

U.S. Department of Education
2016 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [X] Title I [] Charter [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Mrs. Christine Ziemann

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

Official School Name Wilson Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 405 West 3rd Street

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

City Beaver Dam State WI Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 53916-1513

County Dodge County

Telephone (920) 885-7373 Fax _____

Web site/URL http://www.beaverdam.k12.wi.us E-mail ziemannc@bdusd.org

Twitter Handle

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

YouTube/URL _____ Blog _____ Other Social Media Link _____

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Mr. Steve Vessey E-mail vesseys@bdusd.org

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

District Name Beaver Dam Unified School District Tel. (920) 885-7300

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mrs. Joanne Tyjeski

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

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

Date _____

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

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

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

Part I – Eligibility Certification

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The public school has met their state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) using the most recent accountability results available for the year prior to nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) for the year in which they are nominated (2015-2016) and be certified by the state representative. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2010 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, or 2015.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2015-2016) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 6 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 8 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	114	92	114
K	10	15	25
1	9	13	22
2	10	14	24
3	11	15	26
4	8	15	23
5	11	14	25
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	173	178	351

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 3 % Black or African American
 - 14 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 76 % White
 - 5 % 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: 12%

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	18
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	26
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	44
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	370
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.119
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	12

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

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Laotian, Hmong

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 50 %
Total number students who qualify: 176

8. Students receiving special education services: 7 %
24 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

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

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 2
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	14
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	6
Paraprofessionals	12
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

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 25:1

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%	96%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2015.

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

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No

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

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

Our mission is "Guiding students. Empowering futures." and we strive to accomplish this each and every day.

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

Wilson Elementary School is one of six elementary schools in the Beaver Dam Unified School District. Beaver Dam, Wisconsin is a city of approximately 16,000 residents. One of the draws to Beaver Dam is that it is within driving distance to three major metropolitan areas. The proximity to larger cities keeps the school system progressive and competitive. The community takes great pride in our lake, beautiful parks, and family centered values that help make Beaver Dam a nurturing environment for students. The mission of the district, “Guiding Students, Empowering Futures”, helps to focus our work on a daily basis and provides the community with our promise to keep students at the forefront of decisions and a pledge to make the most of our impact on their future.

Wilson Elementary is located in the heart of downtown Beaver Dam and the original building was built in 1966. A necessary addition to the building in 1998 provided a library and cafeteria. We are a true “neighborhood” school and many of our students walk the short distance to school every day. At student pick-up at the end of the day, you will see parents and grandparents walking up to the front doors and waiting patiently for the children to be dismissed. At Wilson school, because we are a single-section elementary with only one section of each grade K-5, it really is a place where everyone knows your name.

This small, cozy learning atmosphere provides students with the secure knowledge that all staff are here to help them be successful. Due to this community culture, the roles and the responsibilities of the staff are quite different than what you may find in a much larger school. Here, everyone takes responsibility for the success of our students and the collaboration that occurs is a vital part of the success of our school.

For the past three years, our focus on a strong core curriculum has strengthened our work around Response to Intervention and renewed our focus on using student data to guide our instruction. With the creation of Data Teams and Pupil Service Teams, we are able to bring people together to focus conversation around specific student needs and problem solve strategies to reach students who may need differentiated instruction. This student-centered approach has been applied to both academic with the adoption of curriculum that is closely aligned to our standards, and behavior with our adoption of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS).

At Wilson, our adoption of PBIS has brought our small school even closer together. All staff are involved in the PBIS team to make decisions regarding school expectations, celebrations, and problem-solving efforts. The whole school participates in a Monday Morning Meeting in the gym where we celebrate student successes and share our behavioral focus for the week.

The students at Wilson are able to participate in a district programs such as our Gifted and Talented Education (GATE), Partners Are Learning (PALs) which is a tutoring and mentoring program designed to improve academic performance and is run by community volunteers. Parents at Wilson are also able to participate in a robust Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) that provides our school with assemblies, dances, activity nights and funding for field trips and other things that make our school such a fun place to be!

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Wilson Elementary, alongside the other schools in the Beaver Dam Unified School District, has put a lot of time and learning into strengthening the elementary core curriculum and aligning instruction and assessment to the standards. Much of this work has been guided by research around Understanding by Design by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe, as well as the meta-analysis of instructional strategies by John Hattie. We have taken these research elements into consideration when designing and implementing curriculum.

The reading and language arts curriculum is based around a research-based literacy framework. Beaver Dam Unified School District has a long-standing practice of implementing a standards-based curriculum and we are continually refining and revising based on teacher feedback and assessment data. The classroom data, benchmarking data, and teacher observations are all taken into account when looking at how students are meeting grade-level expectations. We are currently in our third year of implementing a program with a structured scope and sequence that provides our teachers with the resources needed to provide students access to grade-level text as well as differentiated supporting materials for guided reading and instructional strategies to target areas of specific need identified by student data. All teachers present class data at data team meetings where decisions are made about students needing extra support or extended learning.

Teachers participate in district-wide and building-wide professional development with our literacy support teachers, have the opportunity to attend a local literacy symposium to develop and refine curriculum, as well as attend state literacy conferences. Our literacy support teachers provide instructional support to teachers and intervention supports to students.

In the area of mathematics, all grades use a program rooted in a structured scope and sequence. For more than ten years, teachers have been learning about and have been delivering instruction using curriculum that is closely aligned with our standards. Because of the longevity of this program in the district, teachers truly understand how it assesses their grade level-standards and how it incorporates the Standards for Mathematical Practice into mathematical units. Professional development in the area of math is part of the success of this program and teachers participate in learning and understanding around math both at the district and building level. Cohorts of teachers are also sent to a national conference every year to better understand and apply the program and its components. Like all curriculum delivery, it is impacted by our reflection on student data, both formative and summative. The significant longitudinal data that we have gathered helps to drive the math interventions and extensions that we provide to students.

The science curriculum at Wilson Elementary is centered on hands-on inquiry based units of study. Each grade level has three or four units that allow them to deeply explore scientific and engineering concepts fully developed around the Wisconsin Academic Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards.

Our social studies curriculum is a comprehensive, articulated program that is aligned to the Wisconsin Academic Standards and the National Social Studies Standards. We are currently in the process of a social studies review to seek more updated and technology-enhanced curriculum that will tie in ELA/history/social studies standards. Our hope is to strengthen our social studies curriculum to include a strong civics base that enhances the rigor of the discipline and encourages critical thinking, problem solving, and skills that reflect our district mission of "Guiding students, Empowering futures" to empower all students to become engaged citizens.

Four year old Kindergarten is offered through a collaborative partnership between local child-care centers and the school district. This partnership began in 2008 and has steadily grown to include over 200 students. The introduction of this program, and our ability to provide strong curriculum program and materials to the centers, has been a huge success. We have extended our math program into four year old kindergarten, and have been able to integrate science and social studies into a reading and language arts curriculum that builds the foundation of our literacy framework. The units of study that have been created not only give our

youngest students structured exposure to essential literacy concepts in phonemic awareness and phonics, but they also provide important learning and exposure to life skills and how to be part of a community.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

The Beaver Dam Unified School District has a long standing reputation for providing a comprehensive academic program that nurtures the whole child. Art, music, and physical education instruction are important parts of our elementary curriculum.

All students in Kindergarten through grade five have art instruction weekly. The units of study focus on a wide variety of visual arts including drawing, painting, three-dimensional art, textiles, and clay. Our art instructor integrates technology into daily lessons by creating video tutorials to demonstrate various techniques. She also uses technology to create digital portfolios for students that can be shared electronically with families. In our community, artwork is proudly displayed and featured during Youth Art Month. Our fourth graders are also involved in an annual architecture walk of downtown Beaver Dam where a local guide explains the history and background of some of our most prominent buildings.

Our music program embodies the essence of performing arts and our elementary curriculum includes chorus, band, and orchestra. Our district was fortunate to be awarded a music grant a few years back that allowed us to purchase student instruments such as drums and keyboards. Our elementary music department coordinates a yearly chorus festival that includes all of the elementary chorus groups, school concerts, band concerts, and orchestra concerts. Last year at Wilson Elementary, our Music teacher prepared the whole student population to participate in a performance with Opera for the Young, a local group that performs at schools across the state exposing opera to young children. It was an excellent performance and we are going to repeat it this year with a different opera!

Physical education is strongly rooted in Beaver Dam. The community gathers behind our athletic teams and actively supports the physical development of our students. Our physical education department across the district works closely together to create units of study based around the Wisconsin Academic Standards. These units are thoughtfully developed, assessed and refined on a regular basis. One of the highlights for many fourth and fifth grade students is our annual track meets. Students from across the district come together for a fun-filled track meet which concludes with our annual classroom tug-of-war contest. Students compete with respect and admiration for each other. The physical education department was awarded a Physical Education Program (PEP) grant that allowed the purchase of new and replacement equipment for our elementary buildings. This new equipment allowed the department to create new units of study that they had not been able to do prior to the grant.

Technology is a Key Performance Objective (KPO) of the district and we have carefully created plans for the integration of new technology as well as curriculum applications for technology we currently have. Wilson Elementary has a computer lab that is heavily used as well as a laptop cart and a classroom set of laptops. Students in second grade through fifth grade learn a keyboarding curriculum that aligns with the Wisconsin Academic Standards for technology. We have hired a district director of technology to coordinate using technology to enhance teaching and learning.

Wilson Elementary strives to make sure that every child makes academic growth. Because of this, we have worked hard to strengthen our Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) program over the last few years. Our GATE teacher works with high achieving students for six week long units of study in the areas of mathematics and English language arts. During these units, students are challenged to think beyond what is expected at their grade level, and are encouraged to apply their knowledge in new and creative ways. Some students require a more specified level of enrichment and participate in content area advancement. For students of this caliber, the GATE teacher supports the students and the staff as a coach and a collaborator for instruction.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

Wilson Elementary uses a tiered system of academic supports that stresses the importance of a strong universal tier. We have been very careful to choose resources that provide both a structured scope and sequence of the Wisconsin Academic Standards, and also research based instructional strategies to meet the needs of all of our learners. Part of our success using this approach has been to build teacher capacity in the planning, delivery, and assessment of curriculum. Much work has been done around the Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching. We have focused on things such as classroom procedures, managing student behaviors, communicating expectations with students, and using questioning and discussion techniques.

Sometimes however, universal instruction does not meet the needs of every student. In these cases, we have set up a system of problem solving teams where we review present and past levels of performance and plan what type of intervention or strategy may be needed. Finding the right research based intervention at the right time for our students has been a major focus of our problem solving teams. While we have a number of resources available to staff it is important for staff to know that one resource is not right for all. Taking a close look at student performance and identifying specific areas of need and then providing targeted instruction and skill specific progress monitoring has helped to move our students forward. Because we are a smaller school, the staff come together to support one another by sharing ideas on instructional methods and strategies. We have done professional development work with expected rates of improvement and progress monitoring of the specific skill to measure student growth. Each students' progress is reviewed after a period of six to eight weeks to determine if the intervention is producing results, or if it needs to be modified or intensified.

Another area in which we have been working has been the scheduling of interventions or supports to allow all students to have access to the core grade level curriculum. The "push-in" of services instead of "pull-out" approach has enabled the expectations to remain high for all students and yet allows them access to interventions specific to their area of need. This has allowed us to focus on the transfer of skills from individualized instruction into the classroom setting.

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

A balanced assessment model is used at Wilson Elementary to ensure that local, state, and national benchmarks are being met for each child. This balanced approach looks at the whole child in relation to their academic performance, instead of placing a heavy emphasis on any one measure. Our approach to assessment is focused around four key areas: assessment to plan for learning, assessment to support learning, assessment to monitor learning, and assessment to verify learning. Classroom teachers use formative data, usually in the form of daily assignments or classroom observations, to get quick feedback on the performance of students and allows them to make immediate instructional adjustments.

Wilson also uses benchmark data. For reading, we use the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment kit to monitor student progress longitudinally. This data shows us when students are meeting or exceeding reading expectations or if they are needing reading intervention. The running record that is produced during the assessment provides vital information to the teacher on how the student performs as a reader, and areas of instruction the student needs in order to move forward. In math, we use mid-year benchmark assessments and end of the year benchmark assessments to gather longitudinal data. We track specific math standards that are historically more difficult for students and have been introducing new strategies and resources for teachers to enhance and support instruction in these areas. Because this type of data can sometimes be subjective to interpretation, we also use AIMSweb as a benchmark assessment to give us picture of how students are performing in reading and math in relation to the national norms set up within that assessment. We take a look at this data at the classroom, building, and district level to provide checks and balances that our universal instruction is effective and rigorous. The benchmark assessment data collected is shared with parents at teacher/parent conferences. The State of Wisconsin also requires benchmark assessments such as the Wisconsin Forward Exam and the PALS (Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening) assessment and the results of both are released to the public annually.

Summative data collected is used to evaluate cumulative learning and is often subject and unit specific. This data is used by teachers to inform progress reports, which are also shared with parents.

As part of our system of tiered academic supports, grade levels meet with a data team every six weeks to review assessment data and to determine adequate growth. Should any students be identified as needing more support as a result of a data team meeting, a problem solving team meeting are set up to begin the intervention process. This system gives teachers the administrative support they need as they focus on using data to plan, support, monitor, and verify learning.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Wilson Elementary is a close-knit school community. Because we are a single section building, the students and staff easily build lasting relationships. Many of the staff live and are involved in the community. The Beaver Dam Unified School District has adopted the PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) system. We have quarterly themes to motivate and teach students about respectful, responsible, and safe behavior. Our themes are celebrated quarterly with a whole school activity that may include something like a bowling outing, a dance, or a whole school field trip. The staff are all part of the PBIS team and we meet monthly to review behavioral data, decide on the monthly focus, and plan our celebrations.

Each Monday morning, the whole school starts the week off in the gym for our Monday Morning Meeting. We talk about our behavioral goal for the week, celebrate birthdays for the week, talk about Wisconsin Public School Observance Days, sing our school song, say the Pledge of Allegiance, and announce our Wonderful Wildcat Award winners. Classroom teachers choose one student a week who has put forth exceptional academic effort or teamwork to be awarded the Wonderful Wildcat Award. By the end of the year, each student in the school will have earned this award. Awards are posted in the school hallway and the winners pictures are taken and posted on the school website.

Our Parent Teacher Organization meets monthly with the administrator and staff to collaboratively plan activities for the school and to make decisions regarding resources that the PTO would like to provide for the students. The phenomenal activities that are planned allow staff to interact with students and families in a less formal setting and allows staff to really get to know the students that attend our school.

The administrator has an open door policy and welcomes students, staff, and parents to come with questions or concerns. The size of the building allows for the administrator to visit classrooms on a daily basis and interact with students in their classroom settings. Our faculty meetings are run in a collaborative format and staff are encouraged to work together to find solutions to problems or to celebrate success.

Wilson also encourages student leadership and promotes a very successful safety patrol program which is overseen by the district police liaison officer. This program supports ownership and pride in our school community and enables the oldest students in our building to model the respectful, responsible, and safe behavior that we promote for all of our students.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Wilson continues to find new and exciting ways to involve families and the community in our school. Most recently, we have focused on communicating with families and the community through social outlets such as a new, more user friendly website, a new district Facebook page, and a Wilson Twitter account. Informed parents tend to be involved parents and we are updating our communication avenues to relate to 21st century parents. We are using these social formats to promote the positive things that students are doing, their accomplishments, and information about school events. Our new website provides instant access for families to pertinent information and we have increased our efforts to keep the sites updated. We also send out monthly newsletters in hard copy format and electronically to remind parents of upcoming events and information.

To truly engage families and the community, we have invited participation to specific events and often encourage parents to come to school to volunteer or to have lunch with their child. For example, we recently celebrated Read Across America Week and invited guest readers that included the fire chief, the mayor, and our police liaison officer. As part of this week-long celebration, we also had parent luncheons where we invited parents to come have lunch with their child and then shop at our book fair. Our school board also makes regular visits to our building and we have invited them in to observe the fabulous things happening in classrooms and to have lunch with us!

The Wilson Parent Teacher Organization has sponsored fundraising events at local restaurants and has been very active in reaching out to local businesses for donations. The community of Beaver Dam has a long-standing history of being very supportive of the school district and many of our parents are actively involved in community events and activities. Many local businesses recently donated funding at the request of the parent teacher organization to help bring The Opera For the Young to Wilson Elementary as an interactive assembly exposing students to opera.

3. Professional Development:

There are many different professional development opportunities available to teachers, administrators, and non-certified staff. Building teacher capacity in the resources that are available to them, building knowledge and confidence in effective teaching strategies, understanding classroom and individual student data have all been a major focus of the professional development offerings over the past two years. All professional development aligns to the Wisconsin Academic Standards and support Educator Effectiveness through alignment with the Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Beaver Dam Unified School District has made a focused effort in providing a strong universal tier of instruction across all content areas. This focus on universal instruction has caused us to update and organize resources that teachers are using. Professional development on the many components of our resources, the assessment components associated with those resources, and the planning and organization utilizing those resources has been provided during in-service days, our summer Literacy Symposium, and our summer Learning Institute. Each year, teachers are offered opportunities to attend local and national professional conferences to support instruction in specific content areas. Outside of teacher contracted hours, teachers are able to sign-up for professional development through an electronic system that documents participation in professional development. Teachers are also encouraged to document professional development that they participate in on their own.

Teacher assistants at Wilson Elementary participate in monthly professional development led by the principal and reading specialist. The teacher assistants are given strategies for working with students in small groups, managing student behavior during lunch and recess, and questioning and discussion prompts. The teacher assistants are able to suggest topics to be covered and are given resources to use as part of the professional development.

Administrators at Wilson Elementary participate in all of the professional development activities either alongside teachers, or by presenting the information. Outside of the district, the principal participates in professional development offered through the Cooperative Education Service Agency and through the Association of Wisconsin School Administrators organization. The principal is also a member of many professional organizations including the International Literacy Association and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development which provide many professional articles and publications that engage the Principal in professional learning.

4. School Leadership:

The nature and size of Wilson Elementary create unique opportunities for staff to be involved in many areas of leadership. All staff are encouraged and expected to be involved in the leadership of the school in some capacity. Every member of the staff is on our PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) team. Roles within that team are delegated to specific members of staff. Some are on the data review committee, some are on the event planning committee, some are on the publicity committee, and some are the note-taking committee. One staff member is our district representative and attends monthly district meetings to ensure that Wilson is aligned to the district agenda of PBIS implementation. All of the committees are under the supervision of the Principal. This same format is employed for our crisis teams. All members of the staff are on one of the committees under the crisis team are trained in the protocols and responsibilities of that committee. Here too, the principal oversees the committees.

The Principal and the Interim Principal work closely together to provide a consistent approach to discipline. Communication between the Principal, the Interim Principal, and staff on behavioral issues is handled quickly and efficiently. All staff meet monthly to have open discussions concerning behavior and problem solve solutions to prevent or resolve recurring issues. The Principal also meets every six weeks with each grade level to discuss academic concerns or intervention needs and sets up and leads Problem Solving Team meetings around specific students.

The district utilizes a Grade Level Leader system where teachers can apply to be a Grade Level Leader. The Grade Level Leaders meet monthly with the administrators to plan discussions and professional development activities. The grade levels across the district come together once a month to participate in specified activities led by the Grade Level Leader and a Principal. The Grade Level Leaders are also able to bring specific grade level concerns to the administrators for consideration.

All of the elementary principals meet twice a month to discuss policies, structure, and district initiatives. All district administrators meet monthly to coordinate leadership on district Key Performance Objectives, to problem solve and provide support concerning Educator Effectiveness, district assessments, scheduling, and state and local requirements. A collaborative leadership approach is integral at the district administration level and is supported thoroughly by the district superintendent.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The one practice that makes the students so successful at Wilson Elementary has been our focus on purpose. With many initiatives and demands in education, we have striven to keep our attention on the purpose of what we are doing and how that purpose leads to guiding students and empowering their futures. It is easy to get caught up in the act of teaching, or in the whirl of activity in an elementary building, but when we take a step back and look closely at what we are doing, and why we are doing it, if it does not meet the purpose of moving our students forward, we must let it go.

Teachers spend huge amounts of time planning, preparing, and assessing instruction. While planning, teachers must know their students, the resources, and the standards to which they are teaching. The purpose of their lesson is communicated openly with students and administration to take the mystery out of what students are learning and why they are learning it. Planning for instruction follows an Understanding by Design format so that the expected outcomes of learning are discussed and relayed at the onset of planning. Planning is done with the end in mind and that enables our educators to know their purpose of instruction intimately.

In preparing for learning, great care is taken to create environments where students are happy, expectations for behavior are clear, and students, staff, and families interact with respect and rapport. The teaching of expectations continually is done with the purpose that students will be safe, responsible, and respectful citizens of our community and our school. The purpose of keeping these expectations in the forefront of what we are doing is so that positive behaviors become automatic. Students that are in positive environments learn more, are eager to come to school, and internalize healthy outlooks on life.

Keeping the purpose of assessments has been one of our greatest areas of growth as a staff. Assessments can be viewed as just something we need to get through, but if we take the time to look at the purpose of the assessments and the information about our students that we can gain from the assessments, we make them valuable tools to inform instruction. The purpose of looking at local, state, and national data varies greatly but each view gives us a distinct look at where we stand and how we can grow as we move forward.