

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

Official School Name Half Day School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 239 Olde Half Day Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Lincolnshire State IL Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 60069-2906

County Lake County

Telephone (847) 634-6463 Fax (847) 634-1968

Web site/URL http://www.hd.d103.org E-mail jmau@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.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent*Dr. Scott Warren E-mail swarren@d103.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Lincolnshire-Prairie View School 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.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

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.

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

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, 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 | 94 | 97 | 191 |
| 4 | 88 | 91 | 179 |
| 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 or higher | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Students | 182 | 188 | 370 |

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 40 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 2 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 54 % 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: 4%

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 | 5 |
| (3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)] | 13 |
| (4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014 | 344 |
| (5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4) | 0.038 |
| (6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100 | 4 |

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 10 %
31 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Czech, Hebrew, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Marathi, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 2 %
Total number students who qualify: 5
8. Students receiving special education services: 10 %
38 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.

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

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 10
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 | 16 |
| Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc. | 16 |
| Paraprofessionals | 7 |
| Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc. | 5 |

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% | 96% | 96% | 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.

| 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. 2010

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

Half Day School's mission is to share an educational experience, which is academically challenging, developmentally appropriate, and responsive to each individual in a safe, nurturing environment; where children, parents, and teachers collaborate and embrace life-long learning.

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

Located in Lincolnshire, Illinois and established in 1839, Half Day School is the oldest school in Lake County. Over the years, three major additions and building renovations have provided Half Day School with modern amenities while maintaining its original character. With a unique history and rich traditions, Half Day distinguishes itself as an engaging learning environment.

Half Day School is in its third year of implementing the World Language Spanish curriculum, with components of the instruction integrated throughout the school day. Technology integration provides a motivating learning environment that engages and personalizes learning for each student. Over the course of the past five years, the resources available for our student body have skyrocketed from five iPads per classroom to 1:1 iPad implementation for all of its students. Additionally, we have the added benefit of an Instructional Technology Coach whom aids in empowering students with responsible digital citizenship skills. Opening the emotional mind for rich learning experiences, Half Day School provides an explicit curriculum for targeting social emotional learning objectives. These core experiences are echoed throughout the building as all stakeholders instruct and reinforce students, preparing them for academic and social success.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Half Day School is proud to be considered a leader in learning. The staff is committed to providing rigorous instruction across content areas. Methodology is differentiated to meet the needs of our diverse learners, and teachers collaborate to deliver lessons aligned with the curriculum standards. Formative assessment is used to measure growth and shape learning opportunities. Through experiential activities, students construct understanding through collaboration and effective communication. Technology is authentically embedded throughout the curriculum allowing students to successfully develop as 21st century learners.

Half Day's ELA curriculum is tied to the CCSS for reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Through close reading lessons in various settings, teachers model strategies for comprehending complex texts. Differentiated instruction in reading strategies, genres, and vocabulary is supported by a plethora of researched-based teaching methods. Students apply these skills independently in guided reading lessons with leveled and paired texts. Teachers guide students to identify text evidence to support their analysis. Teachers also incorporate leveled novel units and read alouds to provide students with authentic reading opportunities. Students use shared texts as a foundation for collaborative conversations and guided discussions both digitally and face-to-face. Classroom teachers collaborate with the Literacy, Enrichment, ELL, Media and Learning Behavior Specialists to ensure each student is appropriately challenged.

Students use a variety of sources to write for multiple purposes. Using both Wonders and writer's workshop resources, instruction occurs through mini lessons and individualized conferences. Collaborative platforms enhance the writing process by allowing communication between teachers and students. Writing occurs across disciplines, and students continuously journal about learning experiences. Differentiated word study programs allow students to strengthen spelling skills and expand vocabulary to become effective communicators. Using technology, students create multimedia projects to showcase their writing.

Math lessons are designed to promote a deep understanding of concepts. Using a combination of enVision Math, Investigations, and research-based resources, teachers provide opportunities for students to interact with and communicate about mathematics. The Eight Mathematical Practices are integrated into daily lessons so students can solve problems flexibly, allowing for different strategies to develop a solution. Teachers use pre-assessments to inform the pace and depth of instruction. Lessons are differentiated within the classroom, where additional individualized learning opportunities and enrichment occurs through the RtI, REACH and special education models. Problem-based learning opportunities extend and enrich math concepts. For example, students design a tour of their community and create a carnival using a variety of mathematical concepts. Technology engages all learners, as they interact with math through virtual manipulatives, games, videos, and practice. Students use technology to demonstrate their understanding by creating their own videos, concept maps, and models. Students are provided with additional enrichment opportunities, such as the ICTM competition, Math Olympics, and integrated STEAM activities.

Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) guide interactive experiences in physical, life, and earth sciences. Students state claims, gather evidence, and explain their reasoning, as they interact with real world science materials. Instruction is supported with robust non-fiction text. Students experience real world problem solving using robotics, 3D printing and visits to the district's nature center. An overnight Outdoor Education field trip for fourth graders extends the science curriculum through interactive and collaborative experiences. These experiences include designing solar ovens to capture energy from the sun, a predator/prey simulation, canoeing, and an ecosystem study exploration with pond water samples and microscopes.

Thematic social studies units are integrated across content areas. Third grade students focus on community. Students research their local history, including that of our own Half Day School which has experienced many changes since its creation in 1839! As a culminating activity for their study of Chicago's history, students travel back in time to attend a simulation of Chicago's two World Fairs. Fourth grade students examine the interdependence of regions and national and global connections. Students explore the branches

of government and investigate their roles as citizens. An extensive study of Illinois culminates in a State Fair simulation. Lessons are supported by our teacher librarian using curricular resources, including primary and secondary sources.

Throughout these curricular areas, teachers work collaboratively with parents, students, and community members to develop successful 21st century learners. Ongoing professional development opportunities in the core contents ensure that teachers at Half Day School exemplify leaders in learning.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Half Day School's special curriculum areas are essential for supporting students' collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, and problem solving skills. Students receive instruction in World language, visual arts, general music, library, orchestra, physical education, and technology.

All students receive thirty minutes of Spanish four times a week. Ninety percent of instruction is in the target language of Spanish. Students are taught in content rich thematic units using the Foreign Language in Elementary School (FLES) model. Through games, interactions, presentations, and technology-enhanced projects, students learn about the Spanish culture and use the language in authentic ways, including our daily morning announcements.

The visual arts curriculum is aligned with the National and Illinois Learning Standards for Art Education. During weekly hour long art classes, all students engage in problem solving, showcasing their creativity through art media, history and collaboration. Content areas are integrated throughout the art curriculum. During the year, students create and add to a digital art portfolio. Additionally, students travel to the district's nature center to build their art appreciation through simulations. For example, in their study of ancient Egyptian and Prehistoric art, students create hieroglyphics inside a "pyramid" and enter a "cave" fashioning prehistoric paintings.

General music instruction for all students is twice a week for thirty minutes. The music curriculum is aligned with the National Core Arts Standards (NCAS) and is content enriched with classroom curriculum. Students explore music, acquiring skills through hands-on experiences. They learn to play the recorder, Orff rhythm instruments, and world drums. Students are encouraged to create, improvise, and compose their own music. Fine motor skills, collaboration, critical thinking, technology, and creativity are embedded into lessons. Currently, forty-four percent of students elect to be in chorus, an extension of the music program. Two annual concerts and community events yield a variety of performance opportunities. All students are welcome to share their talent in our school musical whether it be singing, acting, creating props, participating in stage crew, or designing the program. Over half the school's students participate in the spring musical, performing to full houses composed of students, families, staff and community members!

Another musical enrichment opportunity is our orchestra program. Beginning in third grade, all students are welcome to develop their musical talents, partaking in violin, viola, cello or bass small group sectionals. NCAS are incorporated into weekly lessons as students develop their intonation and rhythm skills, bow technique, and notation reading, while also gaining an appreciation of classical, modern, and diverse cultural music genres. Students showcase their quickly developing talents during our two annual school concerts, various community events, Half Day's talent show, and the Illinois Grade School Music Association (IGSMA) Solo and Ensemble Contest.

Library for all students meets once a week for forty-five minutes, which offers a balance of digital citizenship, information literacy and literature appreciation to meet standards linked with the third and fourth grade curriculum. Students learn to use the library's print and electronic resources, supporting learning and encouraging recreational reading. Through weekly research questions, students access resources, use keywords, cite sources, and develop nonfiction reading strategies. Participation in the statewide student choice book award is encouraged. Last year students read and evaluated over 1,300 books before selecting a winner. All students have the opportunity to suggest nominees for next year.

A healthy lifestyle is promoted for our students by providing them with daily physical education class for thirty minutes. Instruction is aligned with the Illinois Learning Standards for Physical Development and Health. The curriculum includes activities to develop movement and motor skills as well as agility. Individual physical fitness, good sportsmanship, team building and problem solving are also stressed. Over half of our students eagerly participate in our optional Jump Rope for Heart fundraiser for the American Heart Association. Additionally, all students energetically anticipate our end of the year field day.

Technology is integrated and embedded into all curricular areas. Goals of the 1:1 Teaching and Learning initiative include enhancing learning, leveraging technology for individualized instruction, promoting and strengthening collaboration, increasing student engagement, and encouraging creativity. In addition to iPad use, students develop their technological proficiency on iMacs in our three computer labs. The digital citizenship program explicitly teaches all students how to responsibly navigate their digital world. Our Instructional Technology Coach collaborates with teachers to develop units and works directly with students, designing and teaching engaging activities, such as the “Hour of Code.”

The variety of opportunities provided through our rigorous and integrated curriculum supports students in acquiring myriad skills at Half Day School.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

All staff collaborate to design and implement differentiated curriculum and instruction that stimulate all students to meet or exceed CCSS and district goals. Teamwork is essential to ensure success and appropriate level of challenge for all students. Collaboration occurs within Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), including classroom teachers and REACH, (Results in Education for All Children), technology, ELL, LBS (Learning Behavior Specialist), RtI (Response to Intervention) literacy and math specialists. Formal collaboration meetings are scheduled weekly or biweekly. Pre-assessments, observations, and other formative assessments determine entry level of student learning for each unit. Together, PLCs determine pre-teaching opportunities, instructional strategies, learning resources, tiered problem-solving, technology integration, and ongoing assessments of student learning.

LBS, ELL, REACH, and RtI specialists support classroom learning through a multi-tiered learning support model, which includes push-in, small group pull-out, and individualized instruction to meet the needs of the wide range of learners in each classroom. Our goal is to meet students at their individual performance levels, matching instructional strategies, text levels, differentiating classroom projects and assessments to both challenge and support all learners. Our team approach values the diverse backgrounds of our families, representing more than 25 cultures, through weekly home communication to support curriculum. We embrace the least restrictive environment by creating balanced heterogeneous classrooms that integrate ELL, IEP, REACH and RtI students.

ELL students are with English speaking peers for most of their school day. They learn to self-advocate and access assistive technologies, such as iTranslate, audio books, and visual supports on their 1:1 devices. Students work in a small group setting based on English language proficiency levels. Instruction focuses on core vocabulary, pre-teaching classroom content, reviewing concepts and skills, and developing writing proficiency.

Our 4th grade wind turbine science unit is a key example of hands-on, problem-based learning, technology integration, and inclusive, differentiated curriculum. Cooperative engineering teams are formed representing mixed learning levels. Each engineering team is presented with a problem to design wind turbine blades that maximize energy production. Students research, collect data, and use a CAD application to design and 3D print their inventions. Designs are then tested, and students reflect in their science notebooks on ways to improve their designs. Preteaching, modifications, and support are provided to specifically identified students by PLC teams to ensure success during classroom lessons. In addition, push-in support by LBS, ELL and RtI specialists ensures success for every student. Enrichment extensions are provided for small groups to challenge our high-end learners. The science notebook, with the same standards and content, is modified to match different instructional levels.

The extensive teacher collaboration, differentiated instruction, variety and flexibility of student services address the diverse learning needs of all of our students.

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

Assessment data components are developed, administered, analyzed and acted upon in regular intervals. The assessment calendar is developed annually to maximize timely feedback to inform instruction to best meet individual student needs. Our assessment regimen includes standardized, local curriculum-based, grade-level common assessments and formative techniques including portfolios and observations. Designed to view students in a variety of ways, assessments yield valuable information, guiding staff development, classroom instruction, academic support, enrichment programs, and curricular development.

To maintain our historic high levels of achievement, performance on ACCESS, AIMSweb, CogAT, ISAT/PARCC, and MAP is analyzed for specific strengths and weaknesses in both achievement and learned reasoning abilities. Item analysis from standardized measures point to curricular strengths or relative areas for improvement, which are then addressed school-wide through curriculum committees. Gleaned information is shared through professional development. Most notably, data is used as a source for teachers to plan differentiated instruction.

Assessment instruments are utilized during formal data team meetings. Collaboration amongst the administrator, school psychologist, literacy, math and ELL specialists and classroom teachers yields action plans for students performing below benchmarks. These multi-tiered plans are used to further guide differentiated instruction, and may include literacy, math or language intervention. Weekly assessment probes monitor students receiving intervention. If progress is not reflected in the data, the team adjusts the plan by changing the instructional method, materials, frequency, intensity, teacher-to-student ratio or by elevating the concern to our Problem Solving Team (PST) for more indepth analysis.

Formative assessments are used across content areas on a daily basis. Observations of performance tasks, use of interactive whiteboards, and student response platforms (Haiku, Kahoot, Socrative), give both students and teachers real-time data on performance towards learning objectives. Students charting progress through graphs, tracking pre/post test progress, and entering personal data points through progress monitoring tools foster ownership in their learning. During weekly PLC meetings, “in the moment” data are utilized to form flexible instructional groupings, tailor instruction, and compact curriculum for enrichment.

Families receive standards-based report cards three times per year. A narrative portion provides a personalized explanation of specific performance. Fall and spring Parent-Teacher conferences, two open houses and student portfolios provide opportunities to share and reflect upon individual growth. Portfolios empower students, actively participating in their own evaluation and learning. Standardized testing results are mailed home to parents with an explanation for interpreting data. Additionally, staff and parent workshops, presented by District Administration, are held to discuss district, school, and student performance. The district distributes an Annual Report to the community, which includes student assessment information, and parent newsletters with updates. The annual Illinois School Report Card is distributed to the community and incorporated into the Annual Report, including comparative metrics. Media releases celebrate student success by highlighting achievement data for a broad audience.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

For students to be open to learning, it is essential to consider the whole child. While it's true that our students achieve success in all academic areas at the state and national levels, Half Day recognizes students are much more than a test score. Students are provided with engaging, real-world opportunities to further their learning and interests through activities such as robotics, Cardboard Challenge, 3D printing, computer coding, and music technology integration, deepening collaboration and communication skills. To achieve academic success, students and staff must feel safe as respected and responsible school citizens prepared to become positive contributors to the world community. All decisions begin with the question, "What's best for kids?"

We value student involvement in helping establish a positive school climate. Half Day Helpers and School Safety Patrols enable students and staff to work together to keep the school clean and safe. Additionally, Student Council is essential to creating a positive school community and providing lifelong leadership skills. Collaboratively, students plan activities that benefit communities near and far. Locally, students collect books for donating to book banks and food pantries. Nationally, and most recently, students raised over \$5,000 to donate to a student-selected charity, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. To benefit their world community, student fundraising helps bring clean water to countries in Africa.

To foster a sense of community, teachers must be valued as professionals. Leadership is encouraged through various committees and professional learning communities. Teachers have the opportunity to learn from one another through technology sessions, team meetings, mentors, and shared resource web pages. Teachers bond through Friday treats, special spirit days, and team-building activities.

Half Day is truly a place where many cultures come together to become part of one school community. The halls proudly display student-created community and family crests highlighting the unique traditions and cultures of our students. Our social emotional learning curriculum further supports understanding and appreciation of the wide-range of values, backgrounds, and cultures of our students. Acceptance and tolerance of others are put into practice, as students consistently engage in cooperative and collaborative projects. While respecting students as individuals, Half Day has created its own culture and traditions, including spirit days, the "Half Day Wave," Outdoor Education, holiday celebrations, World's Fair, Illinois Days, and Field Day.

A positive environment for students and teachers, coupled with enriching experiences, develop confident contributors now and in the future. Half Day is truly a place where what's best for kids comes first, forever, and always.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Students' first teachers are their families, and Half Day continues to involve them in a number of ways. For example, parent education classes inform parents about timely topics, such as raising children in a digital world, dealing with bullies, and helping students cope with stress. Teachers and school leaders connect with parents via social media, newsletters, curriculum nights, and conferences, informing and involving parents in their children's learning.

Partnerships with families have been essential to Half Day's success. Parents support learning by sponsoring the book fair, chaperoning field trips, organizing classroom parties, and supervising indoor recess. Links to Learning grants, the Parent Teacher Organization, District 103 Music Boosters and the Learning Fund Foundation are parent-run programs that have funded innovative experiences directly enhancing learning and engaging students. Through their efforts, we have purchased robotics, voice amplification systems, a 3D printer, a hands-free recording device, Orff instruments and tubano drums. With their support, a gardening club involving students will begin this spring. These groups have also enabled us to bring visiting authors, curriculum enhancing assemblies, Illinois Days, and World's Fair

simulations to our students. Furthermore, the involvement of our parent volunteers supports the hundreds of students participating in our chorus, school musical, and orchestra programs.

We are fortunate to be part of a community that strongly values education. Community members worked in partnership with district staff to outline strategic goals in Vision 2020. Participants in this diverse group of stakeholders included community and business leaders, parents, teachers, school leaders, and alumni. Using community survey responses, this group helped shape a common vision for the district. Some initiatives stemming from this focus group include world language instruction for all K-8 students, continuous improvement of our REACH enrichment model, 1:1 technology rollout, and facility additions and reconfiguration. These initiatives contribute to innovative learning experiences for our students.

Partnerships with the local community include a nature center developed in collaboration between the district and village, providing hands-on outdoor learning opportunities for our students. Uniquely, our chorus performs annually at the Village Tree Lighting Ceremony and local retirement communities. Additionally, the Vernon Area Library has been a valuable partner for many years, providing materials and programs to enhance our engaging curriculum. The highlight of our STEM after school activity was a tour of another community business, Zizzo Racing. Additionally, partnerships through Explore the Arts Day, Consortium Art Fair, and Robotics Club provide a bridge to the Stevenson High School consortium.

School, family, and community partnerships foster engaging educational experiences for our students, preparing them for future endeavors.

3. Professional Development:

Half Day's professional development approach focuses at its core - our teachers. Our motto could easily be framed, "By the Teachers, For the Teachers, For Our Students." Each year, administration solicits and secures volunteers from a cross section of specialties to form the building's Staff Development Committee. This committee, which meets monthly, is charged with the weighty task of garnering ideas aligned with the District's Vision 2020, steering plans of action, implementing appropriate and timely professional development with the full staff. Activities occur through platforms, such as faculty meetings, team meetings, late start dates and inservice days. These opportunities are rooted in fostering student growth, staff professional growth, team building and supplementing overall school improvement.

Similarly, cross section representation of staff is also solicited through each major curricular area. These committee members/teacher leaders are charged with yearly curriculum and assessment review, maintaining academic rigor and high student achievement in each specific content area. While strong structures are in place to professionally develop our staff, concentrated time to tackle initiatives continues to be a daily challenge the school looks to overcome. As such, building administration and the full staff work to problem solve and strategically address its member's learning needs. Our staff has taken to supporting each other through the use of our learning management system, sharing resources, and collaborating through virtual means. Additionally, our Technology Integration Specialist promotes professional development and collaboration through the use of social media, i.e., Twitter, Google+, etc. Our REACH Enrichment Specialist meets weekly with classroom teachers and building administration, highlighting and reinforcing curricular concepts and teaching strategies for students demonstrating academic success. Similarly, our student services staff, problem solve, promote, and personalize learning strategies for our exceptional learners.

Capitalizing on the expertise of many of our staff can also be exemplified through our staff meeting time, late start collaboration time, grade level meetings and inservice days. Most recent topics and staff responsible for facilitating have included, but are not limited to 1:1 Device Prescription Planning - Technology Integration Specialist; NGSS Science Notebook Trainings - science committee members, REACH Enrichment Specialist; CogAT implementation - District Administration; Erin's Law - School Social Worker and Social Emotional Learning committee members; ELA and Mathematics CCSS - Literacy Specialist, Math Specialist and committee members; and finally, nine out of 45 Half Day staff members presented Technology Integration Workshops at our most recent inservice day.

Each of these aspects, while unique in their own rights, contributes to the overall success of our staff's professional development and the growth of our students.

4. School Leadership:

Half Day School is committed to the District's vision to be "Leaders in Learning." This vision encompasses the gifts, talents, dedication, and expertise of every member of the learning community. Half Day is an exemplary staff of leaders who, in conjunction with the building principal and district administration, focus 100% of their efforts on what is best for kids, creating a positive environment for all to thrive. This symbiotic atmosphere is reinforced, supported and built upon through the building principal's inclusive, lead by example, leadership style.

Instructionally, each content area of math, ELA, science, social studies, technology, SEL, PE/health, creative arts and world language has Building Committee Chairpersons and subsequent staff committee members at their charge. These chairpersons are responsible for district wide collaboration with the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction and building principal, setting building goals, developing meeting agendas, facilitating building meetings, and prioritizing budgetary needs, yielding ample opportunity to impact learning opportunities.

Yearly goals include data review and growth targets addressing relative areas of need as determined through analysis. Integral decisions about programming, assessment development and resource allocation are made with an assurance that all learning standards are being addressed. As building committee representatives, Half Day staff members differentiate the big ideas and concepts of the district, tailoring them to their building's learning goals. The curriculum is developed, paced, and adapted by staff to meet the high academic needs of our students.

Additionally, these same staff members infiltrate their content area specialty ideals through smaller, goal focused PLC's, using common assessments to analyze student data in order to respond to students' academic needs. The structure of the school day has made these meetings a priority by providing common meeting times when the principal is a contributing member of the collaboration, sharing in positive, inclusive leadership. The collaborative climate is supportive, as the staff's vision of excellence moves everyone forward through an organic team mentoring approach.

Half Day School would not be complete without its student leadership components. With support from their teachers, students model positive leadership for other students through programs, such as Student Council, morning announcements, Half Day Helpers, safety patrol and an SEL program that promotes and highlights positive student behaviors and problem solving techniques.

This comprehensive, shared leadership model makes the whole greater than the sum of all its parts, directly and positively influencing the Half Day School community.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Half Day School is proud of the multi-tiered approach we provide to differentiate learning experiences for all students. In the classroom, teachers personalize learning to meet the individual needs of all. In addition to differentiated learning in our general education, specialty, RtI, and SPED classrooms, our unique REACH model enriches and supports every child.

Our REACH model successfully allows for effective teaching, providing students with varied opportunities to acquire content, process, and demonstrate what they are learning while making sense of concepts and ideas. REACH is composed of three tiers.

Tier 1 provides curricular enrichment experiences for all students that enhance the grade level curriculum through critical/creative thinking and problem solving within a variety of inquiries, investigations, and presentations. Examples include robotic coding, live animal observations, erosion simulation, Outdoor Education, StarLab, and wind turbine design.

Tier 2 provides extension experiences for students whose academic needs exceed Tier 1. Teachers and the Enrichment Specialist use formal and informal assessments, as well as classroom observations, to determine appropriate opportunities for participation. Math investigations, literature analysis, and writing extensions are amongst, but not limited to the individualized study groups flexibly created as outcomes of our PLC's.

Tier 3 targets students whose needs exceed Tiers 1 and 2. Typically, 3-5% of our students participate in these enrichment activities. These students exhibit high levels of ability, creativity, and task commitment in school activities based on multiple assessment data points. Extensions are designed to accommodate individual needs. Curriculum modifications or replacement activities are designed to advance development of students demonstrating a particular talent, ability, or potential in specific subject areas. Extension experiences offer additional depth and complexity for those who demonstrate the need to be challenged beyond the grade level learning targets.

REACH has a synergistic effect in our school community. Teachers across grade levels collaborate and discuss students' learning needs. Together, they review data points and share observations pertaining to each student. The purpose of these meetings is to ensure continuity in a student's learning program. In addition, PLC's meet throughout the school year to review student achievement, adjusting programming and enrichment activities to meet each child's appropriate level.

The REACH model has proven to be successful through quantitative and qualitative data. Our students consistently meet or exceed expectations on standardized and local assessments. Student reflections and portfolios demonstrate a deepened understanding of the curriculum goals. Ultimately, our collaborative and exciting learning experiences engage and motivate our diverse student population.