

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 Dr. Cynthia Kalogeropoulos PHD

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

Official School Name Grove Avenue Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 900 South Grove Avenue

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

City Barrington State IL Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 60010-5023

County Cook County

Telephone (847) 381-1888 Fax (847) 842-7420

Web site/URL http://www.barrington220.org/grove E-mail ckalogeropoulos@barrington220.org

Twitter Handle _____ Facebook Page http://www.facebook.com/GroveAvenueSchool 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, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Dr. Brian Harris Ed.D E-mail bharris@barrington220.org

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

District Name Barrington Cusd 220 Tel. (847) 381-6300

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. Brian Battle

(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):
- 8 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools

11 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	40	31	71
1	46	34	80
2	40	32	72
3	48	30	78
4	47	58	105
5	68	39	107
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 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	289	224	513

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 23 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 9 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 64 % White
 - 3 % 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	8
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	9
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	17
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	513
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.033
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 3 %
13 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Arabic, Armenian, Bengali, Cantonese, French, Greek, Gujarati, Hakka, Hindi, Japanese, Kannada, Korean, Lithuanian, Malayalam, Marathi, Pampangan, Polish, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Tagolog, Tamil, Telugu, Ukrainian, Urdu

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 10 %
Total number students who qualify: 51
8. Students receiving special education services: 14 %
74 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.

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

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 31
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers	22
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	12
Paraprofessionals	14
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 23:1

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

Required Information	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
Daily student attendance	96%	97%	97%	96%	96%
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.

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

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. 2007

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

Our mission is to respect the needs of each child and to create a nurturing learning environment that fosters compassion, curiosity, self-discipline, independence and confidence.

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

Grove Avenue School is part of the Barrington 220 School District which includes an early learning center, eight elementary schools, two middle schools and a high school. The district covers a seventy-two mile square mile area in a suburban setting approximately forty miles from Chicago. Our school reflects higher levels of cultural and socio-economic diversity than many of the district's other more affluent schools.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

The instructional program of Grove Avenue School is aligned to Illinois State Standards, Common Core (National) Standards, and 21st Century Skills Standards. Our district's curriculum is designed by teams of teachers working with district and outside specialists, and is updated every year, as needed. Teachers are provided significant staff development opportunities to obtain a thorough understanding of the content areas they teach. The instructional program provides all students with fair and equitable educational opportunities, while remaining complex and rigorous for all. Here is a synopsis of the core focus of each major curricular area.

Reading/English Language Arts: Success for children in all academic subjects is important at Grove Avenue School; however, we believe that reading excellence is our most important goal. The goals of our reading program are for students to develop the ability to obtain meaning from print, and developing the ability to demonstrate a critical stance about and from text. To become successful, readers need to be strong in decoding accuracy, fluency, language abilities, vocabulary, and comprehension. Reading instruction begins in kindergarten where teachers focus on all strands of reading components. Developmentally appropriate instruction at each grade level is thoughtfully scaffolded to allow for the gradual release of skills and strategies to the learners as independent readers. Students receive reading instruction in flexible groups in their classrooms and participate in whole group, small group, and individualized instruction each day. Daily support is provided to at-risk students in intervention groups where gaps are bridged as soon as possible. Students needing extension activities are provided these in their classrooms; and more significantly by our full time extended teacher beginning in grade three. Children are given the charge to read at home every night in increments that vary based on their age, because reading practice is clearly linked to reading success. Our annual Family Reading Program puts additional emphasis on at-home reading during this incentive filled five week program.

Written and oral language are basic tools for learning and communication, and incorporating thinking, language, and mechanics. It is clear that there is an inherent interconnection between reading and writing, listening and speaking. Students develop knowledge of the writing processes and how to vary them for different purposes, genres, and audiences beginning in kindergarten. Students spend a significant amount of time practicing their craft by writing every day. They also develop interactive skills for good conversations and discussions including listening and speaking.

Mathematics: Mathematics is at the heart of 21st Century skills and is aligned to the Common Core State Standards. The comprehensive mathematics curriculum is a hybrid of the Singapore Mathematics instructional approach which emphasizes problem solving to build understanding of concepts and skills; the concrete to pictorial to abstract approach to build understanding; multiple representations of knowing; and the use of routine and non-routine problems. Developmentally appropriate instruction at each grade level is thoughtfully scaffolded to allow for the gradual release of skills and strategies to the learners as independent mathematical thinkers. Students are assessed with formative and summative measures to determine their instructional needs. Intervention groups are established for students needing additional support and reteaching; and extensions are given to students ready for those challenges. Classroom math clubs meet regularly before school for additional instructional practice in mathematics. The school's extended teacher provides the most significant extension for more able learners beginning in grade three.

Science: The science program used at Grove Avenue School, and developed at the district level is a process inquiry-based program. Students have ample opportunities for hands-on learning preceding abstract lessons. Students are taught how to observe, compare, organize, seek relationships, measure, predict and infer even at the kindergarten level. Integrated processes taught include controlling of variables, interpreting data, formulating hypotheses, identifying operations and experimenting. Students participate in an outdoor program component at all levels culminating at the fifth grade level with a three day learning trip to an outdoor camp in Wisconsin. Experiences in science are engaging, and incorporate reading and writing skills.

Social Studies: Social studies instruction focuses on citizenship education, geography, history, and current events. Students begin by learning their past, understanding their culture, and the culture of others. Students learn how history has developed our nation, and our place in the world, and how we are interdependent on global communities. Primary students visit community helpers; third graders visit the Chicago History Museum; and fifth graders visit the state capital in Springfield.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Visual and Performing Arts: Our K-5 visual arts curriculum includes opportunities to develop student expression. Children participate in lessons on the elements of design: line, shape, form, color, texture, and space. Our students participate in a fifty minute art class taught by a certified art teacher once a week in a spacious and beautiful art room. Our art teacher guides students to learn to see, sense, recall, and become more acutely aware of their surroundings. Art experiences are both two and three dimensional. Students work in many media including paint, clay, glazes, paper mache, fiber, pencils, crayons, and markers. As students age there is a greater emphasis on techniques, craftsmanship, and steps in the creative process. Students' art work is widely displayed in the hallways of the school as well as featured displays in the district administrative center. Our school's annual Open House beautifully celebrates the accomplishments of all of our student artists. Students also may participate in an art club that meets twice a week before school for additional art experiences.

Vocal music is taught for fifty minutes each week to our students by a certified music teacher. Students master concepts including rhythm, melody, pitch, harmony, form, tone, color, texture, style, and dynamics. The relationship between music and allied arts are included. Classroom rhythm instruments are incorporated into the instruction to extend the singing experience and incorporate greater creativity. Every student participates in at least one musical performance during the year to showcase his/her skills. Additional opportunities are available to children beginning in second grade to join our school's choir which performs at school events and at a spring district festival.

Beginning in the fourth grade and continuing into fifth grade, students may join the district's orchestra program which provides individual and small group lessons to students. These orchestra members not only participate in our school's orchestra, but also a district orchestra composed of students from all of the elementary schools. School and district concerts showcase their orchestral work throughout the school year. Interested students may also join our school's band beginning in fifth grade. Students are given individual or small group band lessons during the school day, and participate in a district band that practices once a week at the middle school, and performs concerts throughout the year.

Physical Education/Health/Nutrition: Students participate in a rigorous daily physical education class taught in our large gym by two certified gym teachers. This daily program helps our children to sustain a high standard of fitness which increases their overall health. Student goals are established and monitored in the areas of strength, endurance, and flexibility. Our children are also taught skills in a wide range of sports to enhance their long term opportunities for lifetime fitness. Students have additional activities during their school day to join which further increases their active lifestyles.

Students in the intermediate grades may join our girls and boys running clubs in the spring and fall; and fifth graders may join our basketball and track teams. Our younger students may join recess walking club, and jump rope club. Student fitness progress in fourth and fifth grades is charted, monitored and shared with both the students and their parents. To promote active play by our students our Grove Family has raised over \$300,000 to construct an expansive new playground to heighten active play opportunities for all of our students both during the day and outside of it.

The focus on health education is to promote healthy life styles to kids, and guide them toward optimal health. Included in the classroom curriculum are units about proper nutrition. Students at Grove Avenue School are only allowed to bring fresh fruits, vegetables, and cheese as snack items.

Technology: Our district's technology program is identified under the umbrella of One to World. Students in all grades have access to lap tops and in our younger classrooms iPADS. Next year an expanded operation

will be launched providing students with 1:1 access in all grades to personal devices. Students are taught technology skills in the context of their teaching and learning curriculum in order to clearly see how technology can greatly expand students' learning opportunities.

Foreign Language: Our school participates in the district Dual Language Program comprised of two classes whose students are 50% native English speakers, and 50% native Spanish speakers. This program is a district option for our families. In kindergarten and first grade, students' learning is taught 90% in Spanish. As students progress through the program, they will master academic content skills in both languages as teachers vary the language in which the content units are taught. At the present time we have two fifth grade sections of this program in our school.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

Teachers at Grove Avenue School are guided by methodology that is identified as Best Practice. Students are placed into heterogeneous class groupings by the principal after consulting with classroom teachers and specialists about each child's unique strengths and weaknesses. Teachers create classes that are student-centered. This begins by together establishing the class rules at the start of the year and continues by creating classroom experiences that are authentic and filled with rich and complex ideas and materials. Creating a student-centered room also is launched by teachers who are dedicated to helping their learners see connections in their studies throughout the day rather than isolated subparts. It can also be seen in the increased use of student choice in our classrooms. Student choice can be seen in the books kids read, the topics they write about, and the activities that they focus on during their day. At Grove Avenue School all learners are challenged in their work, and are expected to see that they are truly responsible for their learning.

Secondly, teachers are committed to developing truly powerful learning opportunities for children by helping them develop strong understanding of concepts through higher-order thinking that is associated with inquiry. They know that it is important for all students to be reflective about their learning throughout their day. When teachers end a lesson with reflective questioning students are able to become more conscious of their own cognitive processes and learn how to begin to monitor their thinking.

Finally Grove teachers know how important it is for all of our learners to be a part of a truly collaborative learning experience. Collaboration promotes children's learning as part of a group and promotes the importance of learning and growing from each other.

Our classrooms open routes for learners who think differently, who may need extra support, or who operate on different timetables. Teachers provide individually appropriate work, materials, and choices for every student. Our school climate welcomes a wide range of learning styles, learning habits, ability levels, and interest levels. We all believe that everyone has talents that can be celebrated and that contribute significance to us all.

Formal and summative assessments are frequently used to guide instruction and to determine next steps. Intervention groups right within the classroom are most frequent. More significant needs may be provided by specialists pushing in the classroom and collaborating with the classroom teacher. Clearly all children can meet the same educational standards, but not in the same way or the same amount of time. All students deserve the dignity of taking risks and doing challenging work.

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

4. Assessment for Instruction and Learning and Sharing Assessment Results Assessments are used to make large programmatic decisions at the district and school levels; provide grade and classroom level instructional guidance; and truly support the learning journeys of individual children. Here is a summary of each:

Several assessments are given throughout the school year to gather information that will help teachers understand each child's strengths and needs so we can better utilize instructional strategies and resources

when working with a child. The Achievement Improvement Monitoring System is a series of assessments that are administered to our kindergarten, first and second grade students three times during the year. They are administered individually to students and measure basic reading and math skills which inform instruction. Data that is collected about a grade level of learners is monitored by specialists and grade level teams to determine if instructional changes are needed. Like athletic coaches, our teachers recognize the importance of using ongoing assessments to maximize learning by making instructional adjustments for students based on the data. Parents are informed by classroom teachers if additional support will be provided.

The NWEA Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) assesses our second through fifth grade students in both reading and math in the winter and spring of the school year. This assessment gives us information about each student's instructional level and also measures academic growth throughout the year.

Grade level teams and specialists study the data and the track of performance of each student. Sometimes students will receive some additional support in the classroom or with an intervention group if a concern is discovered. Parents receive a written report which includes charts showing growth in learning over the years in math and reading. Information is also shared during parent-teacher conferences.

Students in grades three through five are tested on the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers Test (PARCC) in the spring. This exam measures individual student achievement relative to the New Illinois Standards. Individual student performance reports are studied by the staff to determine trend lines of strength or weakness in our instructional program. Individual student results are shared with parents; and our school performance is shared on the state school web site.

Monitoring of reading is completed on each child at least three times a year. The Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System (F & P) is an individually administered reading inventory of students' reading abilities. Students are assessed on accuracy, fluency, and comprehension questions that yield a level of reading ability on the Fountas & Pinnell A-Z Text Level Gradient. This testing informs instruction and the accuracy of classroom flexible grouping patterns.

Daily administered formative assessments are regularly used to determine classroom groupings that are ever changing and also next steps for teachers in designing their instruction.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Grove School is beautiful, warm and spacious, but what really matters is the heart and soul of this school; and that comes from its people. Grove students are noted for their academic excellence. Our test scores consistently rank our school high above others in the nation and this showers a sense of pride and motivation upon teachers, students, and parents. Our excellence is noted on our morning announcements; celebrated at staff meetings; and heralded in parent communication at Back to School night speeches by the principal and in newsletter articles. This level of success brings along with it a high commitment to excellence and the determination to keep pushing forward in our levels of achievement. At Grove, learning is definitely taken seriously, and yet we also manage to make it fun and exciting. We are the first to admit that we work hard, and play hard too. We kick off our Meet the Teacher Day in August with a high school drum line proudly announcing to arriving children that great things lie ahead in the year. Kids are expected to read and complete math work throughout the summer months. This hard work is celebrated at the start of the new school year by taking an afternoon off in September when we hire giant inflatables and a rockin' deejay for kids to have a party. Our five week annual Family Reading Program requires all students to complete a significant amount of at home reading, but they do it joyfully because they are rewarded throughout the five weeks with prizes such as a pancake breakfast cooked by their teachers; a game day; extra recess time; and the grand finale BIG EVENT which this year was a trip to a Monster Truck Show. Our famous Grove Pride Board displays student work each week that contains teacher nominated work that is uniquely excellent for the nominated child. Students are called down to the office during morning announcements and are truly celebrated for their academic efforts by the principal. Grove teachers and staff members are filled with contagious enthusiasm about their jobs. When they accept a position at Grove they know that this is a unique place where the norm is to go way above and beyond a job description. Our Grove staff embraces this opportunity and works together knowing that through their hard work they are making a true difference in the lives of all Grove students.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Parents are true partners in our efforts to create a school where children are nurtured to be the best that they can be. As true academic partners, parents are eager to receive the learning baton that we pass to them each day. This year collectively our Grove family decided to be a Homework Free School. The caveat was that there was an expectation that every child would do a significant amount of reading every day at home, and occasionally work on some practice assignments when a need was displayed. Our parents are doing an amazing job supervising the reading every night and also initiating creative learning opportunities in their homes. This year every grade level team of teachers at Grove hosted a parent learning workshop to share ideas about how home learning can become an amazing and positive experience. Families have started inquiry projects that pursue interests of their children; they host family book clubs; family game nights; and science explorations. We have all discovered that the greatest part of having no homework is that it takes the stress and even occasional anger away from the home environment and instead draws families together to eagerly enjoy learning together in a stress free environment. Kids naturally want to learn and we now realize that homework regularly put a blockade around the true learning passions that children have. It has been a true success at our school.

Grove parent volunteers are absolutely incredible. Each year our PTO provides the school with an army of wonderful volunteers loaded with energy, ideas, and enthusiasm. Their fund raising efforts have helped our school to significantly increase the books that we can put in learners' hands; and enhanced our school with other instructional materials for increased student learning. Parents eagerly volunteer in our classrooms to support individualized instruction; create magnificent displays of student work; enthusiastically chaperone field trips; and organize classroom parties. We would not attain the success we have without our parents' strong support.

There is harmony between parents and staff members at Grove. Both groups are dedicated to truly creating a uniquely exceptional school where all children are celebrated.

3. Professional Development:

The Grove staff displays an enthusiastic commitment to professional development and this quest has resulted in a staff composed of knowledgeable and enthusiastic educators. All members of the staff from beginning teachers to veterans display great dedication to increasing their competence and staying informed about the latest information in educational research. Over ninety-eight percent of our teachers have completed a masters degree or work beyond this degree. Teachers attend hundreds of workshops provided by our district over the summer; and additional seminars and workshops held locally and nationally in order to stay on the cutting edge in their fields of instruction. Grove's instructional assistants are certified teachers who also pursue further knowledge through in-service training. Our staff development work is paid for by our district budget and by additional money allocated by our PTO.

Our school's learning charge is led by the principal who is a passionate instructional leader. She regularly purchases books for teachers to read, and often participate in discussion groups about the books. She is a voracious reader and on a weekly basis shares with teachers pertinent articles from a wide variety of news publications. Two instructional coaches also dramatically impact the learning environment of Grove. These individuals are regularly seen huddling with individual teachers, grade level teams, or the entire staff at meetings. They offer training opportunities that are diversified and always pertinent to present instructional needs.

The district offers outstanding learning opportunities for teachers during the school year. Grade level training seminars are regularly held to thoroughly prepare teachers for the instructional changes that are being implemented. For instance, grade level teachers are now science teaching experts because they fully participated in the hands on science experiments before teaching them to their students.

Members of the staff also provide learning support for their colleagues. Our psychologist and social worker grow teachers' effective effectiveness through in-service presentations; our school nurse better prepares our staff for the health issues we are facing; and our gifted extended teacher grows teachers' ability to provide more effective acceleration for classroom learners needing more challenge. Grove teachers are truly knowledgeable about children's literature thanks to seminars offered to them by our amazing librarian, and as a result the right books get into the right hands of our readers. These are a few examples of learning opportunities initiated by colleagues.

The high levels of student achievement at Grove Avenue School are closely linked to the academic diligence of teachers who display a commitment to life- long learning. This learning quest is passed on to the students who grow to have this same passion in their lives.

4. School Leadership:

The principal is vibrant, dynamic and knowledgeable educator who maintains consistently high expectations for herself and others. She models a commitment to the school's mission statement, Children First, by displaying respect and commitment to all children. She is clearly accessible to students and encourages their interaction with her. Not only is she often in the classrooms and hallways of the school, but spends every day helping out in the lunch room which allows every child easy access to her attention on a daily basis. Her vision of the whole child guides efforts of all at Grove Avenue School.

The instructional leadership of the principal enables the staff to achieve excellence in their teaching fields. Teachers are encouraged by her to attend workshops, and to enroll in graduate programs to strengthen their professional repertoire. On a regular basis significant book studies occur, some required, others optional. Teachers at Grove are expected to take risks in their classrooms and demonstrate their innovation.

The principal demonstrates the importance of hard work and team work as a member of the staff. She shows a willingness to mop or vacuum a floor, apply first aid in the nurse's office, or drive to pick up a child who has missed the school bus. Every job is valued in the operation of this school and by showing we are all in this together the message sends a positive signal to all employees of the school.

The assistant to the principal also provides strong leadership and a willingness to go above and beyond the job description. As our school social worker he works successfully to grow teachers' understanding about the unique social/emotional challenges of children, and how successfully build a bridge to help them find success in the classroom and in life. He has also grown the staff's ability to be proactive with discipline opportunities by rewarding success that children attain, and downplaying negative consequences. Very few behavioral issues obstruct the learning environment of our school.

Grove's two learning coaches are passionate kid lovers, learning lovers, and are always willing to go the extra mile to make a difference. They have helped teachers embrace positive change paths, and enabled them by partnering with them during challenging times. They are risk takers and model this in their work with teachers.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

There is a strong commitment to making sure that all children grow as learners and also grow into caring people. We are so proud of our focus on the development of good character in our students; and the inclusion of our Power of One Program which teaches children to resolve their differences through talking, not fighting; and to feel empowered as kids to make a difference in their classrooms, school, and in the world.

Grove students regularly participate in volunteer experiences that help in the school, their community and beyond. Our students have planted wildflowers in nature conservation areas; collected prairie seeds for a conservation group; raked leaves in our school neighborhood for senior citizens; and have recently been holding hot chocolate booths and lemonade stands to raise money for our playground fund. Every Wednesday we encourage kids to bring in a food item for the village food pantry. They show their participation in this program by wearing a hat in school during the day that they contribute. This year the Students Rebuild organization challenged schools and youth groups to fold pinwheels to raise money to build schools in refugee areas in the Middle East. This was a perfect project to launch a Grove cares rallying cry. Our kid pinwheel folders at our school raised over \$6000 for this cause. In the past we have folded paper cranes for Japanese tsunami victims, and created bookmarks to raise money for literacy centers in Africa and Central America.

Our intermediate students participate in Feed My Starving Children projects twice a year assembling non-perishable food packets for shipment to countries of high poverty. Our fifth graders annually work in the Northern Illinois Food Bank to again show a commitment to making our world a better place.

About eighty teachers and kids participate in the St. Baldrick's Campaign for pediatric cancer every April. These caring souls shave off their hair to raise money through pledges for the program.

Grove staff members are not only guiding their students to have hearts of gold, but they, too, are ready to dig in to participate in a good cause. Annually they have sponsored a Friday night lock-in for students to raise money for campaigns such as Barrington Giving Days, which provide support for the neediest families living in the boundaries of our school district. This year the Grove staff raised over \$13,000 at our lock-in which was then contributed to our school's playground fund.

Grove is a school filled with caring hearts, dedicated to making the world a better place and helping all students to be empowered with the message that they can be true difference makers in the world. This is an important ingredient in creating a true Blue Ribbon School!