

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2017 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mrs. Katherine Ruth Williams

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

Official School Name Elmwood Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 5900 South Sunnyslope Road

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

City New Berlin State WI Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 53151-8719

County Waukesha County

Telephone (262) 789-6581

Fax (414) 427-7290

Web site/URL

<http://www.nbexcellence.org/school>

s/elm/

E-mail katherine.williams@nbexcellence.org

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\*Mr. Joe Garza

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

E-mail joe.garza@nbexcellence.org

District Name School District of New Berlin Tel. (262) 789-6200

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 Mr. Tom David

(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

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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

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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):
- 4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 2 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 6 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	34	37	71
1	28	32	60
2	52	30	82
3	34	46	80
4	46	40	86
5	49	47	96
6	48	41	89
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
<b>Total Students</b>	291	273	564

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 14 % Asian
  - 1 % Black or African American
  - 5 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 78 % White
  - 2 % 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	14
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	2
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	16
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	551
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.029
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %  
7 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 5 %  
Total number students who qualify: 29

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

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

- |                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <u>9</u> Autism                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness              | <u>4</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness        | <u>3</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>4</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>12</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment    | <u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>0</u> Mental Retardation    | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities | <u>6</u> Developmentally Delayed               |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 1
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	24
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.	10
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 23:1
12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

<b>Required Information</b>	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	95%	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.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
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.  
To empower, inspire, and support students in acquiring the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to establish goals for their future and develop plans to achieve them.
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**

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Elmwood Elementary has a unique history. After being closed for several years, Elmwood reopened in 1992. A collaborative team of families, community members, educators, and university staff developed a shared vision for a child-centered school with instruction derived from research-based best practices. In the fall of 2002, we saw the opening and dedication of a brand new Elmwood, designed to fit the learning needs of our children. Several improvements were immediately apparent that carried instructional benefits: built-in glass curios in the main hall to celebrate student artwork, an enormous library media center with a broadcast studio and carpeted stage to enhance 21st century communication skills, and breakout areas in each grade level pod to encourage collaborative learning activities. Shortly thereafter, the district merged Glen Park and Elmwood Elementary Schools in 2012. Change is difficult, but the combined schools discovered an opportunity to further our success with a new school community, students, and staff to reinvigorate Elmwood's culture of acceptance and learning for all!

Throughout these transitions, we have honored past traditions and started new ones in recognition of new beginnings. Fine Arts Nights are a long-standing tradition for our students to learn and celebrate as musicians and artists. Families visit classrooms, admire their child's artwork displayed in the main hallway, and conclude the evening by watching their child perform a musical concert. Our Elmwood Holiday Sing-Along, where the school community sings carols in the gym, is another enduring tradition that students, staff, and families look forward to each year. Our Home and School (H&S) parent-teacher organization supports our traditions through fundraising and volunteering, so activities like High Interest Day (students choose and participate in workshops that peak their interest), Fall Fest, and Artist-in-Residence programs continue to thrive. Finally, on the last day of school it is an Elmwood tradition that all staff line the sidewalk and wave farewell as students leave for summer vacation. Tears, silly string, and the sound of bus horns celebrate a job well done. All of these activities lend themselves to strong socio-emotional growth, which in turn supports academic outcomes.

Currently, Elmwood is one of four elementary schools in the District of New Berlin, a suburban school district that serves more than 4,500 students in kindergarten through twelfth grade. Amidst the last remaining farm fields in New Berlin, Elmwood has a rural-suburban charm in a location only 20 minutes' drive from downtown Milwaukee. At Elmwood, we are honored to serve 564 students and their families from kindergarten to sixth grade. Also unique to Elmwood is that we house and support our district's Kindergarten Prep classes for qualifying four-year-olds and host advanced math courses for our smaller elementary buildings. To lead the learning of our Elmwood students, we have two administrators, 24 classroom teachers, 10 specialists, 10 student learning assistants, and a school psychologist. This passionate, professional team forms the school community that prepares our students for college, careers, and future opportunities.

High-achieving, service-minded, empathetic leaders of tomorrow would be an accurate way to describe our students at Elmwood Elementary. As part of our unique programming, over 60 fifth and sixth grade students design and lead out our Elmwood Today Show broadcast. Every morning, our school watches the student anchor reports. This is a phenomenally positive way to open each day of learning. Annually, kindergarten students visit our local nursing homes to share reading skills and friendship. On Wednesday mornings, over 75 kindergarten through sixth grade students participate in Chess Club, which have won 80+ state and national awards; the Elmwood Chess Tournament is the largest elementary school hosted tournament in Wisconsin. Our supportive Elmwood families have partnered with our staff over the years to provide many opportunities to our students. This past year, our Home and School parent-teacher organization held a Fun Run. Through it, Elmwood families raised over \$19,000 that went directly back to our school. Our Robotics Team, Musical, and Talent Show are a few examples of the extra-curricular activities supported by our families. On a daily basis, you will find parents, grandparents, and other relatives volunteering to lead reading groups at multiple grade levels.

In addition to the above opportunities, specific strategies are in place to encourage students to realize their full potential including action-planning, a college and career readiness focus, and strategic collaboration between educators. Our School Action Plan (SAP) is based on our mission, vision, and beliefs. It is also

data-driven to best meet the needs of all of our learners. The why of our collective work is expressed through Elmwood's mission: To empower, inspire, and support students in acquiring the knowledge skills, and dispositions to establish goals for their future and develop plans to achieve them. Our vision drives our actions: We prepare ALL students to succeed in a diverse, change-oriented, global society by fostering a collaborative learning environment. Our staff has committed to five beliefs that guide our practice:

1. ALL kids can learn - academically, socially, and emotionally.
2. Learning is the work.
3. Every child is my child.
4. Relationships before results.
5. We are a team!

Our SAP is focused on the learning of all students. We credit it with earning us a School Accountability Report Card score of 96.5 out of 100, which corresponds to a rating of "Significantly Exceeds Expectations" from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Supported by our highly-functioning Professional Learning Communities, we meet the needs of all learners within the classroom setting. Our full inclusion practices help propel all Elmwood students to extraordinary levels of excellence. Additionally, the integration of digital learning and the Four Cs (critical-thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity) has helped us focus on the skills our students will need in the future as well as maximizing their learning now. Through these efforts, our living mantra as Elmwood Lion Cubs is clear every day: "LET'S ROAR TOWARDS EXCELLENCE!"

## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Core Curriculum:**

Elmwood’s mission is to empower, inspire, and support students in acquiring the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to establish goals for their future and develop plans to achieve them. Our curriculum, instruction, and assessment in the core areas of literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies are key reasons for our students’ exemplary high performance - academically, socially, and emotionally.

In an effort to calibrate students’ educational experiences and to provide equity in high quality instructional practices, Elmwood’s instructional coaches collaborated with colleagues, through a rigorous Professional Learning Communities (PLC) model, to create a set of quality indicators for literacy and for mathematics. These research-informed frameworks helped shape our professional learning structure and our classroom practices. The implementation of new literacy and mathematics resources over the past five years has enabled us to shift our focus from teaching to learning. To support this work, our educators also participated in book studies, analyzed and evaluated student data, and designed, modified or located high cognitive demand tasks in literacy and mathematics. Additionally, we allocated time and support for teachers to be reflective in their practice by incorporating learning labs, where teachers could observe a classroom and provide feedback on a specific indicator.

Balanced Literacy is a primary focus at Elmwood Elementary. Our educators implemented a reading and writing workshop structure, while using Common Core State Standards and rigorous units of study to impact learning for all K-6 students. The strategic organization of our reading and writing scope and sequence built a vertical approach for growth within targeted and explicit K-6 instruction. This alignment included an increase in rigor, high quality instruction, responsive teaching practices, and student ownership through mini-lessons, independent reading and writing time, conferring, guided reading, strategy groups, interactive read-alouds, and phonological awareness and phonics instruction. Our collaborative grade level teams built a solid foundation of shared practice, data collection of student performance, and responsiveness to both formative and summative assessments. Our educators empowered all students in authentic, growth oriented goal setting cycles based on pre-assessments, feedback, reading and writing continuums, self-reflections, and peer conferences. In this work, students do not focus on their reading level label. Instead, students reflect on how the indicators such as plot/setting, characters, and vocabulary/figurative language change from level to level.

In mathematics, we focus on differentiation to create thinkers and problem solvers. At Elmwood, we offer a number of mathematics courses which include opportunities for self-acceleration and compaction of content. It is the role of the educator to prompt, question and facilitate student discourse and be responsive to student needs. Students are encouraged to take risks, share their thinking, ask questions, justify their solution paths and critique the reasoning of their peers. The mathematics block commences with a number sense building routine, such as a Number Talk or estimation task. This routine enables teachers to gain valuable insight into students’ foundational skills and concept of number. Number sense routines are typically followed by a low floor, high ceiling task that is directly aligned to the learning goals for the lesson. Through intentional task selection, teachers create cognitive dissonance for students, while grounding them in conceptual mathematical understandings. Following the debriefing of the task, students are provided with the option of completing a formative assessment and moving on to a related differentiated activity or remaining with the teacher to receive additional support through a concrete, representational, or abstract approach prior to completing the formative check for understanding.

Elmwood’s science curriculum prepares students for their future through questioning, scientific thinking, reasoning, data analysis, reporting out results and incorporates inquiry, hands-on learning, project-based learning, virtual labs, investigations, research, and solving real-world problems. Elmwood educators are a critical part of our district-wide science alignment team. The science alignment team reviewed and evaluated the Next Generation Science Standards, by grade level, to formulate learning progressions, which then led the team to review possible resources to support these standards. Currently, four grade levels at Elmwood are piloting three different resources to help educate and prepare students for the future.

Elmwood is in its second year of implementing our district's new social studies curriculum based on Wisconsin Academic Standards. Elmwood educators were active participants in our district's K-12 social studies alignment team that researched best practices, experienced site visits to neighboring districts, and piloted various resources before giving recommendations for district adoption. Embedded into our social studies curriculum is our school behavior plan which aims at teaching our students to be safe, respectful, and responsible citizens of our school, their community, and our world. Our Behavior School Leadership Team oversees and continuously strives to strengthen this school behavior plan. Additionally, we take great pride in the daily classroom meetings held throughout our school to emphasize the importance of being a kind citizen and building a responsive and authentic classroom community. Students are also immersed in a culture of giving back through various Passion Projects (inquiry-based projects that are driven from a student's area of interest), classroom drives, and community outreach. This is a school-wide belief to best instill values that ensure readiness for our students to be contributing citizens.

## **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

At Elmwood, we prepare ALL students to succeed in a diverse, change-oriented, global society by fostering a learning environment in which our school, families, and community work collaboratively. In order to achieve our vision, Elmwood integrates multiple curriculum areas into our students' daily lives. These areas include: art, music, physical education, technology, and an anti-bullying curriculum.

Our comprehensive, sequential art curriculum includes 21st century learning that extends beyond the classroom. The curriculum includes study of creative expression, art history and culture, art analysis, and aesthetic perception; and aligns with Wisconsin and national standards. At Elmwood, we believe art education for our students is an indispensable opportunity to learn about creativity and self-expression. Our first through sixth grade students meet for art class for one hour each week. During these learning experiences, we incorporate content, creativity, craftsmanship, and concentration as the framework for teaching and learning. As a culminating activity, students have an opportunity to showcase their art during Fine Arts Night. These nights include student musical performances and displays of completed student art projects. Additionally, Art Club is offered to fourth through sixth graders as a co-curricular to enhance their art experience. We are also fortunate in that our Home and School parent-teacher organization funds an Artist-In-Residence program, where all students work collaboratively on a common theme to create works of art for our school.

Students at Elmwood have many opportunities to explore their musical interests. Students in grades one through six meet twice weekly for thirty minutes for general music. Students perform, learn about, and appreciate music in a multi-faceted learning environment. Units focus on multicultural music and folk dancing, music literacy, and instrument playing such as guitar, xylophones, autoharps, bells and percussion instruments. Each grade prepares and participates in a music concert for Fine Arts Night. Choir and the school musical are extracurricular activities for students in grades four through six. Additionally, our students' musical curriculum is further enriched by the opportunity to enroll in orchestra in fifth and sixth grade and band in sixth grade. Orchestra, band, and choir members perform at our winter and spring concerts, and orchestra members also take part in our district-wide String Fest and Elementary Orchestra Solo/Ensemble Festival, while band members compete in the Band Olympics.

In alignment with the Wisconsin Standards for Physical Education, the objective of physical education is to get students moving and teach them a wide variety of movement and fitness skills to foster a lifetime of physical activity and fitness. At Elmwood Elementary, students participate in physical education two times per week for thirty minutes to learn developmentally appropriate differentiated activities that build upon prior skills and knowledge; a third contact is facilitated in a flipped model approach. Teamwork, sportsmanship, and cooperation are integrated throughout all lessons to foster 21st century learners who are college and career ready. It is here that students develop enjoyment of movement and confidence to become lifelong movers. Healthy choices are integrated throughout physical education lessons with students participating in Jump Rope for Heart, which both raises money for the American Heart Association and teaches about heart healthy habits.

Elmwood Elementary students utilize technology and digital learning practices to strengthen their proficiencies of the Four Cs: communication, creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration. Students use iPads, Chromebooks and laptops to create artifacts that make learning visible. In doing so, learners engage in active inquiry. We use G Suite for Education and our learning management system PowerSchool Learning to improve work flow, create opportunities for students to communicate online with others, collaboratively share feedback, and portfolio their work across grade levels. We use data to set student growth and professional learning goals with the BrightBytes data collection tool. Elmwood Elementary's Digital Learning Coach works with teachers to encourage the use of innovative practices. These practices include being student-centered, engaging all learners in research, promoting responsible digital citizenship, and supporting keyboarding skill development. Our ability to connect powerful instruction with innovative learning truly prepares our students for the future.

Elmwood students understand the importance of standing up for themselves and for others when they see behaviors happening that they know are wrong. Currently we use Second Step, a researched based anti-bullying curriculum that integrates social-emotional learning into the classroom. This curriculum promotes self-regulation and responsible decision-making, and teaches anti-bullying techniques. During our sessions, students engage in role play and reflective conversations to support their social skills. Additionally, we utilize Being the ONE!, a character development program inspired by Kathryn Otoshi's book ONE. This story demonstrates to our students the critical role they play in making Elmwood a safe and wonderful place to be every day. They learn to not only use their words to stand up for others, but also that listening to others is an important step to creating a culture of respect. At the beginning of the year, our principal and associate principal visit all classrooms to read ONE, and discuss what students can do for themselves and others in difficult situations. Teachers and staff reinforce these ideas throughout the year through short lessons and examples given during their morning meetings with students.

### **3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:**

Our first and primary belief at Elmwood is that "ALL Kids Can Learn". We utilize a variety of instructional approaches, interventions, and assessments that work in alignment to impact high quality instruction and learning. We are a data-driven learning organization that uses a Multi-Level System of Support (MLSS) to ensure that we are fostering academic, social and emotional growth for all of our students. At Elmwood, our MLSS is a three tiered collaborative and responsive structure, which includes universal instruction, intervention support, and assessment. At the core of our system is our Tier 1 universal instruction, which encompasses instructional cycles, differentiated instruction, and digital learning practices.

Through collaborative efforts at Elmwood, we ensure an equitable Tier 1 experience for all our students using instructional planning cycles with regular education teachers, special education teachers, coaches, support staff, and administration. These cycles include establishing clear learning targets aligned to the standards, developing clear and concise teaching points, creating common assessments, implementing flexible groups based on data, and conferring between teachers and students. At Elmwood, our grade level teams use a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) template during the instructional cycle to plan to the edges (where we first consider the needs of our most diverse learners) for all learners to achieve success. For example, our advanced learners self-assess based on educator feedback and set personalized goals using reading and writing continuums. Furthermore, to demonstrate and portfolio their thinking and learning, our students are fully immersed in digital learning practices through the creation of original artifacts using iPad apps including Seesaw and Explain Everything. Additionally, G Suite for Education apps and Compass Learning Odyssey are utilized to enhance personalized learning and reflection.

Students at Elmwood are also supported at the Tier 2 and 3 levels through MLSS. Each grade level has an intervention block, otherwise known as "Cub Time" which refers to our mascot, during the school day designated to providing students with appropriately differentiated instructional methods and interventions. Through data review and analysis, students receive appropriate research-based interventions matched to their individual academic and behavioral needs. For example, a student who demonstrates a need in the area of reading comprehension would be placed in a reading intervention such as Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) or Soar to Success (SOAR). The intervention would be facilitated and progress-monitored by our classroom educators. During "Cub Time", advanced learners are given opportunities based on their

Differentiated Education Plans (DEPs) to deepen their knowledge and skills. In terms of Tier 2 and 3 behavior interventions, a team meeting including a student's classroom teacher, psychologist, and administrator is held to determine an appropriate plan.

At Elmwood, we strategically use assessments to impact instruction within all tiers in order to design next steps for all students. To determine the most appropriate programming at Tier 1, a variety of norm-referenced, academic screeners are used including Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) and the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT). This data is triangulated with classroom level assessments and drives decisions for appropriate Tier 1 supports or additional intervention. For example, each child's data profile is reviewed to determine appropriate course placement, which may include compacted math coursework, subject level acceleration, or self-selected acceleration resulting in a Math 4/5, Math 6/7a, or Math 7/8 placement. These course options offered at Elmwood encourage and foster continued growth for our advanced learners. These opportunities prepare our Elmwood students for college and future careers by increasing student engagement and creating opportunities for self-directed and life-long learning.

Analyzing assessment data at Tier 2 and 3 is critical in achieving our student and building goals. At Elmwood, we hold monthly Grade Level Data Team meetings to comprehensively review student data profiles. Instructional coaches, administrators, psychologist, grade level teachers, and special education teachers collaborate and analyze MAP data, classroom performance, AIMSweb baseline assessments, and diagnostic assessments (e.g. Number Knowledge Assessments and Fountas & Pinnell). After academic and behavioral considerations are discussed, and multiple data points are reviewed, our Elmwood team may recommend a student for Tier 2 or 3 placement. Customized student growth goals are established and shared with students and families in order to close learning gaps. Progress monitoring is completed weekly or bi-monthly and closely monitored by our Elmwood's Grade Level Data Team. Most recently, 31% of students performing at the first quartile on MAP reading (1st through 24th percentile) moved to the second quartile (25th through 49th percentile) from fall 2016 to winter 2017. Several Elmwood students who have received intensive interventions closed their learning gaps and successfully transitioned back into Tier 1 instruction.

Through Elmwood's responsive, interwoven application of instructional methods, interventions, and assessments, our students have achieved and maintained high levels of success. Elmwood has multiple systems in place to maintain high levels of achievement that exemplify our belief that "All Students Can Learn". Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and monthly Grade Level Data Team meetings are structures that support our work. Through continuous cycles of reflection, learning, and implementation, Elmwood pushes the edges of student and staff learning for growth and improvement.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

“Let’s Roar Towards Excellence!” This is the mantra that is heard, seen and felt throughout our school community of Elmwood Lion Cubs. We believe in actively engaging our students in the school community to ensure learning is the work. Our staff strongly believes in relationships before results and are committed to the social-emotional needs of all our students. We believe our positive environment has been fundamental to our success as a learning institution on all metrics, not least of which are our results on the School Accountability Report Card, published by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Our efforts in culture and climate have been instrumental to student learning, their social needs, and their ongoing emotional development.

A Behavior School Leadership Team (BSLT) – comprised of educators from each grade level, the associate principal, and psychologist—was created two years ago in response to increasing engagement with students, shared leadership with teachers, and collaborative decision-making with the community. The BSLT worked to develop school wide expectations, incentives, lessons, events and partnerships to actively engage students in our Elmwood community. Positively stated school-wide behavioral expectations are reviewed in the classroom to teach building expectations along with problem solving techniques. All students have a voice in where we focus our behavioral instruction efforts through feedback given on a bi-annual climate survey. Our BSLT reviews the data to identify building concerns and is able to implement timely changes based on the needs of our students.

We are the Elmwood Lion Cubs and students earn “A-Paw-zzz” (applause) tickets for their leadership in being safe, respectful, and responsible. All staff regularly present students with tickets throughout the building to reinforce positive behaviors. These tickets are collected each quarter and displayed for the entire school to view on a large banner in the office. Four times throughout the year we celebrate our positive choices with a whole school event. Students look forward to these large celebrations and have enjoyed school dances, dessert days in the lunchroom, and special assemblies.

Additionally, we recognize students individually for being leaders in the building. Each day our fifth and sixth grade students broadcast news and special announcements on our Elmwood Today Show, which is watched in every classroom throughout the building. The principal and associate principal are live on the show every Friday to announce our “A-Paw-zzz” winners. Two tickets are chosen from each grade to be highlighted to the entire school. Students are invited to the library where the principal and associate principal congratulate them with a unique paw prize and meal certificate.

We also value and celebrate the amazing work of our staff members. At the beginning of each staff meeting, we highlight our five beliefs by “glowing” each other and stating why and how our colleagues exemplify our commitments to each other, our students, and families. Staff receive a glow bracelet to wear which reminds them of the difference they make in the lives of our students.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

At Elmwood Elementary our fifth belief, which we hold strongly to, is: “We are a team!” We believe that our parents and community are an integral part of that team, contributing to our school’s success and driving our students’ growth and development. We are fortunate to have families that regularly volunteer and plan fundraisers to support several of our academic programs. A few examples of these efforts are bi-annual Scholastic Book Fair Drives to solicit book donations for our classrooms, staff appreciation events, High Interest Day (students choose and participate in workshops that peak their interest), and a week-long Boosterthon that promotes health and character building. Our Home and School parent-teacher organization also plans family events outside of the school day, such as Elmwood Playground and Popsicle meet-ups, to foster relationships and welcome new families to our community.

In addition to receiving support from our families, Elmwood enjoys giving back to the community. Pennies

for Patients is a fundraiser that has been led by an Elmwood teacher for the past five years. Our school community collects funds over a three week period that supports research and treatment for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Elmwood staff and students have partnered with the Waukesha Food Pantry to hold food drives. Our fifth grade students have also volunteered to make sandwiches for the Guest House, an area homeless shelter. Twice a year, a large number of Elmwood staff volunteer at the Hunger Task Force to collect food for families in need. We believe these acts of generosity and citizenship are essential for students, as philanthropic efforts and overall success in life are often intertwined.

Elmwood Elementary has built a strong partnership with the New Berlin Police Department. For the past several years, a New Berlin police officer has implemented a 12-week Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program with our fifth grade students, which has led to stronger student decision making skills. This program helps students identify a problem, analyze their choices, and make a decision that best solves the problem. Additionally, our school shares a School Resource Officer (SRO) with our middle/high school and our SRO serves as a role-model and community liaison, which has proven to be a powerful partnership for our students.

Finally, we are proud of our partnership with Junior Achievement, a non-profit organization dedicated to preparing students for work and life in the 21st century. Last year, we worked closely with Junior Achievement to implement our first annual Jump into Your Future event, a daylong opportunity in which kindergarten through sixth grade students hear from professionals in a variety of careers as part of exploring the world of work. This event has an exciting outcome: sixth graders make career relevant course selections when preparing for their middle school experience. During this event, students are encouraged to work hard in their classes, particularly in areas relevant to possible careers of interest. These opportunities are instrumental in supporting student learning, as Jump into Your Future reveals the link between school and career success.

### **3. Professional Development:**

At Elmwood Elementary, one of our five guiding beliefs that each and every staff member is committed to is "Learning is the work". Effective professional learning is not only systematic and data-driven to improve student learning, but is a point of pride when speaking to any staff member at Elmwood. Our Professional Learning Plan (PLP) is developed using our School Action Plan (SAP), which is based on our four district strategic goals, our student data, family feedback, and staff culture/climate surveys to evaluate professional development needs throughout the year. As lead learners, the principal and associate principal are active members of the Association of Wisconsin School Administrators (AWSA) and have participated in AWSA's School Administrators Institute for Transformational Leadership (SAIL) statewide professional learning cohort. The results of the learning are shared with Elmwood's Building Leadership Team, so that the learning cycle continues and theories of action are implemented, monitored, and revised.

A unique feature at Elmwood that helps support our culture of collaboration is our four School Leadership Teams: Research and Development (focused on student engagement), 21st Century Learning, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), and Behavior. These vertical teams (K-6, specials, administrators, coaches) have created an integrated, three-year action plan using the Plan-Do-Study-Act framework. A key element to each team is to learn and then share with staff. For example, our 21st Century Leadership Team used BrightBytes data to determine needs of students and hosted an "Appy Hour" to discover technology resources for students. To further support learning and professional development, the School District of New Berlin sponsored a three-day conference focused on PLCs. Ten Elmwood educators and administrators attended the PLC at Work Institute to build teacher capacities, improve student achievement, and further refine our instructional practices. Teachers reported considerable satisfaction with the training and the collaborative nature of PLC work, which in turn has led to a positive outcome in our recent Student Engagement Survey wherein 95% of kindergarten through second graders feel that what they are learning is important.

Elmwood's PLP also takes into account that we have both veteran and novice educators on our staff and differentiates based on professional development needs accordingly. Our district built in three flexible learning days - 12 hours of professional learning aligned to individual educator's professional goals and

Elmwood's School Action Plan. Educators are engaged in six-week cycles based on a student-centered coaching model - student data informs the educator and coach, observations, and real-time feedback. Lastly, new teachers to Elmwood are supported through our mentor-mentee two-year program based on Danielson's Framework, with the primary focus on instructional practices and technology integration. Teachers coming out of the mentoring program have reported greater confidence in receiving feedback and have sought additional suggestions to improve their practice from administrators and other colleagues.

#### **4. School Leadership:**

At Elmwood Elementary, we "roar towards excellence" by modeling another of our five beliefs: "Every child is my child." Every member of Team Elmwood understands that his or her responsibility is to every child at our school, not just those that are in their classrooms. Kouzes and Posner, education researchers, have inspired our leadership practices by stating, "Leadership is everyone's business. Leadership is not about a position or a place. It's an attitude and a sense of responsibility for making a difference." This quote, posted on our Elmwood staff homepage, embodies our belief that everyone can be a leader. Our fifth graders partner with our second graders to focus on reading skills; this sense of responsibility is directly related to leadership. With our committed belief in leadership, administrators, in partnership with students, families, and educators, have transformed Elmwood into a learning organization focused on increasing students' performance - academically, socially, and emotionally.

The principal and associate principal strive to lead by example and by growing leaders within Elmwood. Both administrators attended Lean Leadership Skills training and learned about a new strategy called value-streaming, a process to analyze our current plans and streamline information management. As a result of this training, they recognized a gap between the four school leadership team action plans. To address this gap, they led several professional learning sessions with the entire staff on value-streaming to improve the efficiency of working towards our vision of preparing our Elmwood students for their future. Being lead learners is one aspect that we stress in our school leadership model, while developing additional leaders is just as important.

The Elmwood administrators believe that leadership is the intentional act of respecting the past, honoring the now, and envisioning the future with your followers to meet a common goal, while simultaneously growing additional leaders to carry a shared vision. Elmwood has four School Leadership Teams (SLT) centered around our school goals: PLCs, Research and Development, Behavior, and 21st Century Learning. Multiple educators applied to become a SLT Chair for the teams. As part of the Leadership Chair commitment, Chairs would attend quarterly leadership development sessions, to identify behavioral and academic supports to enhance student learning outcomes. Based on the distributive leadership model, we are more responsive to student needs in a timely manner. Prior to one of our sessions, Chairs used StrengthsFinders 2.0 to discover their strengths, which in turn is leveraged in their SLT leadership efforts to advance school improvement efforts.

In addition to the above efforts, our leadership in the district Achievement-based Grading initiative has yielded a positive outcome: 94% of our third through sixth graders agree that hard work is linked to success in classroom as reported through our Student Engagement Survey. Furthermore, Elmwood educators have taken the initiative to serve on district committees such as, Wellness, Green Team, and Social Studies Alignment. In all of our work, our focus is laser sharp on student outcomes!

## **Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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Our first essential belief, “ALL kids can learn,” is one we live out each and every day at Elmwood Elementary. Students, families, and staff recognize full inclusion as the most influential practice. There are three major components of our full inclusion model that contribute to our students’ growth and achievement: teacher collaboration, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and our culture of acceptance and ownership.

Full inclusion at Elmwood is a foundational practice that allows for all students to access learning that meets their instructional needs. To the greatest extent possible, all students participate within classrooms where regular education and special education staff work hand-in-hand to meet the needs of all learners. These K-6 educators proactively plan multi-level entry points for all learners. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) allows us to develop and deliver instruction that all students can access with appropriate supports or accommodations, including front loading, digital supports, and differentiated materials. On a weekly basis, our grade level teams, which include special education teachers and regular education teachers, utilize the UDL template to determine essential understandings and proficiencies based upon our standards. In addition to the grade level team meetings, special education teachers meet with their co-teachers to extensively plan upcoming lessons while considering multiple modalities and potential barriers, whether academic, social, or emotional.

Students, families, and staff are proud of our culture of acceptance and ownership at Elmwood due to our full inclusion model. Administrators and coaches participate in grade level meetings to guide, model, and give examples of what it truly means to be accountable for every student. Students are encouraged to take an active role in their learning. For example, students identified as needing practice with life skills, run our Friday Snack Cart, selling snacks to staff, while working on manners, money skills, and organization. Each Elmwood student is celebrated for their unique skills and talents, while recognizing new skills and interests emerge throughout one’s life. Our culture of acceptance allows for risk-taking, growth, and self-discovery; all critical dispositions that prepare our students for success in college, career, and other future opportunities.

Guests to Elmwood witness a community dedicated to the dignity of students learning at all levels and aptitudes. For example, our Talented and Gifted students collaborate with staff and parents to write and monitor individual growth goals related to their identified area; our TAG students have self-reported that they enjoy sharing their strengths and making goals for themselves because they feel ownership and hold themselves to higher standards. Additionally, collaboratively embedded digital learning practices allow students to provide feedback to one another in a respectful, learning-focused manner. Through our Brightbytes survey, 97% of our students reported that they are taught how to act respectfully online (Wisconsin average was 74%) and more importantly, 88% of our Elmwood students shared they are asked to collaborate online with classmates (Wisconsin average was 57%). Ultimately, our belief about full inclusion at Elmwood is not just about accommodations or supports, it is more about attitudes and dispositions, which is foundational for our students’ success, both in and out of the classroom.