

U.S. Department of Education
2017 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 Dr. Gary A. van Staveren

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

Official School Name Hamlin Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 270 West Hamlin Road

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

City Rochester Hills State MI Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 48307-3832

County Oakland County

Telephone (248) 726-3600 Fax _____

Web site/URL

<http://www.rochester.k12.mi.us/pages/321/hamlin>

E-mail gvanstaveren@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 E-mail rshaner@rochester.k12.mi.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Rochester Community School District 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

(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	8	13	21
K	43	36	79
1	28	31	59
2	32	44	76
3	37	20	57
4	39	31	70
5	26	21	47
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	213	196	409

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 19 % Asian
 - 9 % Black or African American
 - 9 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 60 % White
 - 3 % 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: 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, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	11
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	11
(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, 2015	377
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.058
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	6

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 28 %
110 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Spanish, Oriya, Telegu, German, Hindi, Chinese, Portuguese, Marathi, Sowrashtra, Korean, Arabic, Nepali, Cantonese, Tamil, Vietnamese, Czech, Italian, Chaldean, Malayalam, Albanian, Polish, Romanian, Punjabi, Urdu, Japanese, Farsi, Tagalog, Macedonian, Mandarin Chinese, Serbian

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 21 %
Total number students who qualify: 80
8. Students receiving special education services: 14 %
55 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.

- 15 Autism
- 0 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 4 Emotional Disturbance
- 0 Hearing Impairment
- 1 Mental Retardation
- 0 Multiple Disabilities
- 0 Orthopedic Impairment
- 4 Other Health Impaired
- 5 Specific Learning Disability
- 25 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: 4
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	17
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	11
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	13
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 23:1
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%	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 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 X

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

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

Hamlin Elementary assures successful learning for all students. We learn. We grow. We soar.

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

Hamlin Elementary School is a PreK-5 elementary school in the Rochester Community Schools district. Hamlin is a historical landmark as the school was founded in 1836 before Michigan became a state. Hamlin serves nearly 400 students from southern Rochester Hills, which is located in northern metro Detroit. Hamlin's mission statement is "Hamlin Elementary assures successful learning for all students. We learn. We grow. We soar." The Hamlin community is one of socioeconomic, cultural, and academic diversity, and is a safe environment for all to flourish. The teachers, para-educators, ancillary support staff, and parents truly care for children.

Within our school we host two Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) basic classrooms, one PreK classroom, and one Headstart classroom. Approximately 30% of our students qualify for English as a Second Language (ESL) services and approximately 30 different languages are represented by our families. Just over 20% of our students qualify for free/reduced lunch. Approximately 14% of our students have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and require special services.

When one walks into our building and through the halls, one promptly recognizes the collaborative, caring, positive culture and climate that permeates throughout the building. All staff embrace a growth mindset and deeply care for our students. The teachers meet monthly in grade level meetings with the Learning Consultant and Principal. Following a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) model, the teams discuss student needs, review data, and plan for the support and intervention students need for continued growth.

The teachers are focused on the school improvement goals in the core academic areas of literacy and numeracy. In addition, one of Hamlin's school improvement goals is to continue to cultivate a 'Culture of Thinking' that aligns to the Harvard Project Zero research of Dr. Ron Ritchhart; Hamlin teachers have been trained by Dr. Ritchhart, have visited other schools outside the district, have hosted several schools, and have presented at the district level during professional development days about our journey since 2012-2013.

We have recognized that the needs of our population continue to change and that we must make educated, student-centered decisions. Due to Hamlin's exceptional cultural diversity and increasing number of English Language Learner (ELL) students, our staff has also embraced ESL training from Oakland Schools on literacy strategies for ELLs and monolingual students. We celebrate our diversity, annually, during Cultural Heritage month with a multi-cultural assembly, Parade of Nations, and International Fair.

Recognizing the changing socio-emotional needs of our students Hamlin staff have also adopted the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence strategies created by the work of Dr. Marc Brackett. This year the staff is learning about the Anchors of Emotional Intelligence, next year about the Feeling Words Curriculum, and in year three, about Lasting Results. Since 2007, Hamlin also has a Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) team that promotes a positive and supportive culture at Hamlin. Currently, this team has been instrumental in planning and facilitating monthly 'Hawks' Nests'; whole building, K-5, multi-age groupings assigned to a staff member that focus on positive behavior and community building.

Hamlin Elementary realizes the importance of educating the whole child and provides one hour per week of Art, Music, Physical Education and Media. Hamlin also provides 30 minutes per week of Chinese instruction to students in grades 1-5.

The Hamlin Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) provides several enrichment assemblies and opportunities for students throughout the school year; these include but are not limited to, Chinese Acrobats, Science Alive, Michigan Science Center, and Anti-Bullying assemblies. The PTA is able to fund their enrichments and initiatives largely through their annual Fun Run. A unique event that culminates the annual Fun Run is the Principal's Challenge, called the 'Tour de Hamlin', where the principal races students from each grade level through the hallways of the school on tricycles. The PTA also provides small scholarships for teachers to spend on materials for their classrooms. Hamlin has numerous parent volunteers. Each May, nearly 100 volunteers are recognized for their support at our annual Volunteer Reception.

Hamlin Elementary has experienced continuous improvement over the past several years, improving our Top to Bottom ranking each year. Our students outperform the State of Michigan and Oakland County averages on the M-STEP. We were fortunate to host the State of Michigan Superintendent and Board of Education member in 2016. Our annual continuous improvement and exceptional student learning at all levels is due to the collaborative, caring efforts of our teaching and learning community. Hamlin has a special place in the community's heart and is a school that many teachers send their own children to. Hamlin assures successful learning for all. We learn. We grow. We soar.

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 Hamlin 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:

Hamlin 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.

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, 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 providing 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 Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (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, monitoring an on-site weather station, Green School status, and an overnight camp experience.

Social Studies, History, Civic Learning and Engagement:

The social studies curriculum is a combination 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 a historic barn to build a homeless shelter?"). Hamlin students demonstrate civic responsibility through Genius Hour projects like canned food, gently worn clothing, or book drives to support those less advantaged.

Pre-K Curriculum:

Hamlin offers preschool classes that serve both three and four year-olds. The program follows the HighScope curriculum, which has 58 Key Developmental Indicators (KDIs) in eight content areas: Approaches to Learning; Social and Emotional Development; Physical Development and Health; Language, Literacy, and Communication; Mathematics; Creative Arts; Science and Technology; and Social Studies. The program uses COR Advantage as the assessment program. This program is aligned to both the KDIs and to the Common Core State Standards. Preschool students in these classrooms develop confidence and competence in academics, social skills, and problem solving strategies that support them in kindergarten and beyond.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Hamlin 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 receive Chinese language and culture exposure 30 minutes per week.

Art Education:

The goals of art education at Hamlin 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). 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:

Hamlin 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, 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. Teachers ensure that students apply concepts from core academic classes into physical education by using literacy and math skills in lessons. All students participate in the American Heart Association sponsored "Jump Rope for Heart" promoting life-long health and physical activity.

Music Education:

Music concepts and skills are taught sequentially at developmentally appropriate levels through listening, performing, and creating opportunities. Musical concepts include: steady beat, tempo, form, dynamics, harmony, meter, melody, rhythm, tone color, texture and history of music (style, culture, and composers). Students further combine skills of literacy and math through identification and analysis of musical structures, notation (iconic, symbolic, and traditional), and pattern recognition.

By the end of fifth grade, students are exposed to a variety of instruments and technology, including recorders, keyboards, xylophones, baritone ukuleles, percussion instruments from diverse cultures, and iPads. Experiences are authentic and encourage musical understanding and independence.

Instructional Media and Technology:

The Hamlin media and technology program develops a foundation of literacy for all students and fosters a deep love of literature and reading for pleasure. The media and technology program also provides students with opportunities to develop the ability to seek, to evaluate, and to use information independently and ethically. Technology skills are embedded throughout the curriculum, preparing students to live and work in our global environment. Students are also able to develop crucial problem-solving strategies in a creative atmosphere. The skill areas and foundations are practiced and reinforced throughout the curriculum and are developed in authentic collaboration with classroom teachers.

Chinese Language and Culture Exposure:

In looking at research and consulting with our world language consultant at Oakland Intermediate School District (ISD), Chinese is a great language to introduce at the elementary level because the brain is much more malleable. There is also a lot of cognitive carryover to other academic subjects. Even if students switch language entering 6th grade, the background of learning Chinese will help them to learn other languages.

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 within the next few years.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Hamlin implements a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support to meet the diverse and individual needs of students, with a focus on the instructional core.

Hamlin implements an aligned curriculum, instruction, and assessment system to ensure that students achieve rigorous instructional outcomes. With a focus on the instructional core, instruction is delivered using a variety of best-practice approaches following a gradual release of responsibility framework. Explicit instruction is followed with guided practice before students engage in collaborative or independent learning activities. Assessment is ongoing to adjust instruction and drive student learning.

In accordance with Rochester Community Schools Strategic Plan, Hamlin has implemented innovative, instructional strategies that focus on creating a culture of thinking throughout our school community. The focus on the eight cultural forces and, more specifically, the cultural force of visible thinking routines, enable students to be critical thinkers and problem solvers. The routines can be used across the curriculum to deepen students thinking and understanding about concepts. These theories from Harvard University (Dr. Ron Ritchhart) have been systematically put into practice, grades K-5.

Hamlin utilizes a workshop approach for both literacy and math instruction in order to build a strong foundation to support students' literacy and numeracy development through the elementary years. The goal for all students in a workshop format is to deepen student learning while developing independent and strategic thinking skills. A key characteristic of a sound workshop is differentiated instruction for all students.

In both reading and writing workshops students are provided with daily protected time to read and write

authentic texts. Teachers group students in a variety of ways in order to help students achieve their individual goals. These goals are determined through the use of ongoing formative assessment and individual student conferences. Teachers may utilize guided reading or writing, strategy grouping, or individual conferring to provide direct instruction and explicit feedback to students. The teacher's knowledge of literacy development paired with their understanding of students' needs foster instructional decisions individualized to each student. This process helps accelerate student learning.

Rochester Community Schools has developed and implemented a variety of assessment practices. The goals for Hamlin's balanced assessment system are as follows: inform teaching decisions and guide instruction, systematically assessing the child's strengths and knowledge in core areas, determine student strengths, both independently and with teacher support, document progress for parents and students, summarize achievement and learning within a period of time, and report achievement and learning to administrators, school board, and various stakeholders in the community

Assessment practices include frequent formative assessments to diagnose learning needs, plan next steps for instruction, and provide students with actionable feedback about their learning. Formative assessments used at Hamlin include the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark assessments for reading, student and teacher rubrics from the Teacher's College Writing Pathways, and Everyday Mathematics unit assessments. These assessments are viewed as a continuum of progress, and as such are conducted at regular intervals with results being reviewed at grade level team meetings. Teachers also employ a variety of other formative assessment strategies within their daily teaching. Examples include, but are not limited to, informal running records, progress monitoring, anecdotal notes, student goals and checklists, student conferences, exit slips, and the use of strategic questioning. These assessments drive day-to-day instruction and allow teachers to flexibly adjust their instruction to meet the needs of students. Summative assessments (State test and district tests) and diagnostic assessments (i-Ready computer adaptive assessment) are considered along with formative assessments to determine proficiency, growth, and to identify which students would benefit from interventions or differentiated instruction that extends learning.

Hamlin Elementary believes that all students can learn at high levels and utilizes a Multi-Tiered System of Support to support learning at all levels. In some cases, for example, when a student is particularly advanced in mathematics, students may receive math instruction in a classroom at a grade level beyond their own. For students who have not achieved standards, teachers provide additional time and adjust instruction to suit the learning needs of each child. Additional interventions are provided through the Early Interventionist and Learning Consultant programs using Leveled Literacy Intervention or i-Ready's computer-based intervention for students who have not mastered grade level standards.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Each morning, Hamlin staff and students start their day together reciting the Hamlin Core Value pledge: “I promise to be respectful, responsible, ready and safe each and every day at Hamlin Elementary.” This is based on the school’s building-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS), strategies for achieving social and learning outcomes in a positive manner.

Through PBIS, staff receive training and support to motivate students to be their “personal best self” in behavior and academics. Exemplary behavior is recognized through our school’s “Hawk Hoorays,” (a note home applauding the exemplary act of students) as well as through our Student of the Month program (awarding one student per class each month who displays outstanding citizenship). Our PBIS program has helped engage and motivate students to be kind, compassionate, and caring citizens. This can be seen exemplified in our upper elementary Safety and Service Squad members leading and assisting younger students, as well as general education students supporting our Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) students in transitions, in the classroom, at lunch, and at recess.

Based on theories from Harvard University’s Project Zero (Dr. Ron Ritchhart), our staff has worked together, through committees, professional development meetings and book studies, to support each other in implementing best practices for creating a culture of thinking within our building. This environment has stimulated students to be critical thinkers and problem solvers. Hallways display student work that models the deep thinking teachers work to elicit from students. Staff members regularly collaborate in grade level teams with the principal and learning consultant for further support in helping all students achieve academic success.

When we host visitors on ‘Gallery Walks’ of our school, the hallways and classrooms share Hamlin’s story of teaching and learning. Visitors have commented on the recognizable consistent language of the eight Cultural Forces and Visible Thinking Routines (from Dr. Ron Ritchhart’s Cultures of Thinking). Visitors also comment on the positive climate and culture of our building, recognized through the interactions of our students and staff. Our own staff have commented on the fact that we are like a family—we care about one another, our students, and the families in our community.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Hamlin Elementary realizes the critical importance of parental involvement and the positive influence it can have on a child’s learning. There are numerous events and activities to engage our families and community.

The Hamlin PTA comprises approximately 125 members and facilitates nearly 30 various committees. Committees include but are not limited to landscaping, cultural heritage, Authors in April, Field Day, Health and Wellness, and Family Night. The PTA also collaborates closely with the Hamlin Staff and provides teacher grants, enrichments or assemblies, and sponsors many fun events like Celebrity Server Night or Spring Raffle or Bagels with a Buddy.

Many family members are also engaged in the school culture through volunteering in their respective child’s classroom, in the media center, or in the main office. When volunteering in the classrooms parent volunteers can often be found facilitating a guided reading group or supporting numeracy skills among other activities. Our parent volunteers are highly encouraged to help and support our school and, annually, we have over 100 volunteers that we recognize in May at our annual volunteer reception.

The Rochester Hills area is home to many educational, business, and non-profit industries. Hamlin frequently is supported by the following organizations, to name a few; Rochester Area Youth Assistance, the Rochester Area Recreation Authority, i9 Sports, Staples, and St. Mark’s Orthodox and Faith Churches adjacent to the school.

Other supportive community organizations include the Blessings in a Backpack organization provides weekly meals for disadvantaged students. Meijer's and local businesses donate hundreds of dollars worth of merchandise for the holidays and special events. The Rochester Fire Department and the Rochester Police Department provide lessons to our students about fire safety, anti-bullying, cyber bullying, etc. And, the Rochester High School National Honor Society students volunteer twice per week to tutor students in school aged care after school.

Lastly, Hamlin's cultural heritage month celebrates the diverse cultural heritages of our families and community. Parents and students participate in classroom presentations, over 100 students participate in the International Parade wearing clothing representative of their native country, and students, parents, and community members participate in our International Fair. Our diverse community of students, staff, and families have many opportunities to share, learn from, and engage with one another through many events over the course of a school year.

3. Professional Development:

The teachers at Hamlin Elementary are very fortunate to work in the Rochester Community Schools district and be provided with several professional development opportunities at both the district and building level.

The professional development schedule within the Rochester Community School district provides three days of learning each year with the learning divided into district learning in the morning and building learning in the afternoon. Several Hamlin teachers and ancillary support staff have been involved in presenting and facilitating district level professional development.

Hamlin teachers have also served as facilitators, hosts, or guests in district teacher labs – job embedded professional development. In the teacher lab professional learning model, small groups of teachers from around the district spend the morning engaged in specific learning in a host classroom and the afternoon debriefing on said learning and its application within their own classroom at their own school.

Additionally, Hamlin teachers learn from each other in smaller versions of teacher lab within our own building. The learning consultant covers teacher A's classroom so that teacher can observe teacher B and vice-versa; we have a culture such that teachers openly share instructional and classroom management best practices and tools of the trade as our common end goal is to continue improvement of teaching and learning.

As stated previously, establishing a culture of thinking at Hamlin Elementary has been the primary focus of professional development over the last several years. This professional development began with visitations to other schools already enculturated and a book study of Dr. Ron Ritchhart's book Making Thinking Visible. Subsequently, a teacher from each grade level, the learning consultant, and principal participated in the Foundations training with Dr. Ritchhart. Since then, utilizing a train the trainer model, these teachers facilitated 'Cultures of Thinking' learning and growth with the entire staff. The Hamlin team has also payed it forward by providing professional development at the district level.

Also, previously stated, we have recognized that the needs of our population continue to change. Due to Hamlin's increasing number of ELL (English Language Learner) students, our staff has also participated in ESL (English as a Second Language) training from Oakland Schools on literacy strategies for ELLs and monolingual students. And, recognizing the changing socio-emotional needs of our students a team of Hamlin teachers have participated in training from the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence and the work of Dr. Marc Brackett.

4. School Leadership:

Tim Fargo's quote, "Leadership is service, not position," is the framework for Hamlin's service leadership philosophy. School leaders encourage shared leadership, put the needs of others first, and set high expectations. Shared leadership is vital at Hamlin and is fostered by the school principal. The principal

empowers staff to take on leadership roles on the School Improvement Leadership Team (SILT), the Cultures of Thinking (CoT) Team, the Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS) Team, and the Diversity Team. This culture of shared leadership contributes to the success of Hamlin Elementary.

All staff members are welcomed and encouraged to join a leadership team. Members of the SILT problem solve and make building-wide decisions to help improve our school community and focus on our building goals. The CoT Team develops a strong professional culture of thinking by planning and facilitating professional development. Their focus on thinking, learning, and understanding also helps create a rich culture of thinking for students. Members of the PBIS team promote and facilitate a positive culture and climate for both staff and students. Finally, the Diversity Team provides suggestions for rich instructional resources which reflect our diverse student body. Each of these teams have a significant impact on our Hamlin community and the successful development of students who are lifelong learners and responsible, engaged citizens.

As a leader, the Hamlin principal's "yes before no" mindset gives teachers opportunities to develop their leadership skills. With this "yes before no" mindset, the principal encourages staff with passionate student-centered ideas to bring those ideas to fruition. One example of this is the Hamlin versus Hampton staff volleyball fundraiser. This event raises nearly \$2,000 each year for a local charity and provides students with a strong model of the importance of giving back to the community. Another example is the Hamlin International Fair, which brings together nearly 500 stakeholders from the Hamlin community to enjoy an evening of multicultural dancing, food, and music. The event has increased cultural awareness for our students and their families and is helping to develop global citizens who appreciate the importance of diverse perspectives.

Hamlin's shared leadership philosophy extends to all stakeholders. The principal and Hamlin teacher-leaders partner with the PTA. Additionally, the principal meets with a student advisory board. These students played a central role when hosting the Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce Leadership Day and a visit from the State of Michigan Superintendent.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

While there are many programs utilized at Hamlin to help us find success, it can all be summed up in one phrase: Hamlin Elementary is a culture of thinking. The Hamlin team has always worked to make our building an inclusive environment for all students to find success, but this is not an easy task in a building with such a range of diverse needs. Since adopting Dr. Ron Ritchhart's pedagogy there has been a massive shift in the way thinking and learning is accomplished, resulting in a significant increase in our social, emotional, and academic achievement. Ritchhart boils success into eight cultural forces, and we work hard to incorporate those throughout our community. As a building we've focused on routines and structures, language, and relationships in order to create the strongest possible foundation for success.

Hamlin Elementary operates smoothly due to our logical and predictable structure. Children feel safe to take risks and expand their thinking. Every day we come together as a community to say the Pledge of Allegiance and Hamlin core value pledge reviewing our expected behaviors. From there, every classroom has a structure that works for that class. Part of Hamlin's beauty is that every classroom looks and sounds different while maintaining the expectations. In addition to structural and behavioral routines, Hamlin has adopted thinking routines to help making inner thoughts visible and increase metacognition from Kindergarten through 5th grade.

Another cultural force on which we focus is language. Educators use high level language, which encourages high level thinking. Consistent behavioral language and expectations are used throughout the building, allowing for students to better focus on their learning. Language is inclusive, helping students take ownership of our community, our classrooms, and our learning.

To conclude, of the most significant cultural forces leading to our success are the relationships. Every person entering our school has value in our community, and this is reflected through the way they are treated. Our social worker does classroom lessons in order to build relationships with every student in addition to our special education population. Every classroom has a morning meeting to continue building and establishing relationships.

The Hamlin team has embraced how creating a culture of thinking positively influences the learning of our students. "Children grow into the intellectual life of those around them." - Vygotsky