

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 [X] Choice

Name of Principal Mr. John F. Pagel

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

Official School Name Deerfield Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 3600 Crooks Road

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

City Rochester Hills State MI Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 48309-4159

County Oakland County

Telephone (248) 537-6700 Fax (248) 537-6705

Web site/URL http://www.avondaleschools.org/deerfield E-mail david.goetz@avondale.k12.mi.us

Twitter Handle https://twitter.com/Avondaleschools Facebook Page http://www.facebook.com/avondaleschooldistrict 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. James Schwarz Ph.D. E-mail james.schwarz@avondale.k12.mi.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Avondale School District Tel. (248) 537-6000

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. Kenneth Hedrick
(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):
- 4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 2 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 7 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
 - Suburban
 - Small city or town in a rural area
 - Rural
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2015 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	40	38	78
1	36	27	63
2	25	28	53
3	35	30	65
4	29	25	54
5	31	33	64
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	196	181	377

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 12 % Asian
 - 11 % Black or African American
 - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 71 % White
 - 0 % 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: 6%

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	7
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	15
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	22
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	385
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.057
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	6

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 16 %
59 Total number ELL

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

Albanian; Amharic; Arabic; Assamese; Bengali; Chaldean; Chinese; Farsi; French; German; Gujarati; Hindi; Hmong; Japanese; Korean; Malayalam; Romanian; Russian; Spanish; Tamil; Telugu; Ukrainian; Urdu; Vietnamese

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 25 %
Total number students who qualify: 95

8. Students receiving special education services: 10 %
36 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>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>1</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>14</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>4</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>5</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>7</u> Mental Retardation	<u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 15
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.	5
Paraprofessionals	4
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

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%	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. 1998

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

"To ensure that all students acquire knowledge and develop the academic, social and thinking skills that will enable them to become productive members of society."

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

The Avondale School District advertises a specific number of seats that are open to non-resident school of choice applicants. There is an open enrollment application period from April 15th to May 15th as supervised by Oakland County. All requests are honored unless the number of requests exceeds the number of open seats. In this case a lottery process is established. There are no specific academic criteria for eligibility.

PART III – SUMMARY

Deerfield Elementary School is part of the Avondale School District and is located in the southwest quadrant of the city of Rochester Hills, Michigan. We are proud to have been recognized as a Michigan and National Blue Ribbon School (1998). We have been designated as a "Rewards School" (2013 and 2014) by the State of Michigan and have received district accreditation through AdvancEd.

Our mission statement is "Deerfield ensures that all students acquire knowledge and develop the academic, social and thinking skills that will enable them to become productive members of society." Our goal is to work together to build community, to ensure that all stakeholders learn, and to help all students succeed, both academically and socially. Our mission is further supported by our purpose statement which is "The purpose of Deerfield Elementary is to help children recognize their potential, build confidence, and ensure student learning." We expect Deerfield Elementary will be a place where a collaborative community develops and implements meaningful curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessment to ensure all students learn.

Deerfield Elementary School has provided families in the cities of Auburn Hills, Bloomfield Twp., Rochester Hills, and Troy, Michigan with an exceptional choice for public education. Our school community consists of 377 students, an administrator, teachers, support staff, and amazing families. Each of these groups is a crucial component to the development of life-long learners. Educators work tirelessly to develop rigorous curriculum and meaningful assessments while utilizing best practice instructional methods which challenge students to reach their highest potential. Many people purchase homes within the Deerfield Elementary School boundary due to the richness of the cultural and ethnic diversity of our student population as well as our exceptional curriculum and school staff. Fifty-nine of our students are served by our ELL teachers. Many additional students speak a primary language other than English at home. Twenty-five different languages are spoken at Deerfield. Approximately 25% of our students come from economically disadvantaged homes, which is more than double what it was ten years ago. The neighborhoods in the attendance area surrounding our school are as diverse as our student population. Student homes range from federally subsidized housing to upscale homes, and yet we take great pride that we have broken down social and cultural barriers to ensure that one would find it challenging to identify children from any of our socio-economic sub groups.

A collaborative culture is evident throughout the school as teachers have collaborated within, as well as across, grade levels to provide an educational program that challenges all students. The needs of children are met in a differentiated, articulated approach. Teachers have focused our school improvement efforts on the areas of reading comprehension, writing conventions, and number sense. Additionally, teachers have been working diligently to incorporate the Harvard research of "Visible Thinking" routines in their classrooms beginning in the 2014-2015 school year. These routines are aimed at supporting our school improvement efforts and improving overall student achievement and higher order thinking skills.

Deerfield students consistently excel academically and surpass the State of Michigan and Oakland County averages on the state's standardized testing, currently known as the M-STEP test. Curriculum decisions are based on data from various assessments, and school and district standards are aligned with the Common Core Curriculum. Deerfield staff realizes that motivating each child to build on his or her skills, talents, and imagination promotes academic success. Teachers spend countless hours honing their professional skills. They attend a wide variety of district-provided professional development offerings as well as teacher designed and led professional development within the building. Our teachers are learners and therefore our students are learning!

Deerfield provides students opportunities to participate in a variety of fine arts programs. As a part of the regular school program, students participate in physical education, vocal music, and art. Additionally, Avondale Community Education provides parents and students a multitude of extra-curricular programs after school. We support and promote the importance of living healthy lifestyles.

Deerfield has recently experienced many notable achievements. Our school improvement efforts have

incorporated meaningful use of data to inform instruction, and collaboration among teachers across grade levels. Additionally, we have introduced a multi-tiered system of support to identify and differentiate instruction with our Teacher Assisted Team and our Student Progress Meeting and RTI processes. Deerfield is a lighthouse for parental involvement. Our current PTO has more than 30 established committees that support the academic and social endeavors of our students. We are proud of our numerous family events that celebrate music, art, reading, mathematics, science, social studies, physical fitness, health and much more! A diverse committee of educators in our building has recently worked together to develop a matrix of Positive Behavior and Intervention Support. Students are being "caught in the act" of kindness, courage and justice. These young leaders are recognized weekly for their efforts. This intervention has yielded a 20% decrease in behavior referrals in just the first 6 months!

Our learning community was truly galvanized through the National Blue Ribbon process in 1998. Our journey helped us to institute a comprehensive and ongoing process for continuous improvement, it raised the level of parental involvement to new heights that have continued for more than a decade, and it has continued to inspire a staff to have the highest aspirations for ourselves and our students. Once you have been recognized as a National Blue Ribbon school, you want to be able to continue to pass what we believe is the toughest test....the test of time.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Deerfield's core curriculum is based on a combination of Common Core Standards (English/Language Arts and Math) and Grade Level Content Expectations (Science and Social Studies).

In Language Arts, Reading and Writing Workshop is the instructional model used in Avondale to support students as they continually develop their skills in reading, writing, listening and speaking. We focus on challenging our students to be skilled readers, writers, and thinkers who effectively comprehend and communicate. Our workshop model expands students' fluency and comprehension through a structure that fosters a love of language by using meaningful text. The workshop model allows teachers to differentiate instruction in order to accommodate the learning needs of all students. Many of our teachers worked at the district and county level to write these units of study. Students experience a variety of genres and authors as literacy competencies are developed through narrative and informational text. Instruction is comprehensive and provides a progression of teaching and learning that aligns with the Common Core State Standards. Teachers work with students as a whole group, in small groups, and through individualized instruction. Literacy mini-lessons are followed by opportunities for independent practice. During this time, teachers gather small groups for "Literature Circles" designed to use books at the students' instructional levels. Small group and individual conferences address the needs of readers at all levels. Students are empowered to select 'just right' books from the classroom library or our building level Literacy Library. Our comprehensive reading assessment centers on the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Reading System; it also includes reading scores from the MSTEP and IReady along with anecdotal records, rubrics, and checklists. Students who perform below grade level expectations are given additional instruction using LLI (Leveled Literacy Instruction) materials multiple times each week. Books from a variety of publishers are available for reading in the classroom and teachers use our Literacy Library to check out multiple copies of books for small group instruction.

In mathematics, our district uses Houghton Mifflin Harcourt's Math Expressions for curriculum delivery. These materials were chosen because they are based directly on the Common Core State Standards and provide support materials suitable for instruction, intervention, and enrichment. Math Expressions is an inquiry-based program, which supports problem solving, development of number sense, and higher-level thinking. Through daily "Math Talk," students explain their mathematical processes and thinking. This allows students to become more fluent in applying strategies. "Math Talk" also provides opportunities for students to collaborate with their classmates. Teachers intentionally choose specific routines to promote student thinking, while building students' procedural fluency and conceptual understanding. These practices are not simply related to the use of algorithms, but require students to reason and apply previous thinking and learning to successfully solve problems. Students are required to make sense of problems and to persevere in solving them. Students must reason abstractly and quantitatively as well as articulate their thinking and critique the reasoning of others. Our program also has helpful online resources to supplement classroom learning and to help parents work with their students at home.

The science curriculum is aligned with the Michigan Grade Level Content Expectations. Teachers are focused at each grade level on student learning about life, earth, and physical sciences through inquiry and the scientific process. Instruction centers on hands-on experimentation and utilizes the Full Option Science System materials recommended by the Oakland Schools ISD. Targeted experiments allow students to form and test hypotheses in a collaborative environment. Again, students are required to make connections to previous learning, to articulate their thinking, and to dissect the thinking of their peers. Interdisciplinary learning is also a part of daily science learning as students interact with charts and graphs that they have worked with in math and through written articulation of scientific findings and conclusions.

The social Studies curriculum is aligned with the Michigan Grade Level Content Expectations and focuses on the major components of culture, history, economics, government, and geography. Students begin in Kindergarten learning about families and local communities and continue to expand learning throughout the various grades to include Michigan, U.S., and world history, along with geography, regions, economics, and

social and cultural trends. At each grade level, social studies learning includes opportunities for collaboration around informational text, writing, and participation in a variety of field trips to learn about the processes of all branches of our democratic local, state, and federal governments. Students extend their learning by testing their self-efficacy through letter writing, visits with government officials, and through student extra-curricular opportunities such as Leadership Club and Environmental Recycling Club.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Deerfield students engage in learning in visual arts, music, and physical education multiple times each week.

Our visual arts curriculum is based on the Michigan Grade Level Content Expectations. Children in grades K-5 learn about the history and methods of famous artists and incorporate this learning into their own pottery, sculpting, drawing, painting, and calligraphy. Learning in the visual arts is comprehensive and interdisciplinary and offers students opportunities to see the connections and impact of math, science, social studies, and literature on artistic expression. Deerfield artists display their work for the year at our annual Deerfield Art Fest. The walls of our school are transformed into a real art gallery for parents and community members to enjoy. In addition, we have had numerous students win local and national awards for their work. Art from Deerfield has been on display and has won awards at the district, county, and state levels. Beautiful elementary selections have also traveled the country and have been on display in our Nation's Capital!

Deerfield's music curriculum is based on national standards for music education. Learning in music includes singing, dancing, listening, composing, and playing instruments. Students in grades K-3 learn about rhythm, beat, tone, and pitch and are introduced to percussion instruments such as the maracas, tambourine, xylophone, and bongos. Children in grades 4-5 also learn to play the recorder and the ukulele. This instrumental learning sets the stage for formal band classes which begin in 6th grade in our district. Music students in grades 1-5 perform an evening concert to showcase their learning for parents and community members and all concerts are streamed live around the world using our media distribution system.

Our physical education program is based on national standards and the Michigan Exemplary Physical Education Curriculum. Physical education classes encourage healthy habits and physical fitness and are assessed by individual fitness testing and goal setting. Team and individual sport units focus on skill development. Students in grades K-5 learn basic skills in basketball, hockey, baseball, football, volleyball, and bowling. In addition, students engage in health units at all grade levels and learn about their bodies and how to keep them healthy through proper nutrition, exercise, and by making healthy choices to avoid drugs, alcohol, and tobacco use. Each year, our entire student body participates in the "Jump Rope and Hoops for Heart" fundraiser for the American Heart Association. This year, we are proud that our students raised more than \$13,000 for this worthy cause while showing off their physical fitness!

Deerfield students in grades K-5 attend library/media classes once each week. Our media curriculum is based on state standards and was written by Avondale Media Specialists and colleagues from around Oakland County. Teachers and students use technology in lessons about online resources and utilize technology to research, collaborate, and communicate in a variety of contexts. The Deerfield Media Center offers a wide variety of choices to students when checking out books to read at home. Each week, our students participate in a "library lesson" on how to locate appropriate resources for research and/or enjoyment. Deerfield has a variety of technology tools for use with each curriculum area. Various devices (smartboards, iPads, laptops, and peripheral technologies, etc.) allow for the differentiation of instruction, practice of skills, and the completion of project-based assessments.

A subcomponent of our English/Language Arts program that we would like to highlight as an additional curriculum area is our recent work with our writing program. Deerfield utilizes the Michigan Association of Intermediate Administrators (MAISA) units of study along with the research of Lucy Calkins as the foundations of our writing program. We incorporate a writing workshop format. The basic principles of writing workshop encourage student independence through apprenticeship learning and through the use of mentor texts. The units follow a workshop structure which includes a connection, teaching point, active engagement, link, mid workshop teaching point, and share. Teachers craft their lessons according to a specific teaching point and learning objective, and writers use that teaching point as they author their own

pieces. The teacher holds conferences with individual students throughout the writing workshop, and prepares students to share their work. Students share their work with their writing partner, and provide feedback to one another according to a rubric. While this process is still in its beginning stages, we have seen a positive impact in our writing scores as measured by state standardized testing (MEAP and MSTEP).

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

Deerfield Elementary has a comprehensive system in place to inform instruction, intervention and enrichment within our learning community. First, with the help of our teachers' union, we were able to develop a master schedule for all elementary buildings that provides for daily common planning time by grade level. This affords teachers the opportunity to meet each day to discuss grade level assessment results and to plan core instruction for all students collaboratively. Additionally, teachers are able to design "intervention and enrichment" instructional blocks throughout the week to ensure that students in need of remediation and/or extended learning get what they need in order to be successful. During these "IE" blocks, students are divided into intervention and enrichment groups and receive targeted instruction based on individual and/or common small group needs.

Technology tools such as iReady online programming, RAZ-Kids reading, and a variety of online mathematics tools are incorporated to give students an extra rotation of instruction in their areas of need. These resources also have an enrichment component to ensure that those students who have achieved mastery have an opportunity to extend their learning around various content.

Grade level teams also meet each quarter with the building administrator and with support staff to review comprehensive assessment data and to strategize RTI type activities for students who need supplemental help outside of the classroom. Our building child study team also collaborates each week to brainstorm strategies to ensure that no students are left behind in their learning.

Our Fountas and Pinnell assessment model and LLI programs allow for highly individualized instruction in reading while our Math Expressions "math talk" format promotes individualized and small group learning in math. Technology tools offer opportunities for students to engage with content in new ways that are different from traditional classroom instruction.

Tier 2 and 3 strategies used by our ESL, reading support, speech, and special services staff give students up to five extra instructional opportunities each week in addition to their general education classroom lessons. The ESL and Title I staff also provide small group instruction that coordinates with each grade level's science and social study units. This involves deeper instruction in vocabulary and background knowledge.

Deerfield instructional staff has received extensive training on the Harvard research of "Visible Thinking." We have also participated in multiple book studies on "Teaching with Poverty in Mind" and understanding the "cultural forces" that impact instructional best practices. The staff has used this learning to inform all core instruction, intervention and enrichment to ensure that we are meeting the needs of all students. Deerfield has made significant gains in reducing achievement gaps on standardized and local assessments for all of our identified sub-groups. We have leveled the learning field for our students!

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

Deerfield educators utilize a variety of assessment data to analyze and improve student learning. We consider this to be an ongoing process and continue, as a staff, to employ systems that will ensure efficiency and the maximum impact for all students.

Local assessments such as our math facts, number sense awareness diagnostics, and Fountas and Pinnell individualized reading assessments are loaded into our Pearson INFORM site for tracking of individual student performance. This enables teachers to retrieve results and to sort data in a wide variety of categories (sight-word vocabulary, fluency, phonics, comprehension, etc.). The results are used formatively for student placement and to differentiate instruction. These results are also used in a summative manner to evaluate instruction and guide our staff with school improvement and curricular planning initiatives.

Public school students in grades 3-9 are required by the State of Michigan to take the MSTEP test. Students are tested in Mathematics, Reading, Writing, Science, and Social Studies. These tests are reported based on four levels of proficiency. MSTEP results are delivered online a few months after the assessment is given. The principal and teachers immediately review the results. Teachers use the Individual Student Report to identify a student's strengths and areas which may need improvement. Teachers use the Item Analysis Report to evaluate student responses to specific tested standards. Each item is aligned to an expectation and/or specific Common Core Standard. Teachers use the demographic report to examine scores by demographic subgroup. The Comprehensive Report examines mean scale scores and performance level information by grade level and subject area.

The assessments (local and state) listed above drive instructional decisions for further learning. Teachers meet each day in grade level teams to discuss local and standardized assessment results and to plan core instruction for all students collaboratively. Additionally, teachers are able to design "intervention and enrichment" instructional blocks throughout the week to ensure that students in need of remediation and/or extended learning get what they need in order to be successful. During these "IE" blocks, students are divided into intervention and enrichment groups and receive targeted instruction around individual and/or common small group needs.

Detailed summary results along with action plans for instruction, intervention, and enrichment are shared with all stakeholders, including parents, at multiple data meetings throughout the year. Parents are engaged with ideas of how to help their students at home and are given access to a number of online programs and videos that make it easy for them to partner with our staff in this endeavor.

We are proud that Deerfield Elementary consistently outperforms both the state and county averages on the MEAP and MSTEP standardized tests. The State of Michigan has recognized our school as outperforming our demographic on overall performance and in the quest to narrow or eliminate achievement gaps for our sub group population. We believe that the work as detailed above has enabled us to provide the necessary instruction, intervention and enrichment to ensure that all of our students achieve academic success!

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

The Deerfield learning community is a family and we truly love each other! Our climate and culture is shaped by the way we feel about one another. This is personal to all of us!

Our students own their learning and are engaged because we don't teach at them. Instead, we learn with them. Our learning family has created an environment in which thinking and ideas are made visible and are valued. Active participation isn't just encouraged, it is required by everyone and is measured through a variety of engagement rubrics and thinking routines. Staff, students and parents motivate one another to expect to learn and to achieve at a high level each day. We are all reminded during daily morning announcements to "Give our personal best at everything that we do with no exceptions and no excuses." We strive to "fill each other's buckets" with positive encouragement and to be champions for each other every day.

Student effort and citizenship are acknowledged, daily, through our PBIS initiatives (described above) and monthly, through our Fantastic Falcons Student of the Month Programs. Likewise, staff members and parent volunteers are recognized and celebrated regularly (in person and in print) for their leadership. We enjoy "catching" each other in acts of learning greatness! Staff and family social gatherings occur regularly and remind of us our partnership and promote the importance of fellowship and collegiality.

We have been told by visitors that they can feel the warmth and family atmosphere of our building as soon as they enter because they observe the manners of our children, the welcoming nature of our staff, and often comment that the staff members know the names of the students, not only in their own classes, but all around the building. They see examples of learning rather than work when they view a display or bulletin board.

We expect the walls of our building to speak to the thinking, learning, and joy that occur each day. We regularly invite parents, community members, and staff members from other buildings to participate in "Ghost Walk" after hours walk-through visits to engage with student learning samples. We then capture their feedback regarding the climate and culture that they observe when students and staff are not present. We truly believe that the reason that 25% of our student population comes from outside our local attendance boundary is because families can see and feel a loving culture of learning.

We have described our model of shared leadership and empowerment of all stakeholders in the above section on School Leadership. We truly believe that by empowering students, staff and parents to own their role as a learning partner, that we have increased the level of self-efficacy that everyone embraces at our school. We love each other and learning is personal to all at Deerfield. Since 1990, our students participate in the Friday Deerfield Cheer: "We're the kids from Deerfield School! Learning is our golden rule! Making friends and having fun...We know Deerfield's number one!"

2. Engaging Families and Community:

The Deerfield staff works hard to engage our school families. As referenced above, the numerous evening events that we host provide the opportunity for parents to become partners in educating our students. In addition to evening events, our teachers and staff members are responsive to the questions and concerns of parents on a daily bases. The lines of communication remain open so that our parents feel comfortable seeking information and assistance. Teachers connect with parents through phone calls, emails, or school visits. Research shows that students with involved parents are more likely to be better motivated and experience more academic success.

Family members serve in many different volunteer capacities through the Deerfield PTO. This year alone, we are proud to have 30 PTO Committees with nearly 70 volunteers to support student community and climate. This group is engaged, very active and essential to supporting our school. The PTO sponsors many

social events to help welcome families and foster relationships in our school community. They provide funding for school assemblies, field trips, classroom online subscriptions, classroom literacy libraries, and additional materials to enrich our students' learning experiences. Parents and other family members volunteer on a regular basis reading with students, facilitating learning centers, assisting with technology, providing services in the media center, and preparing materials. In grades k-2, we have a parent run "Motor Moms and Dads" program. This simple, exercise program helps our school make sure all young children get that essential motor-skills and practice necessary to be successful in early literacy development. The involvement of all stakeholders is essential to our school improvement process and parents are valued members of our leadership team.

We consider ourselves very fortunate to have partnerships with a multitude of community resources. The North Oakland Foundation provide economically disadvantaged Deerfield students with weekly meals to take home, backpacks, school supplies, along with clothing and gifts at holiday time. Our local law enforcement and fire departments come into our school to educate our students about safety.

Our students also benefit from our district's partnership with Oakland University. Oakland has provided our children with free counseling and tutoring. They have also sponsored numerous scholarships and experiences that promote the importance of higher education, leadership and empowerment.

The Avondale Foundation and court sponsored Youth Assistance agencies also offer financial, tutoring and counseling support to students and fund grants to teachers who are on the cutting edge of implementing innovative programming to children of all ages. It is fitting that there is no city or town of Avondale. We employ a total community effort.

3. Professional Development:

Deerfield teachers and staff are provided with numerous professional development opportunities at both the district and school levels. Daily grade level meetings are held to analyze student assessment data and to promote understanding of expectations and best practices. In addition to grade level meetings, all teachers participate in building and district level Teacher Labs. Teachers observe each other teaching and then talk about the elements of effective instruction, intervention, and enrichment that were observed. Teacher labs provide an opportunity for job-embedded professional development that is deeply connected to daily classroom practices. The focus of Teacher Lab is on instruction that promotes individualization and differentiation within classrooms to enhance student thinking and learning.

Teacher Lab began with a literacy focus for all grade levels and has since moved to other core academic areas such as math, social studies, and science. Our district art, music, and physical education teachers have also had lab opportunities specific to their content. Teachers at all grade levels also have participated in cross-grade collaboration encouraging vertical articulation. These are opportunities to share effective instructional strategies, formative assessments, and curricular outcomes which are ideal for learning and for sharing.

Since 2013, the Harvard Research on "Making Thinking Visible" (Dr. Ron Ritchhart) has been a focus of professional learning at Deerfield. Our staff began with a book study of Dr. Ritchhart's first book "Making Thinking Visible." We were fortunate to have a building team invited to a Visible Thinking Foundations training with Dr. Ritchhart and other experts from around Oakland County. Using a train the trainer model, staff members brought the learning back to our staff meetings and began to spread the instructional routines throughout the building. Teachers use Visible Thinking to promote the students' deeper thinking, understanding and application of concepts, and as a tool for formative assessment. We continue to engage with other schools within the district and around Oakland County as we learn the routines and enhance our instructional practices.

Teachers have eagerly used many routines with their classes and the students have responded with enthusiasm and deeper understanding. Students who tend to perform below grade level greatly benefit from Visible Thinking routines because the framework encourages the active engagement of all students. Deerfield's school improvement process centers on collaborative professional development and has focused

on disciplinary content, instructional strategies for differentiation, and improved assessment practices in order to meet the needs of all students. Deerfield staff members share their expertise and learn from one another. All stakeholders analyze data on high impact instructional strategies and on individual students. We determine an individual student's strengths and weaknesses and match interventions that will increase their learning. This has resulted in steady gains in student achievement as evidenced through local and standardized testing.

4. School Leadership:

Deerfield Elementary employs a system of empowerment of all stakeholders. Shared leadership is the cornerstone by which we operate as a learning community.

The Deerfield Principal has set a vision that requires the use of data to drive all decisions and one that supports collaboration among stakeholders. This is accomplished through transparent communication and by fostering positive relationships and building trust. Through this leadership style, student achievement has increased because we work together to keep our focus on balancing the needs of our students and teachers. The Principal continually builds capacity of understanding within each team member by connecting us to research and best practice. Our leader inspires teachers and students to take pride in their work, collectively and individually. Our ideas are validated and we are inspired to work toward continuous improvement each day on behalf of our students and families. Our Principal is always approachable and is respected and loved by our students.

Staff members at every level serve on school improvement steering committees, child study teams, data teams, and professional development planning committees. The Principal and instructional staff collaborate to develop SMART goals at each grade level to target areas of weakness identified by reviewing multiple assessment data. Professional development opportunities are planned collaboratively to directly support the vision and the academic goals of our school.

The Deerfield PTO meets monthly with the building Principal and teacher representatives to review academic performance data and to plan fundraising initiatives that support the school vision, mission and purpose. Currently, our PTO has more than 30 established committees that support our learning community. School events such as Bedtime Story Hour, Art Fest and Young Authors' Night allow for an extension of our academic programs. A multitude of social events such as our Family Dance, Holiday Breakfast and Dads' Family Carnival create opportunities for fun and fellowship. This organization has raised significant funds that enhance all curricular areas. Our parents are comprehensive learning and social partners.

Student leadership is a critical component of our school. We have created an iLEAD team of students at all grade levels that meets weekly to engage in decision-making, to help plan events, to create important announcements and to promote our enrichment activities. Many of these student leaders have been identified as "at-risk." Research shows that students of poverty and those who are at risk for not reaching their full learning potential often feel powerless. We have intentionally placed these children into roles of shared leadership and the gains we have seen in academic performance and in behavior were highlighted in our most recent School Improvement Plan submission to the State of Michigan.

"Leaders become great, not because of their power, but because of their ability to empower others." - John Maxwell

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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The Deerfield staff began to explore the Harvard research (Ron Ritchhart) of "Visible Thinking" in the fall of 2013. Staff book studies, collaborative teacher lab sessions, and eventual Visible Thinking Foundations training with Dr. Ritchhart himself, galvanized our group of educators to commit to the goal of becoming a Visible Thinking School. We believe that our total commitment to this practice has had the single greatest impact on our ability to "beat the odds" in increasing our student achievement, reducing (or in many cases eliminating) our achievement gaps, and empowering our students to take ownership of their own learning.

Every one of our educators (several of whom elect to send their own children to Deerfield) expressed the strong desire to create a learning environment that would give students a deeper understanding of content, greater motivation for learning, and one that would develop students' ability to apply concepts, make connections, analyze information, synthesize ideas, hypothesize, solve complex problems and to ultimately create.

Teachers began by incorporating Visible Thinking Routines into their instruction. We noticed an immediate positive impact on student attitudes and engagement. We began moving from instruction that was based on memorization, reporting, and tabulating (work) and into instruction that empowered children to use factual knowledge to draw conclusions, take a stand on a complicated topic, or to thoughtfully critique the ideas of others (learning). Sometimes thinking can be "messy" and we experienced a transitional period that occasionally felt awkward, but we persisted together and relied on our colleagues for guidance and encouragement. We were transparent with our students and told them that we were trying something new and wanted them to help us to deepen the learning for everyone. They were so excited to know that the adults needed their help and participation.

As the educators and students became more comfortable with the Visible Thinking Routines, themselves, we were able to become more intentional about dedicating time and creating opportunities for thinking, raising the expectations for our language and questioning to ensure that learning was deeper and more meaningful, and modeling who we are as thinkers and learners.

While this practice is ongoing, we have seen the impact on academic achievement as measured by local and standardized test scores, and more importantly, the impact on the feeling of self-efficacy that must be present in order to empower all students to be the learners and leaders of the future.