Fraction Café, curricular-related field trips, visiting author and writing workshops, social studies simulations, and outdoor education. Instructional STEAM mini-camp activities include bridge building, creating cardboard chairs, and making catapults and mousetrap cars.

Our 1:1 Teaching & Learning Initiative using iPads enhances learning through collaboration, creativity, and communication while increasing student engagement. Real time differentiation of lessons occurs, as teachers provide students with remediation and/or extensions as needed. Interactive white boards combined with AirPlay allow students and teachers to collaborate and share feedback in real time. Students use technology and digital media strategically and capably in ways that enhance executive functioning skills. Teachers are progressing in the SAMR model (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, Redefinition). For example, students use Notability to electronically collect and organize notes, rubrics, and homework in ways that make sense to them as learners. Having an electronic "binder" of work enhances classroom efficiency and decreases the amount of misplaced work and class resources. Students demonstrate independence by becoming self-directed learners, effectively seeking out and using resources to assess their learning.

Our enrichment model, REACH, is three-tiered and designed to provide unique learning experiences for all students with flexible opportunities to meet the academic needs of high ability students. Enrichment specialists review assessment data and continuously collaborate with teachers to provide Tier I support for all students, differentiated activities for students who need additional challenge (Tier II), and significant curriculum modification or replacement for students whose abilities surpass the general curriculum expectation (Tier III).

Specific student needs are addressed through differentiation and scaffolding of the core curriculum. Daniel Wright employs a three-tiered Response-to-Intervention model to provide supports for academic and social-emotional growth. Interventions are systemic, responsive to student needs, research-based, multi-tiered, and data-driven. The levels of differentiated support include RtI co-taught, small group, applied skills, and executive functioning classes. Additionally, co-taught special education resource, direct instruction, intensive replacement instruction, and guided instruction for functional/life skills classes ensure that individual IEP goals are met.

#### 4. Assessment for Instruction and Learning and Sharing Assessment Results:

Daniel Wright utilizes multiple measures to determine academic growth. This includes PARCC assessments, the Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), the Cognitive Abilities Assessment (CogAt), Stevenson High School placement tests, as well as, local common assessments. District assessments identify student growth over time, and compare growth to local and national norms identifying students who will benefit from additional support. Cross-representative data teams designate research-based interventions and strategies for students not meeting grade level expectations. District assessments, also identify students who exceed benchmark expectations. Staff and enrichment specialists provide differentiated units to challenge and extend learning for identified students. Academic growth is progress monitored regularly to ensure continued success and flexibly group students within. Recently, a small group of students who demonstrated consistent and profound mastery of grammar skills with significant strengths in writing were identified and received replacement curriculum provided by the Enrichment Specialist. This group meets twice weekly using materials specifically developed for the gifted and talented population and continue to achieve at the 99% on MAP.

Continued high achievement for all students is monitored using standards based common formative assessments administered every six weeks in ELA and math. This data provides feedback on curriculum and instruction which includes a check on the effectiveness of instructional methods along with the usefulness of texts and materials. Mastery Manager is also used to analyze the quality of test questions and document longitudinal growth by standard.

Advance notification of district assessments informs families of expectations and testing schedules, as well as FAQs, practice test items, and online resources. Results include guides to interpret scores, and Parent Information Nights provide background on assessments as well as access to staff experts as personal resources. Skyward Family Access makes grade and progress reports available to students and parents, 24-7. Our semi-annual Parent Teacher Conferences provide families with structured time to review, discuss and plan for student progress. Annual IEP meetings between staff, parents and students support growth for students with exceptional learning characteristics.

We also announce our statewide assessment results through media releases, electronic parent notices, electronic newsletters, website postings, social media postings, and an Annual Report for the community. Administrators provide reports and present assessment data to the Board of Education on a continuing basis. Each year, major metropolitan newspapers conduct analyses of statewide assessment data with comparisons throughout the region and state and publicly recognize Daniel Wright as one of the highest achieving schools in the state.

## **PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS**

---

### 1. School Climate/Culture:

The environment of Daniel Wright is one that promotes both academic and social emotional growth through diverse programming. Students have the opportunity to work on various academic clubs from Science Olympiad to Battle of the Books. Other opportunities include fine arts clubs and numerous athletic teams. Students who participate in extracurricular teams and in clubs are highly successful and often award winning. Many of our clubs compete nationally and are very successful due to our highly motivated student population. Through our extracurricular programs, Daniel Wright staff is able to focus on helping students contribute to the well being of the school and community.

With the support of the district administration and school board, the Daniel Wright staff is comprised of extremely motivated teachers who serve as leaders within the school district and throughout the community. Three Daniel Wright staff members serve as district committee chairs, while six others serve as building committee chairs. This leadership extends beyond the curriculum into a diverse offering of extracurricular programs, bringing cohesion between the academic school day and after school fine arts, academic, and athletic clubs. This leadership from within strengthens the culture and commitment of the entire learning community as an exemplary Blue Ribbon School.

With a variety of opportunities, all students are able to find a place where they belong based on their interests and strengths. We offer clubs that support our students' social emotional needs, such as our peer mentor program and our Lunch Buddy program, which pairs students with cognitive impairments with general education students. The Wright Way Club consists of students who develop leadership skills and promote a positive school climate through presentations on friendship, anti-bullying, and caring and kindness. The Wright Way Club also educates fellow students on charitable activities locally and globally. Our chapter of the National Junior Honor Society and the Student Council create enthusiasm for scholarship, commitment to service and leadership opportunities.

Based on Social Emotional Learning Standards, our motto is “The Wright Way,” which encourages students to be respectful, responsible, and positive. Our new Wright Way Express, a letter-writing campaign designed to encourage positive dialogue between students, teachers and staff members reinforces “The Wright Way” tenets. Featured activities, such as Red Ribbon Week, Operation Snowflake, and Dude, Be Nice Week! also promote the core of our Social Emotional Learning Standards. These activities help students develop self-awareness, maintain positive relationships, and demonstrate good decision-making skills.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

We believe a collaborative school community, which employs best educational practices, involves parents, reaches out to the community, and relies on high quality leadership teams, forms successful students. Parents volunteer their time and talents to enrich student learning and the school community.

The cornerstone of our family and community engagement is the collaboration between our Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), District 103 Music Boosters, and the Learning Fund Foundation. In concert, these organizations facilitate the “Run for D103 5K” (initially to renovate our outdoor athletic field, now earning a “Field of the Year” award), which has become a community-wide tradition, drawing nearly 800 participants, with financial support from community sponsors. Recently, teachers collaborated with our volunteer groups to bring nearly 50 fine art workshops and assemblies for Explore the Arts Day. Parent volunteer groups also host educational events featuring speakers who share effective parenting strategies, and expertise in managing social pressures, digital culture and stress. Links to Learning grants fund innovative experiences directly enhancing learning and engaging students. These collective efforts strengthen the bonds of community, support our school, and enhance student programs. CVS Health Foundation recently recognized one parent volunteer for consistently investing time with our Science Olympiad Team.

Daniel Wright provides opportunities throughout the year to connect families with our school and support student success. Each new year, Locker Set Up Orientation allows students to acclimate to their schedules before classes begin. Our year commences with Curriculum Night, led by teachers and administrators, to inform parents of programs, supports, and extra-curriculars. The school year peaks with Open House Night, when parents glimpse their children's daily lives by navigating through class schedules. Parent University sessions, led by our Technology Integration Coach, instruct families on the basics of our 1:1 Teaching and Learning Initiative. Workshops, such as "Smart Kids/Smart Phones" and "Protecting Children in a Hyper Digital Age" focus on supporting cyber safety at home. Administrators and students from Stevenson High School facilitate programs to ease the transition for our 8th graders and their families, and to empower our 7th graders with effective decision-making skills. A new community engagement initiative, Police Pals, provides all students with the opportunity to interact with local authorities in a safe and familiar school environment. Engaged parents and community partners continue to propel Daniel Wright students along the path of success as lifelong learners through the 21st century.

### 3. Professional Development:

As part of District 103, Daniel Wright is committed to providing a positive culture and climate that supports the academic, social, emotional and health needs of all students. We respect and value academic and non-academic growth. Each school year we identify and prioritize action plan goals that incorporate the district's vision, mission, core values and strategic planning direction to focus professional development. The Vision 2020 plan is the framework through which our school ensures the academic success of each student.

Professional development for Daniel Wright teachers is focused on providing opportunities to reflect on practice, improve instruction, and create a collegial learning environment. The district provides multiple opportunities for professional development including four district wide professional development days, two late arrival mornings, release days throughout the year focused on new district initiatives, paid summer workshops, and job-embedded training through the support of technology coaches.

The process of creating professional development opportunities begins by administering a needs assessment survey to all certified staff members. After the Building Leadership Team (BLT), comprised of building administrators and teachers, reviews the survey results and summative student assessment data, a four-year professional development plan is created. The BLT meets once a month and the needs assessment is administered at the end of each year to monitor progress towards the plan goals. Additionally, after each professional development opportunity, a feedback survey for the event is distributed. The most recent plan incorporates technology, common language and practice within content areas, purposeful collaboration, and student learning objective goals focused on ensuring continued high academic achievement.

In addition to the four-year plan, certified staff members have the opportunity to personalize their professional development through the use of late arrival workshops, summer curriculum workshops, attendance at local, regional or national conferences and meeting with technology coaches. Late arrival workshops have been implemented for the purpose of collaborative meeting time. On these mornings, certified staff members determine their greatest priority need, for example, meeting with a technology coach to explore a new app or teaching technique, explore a new concept with their content team or meet with an interventionist to better understand how to meet the needs of a particular child or group of children. Certified staff members also have the opportunity to apply for summer workshop stipends to either work with content teams on curriculum and assessment goals or facilitate professional development opportunities aligned with building and district goals. In addition, the technology coach role is grounded in inquiry and reflection, a collaborative process that creates the culture for a shared learning community to be developed in the school. Objectives for the coaching sessions are connected to teachers' ongoing work with their students.

#### 4. School Leadership:

While Daniel Wright has one principal and two assistant principals, leadership is a collaborative effort between administration, staff, parents, students, and the community.

The administrative team serves as educational leaders in the building by fostering a school culture that maximizes learning for all students through effective data-driven and collaborative decision making. Daily, the administrative team works collaboratively with teachers on enhancing teaching practice through a comprehensive supervision process. Additionally, one assistant principal oversees pupil services and the other assistant principal oversees assessment and accountability.

The strength of the building's leadership is the belief that professionals working together in concert produce cumulative effects on student learning. Therefore, there are multiple avenues through which all staff can participate in decision making. Daily, professional learning communities assemble to advance academic and social emotional goals for all students. Department leaders ensure that all staff, certified and non-certified, are current on best practices within in their field and that the enacted curriculum aligns to best practices. Grade level leaders facilitate weekly collaboration and collect input for the building leadership team meetings. Additionally, every staff member serves on at least one district level curriculum committee. Most are also members of an additional committee such as, Middle School Philosophy committee, Teacher Administrator Board (TAB), and Vision 2020.

The building leadership team (BLT) consists of staff members from all departments and grade levels. The main priority of the team is to support the development, implementation and monitoring of the school improvement plan. After collaborating with all staff members, the team works to establish instructional, logistical and safety priorities that advance the articulated goals of the improvement plan. This supports the BLT's assumption that selecting the right work requires the implementation of collaborative structures and processes for aligning shared responsibility, expectations and accountability across the school.

Parents and community members are very active in our schools through PTO, the Music Boosters, and the Learning Fund Foundation. Each of these groups provides leadership and support in both day-to-day and long-term decision making concerning projects and activities which academically, socially, and/or financially impact student learning.

Student leadership groups such as our Wright Way Club, National Junior Honor Society, Student Council and the Principal's Advisory Committee help to organize fund-raisers, presentations, assemblies, recycling efforts, and community service projects that reflect the sense of community that makes Daniel Wright special.

## Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

---

Focused on the district's vision to provide a positive culture and climate supporting the academic, social, emotional and health needs of all students, a focus for our school is: to promote student growth by improving student-teacher relationships through the personalization of learning. Daniel Wright implements social emotional learning (SEL) norms into all curricula and new initiatives.

Fifth grade teachers collaborate to support students as they transition between the elementary school model to the traditional departmentalized format. The team scaffolds SEL goals throughout the year, so students develop skills in self awareness, self management, social awareness, interpersonal skills, and responsible decision making. Students are flexibly grouped based on interest and achievement to match needs and to gain independence.

Sixth grade students are supported socio-emotionally through a weekly advisory period. During this period, students self-reflect on SEL growth, develop organizational skills, participate in team building (e.g., outdoor education), and promote growth through building positive relationships with peers and adults.

In seventh grade, teachers work together using a holistic approach for students to achieve academically, emotionally and socially. Student success is celebrated, and events are planned that promote positive decision-making, collaboration, and healthy choices (e.g., Snowflake, a drug and alcohol awareness program educating students about social pressures and developing effective coping strategies).

In eighth grade, students continue SEL development and understanding of themselves in the larger global community through the analysis of a wide variety of cross-curricular literature. Students' understanding of the human experience develops further with exploration of Essential Questions and written responses to journal prompts. Social skills are honed in large, Socratic discussions, and through daily small group work. These practices foster an environment where the SEL standards work seamlessly with the larger CCSS that drive core curriculum.

According to the 2015 Illinois 5Essentials survey, 89% of Daniel Wright students agree or strongly agree that their teachers treat them with respect, and 90% feel that peers support their academic work. The Daniel Wright staff implemented self-reflection sheets to monitor student growth relative to social and emotional learning. These reflection sheets serve as the cornerstone of conversations during parent-teacher conferences and problem solving team meetings. This information informs future programming and enhances the effectiveness of our social and emotional focus. Our students' SEL foundation fuels them for high academic achievement where 81% met or exceeded PARCC composite expectations, while just 33% of Illinois students achieved at the same level. Our student MAP RIT scores continue to average higher than the national norms (+20 RIT points in math and +15 RIT points in reading). Complementing academics with SEL skill development, Daniel Wright prepares students for success through school and beyond!