

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 Mr. Andrew Fenton

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

Official School Name Oak Grove School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1700 South O'Plaine Road

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

City Green Oaks State IL Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 60048-1541

County Lake County

Telephone (847) 367-4120 Fax (847) 367-4172

Web site/URL http://www.ogschool.org E-mail fenton@ogschool.org

Twitter Handle

https://twitter.com/OakGrovePride Facebook Page _____ Google+ _____

YouTube/URL _____ Blog _____ Other Social Media Link _____

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Dr. Lonny Lemon E-mail lemon@ogschool.org

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

District Name Oak Grove School District #68 (Lake) Tel. (847) 367-4120

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 Ms. Jennifer Manski

(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):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 0 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 1 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	37	33	70
1	42	38	80
2	46	34	80
3	45	50	95
4	47	38	85
5	45	58	103
6	51	50	101
7	55	56	111
8	44	34	78
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	412	391	803

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 19 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 68 % White
 - 8 % 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: 5%

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	36
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	8
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	44
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	803
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.055
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5

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

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

Spanish, Polish, Korean, Arabic, Hindi, Portuguese, Mandarin, Urdu, Russian, Malayalam, Bengali, Marathi, Teluga, Tamil, Punjabi, Tagalog, Gujarati, Greek, French

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 1%
Total number students who qualify: 10

8. Students receiving special education services: 16%
131 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>4</u> Autism	<u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>13</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>41</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>4</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>61</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>3</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>4</u> Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 1
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	5
Classroom teachers	45
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	37
Paraprofessionals	12
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

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 19:1

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%	95%	95%	95%
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 X

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

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

Educating and Inspiring Students to Reach Their Full Potential

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

Since 1923, Oak Grove School, located in the idyllic village of Green Oaks, in Lake County, Illinois, has welcomed all and embraced a tradition of excellence and genuine community pride. Our motto is “Where Students Come First.” Upon one’s first step into our building, it is apparent the motto rings true. Our building is well-lit, newly renovated and there is excitement in the air. Students at Oak Grove are eager to learn! We are dedicated to a philosophy that promotes well-rounded students. It is our goal to provide the best all around education of any elementary school district in Illinois. Oak Grove is an award winning, K-8 school of 820 students who learn and grow together in a hands-on learning environment. As a district located 35 miles northwest of Chicago, our students attend Libertyville High School (LHS) upon graduation. U.S. News & World Report consistently ranks LHS in the top 2% of public high schools in the United States.

Oak Grove sets itself apart from all other area elementary schools by its focus on educating the “whole child.” The district provides daily education in the fine arts, world language, health, physical education, and technology to every student, starting in kindergarten. Our students are exposed to drama, Spanish, music and art from their very first day. The community supports these programs and continues to provide us with the resources to ensure they are maintained. It is one of the major reasons families move to our district. Oak Grove hosts a “Fine Arts Day” where outside artists, authors and musicians spend the day sharing their talents and explaining their careers. Our students see the connection to what they are learning and potential career paths.

Learning how to be responsible citizens is important at Oak Grove. Each year our 8th grade students organize a remarkable Veterans Day celebration. It is not uncommon for over 200 veterans and their guests to attend this day of honor. Additionally, 8th grade students go into lower elementary classrooms and teach a lesson about Veterans Day.

Five years ago, Oak Grove made a commitment to conceptual-based learning in mathematics. This approach was a major paradigm shift and was met with some apprehension. However, the Oak Grove team continued to make decisions to address student learning needs. As our Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) scores reflect, our students achieve at the highest levels both statewide and nationally. 76% of Oak Grove students “met” or “exceeded” PARCC expectations in mathematics and English language arts, compared to 18-35% statewide in Illinois. Oak Grove students rank among the very top of elementary students in our state.

A key to our success is providing quality, in-house professional development to teachers. It is our goal to prepare our teachers to handle the entire spectrum of student abilities within their classroom. Differentiation has been the focus of our institute and school improvement days. Additionally, our Curriculum Director and Student Services Director provide professional development. Each week, a different grade level gets a half day of release time to work together. Our Student Service Director coordinates a monthly workshop for student services personnel on various topics. These offerings have developed a stronger base of knowledge in best practices and increased collaboration across grade levels. Providing the PD in-house has shown to be far more effective than sending teachers out of district.

As a part of our commitment to provide 21st century learning skills, every K-5 student at Oak Grove utilizes an iPad and students in grades 6-8 use laptops. For the first time this year, not only do students have all-day access, they are able to take the devices home. In preparation for this 1:1 initiative, our entire faculty received professional development in relation to 1:1 technology. Specifically, our technology coaches provided training on the use of Google and Apple related applications and assist teachers as they incorporate classroom technology into daily instruction.

In an effort to instruct the “whole child,” we employ a full-time Social Emotional Learning (SEL) teacher. She rotates into every classroom and teaches lessons on character, social justice and bullying. This greatly reduces our discipline issues as our students learn how to be good citizens.

Our parents are involved and committed to excellence and the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) makes significant contributions back to the school. We also have an Oak Grove School Educational Foundation (OGSEF) which provides mini-grants for teachers to support Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM) projects. This year, that included a state of the art production room, complete with computers, green screens and high quality film cameras. Together, the PTO and OGSEF also raised funds in 2014 to help build a new elementary playground.

Oak Grove School will continue to meet the social, emotional, and academic needs of children because of the commitment to excellence by its staff, parents and the entire community. It truly is a school district “Where Students Come First.”

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

The faculty at Oak Grove School works collaboratively to design, implement and refine a curriculum that is rigorous and innovative, challenging students to maximize their potential. Our mathematics and literacy curricula are aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) are currently being used to structure our science curriculum. With the development of the C3 Framework, our social studies curriculum is integrating these standards into student learning in order to best meet the needs of all students. Oak Grove School believes in educating and inspiring all children to reach their full potential. The focus on differentiation strategies provides students with varied educational opportunities, as well as fostering social and emotional awareness.

The implementation of the CCSS has reinforced the expectation to build a student's speaking, writing and reading skills. To provide this instructional structure, our philosophy of reading and writing instruction utilizes the workshop model approach. Students are provided with significant amounts of time daily to read and write, supported by focused mini-lessons on foundational skills. Oak Grove incorporates resources that support the workshop model including Schoolwide, Inc. and Lucy Calkins, Units of Study. Teachers integrate high interest texts, in order to support student learning through fiction and informational reading. This model of literacy instruction provides the time and flexibility to work with students to support their learning and extend student thinking. Also, our Talented and Gifted (TAG) program includes informal enrichment activities in the younger grades and formal, replacement English language arts classes in our upper grades.

Teachers use a conceptual based approach to develop student thinking in mathematics at Oak Grove School. Creating a strong conceptual base of knowledge includes student understanding of the structuring of numbers and integrating student learning through concrete, pictorial and abstract stages of thinking. In K-5, we develop a strong base of student understanding using various materials including Bridges-in-Mathematics and supplemental resources. Our students in grades 6 through 8, continue to develop their understanding of math concepts aligned with the CCSS through a conceptual structure utilizing materials like College Preparatory Mathematics. Students are provided with differentiated instruction in the classroom, through independent and small group work. In order to meet student needs, teachers have the ability to flexibly group students to provide extension and intervention opportunities within the classroom. Beyond this level of support, small groups are established by our team of math specialists for more intensive practice outside the classroom. Our informal TAG program seeks to identify students who would benefit from enrichment opportunities. Starting in grade 4, students identified through our district data matrix have the opportunity to place into formal replacement math classes that provide grade level instruction with greater depth and complexity of the content. Our philosophy of instruction within the TAG program incorporates acceleration of the curriculum, beginning in grade 6.

Aligned with the NGSS, students at Oak Grove School are provided with opportunities to engage with the content through inquiry based learning, by analyzing real-world problems. This allows students to explore content through the different sciences: life, physical, earth and engineering. Collaboration is a key to this process, as our middle school science teachers plan and co-teach with our primary teachers, in an effort to address the NGSS. STEM learning is integrated into instruction across grade levels. Additional learning opportunities in robotics and science design are provided to students through rotations classes in the middle grades. Oak Grove offers numerous clubs and activities that support and increase student interest in science exploration, such as Engineering for Kids and Science Club.

With the development of the C3 Framework, Oak Grove School considers the significance of the integration of content, in order to develop a student's ability to explore problems and make contributions to the community. At the core of our work within social studies is the importance of questioning; we are fostering students can that can identify, analyze and seek out potential solutions to social issues. The integration of the C3 Framework allows for Oak Grove to determine content and integrate critical thinking skills. Students

are encouraged to make connections between concepts, building their capacity to develop their own conclusions and themes.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

At Oak Grove School, we believe our success is due to the integration of our strong academic program with the numerous opportunities provided for students to engage in learning through the arts, physical education, world languages and technology.

Oak Grove believes in daily time dedicated to fine arts instruction at all grades. Students in kindergarten through 5th grade receive music, art and drama on a rotating schedule. In grades 6 through 8, students are given a choice of various elective art, music and drama classes. These courses are designed to allow students to explore different mediums for performing and creating as musicians, performers and artists. Oak Grove's 8th grade musical illustrates student learning, as the students perform, organize and assist in the production. Throughout the year, groups of students showcase their talents during and after school, with a favorite being lunchtime guitar and ukulele performances. Students in 4th through 8th grade have the opportunity to participate in our band and chorus programs. The focus of instruction is an integrative approach, encouraging opportunities for reflection and individual student growth, celebrating successes. The fine arts team works to support classroom instruction, fostering connections so that students identify themes in their learning.

At Oak Grove, individual health and physical fitness is a part of the daily routine. Students attend PE daily for forty minutes from kindergarten through 8th grade. At 1st, 4th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students rotate through health, which includes the use of Fitbits, as part of their personal health education. Physical education classes focus on collaboration, teamwork, communication and activity to promote a healthy body system. Students learn about healthy life choices and analyze their own personal health, making connections between the choices they make and the effects of those choices.

Starting in kindergarten, students begin to study world languages, specifically Spanish. In kindergarten and 1st grade, students attend Spanish class twice a week for twenty minutes. The amount of time increases as students reach higher grades with 80 minutes of instruction in 4th and 5th grade. In 6th grade, students choose to study either 40 minutes of daily instruction in Spanish or French for the remainder of their Oak Grove years. Teachers support student needs by adjusting curriculum and content, in order to challenge students, as they gain additional knowledge in the world languages. Middle school students experience learning through immersion in the language with the teacher supporting and encouraging this work.

During the 2015-2016 school year, every Oak Grove student was provided with his or her own individual technological device. In kindergarten through 5th grade, each student received an iPad and in grades 6 through 8, each student works with a laptop. Oak Grove's technology coaching team continues to develop lessons to support responsible student use. In order to support technology integration, the coaching team works alongside classroom teachers to provide innovative learning experiences. This year, students participated in the worldwide Hour of Code movement, generating conversations across grade levels. The technology team organizes Expert Day, which allows classroom teachers to showcase the innovative ways they are incorporating technology to their colleagues. Students in grades 6 through 8 can enroll in elective courses that provide specific instruction in film-making, broadcasting and web programming. This work is done within our production room, complete with a newly renovated recording area, allowing students to interact with green screen technology. The use of technology does not only enhance learning, but is a vehicle for learning at Oak Grove. This year, Oak Grove School was selected to make the live announcement for the Illinois Readers' Choice Award using our production room equipment that will be coordinated by our librarian and a technology coach.

SEL is a priority at Oak Grove; students in kindergarten through 5th grade receive SEL instruction on a weekly basis. In 6th through 8th grade, SEL instruction is provided as a whole day experience, integrated throughout the year, with a common theme for learning. Students in our upper grades participate in service learning experiences, such as volunteering at Lambs Farm, Feed My Starving Children, and raising funds to support others in need.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

Oak Grove School, filled with academically diverse learners, focuses on a differentiated core curriculum and multiple educational service options in order to best meet the needs of all students. Our core instructional methods focus on inquiry based learning within math, science, and writing. This allows for student choice and significant opportunities for differentiation. Beyond the needs of our core programming we also support students with a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS).

Using universal screeners and evaluating multiple data points, students are identified for reading and math support services. The intensity, grouping and specific intervention for a student is based on their identified tier. Our reading specialists focus on intervention in the areas of fluency and comprehension. Our specialists are trained to use Leveled Literacy Intervention System (LLI) and Wilson Reading System. Math interventionists support classroom conceptual learning, through the use of Add+VantageMR (AVMR) and Bridges interventions. In addition to the student support, Reading and Math Specialists communicate frequently with parents, providing strategies and suggestions for home support.

As our English learner (EL) population grows, the need for differentiated instruction continues to be a focus for our classroom teachers as well as our English learner educators. This year, our teachers have received professional development related to building student academic vocabulary, increasing visual learning opportunities, and teacher awareness of other cultures. Best practices for EL students will continue to be a focus of future professional development.

Special education services are provided in an inclusive manner and our special education teachers, related service personnel and classroom teachers work collaboratively to support the needs of our students. For those students needing emotional support groups such as social skills, social language and Calm Kids are facilitated by the social workers. We continually evaluate our instructional programs and service delivery model to ensure we are best meeting the needs of our students.

Oak Grove's Talented and Gifted Program (TAG) provides educational opportunities to build confidence, encourage curiosity, and foster social and emotional awareness. Students in grades K-3 receive support through classroom-based differentiation based on assessment data, flexible, pull-out enrichment services are provided for high achieving students on a weekly basis. Starting in 4th grade, daily replacement services are offered in English language arts and mathematics. Students in replacement services receive instructional content through curriculum compacting, increased depth of the core content and acceleration, when appropriate.

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

Oak Grove utilizes several assessments and district data to support student growth and improve student instruction. In order for parents to have a comprehensive perspective of how their child is doing, we utilize a data management company which takes in all of our district assessments and generates several reports for parent, teacher, and administrative use. The company is able to aggregate all of the student assessments and creates a propensity score to support teachers in ensuring a vision for what the student growth goals could be over the course of the year. This information is also shared with parents to keep them informed of their child's academic progress. Assessments included in our data system are: STAR from Renaissance Learning, our state assessment PARCC, and AIMSweb.

Three times a year, all students in kindergarten through 8th grade take the STAR assessment. This assessment is given in early literacy, math and reading. Reports are generated with data in alignment with the CCSS that is used to support teachers in organizing small groups for differentiated instruction. These reports are a great support for our teachers as we continue to maintain our high performance levels of achievement. Reports are also used to guide data conversations at team meetings in order to support curricular changes at grade levels. Parents receive copies of all scores and these are used to drive

conversations at parent-teacher conferences.

All students in kindergarten through 3rd grade, as well as our students receiving math intervention in kindergarten through 5th grade, take the AVMR assessments. These are one on one assessments where a teacher sits with an individual student and asks them a series of conceptual math questions to determine their level of math understanding in the areas of number sense and mathematical reasoning. These assessments have been crucial in developing our understanding of student achievement in the area of math. This data has made a significant contribution to the way we have shifted in presenting mathematical content.

There is a 20% gap in assessment data within our Hispanic population in the area of math. In 2012 the gap was 13%, in 2013 the gap increased to 27% due to a large population increase. The 7% decrease this past year speaks to the work we have implemented within the classrooms. We have increased our EL teaching staff, provided teachers with extensive training to support differentiation within the classroom to support different learning styles, and the biggest shift has been in updating our core instructional resources in math to support the conceptual thinking required to successfully master the CCSS. With our continued attention to this group, the teachers and students will continue to close this gap and become comparable to our other subgroups.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Our culture and climate has been purposefully crafted by creating a family within our kindergarten through 8th grade building as we watch our students grow and develop for nine years. Within our school family, teachers have the opportunity to support academic and social emotional growth, helping our students develop leadership skills as they transition from primary to middle school grades. Students are educated in an engaging and safe learning environment. Oak Grove is in the final year of a five-year cycle of completely renovating the facility. Each classroom has new furniture, lighting, flooring, heating, air conditioning and state of the art technology.

Our commitment to students extends outside of the classroom. The faculty embraces leadership opportunities to in coaching sports and sponsoring extracurricular activities. We currently offer fifteen clubs and nine sports for our 820 students. Having so many choices provides students an opportunity to find an area of interest. By participating in these activities, students make a connection with each other, the school and staff members. These programs help support the continued family culture we strive to maintain by including students and staff through activities that support social and emotional development.

Service projects are organized and completed throughout the school year by students from all grade levels. Some examples of how we encourage service learning are: 1st grade students adopting families at the holiday season to learn about wants versus needs, 5th grade students who have adopted an economically less fortunate neighboring school as their book buddies, 6th grade students and families volunteering at Feed My Starving Children and 7th grade collected clothing for a local shelter. By organizing these events within Oak Grove, our students learn to give of themselves and back to our community.

High behavioral expectations are reinforced throughout Oak Grove. Teachers utilize positive reinforcement and structure, along with building relationships to encourage responsible behavior.

As a result, teachers are able to focus on high academic achievement with minimal disruption to instruction. Our staff believes in challenging themselves and collaborating with each other to be the best staff they can be. Teachers take advantage of common planning time to coordinate instruction and assessment for students. Oak Grove faculty presents at local, state and national conferences sharing their knowledge with other educators. A unique feature of Oak Grove is the significant number of teachers that also live within the community. This fosters the family environment, as teachers are often neighbors of their students and therefore exemplifies the phrase, “it takes a village to raise a child.”

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Oak Grove would not be complete without the support of our parent community. We know that students succeed and grow academically and emotionally when a strong partnership exists between school and family. Frequent, open communication between staff and parents help to support this partnership. In 2016 we launched a new logo and developed a Facebook page and Twitter feed to increase our communication efforts.

The PTO has many roles within the school. Parents volunteer daily during lunch for each of our grade levels. They read with students in our early grades. They coordinate a number of events throughout the year such as: new family night, parent/child information nights, book fairs, ice cream socials, student social nights, spirit wear and our school Variety Show.

In addition to our PTO, we are fortunate to have the OGSEF. The foundation raises money and funds projects that enhance district initiatives. The foundation hosted a gala, which raised approximately \$40,000 that supported the addition of a production room in our technology lab, teacher mini-grants for innovative instructional materials and college scholarships for former students.

“Grovers” also learn as we extend and connect with our local community. One of the largest traditions is the annual Veterans Day celebration. The celebration is facilitated and led by our eighth grade students. They teach our younger students about Veterans Day, interview veterans to learn their stories, lead our ceremony and personally greet our Veterans, upon arrival. The number of veterans who attend has grown to over 200 in the past twenty years.

We partner with our feeder high school, LHS, to continue to support the development of students. Former students taking child development classes fulfill volunteer hours within our primary classrooms. Varsity athletes come and read in our elementary classrooms and our middle school band students play with the high school students. These student experiences illustrate the power of our community feel by having so many former students desire to return to OGS so often.

Our school fosters community engagement as well as family engagement. When Feed My Starving Children opened in Libertyville, our students volunteered on their opening day. In addition, we have a mural and benches that were created through Eagle Scout projects. This demonstrates our commitment to supporting the achievement of students within our community. We partnered with the village of Green Oaks to preserve a natural habitat, located near the school grounds, providing the opportunity to interact with nature.

3. Professional Development:

Oak Grove has made a significant effort to focus on embedded and long term professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators. In order to accomplish this task, professional development activities on teacher institute days, school improvement days and faculty meetings are all aligned to supporting student and school achievement. In addition to these traditional opportunities for staff professional development, the curriculum director hosts weekly half-day professional development sessions with each grade level and building administrators. Four times a year, each grade level team has the opportunity to have a half-day of concentrated curriculum work time with the curriculum director. These grade specific meetings are a wonderful opportunity to customize the professional development to the specific team or content area for growth or development. Discussions include: the district’s theme for the year and how it relates to the specific grade or content area, time to critique and update scope and sequence documents, review district assessment data for instructional program improvements, as well as time for teachers to be trained on researched based instructional practices that improve student learning.

This school year, the theme of all professional development has been focused on differentiation. Paula Kluth came and spoke to the staff at our opening teacher institute to share her thoughts and ideas related to meeting the needs of all learners through different activity options and brain breaks. All staff members received a copy of her book and it has been used throughout the year as a book study during our curriculum work days to discuss the ways in which we are all implementing the strategies. Thinking Maps were introduced at the October institute day which support differentiated thinking and student processing of ideas. Teachers within a grade level were responsible for teaching students about each map over the course of eight weeks. Now, all students kindergarten through 8th grades are familiar with and utilize these thinking strategies. Lastly, the workshop model for writing instruction has been a focus to support differentiated instruction and allow for student choice in products. These three areas of focus for differentiation have been common goals for all staff to see there are multiple ways of providing differentiated support to all students which, in turn, supports our student achievement.

Next year, the theme of differentiation will be extended through the additional training of the administrative team during the summer to support embedded professional development during weekly team meetings by the principal and assistant principal.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership philosophy at Oak Grove aligns with the vision of District 68, “Educating and inspiring all students to reach their full potential.” To meet this goal, Oak Grove utilizes the distributive leadership approach. The principal and assistant principal work closely with the curriculum director, student services

director, director of finance and superintendent focusing on the district's mission, vision and yearly goals. The administrative team formally meets on a weekly basis to plan professional development opportunities, discuss building logistics and resolve teacher concerns. The philosophy of the group is a collaborative decision making process that allows for conflicting points of view to be shared, yet keeping the focus on student learning. Daily informal communication between team members is essential to ensure that programming is consistent across grade levels. We have created a collaborative structure that allows us to lead professional development for staff, manage school culture, handle student discipline and guide instructional practices.

The entire school community is committed to student learning by holding each other accountable to the school's mission. The principal and assistant principal seek to empower the leadership potential of all stakeholders, especially teachers. Teachers collaborate daily with their peers and their commitment to student success is evident. They meet with the principal and assistant principal on a weekly basis to discuss curriculum and problem solve student issues with a solution-focused mindset. Utilizing the philosophy of distributive leadership teachers are led in an encouraging and positive manner, allowing them to use their expertise and feel valued, while maintaining a standard of excellence.

Oak Grove has a strong tradition of student leadership. Students work in close partnership with the school and community to lead activities and events that enrich school experiences. One of these events is the student coordinated Veterans Day assembly that is held each year. With the support of teachers, parents and administrators, the 8th grade class coordinates a memorable assembly each November 11th to honor our veterans. Distributive leadership is on full display that day, as an entire class works together and alongside their teachers inspiring all who attend "to reach their full potential."

Leadership at Oak Grove is shared so that all staff and students play an active role in fostering the school's capacity. With this level of collaboration and dedication, it is clear that the school community is fully committed to supporting student success.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) at Oak Grove School provides our students, families, staff and administration with skills necessary to recognize emotions and manage them effectively. Through the lessons and activities, students have been inspired to set and achieve personal goals. We are unique at Oak Grove because we have created a consistent time in the students' schedules that focuses on our social emotional learning standards. All students kindergarten through 5th grade receive SEL class once per week. The instruction is delivered by one teacher to ensure all students receive the same enthusiasm and focus during every lesson. All teachers reinforce the lessons with follow up activities that are interactive and engaging. Students in grades 6 through 8 have entire days set aside to focus on the SEL curriculum and provide the opportunity to focus on this very essential piece of their education. Our 6th through 8th grade students also participate in a variety of service projects in the area to practice the skill of empathy that they learn in the classroom.

Our curriculum is aligned thematically in kindergarten through 5th grade. Some of the programs we use include: Second Step, Child Lures Prevention and Safe at Last. Oak Grove 4th and 5th graders create music videos for our youngest learners. These music videos create an opportunity for the older students to sing songs from previous years, reinforcing goals and providing a leadership role in the instruction. The lyrics and skits provide our students with common language that make our program extremely effective and powerful. Parents are connected to the skills students learn through the use of ClassDojo via weekly photos and information highlighting topics to be discussed and reinforced at home. Through ClassDojo, parent participation data is collected to inform the teacher of the home connection.

At Oak Grove, we take pride in our school climate and our SEL instruction provides strategies that empower students to create a positive environment. Students often seek out individuals who are alone in the lunchroom and invite new friends to play. We practice not just empathy, but compassion, as students support each other in difficult situations and stand by their friends. As a school, our students have become empathetic and responsible learners. The resulting atmosphere is one where we can enjoy positive relationships and encourage each other to take risks in a safe and supportive environment to inspire all students to "reach their full potential."