

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. Diane L. Wirth

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

Official School Name Northpoint Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 50800 Cherry Road

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

City Granger State IN Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 46530-4900

County St. Joseph County

Telephone (574) 271-8598 Fax (574) 968-6003

Web site/URL https://northpoint.phmschools.org E-mail dwirth@phm.k12.in.us

Facebook Page

https://www.facebook.com/groups/2911873476548

Twitter Handle 94/ 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.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent*Dr. Jerry Thacker E-mail jthacker@phm.k12.in.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Penn-Harris-Madison School Corporation Tel. (574) 259-7941

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 Fox

(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):
- 11 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 3 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 15 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 | 39 | 40 | 79 |
| 1 | 50 | 52 | 102 |
| 2 | 40 | 52 | 92 |
| 3 | 51 | 51 | 102 |
| 4 | 62 | 43 | 105 |
| 5 | 65 | 36 | 101 |
| 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 | 307 | 274 | 581 |

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 21 % Asian
 - 3 % Black or African American
 - 0 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 75 % White
 - 1 % 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: 8%

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 | 21 |
| (2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year | 27 |
| (3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)] | 48 |
| (4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014 | 575 |
| (5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4) | 0.083 |
| (6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100 | 8 |

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 5 %
30 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Arabic, Bengali, Cantonese, French, Gujarati, Hindi, Kinyarwanda (Ruanda), Korean, Mandarin (Sichuanese), Marathi, Portuguese, Punjabi, Serbo-Croatian, Spanish, Tagalog (Pilipion), Tamil, Telugu, Turkish, Urdu, Yoruba

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 7 %
Total number students who qualify: 43
8. Students receiving special education services: 11 %
62 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.

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

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 4
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 | 24 |
| Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc. | 5 |
| Paraprofessionals | 20 |
| Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc. | 0 |

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 24:1
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 | 97% | 97% | 97% | 98% | 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.

"...to provide all students with a positive and challenging learning environment that empowers them to become responsible and productive citizens of the 21st century."

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

Northpoint Elementary School is a K-5 school of 581 students located in the suburban area of Granger, Indiana. Beginning in kindergarten, students are provided a rigorous academic program to meet the individual needs of all students. Before even entering our doors, our newest students are given a screening test to provide information for appropriate placement and instructional level. Data-driven instruction throughout K-5 allows our teachers to develop a curriculum map to meet the needs of all children. In addition, grades 2-3 and 4-5 are looping classrooms. This provides for a continuum of learning with no loss of instructional time.

Northpoint is warm, supportive, and accepting of all. Our students, known as the Northpoint Stars, are taught that differences are to be understood and celebrated. We understand that students enter our doors at various levels academically. Our teachers and staff are experts at meeting the students at their readiness level and moving forward from that point. Teachers are trained to review data and are able to pinpoint the needs of each child. Differentiation within our classrooms occur daily. Every minute counts in the instructional day. Response to Instruction (RtI) groups meet to re-teach pinpointed areas of weakness. RtI is not provided just to our struggling learners. High ability students are also provided further enrichment opportunities. After school tutoring occurs on a regular basis. From large group to one-on-one, no child is left behind. Students are taught to take ownership of their learning. Differentiated learning, small group instruction, and individual instruction address the unique needs of all students. Setting goals for students and closely monitoring data to support instruction, along with communication and support from our parents, assures that our students are able to achieve their personal best.

Fully inclusive, students with disabilities are taught in the classroom with their age appropriate peers to the greatest extent possible. Our exceptional education teachers are partners with our general education teachers, and together they develop programs that provide children with research-based instruction to allow all students to meet their highest level of achievement. From our struggling students to our highest ability students, our program is designed to assure every student reaches their full potential.

While providing students with a state-of-the-art education, opportunities for social and emotional growth are continuously available and are of the utmost importance to develop the whole child. Teachers and support staff are willing to step in to mentor students academically, socially, and emotionally before, during, and after school. Anti-bullying programs are taught to students and reinforced regularly. This helps develop a supportive community of learners. “Reading and Writing Buddies” pair older students with younger learners, supporting each other in the learning process. Peer mentoring is utilized to assist students who are in need. It can be as simple as an older student helping a younger one organize belongings at the end of the day or assisting with homework. Teachers and mentors connect with students’ emotional and social needs. Building relationships within our school community is vital to students’ growth. Stars in Service, our student council, teaches students that giving back and supporting others in need is of critical importance. From adopting children at Christmas to supporting the homeless shelter, our students learn at a young age how simple acts can make a difference.

Celebrations are a part of the culture of Northpoint. We recognize and value the members of our learning community. Student of the Month program recognizes individuals who have exhibited our clearly defined behavior expectations, known as our STAR Behaviors: Safe, Trustworthy, Accountable, and Respectful. Diversity within our school is also celebrated and students are taught to value the rich differences individuals bring to Northpoint.

Since being honored with the National Blue Ribbon School Award in 2010, our school continues to evolve. This award has inspired us to examine all practices, make changes that improve our programs, and identify and share with teachers current exemplary methods of achieving success. Receiving the National Blue Ribbon Award, annual Four Star School status, being recognized by bestschools.org as 27th in the nation, and schooldigger.com as second in the state, continues to motivate us to grow and improve.

The saying, “It takes a village,” is truly understood and applied at Northpoint. We believe that our success is

tied to the strong partnership that has been formed by the school, the students, and their families. Northpoint exemplifies Penn-Harris-Madison's "Triangle of Success," connecting our school, parents and teachers. Our teachers, staff, administration, and parents support one another and all students to assure that success is attained by every Northpoint "Star." Support from our stakeholders has allowed us to perform at the highest level. Failure is not an option. We have, and always will, go the extra mile.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Northpoint provides standards-based instruction following the Indiana Academic Standards as defined by the Indiana Department of Education. With highly trained professionals, our students are immersed in relevant, meaningful instruction, meeting the needs of all our students.

Pearson Reading provides the instructional framework of our reading program, with the incorporation of literature resources including novel studies, informational text, leveled reading, and read aloud. Our primary students are also engaged in multi-sensory reading strategies using Foundations. Vocabulary Vine and the study of Greek and Latin roots are incorporated into our intermediate classrooms, which supports vocabulary development and reading.

Reading instruction utilizes a variety of best practices to ensure our students are provided the highest level of instruction. Teachers are trained in Socratic seminar to develop higher level thinking with the students. Small group instruction occurs daily, with students receiving targeted instruction to match their areas of strengths and weaknesses. Supports are built in through RtI to help all students, from our struggling readers to our high ability students. Growth for all is an expectation. Our English Language Learners (ELL) have push-in services to help them acquire their new language, while being immersed in the reading program with their peers. Supports through their Individual Learning Plan (ILP) provide them with the highest quality of learning, with our ELL and general education teachers working in partnership to ensure success.

Writing is taught through the Lucy Calkins program. The teaching and application of writing occurs during a 45 minute block, four days a week, and is also applied in all content areas. Teachers and students engage in writing conferences, and children are instructed in a wide genre of writing projects. Students learn that writing is not an isolated skill, but rather connected throughout all areas of learning.

Our math instruction is supported by the Everyday Mathematics program. This is a comprehensive program, and students are constantly involved in higher level thinking. Guided by data, our students are provided with differentiation to ensure all children grow. Critical skills are targeted, and remediation and enrichment are provided. Supported by hands-on opportunities for learning, students are engaged in whole group instruction, small group instruction and differentiation. Problem solving is a main focus for our students as we prepare them for real life applications of mathematics. Understanding how they will utilize these skills is critical to help them comprehend the purpose for their learning. Students are taught and learn to apply multiple strategies for solving problems. Mathematical vocabulary is also important for overall success. Our K-5 teachers work together to ensure that as students transition from one grade to another, vocabulary development in mathematics is aligned to expectations and builds sequentially to allow for optimum learning.

The social studies and science curriculum are interconnected to the language arts program. Informational texts support the reading curriculum and allow students to write about their studies, research projects, and scientific discoveries. Learning is not isolated, and students see the connectedness of the entire curriculum. The social studies and science programs used by Northpoint help teachers prepare engaging and interactive lessons that the students are excited to do. Social Studies Alive is not like history books of old with slews of names and dates to memorize. The program brings stories of the past “alive” by connecting them to students’ lives today. The interactive notebook component allows students to synthesize information they have learned and take it to deeper levels of understanding.

Students in K-5 are engaged in scientific inquiry and have many opportunities to explore through guided instruction using the National Geographic program. This program is hands-on, making it conducive for learning. There are many experiments and investigations that our teachers use to give students first hand experiences, allowing them to comprehend terminology and concepts that are more abstract. When paired with the online component, students are having fun while learning, plus experiencing more exposure to

vocabulary and enriching activities. Our teachers capitalize on these programs, which takes learning to a new level and opens the door for student success.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

The arts are alive at Northpoint! Our students are engaged in both visual and performing arts. In the visual arts, monthly lessons through our Art Smart volunteer program teaches them about an artist and the artist's style. Children are allowed to create their own masterpieces, replicating that style. From pointillism to surrealism, our students are engaged in lessons about art throughout history. Additionally, within classrooms, teachers guide children through artistic experiences, using a wide range of mediums to enhance the curriculum.

In the performing arts, Northpoint has a rich musical culture and tradition that serves our students both academically and socially. Our music curriculum is multi-faceted and progressive from first to fifth grades. The main goal is for our students to leave elementary school capable of participating in musical activities for the rest of their lives, with a love and understanding of vocal, instrumental, and cultural music. Students are engaged daily to be tuneful, "beatful," and artful, as described by Dr. John Feierabend's First Steps in Music methods.

Our music curriculum for our first through fifth grade students supports and enhances other academic areas through songs and activities that promote fact learning and cross-curricular connections. Each year we hold a dance celebration and Celebrate the Seasons program for all students. Each grade level showcases a dance at the dance celebration, and we sing songs for all holidays celebrated in the wintertime at Celebrate the Seasons. These celebrations provide an opportunity to discover other cultures and traditions through song and dance. Once each school year, all students in grades 1, 2, 3, and 5 participate in a vocal concert for parents and community members, with our fourth graders performing in a recorder recital. Students cover singing, playing instruments, reading, interpreting, and performing standards in these concerts. This is a great way to build a sense of community and belonging, while working toward a common goal. As a nationally recognized district of excellence in music education, our music curriculum is rigorous, rewarding, engaging, and ultimately fun!

Our kindergarten students participate in Music and Movement, a program designed specifically to meet the needs of these young children. Music is combined with physical activities, which develops both fine and gross motor skills. Rhythm, rhyme, and coordination development are just a few of the critical areas that help strengthen the minds and bodies of our youngest learners.

Research shows that physical movement is invaluable in the daily lives of students, promoting not only healthy bodies, but also active minds. Our physical education curriculum develops health-related fitness, physical competence, cognitive understanding, and positive attitudes about physical activity so that students can adopt healthy and physically active lifestyles. There is a progression of specific skills at each grade level. In addition to learning sports that can be played over a lifetime of fitness, students also work on coordination, sportsmanship, teamwork, and gross and fine motor skills. We believe our students at Northpoint need to be educationally, socially, emotionally, and physically fit.

Technology plays a role in all areas of education at Northpoint. Our classrooms are supplied with interactive projectors and document cameras. These technology tools open up the world to our students. Students and teachers can explore beyond traditional textbooks to further advance learning. Chromebooks and iPads are utilized in all classrooms. Discussions can occur through Google Classroom anywhere in the world. Resources are not limited to what is on the bookshelves, but are extended through virtual libraries, where any book is just a click away. Students are taught to use these tools, along with how to use different programs and resources to engage in Project Based Learning, research, and inquiry-based learning opportunities.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

Northpoint strives to meet the individual needs of our diverse population using multiple strategies. Instruction of standards and skills begins with pretesting. Data is used to form focused small and large group instruction based on identified student needs. The use of pretesting ensures students are taught at their level and need. Our teachers are fully trained in differentiated instruction and utilize this practice within each unit of study. Understanding that needs change, instructional groupings are fluid to ensure that individual needs are met. Teachers use multiple formative assessments to drive their instruction.

ELL, exceptional education, and RtI students benefit from both push-in and pull-out services. ELL students are immersed in rich language experiences. Our exceptional education students work among their age appropriate peers and are in the general education classroom for the majority of their day. RtI teams meet with struggling learners daily. Within these small groups, they review standards and practice remedial and critical thinking skills. We also utilize parent helpers and teacher aides within the building for extra support. In addition to these strategies, many teachers within our building host small group and one-on-one tutoring sessions after school. During this time, teachers work on specific skill areas based on formative and summative assessments. Co-teaching, the exceptional education teachers, ELL instructors, and general education teachers work to support the learning of all of our students.

Enrichment opportunities abound at Northpoint. Project-based learning can be observed in every classroom. These projects present students with real life problems and encourage them to think critically. Socratic seminars are utilized to implement higher level thinking and to promote student led discussions. Our high ability students receive above grade level instruction with rigorous goals and expectations. Grade level teams work together, sharing ownership of all children and assisting with remediation and enrichment. Intermediate teachers utilize academic competitions, such as the WordMasters Challenge, to build a stronger, more versatile vocabulary amongst the students. Our students excel in the WordMasters Challenge and have been recognized at a national level.

Teachers are fully equipped with interactive technology. Students are often found using Chromebooks and iPads to support their learning through programs such as Acuity and Odyssey to enrich and reinforce critical skills. Technology connects our children to places and events beyond the classroom and enables learning to come alive through technology.

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

Northpoint uses a variety of assessments to guide our daily instruction for both remediation and acceleration purposes. At the start of each school year, students are assessed for baseline data through our reading program. Data is disaggregated and groups are formed to ensure students are in the appropriate instructional level. Teachers continue to progress monitor and design instruction for student growth.

Students in third through fifth grade are required to take Acuity testing three times a year. Highly trained in analyzing and interpreting data, teachers and staff utilize this information to remediate and enrich our students. Our primary students undergo DIBELS testing three times a year as well. Those students who are at risk are progress monitored at least every two weeks after remediation has occurred to ensure they are making progress towards the standard.

All teachers use many different formative assessments within their classrooms. Daily checks allow for teachers to assess understanding. Having this data available allows teachers the opportunity to monitor and guide their instruction so all students are showing growth. Grade level teams meet weekly to review data and assess student needs. WIDA testing is administered to ELL students. The results are used to help identify strengths and weaknesses, allowing individualized support within their classrooms. Push-in or pull-out services are provided based upon test results.

Beginning in the primary grades, students are given the NWEA test for high ability identification. Depending on these results, select students in grades K, 2 and 5 are given a CogAt test to further help identify them. Teacher input is also a valuable component of high ability identification.

All students in 3rd grade are given IREAD in the spring. Those who do not pass this assessment are required to attend summer school and retest. Grades 3rd-5th also complete the ISTEP+ test each spring.

Communication to parents is critical in supporting the needs of children and working as partners to ensure success. Student data and progress is shared regularly with conferences and data reports sent home to parents. Our high expectations and use of data-driven instruction ensure that students are not left behind nor serviced below their ability level, allowing Northpoint to be a high growth and high performing school.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Northpoint has created a climate and culture of respect. All members of our learning community are taught to value the individual differences that each brings to our population. Rich in diversity, Northpoint has over one hundred students whose second language is English. Our school celebrates diversity through classroom experiences and school-wide events.

We are proud of our exceptional education program, which provides an in-depth experience for students with special needs. Fully inclusive, our exceptional education and general education teachers have created a partnership that benefits all students. We value what every student brings to the classroom. Through our inclusive school environment, all students learn to respect and accept the uniqueness of others.

Anti-bullying lessons are taught and modeled throughout the year, using both P-H-M curriculum and lessons from Logan Center, a community resource for children with disabilities. Anti-bullying cannot be an isolated lesson. The understanding is shared that being different makes our school exceptional. Our students are taught to appreciate our differences. These lessons will impact them through life.

Support for our students is evident daily in our administration, faculty, staff, and parents. All members create an environment of professionalism and determination. They encourage and collaborate. Staff members selflessly give their time to assist colleagues, help students in need, and make sacrifices to provide support. “What can I do to help?” is heard frequently among our staff. A commitment to assisting others is a deep part of our culture.

All stakeholders work to provide a positive environment that supports academic, social, and emotional growth. We strive to develop an atmosphere of acceptance and mutual respect. Throughout the building, staff is aware of students who model our STAR behaviors. Our Northpoint creed encourages students to be safe, trustworthy, accountable, and respectful. This is recited daily by the student body. Children who exemplify these behaviors are rewarded with a “Caught Shining” certificate and recognized on WSTAR morning news. In addition, students can be nominated for “Student of the Month” within their classrooms. They understand that this is a great honor and work toward achieving this recognition. Behavioral expectations are positively taught and modeled from kindergarten through fifth grade. This helps our students move seamlessly throughout their educational career at Northpoint.

Our culture is based on trust, appreciation, and acceptance of others. Staff, students, and parents are partners in learning. Together we have made this brick and mortar building a model of success.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Northpoint is dedicated to teaching our students that other people matter. Children learn that giving to others makes a difference in this world. Our Stars in Service student council program learns about community needs and plans special events to raise donations for charitable organizations. Through Stars in Service, Northpoint has donated to the Homeless Shelter, Wounded Warriors, Hannah’s House, Christmas Commandos, Riley Children’s Hospital, and many other organizations. Every November our students also collect food for our “Stuff a Trailer” day. The food we collect is dispersed to families in need. Our students learn through these opportunities how easy it is to make a difference.

We believe that it is also our professional responsibility to give our time and talent to prepare future educators. Penn High School students job shadow Northpoint teachers. High school students from the Cadet Teacher program, along with university students completing their field experience, are welcomed into our classrooms. Northpoint is a highly sought after placement for student teachers, hosting seniors from IUSB, St. Mary’s College, Bethel College, and other area colleges and universities. We firmly believe that it is an honor to help prepare the next generation of teachers.

Northpoint interacts with the surrounding community in many ways. We host blood drives, allowing teachers, parents, and members of the neighborhood to donate at our school. Our Science Fair is another excellent example of our involvement in the community. Local college professors are invited to come to the fair, interview our young scientists, and decide which students will enter their experiments at the Regional Science Fair held at the University of Notre Dame.

We welcome family and community members to present a variety of programs. Clay Fire Department comes annually to teach fire safety. Dr. Manuel Lopez, DDS, instructs students about dental health. Field trips also provide opportunities for children to learn outside the classroom. Potawatomi Zoo, The Snite Museum of Art, Conner Prairie, Tremendous Tree Farm, and the South Bend Museum of Art are just a few of the learning experiences afforded our students throughout the area.

Northpoint has created an inclusive environment where all families and community members feel valued and welcomed. Parents are an integral part of the heart and soul of Northpoint. Our “village” has helped to define who we are and contributed to the success our school has attained.

3. Professional Development:

Professional development is a key component of the Northpoint culture. Opportunities range from training provided at the school and district level to training sought by teachers independently. We began our school year collaborating ideas on continuing to bring wonder and joy into the classroom environment. A book study on teaching with joy is currently underway to inspire our teaching and learning. Other specific examples of professional development have included high ability instruction, English Language Learners program, bullying prevention, e-Learning for home-based education, Canvas, DIBELS, Acuity, ISTEP, Everyday Math, Pearson Reading, and the Lucy Calkins writing program. These trainings are standards-based and help teachers meet the needs of individual learners. Also, first and second year teachers at Northpoint receive additional support and training throughout the school year.

Relevant and meaningful professional development, collaboration, a constant drive to improve instruction and learning are pursued at Northpoint via team, staff, and committee meetings. We have also connected with a professor at Notre Dame, who teaches Islamic Studies, to help our staff further understand a part of our diverse student population. Professional development opportunities are met with a high level of enthusiastic staff participation.

Recently, in partnership with the Northpoint PTO, classrooms have been updated with new technology, including interactive projectors. Teachers have participated in extensive voluntary training to learn how to best to utilize technology in their classrooms, enhancing student learning. Our students are twenty-first century learners, with the world at their fingertips. Training is ongoing. Opportunities continue through summer with Google Classroom, ActivInspire, and developing Flip Charts with Promethean Planet. While our teaching calendar year is only 180 days, collaboration and sharing take place year round.

Many teachers also participate in independent learning opportunities, such as Teachers as Scholars at the University of Notre Dame and other college summer institutes. Teachers at Northpoint are always willing to share the knowledge they gain at conferences, institutes, and workshops with their colleagues. The professional development culture at Northpoint is one of collaboration focusing on best practices and how to effectively center instruction around diverse student needs. Understanding that it is our responsibility to continue to grow professionally, we open our classroom doors to our colleagues, sharing strategies of successful practices. Lifelong learning is valued by all.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership philosophy is apparent at Northpoint. Teachers are seen as experts in their field. Our principal creates a culture of shared leadership, high expectations, and continuous improvement. The climate is one in which both students and teachers enjoy learning and growing. All stakeholders can learn from another, and everyone is encouraged to share their talents.

Our principal holds high standards for herself, her staff, and the Northpoint students. She has created a climate at Northpoint that results in opportunities for students and staff to excel. Teachers are trained to understand and use data to drive instruction. Best practices are shared. Northpoint is known in the community as one of the top schools in our corporation, state, and country. It is also known for having heart; a school that cares about the well-being of the whole child. This is developed and supported through our principal.

Under the principal, leadership development is encouraged, and teachers are able to share, knowing their expertise is valued. Teachers serve as instructional leaders at grade levels, the building level, and on district-level committees. Northpoint teachers actively pursue opportunities to train others, serve on behavior and intervention teams, and develop curriculum and assessments.

Teachers willingly lead student programs, including student council, Northpoint WSTAR morning news, and Science Expo. Their dedication and passion are apparent as they lead after school activities including Circle the State with Song, Battle of the Books, Silver Mile Movers, and Running is Elementary. Additionally, they lead extracurricular events such as Saturday Enrichment for high ability students, Young Author's Conferences, and Spell Bowl. They work with parents as partners to facilitate art, science, and other academic programs.

Parent involvement at Northpoint is an essential part of student success. The principal supports their involvement at all levels and creates an inviting atmosphere where parents feel appreciated. Open communication and transparency build a level of trust that strengthens Northpoint. Every day, parents can be seen walking through the school doors, where they work to support learning. They are also welcome to help before and after school hours with schoolwide functions. The principal is present at all events. The level of collaboration between parents, teachers, and the administrator is a fundamental key to our success. Leadership and collaboration are encouraged, developed, and celebrated.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Imagine a place or state of being in which everything is perfect. Although this vision is not something one personally encounters on a daily basis, one who examines the academic learning environment at Northpoint Elementary School would classify it as close to perfect, as close to a utopia, as possible. Northpoint is an incredible place because a strong, dedicated, hands-on approach to learning exists and teachers consistently and continuously instill a can-do attitude in our children. This approach to teaching and learning is data-driven and infused with high expectations.

Our approach to analyzing data allows us to help each individual child “reach for the stars” and not only master but surpass rigorous goals and standards, enabling children to become lifelong learners. Instilling joy in the learning process, with relevant and meaningful curriculum, children thrive. The data allows us to identify different strengths and weaknesses among the children. Based on the data we obtain and analyze, our team of teachers develop interesting and invigorating lessons to enhance students’ strengths. We also design specific standards-based lessons to help turn academic weaknesses in our school population into strengths. Data is used to drill down, reinforce, and re-teach until mastery is obtained. Essentially, the attitude among the teachers at Northpoint is that our work is never done. No matter the readiness level of any child, we rely on data to guide our instruction; we push, motivate, and encourage the children to grow and become stronger academically. Teachers create lessons that make children wonder, question, and think at higher levels.

Everyone can improve. At Northpoint every child has an opportunity to thrive in an achievement oriented environment. Data and lessons that are designed to engage our students drive our instructional practices. We are determined that all children succeed. The kind attitudes, determined efforts, and dedicated mindsets among our teachers come together to make our school a dream come true for our community of learners. Our students happily come through our doors on a daily basis entrusting us with their minds and futures. It is an honor and a privilege to encourage our children to “reach for the stars.”