

U.S. Department of Education
2017 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. Teresa Y. DiMaria

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

Official School Name Brewster Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1535 Brewster Road

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

City Rochester Hills State MI Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 48306-3817

County Oakland County

Telephone (248) 726-3300 Fax (248) 726-3305

Web site/URL http://www.rochester.k12.mi.us/pages/319/brewster E-mail kdessy@rochester.k12.mi.us

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Dr. Robert Shaner Ph.D. E-mail rshaner@rochester.k12.mi.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Rochester Community Schools Tel. (248) 726-3000

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 Dr. Sandy Fiaschetti Ph.D.
(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. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group and all subgroups, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2017 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. 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 2011 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: 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, or 2016.
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 has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. 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 (2016-2017) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 13 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 4 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 4 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 21 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, 2016 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	55	57	112
K	33	24	57
1	38	30	68
2	33	38	71
3	42	34	76
4	32	40	72
5	36	35	71
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	269	258	527

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 12 % Asian
 - 2 % Black or African American
 - 3 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 78 % White
 - 4 % 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 2015 – 2016 school year: 3%

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, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	9
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	4
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	13
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	423
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.031
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

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

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

Korean, Chinese, Italian, Spanish, Romanian, Marathi, Vietnamese, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, and Tamil

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 3 %
Total number students who qualify: 11
8. Students receiving special education services: 9 %
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.

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

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 16
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 including those teaching high school specialty subjects	16
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	7
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	4
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 26:1
12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012
Daily student attendance	97%	96%	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 2016.

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.

Brewster Elementary provides a differentiated, quality education in a nurturing environment in order to develop lifelong learners who will succeed in an ever changing world.

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

At Brewster, we live by our mission statement, “The purpose of Brewster Elementary is to provide a differentiated, quality education in a safe and nurturing environment in order to develop lifelong learners who will reach their full potential in an ever-changing world.” Evidence of this can be found in the diverse opportunities we provide our students and families. Many of these opportunities look toward the future with innovation, including STEM activities, creating cultures of thinking, and exploring the flipped classroom model for fifth grade math. Honoring the traditions of our district and school is also important to us. It wouldn’t be a school year at Brewster without the science fair, school carnival, or our second graders’ annual field trip to our community’s one-room schoolhouse, complete with pioneer outfits and McGuffey Readers. As we look forward, we keep one eye on the past, which helps us preserve and build on our sense of community.

Rochester Community Schools has a rich history that dates back to 1827 and a single schoolhouse. From these modest beginnings, the district has grown alongside the suburban community it serves, and currently includes twenty-one schools. District facilities cover 523 acres of property, encompassing 66 square miles within Rochester, Rochester Hills, and Oakland Township. The district employs more than 1,500 staff members. The greater Rochester area, with its vibrant downtown, cultural opportunities, natural spaces, and well-regarded schools, continues to grow and attract new families.

Brewster Elementary School was built in 1980 to serve several interconnected subdivisions. Although the majority (78%) of our population is white, we have seen an increase in student diversity in recent years, and expect this trend to continue. Brewster is a neighborhood school, with most students living within walking distance. Fewer than forty of our 415 students are currently transported by district bus. Because of the proximity of the school to the neighborhoods it serves, Brewster families find it easy to be involved in this close-knit community, sharing their talents through Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) committees and classroom volunteer opportunities. Our parent community is highly invested in their children’s success; we work collaboratively to meet students’ needs, which contributes directly to our academic achievement. We have a low mobility rate (3%), with the vast majority of our students enrolled from kindergarten through fifth grade. This allows us to develop strong, trusting relationships with families over time, and gives us the opportunity to build upon previous years’ learning.

The Michigan Department of Education has named Brewster a Reward School. We are ranked in the 98th percentile on the 2015-2016 Top to Bottom ranking for the state of Michigan. Our academic achievement is a result of the instructional, intervention, and assessment techniques used by our staff to help all students access a rich curriculum. Through data-driven decision making, we are able to effectively deliver Tier 2, Tier 3, and special education interventions to qualifying students. We have also studied and implemented Cultures of Thinking (Ron Ritchhart). Visible thinking routines promote rich understanding, student ownership, and natural differentiation across subject areas. We also utilize a workshop model in reading, writing, and math. We believe that differentiating the curriculum is integral to accelerating achievement, narrowing achievement gaps, and successfully meeting the needs of all learners. We have seen the evidence in our school-wide academic data.

Our scores on state assessments consistently remain above the state, county, and district averages. We know that test scores do not tell the whole story, and so the focus of our day-to-day practice is not on preparing for a test, but on developing well-rounded students who can think critically and have strategies for managing their social and emotional lives. We give our students opportunities to develop empathy and to serve their community. We have a Community Service Kids group that undertakes projects such as collecting coats for a local shelter or cleaning up an area park. Families share their good fortune with others during our annual Adopt a Family event. At our monthly school-wide morning meetings, we recognize our students’ contributions to our school and our community. Our social worker invites students to participate in social skills groups, and our building TEAM works together to support students in crisis. We believe that by nurturing the social and emotional lives of our students, we set them up for success, on tests and in life.

Recently, a group of business and community leaders from Leadership Oakland visited Brewster. The

reflections they wrote after touring the building with fifth grade guides and spending time in classrooms seemed to capture our school nicely. Comments included, “Students have a good knowledge of their school”; “Love the student leadership and empowerment;” “Kids seem very happy in their environment;” and “It always surprises me (how) it comes down to simple things: Good teachers, good instruction, and exploration. It does not need to be anything more.”

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

The Rochester Community Schools mission statement indicates students will be prepared intellectually to deal with and contribute to a demanding, interdependent world by being self-disciplined, analytical, and able to draw support from a variety of resources. The curriculum is aligned to state and national standards. This rigorous, research-based curriculum is designed to challenge students. The curriculum at Brewster Elementary School provides appropriate support to ensure all students grow and achieve at high levels.

English Language Arts

The English Language Arts curriculum enables students to build skills and competencies along a continuum within and across grade levels. The curriculum supports standards and benchmarks for five pillars in reading: comprehension, fluency, phonics, phonemic awareness, and vocabulary. In addition, the curriculum promotes growth and achievement in writing, speaking, listening, and viewing within a balanced-literacy framework. The scope and sequence for units of study in English Language Arts were developed through a collaboration with the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators. Rochester has adopted a workshop framework which begins with a whole-class mini lesson focusing on a skill or strategy that will benefit all students. Next, the teacher may meet with guided reading groups, strategy groups, or have conferences with individual students about their reading and writing. During the independent reading portion of Readers' Workshop, students self-select and read books at their independent reading level. Comprehension of text is of utmost importance during Readers' and Writers' Workshops.

Mathematics

Brewster students participate in a mathematics curriculum that develops foundational skills within five mathematical domains as defined by the Common Core State Standards: Measurement & Data, Numbers & Operations in Base Ten, Numbers & Operations with Fractions, Operations & Algebraic Thinking, and Geometry. Mathematics instruction focuses on problem-solving, reasoning, explaining one's thinking and moving from concrete to abstract thinking.

Students participate in the Everyday Mathematics 4 program. The resource provides a strong mathematical foundation by establishing high expectations for all students and providing research-based, mathematical experiences students need to reach their fullest potential. Aligned with the Common Core State Standards, Everyday Mathematics 4 supports the development of the Standards for Mathematical Practices. These practices emphasize reasoning, problem solving, multiple representations, mathematical modeling, tool use communication and other ways of making sense of mathematics. Everyday Mathematics 4 integrates instruction in mathematical content and mathematical practices.

Priorities within math instruction include, problem solving in real world and mathematical contexts; a systematic, instructional design that revisits concepts to ensure depth of knowledge and long term learning; multiple practice opportunities through routines, games and other activities; opportunities for writing and reasoning about math to document strategies and communication skills for solving problems; engagement in open response problems that foster non-routine problem solving and provide students with an opportunity to justify their solutions and compare strategies with others; instruction that supports "productive struggle" while maintaining high cognitive demand; and ongoing assessment opportunities for teachers to monitor student progress and adjust instruction.

Science

Our science curriculum provides a balance of life, earth, and physical science units of study that are aligned to the Michigan State K-12 Science Standards. A cross-curricular format incorporates STEM, inquiry-based, hands-on activities, and community classroom experiences. Students participate in investigations followed by talking and writing about their observations and understandings in science notebooks. Outdoor education includes hands-on student learning opportunities: maple syrup harvesting, water cycle, environmental, and conservation activities, and an overnight camp experience.

Social Studies, History, Civic Learning and Engagement

The social studies curriculum is an amalgam of several disciplines including history, civics and government, economics and geography, and public discourse/decision making/civic involvement. Standards and benchmarks encompass both thinking and substance for each discipline's content within the scope and sequence. For example, one inquiry begins with an examination of the responsibilities of citizenship as students learn that one key civic responsibility is being informed about matters of public concern. Students explore a variety of public issues in the state and local community, identifying various points of view, and applying core democratic values to support their positions (e.g., "Should a community tear down an historic barn to build a homeless shelter?"). Students, with support of their teacher, gather background information regarding the issue, discuss various viewpoints on the issue, and ultimately express a reasoned position by writing a persuasive essay.

Pre-K Curriculum

Brewster offers classes that serve both three and four year-olds. The HighScope curriculum has 58 Key Developmental Indicators (KDIs) in eight content areas. The program uses COR Advantage as the assessment program. This program is aligned to both the KDIs and to the Common Core State Standards. Two Early Childhood Special Education classes serve students ages 3-5. The Evaluation and Programming System guides instruction in communication, social skills, fine and gross motor skills, cognition and adaptive skills, while focusing on individual goals and objectives. Our students develop confidence and competence in academics, social skills, and problem solving strategies that support them in kindergarten and beyond.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Brewster Elementary School offers its students a comprehensive unified arts and physical educational experience as part of daily instruction. Students in kindergarten through fifth grade attend 240 minutes of "specials classes" per week in the areas of art, music, physical education, and media/technology (60 minutes each). These are taught by certified instructional specialists in each area. Additionally, students in Grades 1-5 attend Chinese language and culture exposure 30 minutes per week.

Art Education

The goals of art education at Brewster are to develop skills, foster creativity, gain knowledge of the historical aspects and impacts of art on humanity, and ensure an appreciation of art in one's life. The curriculum focuses on visual arts and is developmental in nature. Connections are drawn to core curriculum by integrating language arts, math, science, and social studies. The following units are taught at each grade level: graphics, drawing, paper, painting, art history, sculpture, fibers, and printmaking. The units are differentiated by developmental appropriateness, student interest, and material complexity.

Another unique enhancement of the art curriculum is the annual fifth grade field trip to the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA). The DIA is a world-renowned art museum and local "gem" in the Detroit region. During the DIA trip, students are exposed to famous works of art and interpretation through self-exploration as well as guided tour programs. Focus areas include Learning to Look, Shaping Identity – Who Are We? and Thinking Through Art.

Physical Education

Brewster Elementary School believes that an effective physical education program begins with clearly stated objectives that define priorities and desired student outcomes. The five goals for the physical education curriculum are as follows: demonstrate competence in selected motor areas; demonstrate competence in selected motor lifelong games, sports, and activities; demonstrate the ability to assess, achieve, and maintain health-related levels of physical fitness; demonstrate the ability to apply cognitive concepts in making wise lifestyle choices; and exhibit appropriate personal-social character traits while participating in physical activity.

Units are taught in the following areas at each grade level: motor skills, control skills, fitness, knowledge, and personal/social. All students participate in the American Heart Association sponsored "Jump Rope for Heart" which teaches the values of fitness, health, and community service by raising donations in a "jump-a-

thon.” Students have the opportunity to connect to the core curriculum by integrating many literacy and numeracy skills into their physical education experience.

Music Education

Music concepts and skills are taught sequentially at developmentally appropriate levels through listening, performing, and creating using acoustic instruments and technology. Musical concepts include: steady beat, tempo, form, dynamics, harmony, meter, melody, rhythm, tone color, texture and history of music (style, culture and composers). Students are given many opportunities for public performance. Students combine skills of literacy and math while learning all musical concepts.

Exiting fifth grade outcomes include: developing musical reading skills while playing the recorder, keyboard, and xylophone; learning about American musical styles including blues and jazz; and applying melodic and rhythmic dictation. In fifth grade, students attend high school band and choir performances.

Instructional Media and Technology

The purpose of the school media and technology program is to create a foundation of literacy for all students through teaching the skills to find and use information effectively and ethically, fostering a love of literature, and creating a culture that values critical thinking skills. These abilities are used authentically with a deep integration of media and technology into the K-5 core curriculum through collaboration with classroom teachers. These skill areas are addressed throughout the curriculum: technology/digital citizenship, research, literacy, and library skills.

Chinese Language and Culture Exposure

Students in Grades 1-5 receive 30 minutes per week of Chinese instruction. Units are consistent throughout the grade levels and taught in trimester blocks: Greetings and Friendship; Foods and Customs; and Hobbies. The district strategic plan calls for expanding to 90 minutes of instruction per week. In looking at research and consulting with our world language consultant at Oakland ISD (Intermediate School District), Chinese was selected for the elementary because of its cognitive carryover to other academic subjects. We also have a unique partnership with Michigan State University’s Confucius Institute, in which we contract teachers at a lower cost at a financial savings to the district.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

The teachers and staff at Brewster view instruction, intervention, and assessment as being inextricably linked components of a cycle of teaching. Thoughtful implementation of all three is critical to fully knowing our students and meeting their needs.

Brewster teachers value student voice and student choice. A visitor to Brewster would see classrooms engaged in small group work, structured centers in the lower grades, literacy and math workshops, and personally meaningful reading, writing, and research tasks. Thinking routines and open-ended projects allow students to demonstrate learning in their own way and at varying levels of proficiency; these kinds of opportunities increase student ownership and can be found not only in regular classrooms, but also in music, art, media center, and gym classes. Teachers support their learners by differentiating instruction and following current thinking on best practices.

Brewster teachers utilize a variety of tools to assess student growth. We value the information gleaned from both summative and formative assessments. Summative assessments include district-wide math tests given at the beginning, middle, and end of the year; the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment program, which we use to determine independent and instructional reading levels; Lucy Calkins’ Writing Pathways assessments for narrative, informational, and opinion writing; i-Ready, which is currently given as a diagnostic three times a year for our kindergartners through fourth graders; and our state test, M-STEP (Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress), which is administered to our third, fourth, and fifth graders each spring. In addition, teachers may use summative assessments to measure mastery of some units of science, social studies, and math. Formative assessment is conducted formally or informally and is designed to gather information about where to go next with our instruction and how to create flexible groupings of students. Observing or conferring with students, utilizing exit tickets or other quick measures

of learning, and analyzing running records are a few ways that our teachers gather more information to drive our next instructional steps. Our teachers are skilled at knowing our students' strengths and weaknesses, and respond quickly to correct the course when needed.

Through assessments, we collect data, which is beneficial for making intervention decisions for students. We examine student data at our monthly TEAM meetings (consisting of our principal, learning consultant, special education teacher, psychologist, social worker, speech teacher, and classroom teachers), as part of our problem-solving model. Grade level teams meet with the learning consultant and principal on a regular basis to review student progress and make decisions based on our multi-tiered system of support model. Tier 1, or classroom-level, interventions meet the needs of most students. These interventions are woven into the differentiated instruction teachers provide. Examples of classroom-based interventions include re-teaching; providing manipulatives, visuals, and graphic organizers; and using peer or paraeducator support to reinforce concepts. For students who do not respond to these interventions and whose data suggest the need for more intensive intervention, Tier 2 support from the learning consultant is put into place. Tier 2 support consists of research-based intervention programming intended to accelerate progress (Leveled Literacy Intervention for reading, and i-Ready instruction for math). Regular progress monitoring is a key component of Tier 2 support. For our students receiving special education support, data is used to guide student instruction, determine appropriate modifications, and create goals and objectives. Students are aware of their goals and are an integral part of monitoring their own progress.

In addition to using data to drive student-level decisions, we use it to set grade-level or school-wide goals and priorities. For example, a careful analysis of a recent i-Ready diagnostic school report showed that our students are performing lower on vocabulary than on other measured areas. This led us to discuss as a staff ways in which we could strengthen our students' vocabulary development and use of context clues. We have also looked critically at our average scores on the district writing assessment and written a school improvement goal to raise our achievement in this area.

Excellent instruction, smart interventions, and meaningful assessments come together at Brewster to create rich opportunities for our students. We achieve at high levels because we strive to create balance between these three critical practices. With continual vigilance, timely adjustments, and a collaborative approach, we meet our students where they are and move them forward.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Brewster’s Belief Statements are indicative of the culture that we embrace at our school. We believe that students thrive in the care of teachers who build positive, safe relationships and environments, believe in their capacity to learn, and strive to develop a classroom culture of curiosity, resilience, and reflection. We believe in developing communities of thinkers who are actively engaged and invested participants in their own learning. We believe in meeting the needs of all learners through a variety of explicit and experiential teaching methods and modalities. Finally, we believe that the partnership of home, school and community promotes student success.

Teachers build relationships and classroom communities with high expectations that recognize student’s unique needs, strengths, abilities and interests. Our teachers know that before academic learning can take place, our students need to feel welcome, accepted, loved and valued as individuals. Classroom meetings, discussions, and role play foster these relationships student to student and student to teacher.

We have monthly whole school morning meetings to build a sense of the family. Morning meetings feature recognition for student accomplishments as well as updates on upcoming activities. Unique to Brewster is our 5th grade PALS program (Positive Action Leaders). Every 5th grade student is assigned to a classroom Pre K-3rd grade. Students sit with their assigned classes at morning meetings and assemblies. They serve as mentors and good examples to their younger peers. If teachers need an extra set of hands for an activity, they know that they can depend on their PALS.

We have a common language with Brewster’s Community Circle that encourages students to make appropriate choices in behavior expectations. The strategies we teach through the Community Circle are: Be Respectful; Get Help; Compromise; Apologize; Stop and Think; Take Turns; Accept Others; Ignore; Listen; and Take Responsibility. Classrooms also have reward systems to emphasize the positives as children are developing into good students and citizens.

Each morning, students say the Pledge of Allegiance, sing the Star Spangled Banner, and recite Brewster’s Student Mission Statement, “A responsible and respectful student at Brewster School tries hard, uses the Community Circle and is kind to others”.

Students and staff strive to be respectful, to honor others and to put others before themselves. We have a silent dismissal for Memorial Day to show respect for our country and military. Former Brewster students return to play Taps, scouts are in uniform, and the entire student body is completely silent. What an awesome annual experience!

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Brewster is fortunate to have strong parent and community partnerships that strengthen our students’ learning and achievement. On any given day, parent volunteers can be found helping out in our classrooms and media center, working with small groups of students, hanging art work, or assisting teachers with projects. In addition to these invaluable parent contributions, our robust PTA supports Brewster staff through grants, materials reimbursements, and assemblies, and sponsors a wide variety of committees and programs.

Many of our PTA’s programs are designed to ignite or extend interest in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) topics. For example, last year our LEGO Robotics club programmed an EV-3 robot and partnered with environmental experts in Rochester Hills to problem-solve solutions for getting rid of geese in Lake Norcentra Park in our local community, where birds were polluting the lake. Brewster students competed against 47 Lego Robotics teams and formed partnerships across Oakland and Macomb counties. In addition, PTA volunteers run the Math Pentathlon program, in which students practice interactive problem-solving and strategy skills while playing math games during lunch, recess and

after school. This motivational program goes beyond the textbook to apply concepts to real-world situations. The program aligns with national standards and culminates in a contest with districtwide STEAM professionals and parents. The PTA also sponsors the Brewster Science Fair, which every year draws excellent rates of student participation, and the Drama Club, which culminates in an impressive performance and features a large percentage of our fourth and fifth graders.

We have worked hard to nurture community relationships at Brewster. During Career Day, which is offered to third-, fourth- and fifth-graders, students gain an understanding of how skills and interests are translated into careers. Professionals from the community – some of them also Brewster parents - lead hands-on presentations in laser dentistry, engineering, nursing, computer programming, nutrition, medicine, computer design, music, art, and more. Our fourth graders also visit Oakland University each year to learn about science and engineering careers. We are also fortunate to have received funding in recent years from the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs to bring dancers from the Rochester-based Eisenhower Dance to work with students. During the Eisenhower residency, students participate in daily in-school sessions that encourage team building, self-reliance, interdependence, personal space, healthy lifestyle, physicality and self-expression. These opportunities give our students a wider lens, and encourage them to develop new interests and competencies.

3. Professional Development:

The Rochester Community Schools' district calendar designates professional learning days which are divided between district and building initiatives. Brewster has a professional development leadership team that collaborates to plan building in-services. Brewster teachers have been members of curriculum committees that have planned, presented, and facilitated at the district level. This year's district professional learning has focused on Language Arts Units of Study.

It has been a priority in scheduling to include weekly grade level common planning/collaboration time. We have monthly grade level meetings. During this time, the teachers, learning consultant, and principal meet to discuss students, share ideas, support curriculum, and gather resources to enhance instruction. In addition, teachers collaboratively plan multiple times on their own to address student as well as curriculum needs.

We have monthly building TEAM meetings including members of our special education and ancillary staff who work with the classroom teacher to provide the supports necessary to strengthen academic as well as social/ emotional growth. Data drive all decision making in our TEAM meetings.

After setting school wide and grade-level goals, we analyze student data and work together to create strategies that will be implemented throughout the year. Our building goals support and follow the district's Strategic Planning 2020: "Rochester Community Schools will become a world-class educational system by guaranteeing a viable, high quality curriculum for all students."

At monthly staff meetings, we highlight researched based teaching activities and strategies that can transfer into daily instruction. Brewster has implemented innovative, best practice instructional strategies that focus on creating a culture of thinking throughout the school community. The focus on visible thinking routines and other cultural forces enable students to be critical thinkers and problem solvers. These theories from Harvard University (Dr. Ron Ritchhart) have been systematically put into practice, Grades K-5 and are often introduced and modeled at our staff meetings.

Another professional development approach has been book clubs. Last summer, we had an online blog on Creating Cultures of Thinking. This book was a focus for building professional development. The learning consultant has recently facilitated after school webinar workshops. Teachers viewed and discussed several prerecorded webinars from Oakland Schools on the topics of Word Study, Grammar, and Vocabulary instruction.

Embedded in our professional development are often connectors and team building activities to help build

trust among our professional and support staff. The trust that we have established is integral to a healthy teaching and learning environment that benefits all.

4. School Leadership:

Shared leadership and collaboration are integral to Brewster's success. Students are our priority; student learning is always at the center.

The principal's office is a caring and supportive place. Students visit the principal with their ideas, knowing that they will be heard. Parents appreciate her open and honest communication. She is never too busy to meet with parents or incoming families to discuss social, emotional, or academic concerns. Parents and staff are addressed in correspondence as "the Brewster Family," and the tone is one of collaboration. Teachers have remarked, "Our principal treats staff as professionals, honors our ideas and methods, and lets us keep students as our main focus." Brewster's principal provides curricular and academic leadership. She has led Brewster for 16 years and we benefit from the continuity and relationships built during this tenure.

We have many structures in place that provide staff leadership opportunities. At monthly TEAM meetings, we use a problem-solving protocol to identify and plan for meeting students' academic and behavioral needs. TEAM meetings include the input of the principal, resource teacher, learning consultant, speech therapist, social worker, psychologist, and classroom teacher. We have a Professional Development team which focuses on the topics that will have the most impact on student achievement. Building-level committees offer leadership in academic and school culture areas that directly impact our learners. Teachers are involved in leading student groups that help develop the whole child. Staff members serve on district committees and contribute to the professional learning of their peers, helping to disseminate best practices and ultimately impacting student learning.

Our staff cultivates leadership qualities in our students. 5th grade PALS (Positive Action Leaders) is a mentoring program where students are partnered with a lower grade classroom. Students assume a leadership role in our monthly whole school meetings. Other opportunities include Student Council, Drama Club, and Safety Patrol. Students can often be found helping younger students through paired book buddies and peer-to-peer support activities. Our students are role models who care about their classmates. They set a tone of respect and high achievement at our school.

Shared leadership among parents is supported by an active PTA, chairing over forty committees; many provide enrichment activities for our students. Our PTA values education and communication and works to provide exemplary resources and opportunities that impact student growth and learning.

By keeping the focus on student learning, the many leaders at Brewster have a shared investment and claim in the successes of our school.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

At Brewster, our workshop model for reading and writing has contributed to consistently high literacy achievement. Reader’s workshop has been especially powerful in meeting the diverse learning needs of our students and fostering a love of reading. The workshop model is consistent with our belief that one of our most important charges as elementary teachers is to help our students cultivate reading habits that will enrich their lives and prepare them to be thinking citizens. Readers thrive when given direct, meaningful literacy instruction coupled with ample opportunities to read self-selected, accessible text.

One benefit of the workshop model that has contributed to our achievement is that it allows teachers to make quick data-driven, course-correcting instructional decisions. For example, when conferring with a student, a teacher may notice a skill or strategy deficit. The teacher uses this data as a teaching point for the student, and then makes a note to add the student to a strategy group focused on that skill or strategy. The next day, the student joins the group for a quick mini-lesson from the teacher before practicing the strategy or skill with her own self-selected book. These formative assessment opportunities abound in reader’s workshop and allow the teacher to make the small reinforcements and adjustments needed on the way to skillful reading. Before students can get too far behind, the small group and one-to-one components of the workshop help catch them and move them forward.

In addition to the individualized instruction enabled by strategy groups, guided reading lessons, and conferring, reader’s workshop offers students the opportunity to develop their reading identities through choice, voice, and social engagement around books. Book talks, literature-based strategy lessons, and read-alouds with accountable talk give students exposure to a diverse range of genres and subjects. Students’ book choices reflect their interests, and sharing reading recommendations with peers or participating in book clubs create authentic opportunities to see reading as a social endeavor. Vigorous independent reading allows students to interact with large quantities of text, which is a predictor of reading success. Brewster students can sometimes be found walking down the hall with their noses literally in their books, and this excitement for reading spills over into extracurricular programs such as Battle of the Books, the Authors in April visiting author program, and monthly home reading calendars. Our students’ enthusiasm for books leads to lots of authentic reading – and, in turn, high reading achievement.