

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 Mr. Dan Kamphoff

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

Official School Name Hoover Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1524 Hoover Drive

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

City North Mankato State MN Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 56003-2631

County Nicollet County

Telephone (507) 388-5202 Fax (507) 388-8432

Web site/URL http://www.he.isd77.org/ E-mail dkamph1@isd77.k12.mn.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. Sheri Allen E-mail sallen1@isd77.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Mankato Public School District Tel. (507) 387-1868

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. Ann Hendricks
(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):
- 10 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 3 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 15 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
 - Suburban
 - Small city or town in a rural area
 - Rural
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2016 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	46	36	82
1	39	50	89
2	47	51	98
3	38	41	79
4	57	50	107
5	42	40	82
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	268	537

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 2 % Asian
 - 15 % Black or African American
 - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 75 % 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: 11%

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	28
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	29
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	57
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	537
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.106
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	11

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

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Arabic, Chinese, French, Oromo, Somali, Spanish, Telugu, Vietnamese

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 32 %
Total number students who qualify: 170

8. Students receiving special education services: 10 %
56 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.

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

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 8
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	22
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	10
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	9
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 24:1
12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

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

Assuring learning excellence and readiness for a 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

The flourishing community of North Mankato is located 70 miles southwest of the Twin Cities off of Highway 169. North Mankato is a thriving, forward-moving city, yet our values are rooted in our agricultural way of life. The city of North Mankato was ranked #2 best place in Minnesota for Young Families (nerdwallet.com). North Mankato is also the home of Hoover Elementary School. Hoover is one of ten elementary schools in the Mankato Area Public School District. It is evident that the greater Mankato community highly regards education by supporting building expansion and by continuing to offer opportunities that promote academic and extracurricular growth.

In the spring of 2016, Hoover celebrated 50 years of learning. Our celebration was a remarkable community event with many students and staff representing the days of past and present. The smiles and stories that were shared throughout the evening capture the pride that Hoover stakeholders have in being a Hoover Husky. As we reflect on the last 50 years, we can look with pride at a school that has grown and changed in many ways while never wavering from what is best for kids.

Our Hoover community celebrates having a culturally and economically diverse population. We serve approximately 540 students in kindergarten through fifth grade. Hoover's population includes 31.6% students qualifying for free or reduced priced meals. Additionally, 10% of the students are English Language (EL) Learners. Five years ago Hoover became an EL newcomer site by serving EL students and students new to the country from our neighborhood attendance area as well as from across the district. Over the years the district has continued to expand EL services. Hoover's program has continued to grow. We have built success with a strong focus on academic standards and collaboration between our EL staff and classroom teachers. For example, in the 2015-16 school year 32% of our EL students met proficiency standards on ACCESS Assessments to be exited from the program.

Our staff is comprised of dedicated professionals. We have 22 classroom teachers, approximately half of which have more than 10 years of teaching experience. Hoover has 12 non-classroom teachers, 4 licensed non-instructional staff, 19 non-licensed staff and 1 administrator. Our staff is 13% male and 87% female. Our staff offers a variety of experiences and knowledge that makes our school community rich.

The district's mission, "Assuring learning excellence and readiness for a changing world," focuses the efforts of the Hoover staff. Hoover's vision is to develop the skills of all students and lead them to become lifelong learners who are able to collaborate, communicate and create. This is accomplished with staff who believe all students will learn, a strong curricula, supportive learning environment, and by fostering connections within our school community. We are committed to building relationships to positively contribute to students feeling proud, safe, and accepted. As a result, our daily student attendance average reached 97% last year.

Hoover families and community members are very connected to the school and are provided many opportunities to share their gifts. Parents volunteer with activities throughout the school day. They attend music informances and performances, volunteer at field day, view science fair projects, and lead extracurricular activities. Community members read to students in the Reading Oasis, and mentor students during lunch time. Beyond school hours, the school-community connection continues. Activities that we take pride in are visiting families in their neighborhoods with the Back to School Welcome Wagon, Circle of Parents Family Potluck where food from our various cultures is shared, Hoover Carnival, 5th Grade Art Show and Ice Cream Social, and Family Reading Fair.

Hoover Elementary is fortunate to be partnered with many community organizations. The YMCA school based mentor program provides at-risk students with a positive adult role model. Students in need take part in The Backpack Food Program that supplies them with meals for the weekend. The Mankato Area Diversity Council teaches Prejudice Reduction Workshops to all students K-12 in our district. The Junior Achievement program uses local business professionals to teach classes about basic economic concepts. Three years ago, Hoover received a grant from Scholastic with a match from the Mankato Area Kiwanis Club to build a Reading Oasis. This Reading Oasis provides a place for community volunteers to read with

Hoover students.

The Response to Intervention (RtI) framework gives us an avenue to meet the needs of our students academically, behaviorally, socially, and emotionally. Through this framework we are able to create a positive, welcoming environment where students and families feel safe and cared for. This establishes an atmosphere where social, emotional and academic growth can excel. Our consistently high assessment data is evidence that we are effective with our efforts. The Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs) showcase that we have consistently performed well and out-scored the state average.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Hoover's core curriculum is based upon the Minnesota state standards. Our staff is well versed in the use of standards and have ensured their alignment to all curriculum resources. Formative assessments drive instruction, and recent work has focused on moving towards a standards-based report card. Professional development focused on standards-based instruction, the use of district-level instructional expectations, and effective use of our curriculum resources have been critical to our success.

English Language Arts: The English Language Arts (ELA) Minnesota State standards were adopted in 2012. These standards are taught through a balanced literacy approach. This approach encompasses phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics and word study, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency. We have recently adopted a curriculum resource, Benchmark Literacy, to guide standards-based instructional decisions. Reading Informational Text and Literature strands are taught through the Interactive Read Aloud, Shared Reading and Guided Reading components of balanced literacy. A gradual release model allows focused instruction and the opportunity for differentiation on many levels. Reading Foundational Skills are taught mostly through the Phonics and Word Study components of balanced literacy, but are embedded in all components of the balanced literacy framework. Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language standards are the focus during the Writer's Workshop component of balanced literacy, and are embedded in all components of instruction that take place during the language arts block and throughout the day.

We are focused on embedding the ELA standards throughout the entire school day and incorporating them in all subject and content areas. While ELA grade-level standards guide core instruction, Hoover teachers are always looking beyond grade-level standards to provide enrichment and challenge students.

During Interactive Read-Alouds, students listen as their teacher reads a story that builds on the strategies they are studying that day. Shared Reading allows the students and teacher to read together while the teacher guides and supports the students. Guided reading allows for differentiation and the ability to meet the needs of all learners through small groups. Students are individually coached and guided through the application of reading skills and strategies. Teachers confer with students often and record individual student data, to support and coach students through the stages of reading development. In addition to the reading component, the Writer's Workshop teaches students the skills needed to become better writers.

Math: The 2007 Minnesota Math standards drive math instruction at Hoover. Grade-level Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) have aligned these standards to the curriculum resource, Everyday Math. While this is the base for core instruction, teachers at Hoover go above and beyond standards to challenge and meet the needs of each student. Each collaborative team has identified essential learner outcomes (ELOs) or high priority benchmarks that are tracked through common formative assessments. Students who do not meet grade-level standards, ELOs, or high priority benchmarks are the focus of small group guided instruction where teachers are able to use more explicit modeling, problem-solving strategies and re-teaching. Our after-school program, Excellent Community of Engaged Learners (ExCEL), is designed to target and support math intervention. For math enrichment, students are challenged through extension activities, collaboration with peers, a deeper level of conceptual understanding and a faster pace of content presented with a focus on critical thinking.

Science: The Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards in Science were revised in 2009 and implemented in 2011. Our science curriculum resource is the 2012 Pearson Education Interactive Science program. Our teaching approach to science provides inquiry-based learning, investigating hands-on experiences and a rich, consumable text to support the learning of science concepts which makes learning personal, relevant, and engaging for students.

Social Studies/History: Minnesota's 2004 Social Studies standards were recently updated and put into effect in 2013. Social studies at Hoover is the interdisciplinary study of citizenship and government, economics,

geography and history. Students develop the content knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary to be informed and engaged citizens in the contemporary world. ELA and math standards are embedded in social studies instruction.

Health: The classroom Health curriculum follows the National Health standards covering the following topics: Health promotion, health-enhancing behaviors, communication skills, decision-making skills, goal setting and advocating for personal, family and community health. Health and nutrition topics are also embedded in physical education classes.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

At Hoover our non-core subjects are another key to our students' success. All students at Hoover attend one of the following special area classes daily for a 50-minute period: Media and Technology, Music, Physical Education, and Visual Arts.

Media and Technology: Classes focus on analyzing information and communicating using traditional and digital formats. These skills are built upon each year to enhance reading and writing skills. Students have become responsible online digital citizens through the use of computers and iPads. Staff view learning with technology through the SAMR (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, Redefinition) model. Students explore technology through different devices, coding, mass media projects with green screen technology, and other STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) related activities. In our media classes metacognitive strategies are reinforced for reading with a purpose. Students are engaged through interactive read-alouds, author studies, exposure to different genres of literature, the use of text and e-resources, note taking and research skills. All of the assessments in media are tied to Minnesota English Language Arts Standards in Speaking, Viewing, Listening and Media Literacy Benchmarks K-5. Students culminate their work with a multimedia project.

Music: In music, children learn to sing, play, listen, read, compose, and dance/move. They are taught to understand world history and how cultures work to achieve excellence through the disciplines of rehearsing and performing. Math is reinforced through learning rhythms and reading music. Through the Game Plan music curriculum, students are provided a repertoire rich in folk literature, nursery rhymes and traditional singing games.

Physical Education: The focus of our physical education classes is to empower all students with the knowledge and skills to sustain a physically active and healthy lifestyle. Physical education units are taught to coincide with long-range reading plans which supports the teaching of high frequency words, children's literature, and letter recognition.

Visual Arts: The school's visual arts program supports classroom learner outcomes specifically focusing on the genre of fairy tales, geometric shapes, overlapping design, and perspectives. Research skills and projects are supported by using iPads to learn about artists and art history.

Behavior Supports: Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) lessons have been created and delivered to all students K-5. All students learn and practice how to show HUSKY PRIDE (Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Safe, Be Your Best) throughout the school year. This language is pervasive throughout Hoover. Each month we celebrate our successes during an all-school Husky Huddle. Each week is devoted to a Husky pride focus. Our mascot, Herbert the Husky, sends a message to students each week to remind them of the week's focus. Often these messages are videos to captivate the school body and reinforce desired student expectations. At the end of the week Herbert chooses a Super Husky from each classroom who has demonstrated the focus of the week. Additionally, monthly counseling lessons are delivered to all students K-5 each year. Topics include: Conflict resolution, positive choice-making skills, vocabulary for problem solving, listening skills, and respect.

Academic Supports: Our students use many e-resources to enhance our core curriculum. MyON Reader, an online library, personalizes reading for all K-5 students by recommending books based on their interests, reading level and ratings of books they have read.

All Hoover students have access to online paid subscriptions for PebbleGO, Tumblebooks, and MacKin Via which promote and enhance reading at school and at home. The available fiction and nonfiction titles reinforce state standards and core curriculum. IXL math is offered to all students K-5. This online tool approaches topics from multiple perspectives, offering a variety of visual representations to accommodate different learning styles.

Math Masters and Continental Math League are available to any motivated upper grade students who qualify for an enriched learning atmosphere. Math Masters is a program which challenges students to use critical thinking skills and problem-solving abilities in mathematics. Students attend a regional live competition. Continental Math League is also based on problem solving in multiple disciplines. Our team of students compete nationally throughout the school year. Word Masters is a vocabulary competition that develops thinking skills through the completion of analogies.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Standards-based instruction is the basis for all student learning. Standards-based instruction provides guidance and support to all students and staff working toward predetermined learning objectives. Teachers routinely develop instructional activities and determine the effectiveness of instruction through the use of both formative and summative assessments. The instructional practices used to meet the standards include differentiation, leveled materials, and the integration of technology. Hoover also utilizes a push-in model for Special Education and EL students to maximize core instruction and provide supplemental instruction to meet student needs.

Teachers meet regularly in PLCs to set and revisit instructional goals. Student academic needs are addressed through placing students in tiers following the RtI model. Tier 1 students are on or above grade-level. Tier 2 students are a bit below grade-level and need slight modifications and extra practice. Tier 3 students are below grade-level and benefit from targeted small-group interventions. These groupings change often as new data is collected and studied. All students participate in Together Everyone Achieves More (TEAM) time during the day. This 30-minute block is a chance for students to work in leveled groups according to their needs.

Embedded in each curricula are differentiation options for classroom teachers to support academically exceptional students. Beginning in 3rd grade, students who qualify for our talent development program are clustered. Cluster teachers are provided additional professional development and standards-based enrichment materials to enhance classroom curriculum. Michael Clay Thompson resources are utilized for grammar and vocabulary to enrich our language arts. For math enrichment the Beast Academy resource is used.

The MCAs are summative, criterion-referenced tests that annually assess the progress of students and schools in the areas of reading and math. We celebrate our MCA success of an overall trend of high reading and math proficiency scores for the last five years. High percentages of students meeting and exceeding the standards can be attributed to teachers' understanding of data analysis and intervention and enrichment opportunities for students at Hoover. As a district, each school sets goals based on MCA results in reading and math. The goals are set with a formula to reach 100% proficiency and to close the achievement gap in all student groups by 2020.

The MCA data informs us that Hoover has an achievement gap in reading and math with our special education, black, and free/reduced price lunch student groups. In reading we are trending upward in all three student groups to close the gaps. We believe this is a reflection of our collaborative efforts focused on goal setting, data analysis and differentiated instruction. We have also continued to build the quality and consistency of our reading intervention supports.

In Math, the gap has stayed consistent in the above mentioned student groups. All teachers continue to collaborate about instruction on the state math standards, improving core instruction, and focusing on student achievement at the individual level. We are currently implementing small group math as a structure

to best meet the needs of our students.

We also use the Northwest Evaluation Association's Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) test which we take each spring. This is a formative, nationally-normed assessment that also predicts proficiency on the MCAs. We look at both NWEA overall percentile and strand data for all student groups to set goals focused on individual growth. Collaboratively, we use the MAP learning continuum tool to plan instruction to meet our grade-level goals.

Another assessment used formatively at Hoover is the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). DIBELS are a set of procedures and measures for assessing early literacy skill acquisition from kindergarten through 5th grade. They are short fluency measures used to monitor the development of early literacy and reading skills. DIBELS data from each benchmark assessment (fall, winter, and spring) is analyzed at the building, grade, and classroom levels. The results are the universal screener used in initial placement of students for reading instruction focused on fluency and comprehension. Any student who does not meet benchmark in all categories of this assessment is progress-monitored weekly or bi-weekly throughout the school year. The progress monitoring scores are used to make instructional decisions and to evaluate effectiveness of reading interventions.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Hoover is a Professional Learning Community. Establishing a nurturing and positive climate is a priority at Hoover Elementary. We are able to do this through high-quality, engaging instruction and by developing meaningful relationships with our students.

Hoover Elementary's PBIS strategies encompass our common student expectations. In order to create a culture of school pride, we have chosen a mascot, "Herbert the Husky". It is not uncommon to see Herbert at school-wide events, as well as just roaming the hallways. We use "Husky Pride" as our slogan. At Hoover, we can see the positive results that PBIS creates every day. Husky Pride provides a unified language that empowers teachers, aligns resources, and expands PBIS efforts to better serve the whole child.

We offer many opportunities to grow as a school community. We are proud of our monthly "Husky Huddles." These are school-wide celebrations in which kids are recognized for reaching goals as well as just simply being a time to come together and have fun. Everyone enters the gymnasium singing our school song and proclaiming our Husky Pride. Another opportunity for fellowship is our weekly Pride Packs. These are multi-age groups in which membership remains consistent from year to year to further develop a sense of community and belonging. Students learn about dreams, passion and gratitude. They learn that they truly are all connected and accountable for their own actions and success. In classrooms our teachers follow the Responsive Classroom philosophy. An integral component of this program is the Morning Meeting. Children eagerly share experiences and learn about showing respect and demonstrating integrity. Throughout our day we focus on the academic, social, and emotional growth of each child.

At Hoover, we are lifelong learners demonstrated by our monthly Open Door Days. Teachers visit other classrooms and observe innovative techniques and quality instruction. Our teachers are organized into grade level and department PLCs. Teachers meet in PLCs to collaborate over student learning and instruction. The mindset of our PLCs is we are all responsible for all our students. Our staff recently conducted a book study of "Why Students Disengage in American Schools." This helped us grow and reflect as educators as to how we can best engage students. We value and appreciate our cohesive and supportive climate at Hoover. We know it's the little things that count and cultivate this environment, such as staff luncheons, celebrations, and appreciation days.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Hoover Elementary takes pride in strong partnerships with families and our community. Before the school year starts we visit our students and families in their neighborhoods with our Back to School Welcome Wagon. This strategy begins forming relationships and building excitement for the school year.

Hoover staff strives to build positive relationships through frequent parent-teacher communication. Prior to the first day, each family comes to an entrance conference to share the hopes of the parents and student while teachers share information about the upcoming year. We also hold conferences in the fall and spring and regularly reach nearly 100% participation. Routine communication via newsletters, emails, and invitations for parents to assist in the classroom contribute directly to Hoover students and families feeling safe, cared for, and ready to learn.

The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) coordinates activities for families and community members to come together. At an Open House in the fall students and families are encouraged to tour the building, showcase completed work, shop at the book fair, meet and greet staff, and gather for fellowship. In February, we hold a family reading and activity night to celebrate "I Love to Read" month. In the spring, a 5th grade Art Show, Ice Cream Social, and school carnival are held. Annually, we hold the Risser Run in conjunction with physical education classes. We have over 550 students and parents take to the neighborhood streets for a fun run.

Hoover staff continuously look for ways to further connections in our community. A partnership with the local university brings future educators into classrooms allowing them to learn from experienced Hoover staff while adding additional learning opportunities for Hoover students. This partnership speaks to our investment in developing future educators. Another community connection is our weekly reading volunteers from the Mankato Area Kiwanis Club. Each week several volunteers come to Hoover to read with students.

Additionally, students have the opportunity to connect with seniors from our community by visiting the neighboring assisted living home. They read, create projects, and build friendships. Some Hoover classrooms also take part in welcoming a foster grandparent into the classroom for the year. This “grandparent” spends time working with students, and building relationships while providing support.

All of these examples build strong connections among Hoover students, staff, families, and our community. These connections contribute to positive social and emotional relationships, increased academic motivation, as well as a growth mindset.

3. Professional Development:

The Mankato Area Public Schools’ professional development approach is designed to enhance instruction with the intent of improving student learning. Professional development is rooted in daily learning, is standards-based and is closely tied to student achievement. Our job-embedded professional development is a real-time part of a teacher’s daily work. It includes both on-going collaboration and reflection focused on improving instructional practices.

PLCs at Hoover provide a venue for teachers to set goals, analyze data related to student achievement, plan for students’ unique needs, determine an instructional response and reflect on successes and challenges. Teachers and support staff (principal, reading intervention teachers, Continuous Improvement Coaches, EL teachers, and special education teachers) meet at least bi-weekly to collaborate around curricular standards, core instruction, and meeting the needs of individual students. Grade level action plans guide and document the goals, decisions made, and results. The Hoover Leadership Team regularly reviews action plans to support grade levels.

Hoover’s building vision card drives professional development opportunities. It is aligned to the district vision card which is based on student achievement. In the last few years we have focused on best practice instruction in the areas of small group reading, writers’ workshop, and small group math. Embedding state standards and the NWEA learning continuum into these curricular areas has guided the instructional decisions made during professional development workshops. Our Continuous Improvement Coach supports teachers with embedding best practice instructional strategies and standards based teaching. Through classroom visits and team meetings, the coach continues to collaborate with teachers on implementing new learning and making data driven decisions.

Hoover has implemented monthly “open door” days where teachers are able to visit other classrooms to learn from colleagues and see the application of best practice instruction. After visiting other classrooms, teachers reflect on their own practices to continually improve instruction. Another opportunity for learning occurs during district wide, cross-building grade-level collaborations. Several times a year, grade level teachers come together to collaborate around initiatives tied to the district vision card. The District also holds Learning Academies throughout the year where district staff present in their areas of expertise and staff attend to further their learning and skills.

Frequent job-embedded professional development is essential for staff members’ ability to effectively reflect on problems and solutions to best meet the needs of our unique learners. Professional development is rooted in our daily learning, which leads to greater student achievement.

4. School Leadership:

Learning excellence for all students is at the heart of Hoover's leadership philosophy, "All students will learn and every child deserves our best everyday." Our school leadership is set by the building principal in an established school culture of collective responsibility for learning where teacher leaders embrace their roles. Daily, we strive to be a school in which students are eager to come to school, parents want to send their children, and staff are proud to come to work.

Hoover's Leadership Team (HLT) is a vital leadership component comprised of grade level teachers, a specialist representing the non-classroom teaching staff, the Continuous Improvement Coach, and our building principal. The HLT embraces shared leadership as it works annually to set goals as part of Hoover's Vision Card which guides and measures our school efforts and initiatives. The work of HLT is focused on leading the main building initiatives to increase student achievement and engagement.

Teacher leaders are actively engaged in several aspects of Hoover Elementary. They drive the work of our PBIS efforts, PLCs and other building committees. Additionally, our building Continuous Improvement Coach leads professional development in core instruction for teachers. Hoover has teacher leaders who routinely step up and lead committees such as our Pride Packs and Husky Huddle teams. Several staff also share their expertise by leading sessions at district-wide professional development gatherings.

Hoover is always looking to add purposeful opportunities for students to be leaders. Examples of student leaders at Hoover are our Student Ambassadors and Peace Makers. Student Ambassadors lead school-wide community engagement projects as well as activities throughout the year focused on school spirit. Our Peace Makers are leaders in conflict resolution and assist peers in healthy ways of resolving issues that may occur on the playground.

The principal values his role in building successes with everyone across the building. The principal works to empower staff to take risks and share their success with one another to reach all students. Every staff member has strengths to contribute to the learning excellence of all Hoover Huskies. The principal values his role of instructional leader by being a part of classroom lessons and discussions of interventions and assessment results as we strive to reach every child.

Hoover Elementary School's shared leadership model contributes directly to our positive school culture and success on district and state assessments.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Our foundational belief and a core strategy for academic success at Hoover Elementary is to put every child first. When we put children at the forefront of everything we do and every decision we make, students flourish. Hoover Elementary School is committed to making a positive impact on the lives of every Hoover Husky by building connections and engaging all students in their learning. We know students need to be engaged academically, behaviorally, socially, and emotionally. We see student success soar when we engage the whole child in the learning process. Students feel proud to be here, are invested in their learning, and positively contribute to our school community.

We highly value relationships and their role in increasing engagement. We intentionally shape our school culture to include opportunities that foster positive relationships. Our teachers are trained in Responsive Classroom, which we use as a framework to build strong classroom cultures. We utilize Pride Packs to build connections and teach core values. We design structures to enhance the student experience. We also identify disconnected students and match them with staff members as invisible mentors. We also have community based mentors visit through a partnership with the local YMCA to reach students that need even more support.

We put every student first using strong core instruction and meeting their needs as individuals. Hoover's staff designs instructional lessons to purposefully engage students as active participants. Within our core instruction we engage students by being relevant and challenging while differentiating lessons. Teachers involve students in individual lessons through the art of instructional delivery, technology, and incorporating high-interest topics.

Additionally, our Team Time program puts students first by meeting their individual reading needs daily. During this time, students are engaged in instruction at their level based off of formative and summative assessments. The instruction may include enrichment as well as targeted interventions.

Through an RTI framework students are put first as we focus on the behavior of our students with a PBIS model. Husky Pride is the motto our students strive to achieve. Staff deliver strong core instruction of our school-wide expectations. Students actively participate in positive recognition efforts and are expected to hold one another accountable. Beyond our core PBIS efforts we work diligently to ensure that all students at Hoover are connected and able to engage during their time with us. Approaching learning with students first leads us to great results.