

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Dr. Patrick James Phalen III

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

Official School Name Mountain Bay Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 8602 Schofield Avenue

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

City Weston State WI Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 54476-4655

County Marathon County

Telephone (715) 355-0302 Fax (715) 355-0307

Web site/URL http://www.dce.k12.wi.us/Domain/1 E-mail pphalen@dce.k12.wi.us
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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. Kristine Gilmore E-mail kgilmore@dce.k12.wi.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name D C Everest Area School District Tel. (715) 359-4221

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. Jason Jablonski
(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):
- 6 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 9 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	50	27	77
1	33	33	66
2	29	41	70
3	39	34	73
4	54	42	96
5	46	34	80
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	251	211	462

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 13 % Asian
 - 2 % Black or African American
 - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 78 % White
 - 3 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2015 – 2016 school year: 10%

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	22
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	22
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	44
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	439
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.100
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	10

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 12 %
57 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 36 %
Total number students who qualify: 165

8. Students receiving special education services: 12 %
53 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.

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

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 11
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	20
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	16
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	18
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 23:1
12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	95%	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
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.
We pledge to foster a love of learning in a safe, innovative, cooperative climate which empowers students to be productive, caring, creative, and responsible individuals.
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

Located in Weston, Mountain Bay Elementary is in the heart of Northcentral Wisconsin. The region has evolved from an economy reliant on dairy, lumber and paper-making, to one that showcases advanced manufacturing, technology, insurance, tourism and health care. The demographics of the community have become more diverse. After the fall of Saigon, Hmong refugees immigrated to the region with the assistance of church organizations. In 2000, 4.88% of Weston's population was of Asian heritage; that rose to 8.7% by 2010 and continues to grow. The percentage of Hispanic or Latino residents has risen from .7% (2000) to 2.0% (2010). Today, 23% of our students are non-white; 15% of students are Asian.

The population of Weston grew 23.1% from 2000 – 2010. Because of the increased population, the D.C. Everest (DCE) Area School District established Mountain Bay in Fall 2006. It is one of three Title I elementary schools in the District. Mountain Bay receives exceptional support from parents, community members, businesses and organizations. Organizations like the BA Esther Greenheck Foundation and the DCE Area Education Foundation provide grants for innovative educational opportunities that allow us to embrace the latest technologies and educational trends. We are developing Flexible Learning Spaces that will allow students to collaborate and choose a learning space best suited to them; and have hosted nationally recognized artists to demonstrate the value of art/design in a STEAM curriculum. These efforts support our integration of career and technical education (CTE) skills across the curriculum.

As a Love and Logic school, we believe community and strong relationships provide students with a trusted support network and impart the value of good citizenship. One of our teachers is a Love and Logic certified trainer. Through his guidance, we have developed a common staff language and mentality that helps us provide consistent direction and instill students with respectful, responsible and productive character. Our staff believes they are responsible for every student in the building. We frame student “mistakes” as learning opportunities, help students take ownership of problems and use their problem-solving skills to rectify the situation.

Students learn to be respectful, responsible, productive and safe. As part of our STAR program, whenever a student models one of our four core values, they receive a “STAR card”. When a student receives a STAR card, they deliver one copy to the office, one to their teacher and keep one copy for themselves. Every time the office collects 20 tickets, our mascot (Forest the Evergreen Tree) receives another branch. When Forest becomes a full tree, the entire school celebrates with a special event.

We embrace our diversity and host events celebrating — and promoting understanding of — that diversity. The District hosts a Hmong New Year event, and throughout the week students are immersed in Hmong culture and history; leaders from the Hmong community visit with students to share their stories. At the Hmong New Year, each family was provided with a free book to encourage families to read with their children. Hmong community gardens are important to the Hmong culture — all family members take care of the gardens. To promote early literacy, the district established free lending libraries in the gardens to provide children with reading materials to share with their families.

Literacy for Hmong families can be challenging because the Hmong language is an oral language; a written Hmong language was not developed until their arrival in the U.S. Within a family, older generations may not be able to read English or Hmong. In partnership with Discovery Education, the District launched the One-to-One initiative that provides every K-12 student with an iPad. iPads have played a critical role in ELL literacy — digital books and textbooks provide Hmong and Hispanic students with a variety of word study, comprehension and spelling tools; oral tools and multi-lingual digital dictionaries that speak aloud have been particularly helpful for ELL families. Our Child Find screening program for children ages 2 years, 9 months – 5 years and off-site pre-K programs have helped improve kindergarten readiness for ELL families.

Each grade-level has a Professional Learning Community (PLC) consisting of teachers and math/reading recovery/literacy interventionists who discuss students and provide services specific to the individual. We host daily intervention/enrichment (IE) time; students either work with teachers or interventionists on areas of need or pursue deeper-level enrichment study. All students are screened to determine if they would

benefit from advanced placement or are in need of academic and behavioral supports and intervention. We also utilize Standards-Based Grading to more accurately measure and communicate a student's learning, growth and academic achievement.

To prevent the “summer slide,” families are encouraged to utilize educational tools on the iPads to help students retain critical reading, literacy and math skills during the summer. Mountain Bay also hosts a DCE Summer Program — offering courses ranging from musical performances, garden crafts, photography and sports to poetry, 3D art, Minecraft coding, LEGO robotics, STEM camp, sustainability, LEGO physics and Rube Goldberg machines.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Mountain Bay Elementary refers to Common Core State Standards when evaluating and determining curricular decisions. We also subscribe to the “Redefining Ready” model and integrate hands-on, personalized learning with the development of social and emotional skills that help students develop into engaged, respectful and responsible members of society. Career and Technical Education — core academic programs that prepare students for a range of career and education opportunities — are integrated across our curriculum and culture to provide students with STEAM employability and job-specific skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, perseverance, collaboration, technological awareness, engineering, design, coding and creativity. Throughout the process, students are aware of their learning targets and understand the expectations that are set for them.

All literacy content areas — reading, writing and word study — utilize a workshop approach that begins with a mini-lesson and explicit whole-group instruction. Instructors assess students on a daily basis and differentiate instruction as needed. Students progress from whole-group instruction to guided practice, independent practice (at individual level) and share time. Students receive specific teacher feedback to support their individually paced learning and growth via student-teacher conferences during IE time.

The District takes pride in using leading, data-based tools to advance student education. A 4K-grade 2 literacy committee was established during the 2014-15 school year consisting of teachers, the elementary instructional coach, elementary literacy coach, elementary principals and Director of Elementary Education. The Committee evaluated and recommended a new word-study resource to support the development of student knowledge and foundational literacy skills. The new tool was implemented in the 2015-16 school year with coaching provided for students and teachers. A grade 3 – 5 writing committee was formed in 2015-16 to evaluate and recommend a new writing resource to support writing skills and knowledge, and was implemented in 2016-17. These word-study, literacy and writing tools have proven to be highly effective.

Guided by the Common Core Standards, student learning in mathematics is differentiated through a workshop format that includes inquiry-based collaboration, focused mini-lessons, gradual release, differentiated practice and a writing component. This model allows teachers to more effectively meet the specific needs of individual students. Core instructional time is supplemented and further differentiated via IE time — incorporating long-term projects and complementary technology. To hone foundational skills, instructional emphasis is placed on increased rigor, effective questioning, math discourse, making connections and the use of multiple representations to support learning (i.e., manipulatives, drawing, algorithms). Learning activities involve the use of concrete representations (math rack, unifix cubes, 10-frames, counters) and whole body movement to reinforce foundational concepts. Targeted intervention is provided by a trained interventionist and focuses on those strategies that allow students to construct their understanding as they work in the zone of proximal development.

In science, teachers and students have transitioned into the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) for grades K-5. This has been a concerted district effort starting with the adoption of the new standards by our school board several years ago. The NGSS-aligned curriculum consists of essential questions to guide inquiry, student-friendly “I-can” learning targets and prioritized vocabulary. This marks the second year we have used Discovery Education Science Techbook as one of two components of science instruction and learning. Our Science Techbook is an interactive, multimedia text that engages students through literacy and the use of iPads. The structure of Science Techbook is centered around the “5E Science Instructional Model” (Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, Evaluate). The second component of science instruction and learning is teacher-developed hands-on investigations that support the district’s learning targets.

Our science curriculum is further enhanced by a strong K-5 Environmental Education (EE) program that emphasizes sustainability, conservation and individual responsibility for the health of our planet. Highlights include visits and ecology lessons at Rib Mountain State Park, hands-on maple syrup production at our

school forest as part of the fourth grade Wisconsin History unit, and a three-day two-night 5th grade winter program at our school forest.

In social studies, teachers use an active student-centered approach to learning while being mindful of the standards-based social studies curriculum. Our mission is to empower children by helping them understand and appreciate the diversity of the world, build relationships with others, appreciate the impact of the past and present, and develop productive decision making skills. Students learn how to be engaged citizens via field trips, real-world presentations from community leaders and by exploring the world through the use of technology. Teachers incorporate a number of resources into their instruction, including Teacher's Curriculum Institute Techbook, Discovery Education Digital Resources, PLC developed units and authentic literature. With the direction of teachers, students can choose personalized learning paths from a variety of digital tools on their iPad thus providing opportunities for the development of self-directed learning skills. One of our most successful initiatives is the integration of reading and social studies instruction. This model has led to rich student-led conversations around a variety of topics pertaining to social studies.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

As part of our efforts to develop students who are prepared for 21st century careers — which are highly dependent on STEAM skills — and the responsibilities of 21st century citizenship, Mountain Bay makes a concerted effort to integrate art, music, physical education and technology across the curriculum.

Students attend two 30-minute music classes each week and explore the technical and creative aspects of music. They explore the subtext of music — math — and they discover how history and culture define the context of the musical genres. Each year the students showcase what they've learned in grade-specific winter programs, the kindergarten graduation ceremony, fifth grade D.A.R.E. graduation and fourth and fifth grade talent show. Students also honor area Veterans with a Memorial Day musical ceremony that is routinely covered by local TV and newspaper outlets. Select students also perform with Opera for the Young and the Wausau Area Children's Choir.

Students receive one hour of art class each week. Art is integrated with the core curriculum via cross-curriculum projects. For example, kindergarteners craft artistic projects that incorporate letters, plants and seasons and fifth graders create artistic projects that incorporate what they've learned about space, early America and the environment. Student artwork is featured in a variety of venues including Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, Mountain Bay Elementary, the DCE Administrative offices, the DCE Education Foundation IMAGINE event and on digital and social media platforms. Grants have provided students the opportunity to work with nationally recognized artists, muralists, glass and portrait artists to learn about the value of art and its applicability to the core curriculum. We received a grant from the DCE Area Education Foundation and hosted a weeklong Artist-in-Residence session with David Hummer, providing every student the opportunity to work one-on-one with this nationally recognized artist. The sessions emphasized the applicability of art/design and creativity in a STEAM curriculum.

The DC Everest Community based Four Year Old Kindergarten (4K) Program is dedicated to providing high quality, developmentally appropriate learning experiences to all four year old children. In partnership with ten area childcare centers, the DC Everest 4K Program strives to prepare all students with a strong foundation for life-long learning and success. The collaboration with our 4K Partners values working together to preserve early childhood education, which together creates a stronger connection between home, school and community. In addition to our ten community partners, we offer an ELL classroom for children whose home language is Hmong and where the children are learning to speak English. We are very proud of the support we are able to provide these children as they move into a world of education that can be very new to them.

As a Fuel Up to Play 60 school, physical activity and nutrition play a critical role in our curriculum. We promote the benefits of being active for a minimum of 60 minutes a day and teachers routinely provide "active brain breaks" in the classroom. We also promote healthy food choices as a means to fuel bodies and brains. Students receive two ½-hour periods of gym each week with a focus on the benefits of lifelong participation in physical activities, the importance of sportsmanship and the benefits of health and wellness.

We participate in Jump Rope for Heart each year, sponsor an annual Track and Field Day and host a monthly Walk to School event — even in January and February. Former Green Bay Packer Jared Abbrederis visited Mountain Bay to encourage students to remain active and make healthy choices while engaging in some outdoor fun with the students.

As part of our District-wide One-to-One initiative, every student possesses an iPad that is used to differentiate instruction, provide access to tens of thousands of digital texts, create projects and presentations, conduct research and enhance creativity. Technology has played an influential role in providing students with voice and choice — providing them with a variety of tools that allow them to demonstrate what they've learned in a format that is best suited to their needs. Every classroom has a Smartboard that provides unlimited digital resources and is used for large and small group instruction and to promote interactivity and engagement. In addition, each classroom is equipped with a Lightspeed sound unit that ensures students can adequately hear throughout the flexible learning spaces.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

We recognize each student has different backgrounds and experiences that influence their academic preparedness, and have adopted personalized learning and teaching strategies that recognize the individual needs, abilities, learning styles and modes of expression. To optimize core instruction, we continuously research effective curricula that align with our CCSS, evaluate existent instructional methods and provide teachers with exemplary instructional resources. Prior to the start of school, teams of teachers and interventionists participate in a two-day data retreat. We review data from the previous year and draft goals to improve services that meet the needs of all students. During the school year, grade-specific PLCs, along with interventionists, an ELL teacher and special education teachers, meet each week to review data and discuss which method of instruction best suits each child and identify intervention and higher-level opportunities for each individual based on their individual learning needs.

We use Benchmark for reading as it allows for explicit modeling, guided and applied instruction for seamless, spiraling, whole- to small-group instruction. Lucy Calkin's writing program has strengthened students' writing skills and interest in writing and as a result students generate a greater volume of higher quality writing. EnVision Math provides hands-on learning that generates a deeper understanding of the subject. Teachers use Number Talks to begin a lesson, inspiring students to craft creative solutions to real-world math problems.

We utilize the workshop approach in the classroom and informal, formal, formative and summative assessments to determine student classroom groupings. Groups vary from one-on-one to large collaborative groups. Systematic explicit instruction engages students as active participants and builds on previous learning. Gradual release allows students to choose different skills and strategies, take responsibility for their learning and develop independence. Each day, teachers gather students for a mini-lesson and then assess each student's level of understanding and engagement. Those who demonstrate command of the subject are released to work independently on another related task. The group lesson continues with more focused instruction and another assessment occurs. When other students have grasped the concept, they are released and the instructor extends the group lesson with more guidance. Instructional methods include tiered instructional process, differentiated instruction, problem-based learning, explicit instruction and technology-based support.

To ensure all students are provided with relevant, interesting and challenging educational opportunities, we utilize universal screening tools to help all students reach their maximum potential. Multiple data points from STAR, PALS, CogAT, running records, unit assessments, Wisconsin Forward Exam, on-demand writing, Access testing, phonological awareness, literacy screening, teacher rating scales and home rating scales are used to target specific instruction and support for each student. This data guides IEP, ELL, and academic or behavioral support and intervention.

Data is used to identify elementary students who would benefit from placement in the Gifted and Talented Magnet Program or full-grade advancement. Teachers provide differentiated instruction for high achieving students via project-based work that allows students to explore topics in greater depth. Every teacher has

been trained in Depth of Knowledge questioning that challenges students to use higher-level reasoning, research and problem-solving skills.

Daily IE time supplements core instruction so students can receive intensive intervention, a support session or enrichment opportunities for high achievers. Recently, fourth grade students hosted a Genius Hour showcasing their individually chosen enrichment projects.

Our goal is to have 95% of students reading at or above grade level by third grade. Our K-2 literacy Reading Recovery interventionist focuses on developing critical foundational skills and begins with diagnostic assessments to discover root causes. A number of research-based, District-approved literacy interventions are utilized based on individual need. Student progress is monitored and discussed in weekly PLC meetings to determine the student's needs and the effectiveness of the intervention. Together, they make decisions on the best interventions and placements for each child. Teachers also have received intervention training for students in need of further development of foundational skills. If a student does not progress, an additional layer of support is added.

Our success in closing the gap is due in large part to our proactive stance regarding intervention. The Everest System of Supports (ESS) uses the tiered RtI system to identify students in need of more intensive or specialized instruction. The RtI framework follows District guidelines and the state's multi-tiered system of support. In instances where there is an achievement gap of 10 or more percentage points between subgroups of students, we utilize a math interventionist, literacy interventionists and ELL teachers. Intervention is based on a student's progress and intervention intensifies along the RtI tiers as needed. For math, we use Foundations in Early Numeracy Part 1 and Part 2, Guided Math Plus, Numbers and Operations in Base Ten and Guided Math. For literacy, we utilize Guided Reading Plus, Leveled Literacy Instruction, Primary Literacy Instruction, Retrospective Miscue Analysis, Interactive Writing, Writing Aloud and Writing Process Group.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Parents tell us their children hate to miss a day of school and during our last-day-of-school assembly students share how disappointed they are that the school year has ended. This is because we are a family at Mountain Bay — we take care of each other’s academic, emotional, social and health needs. We make certain every student, staff member and teacher knows they have a voice and are an important member of our school and community. We celebrate academic, character and citizenship accomplishments with extended recesses, an all-school movie or a popcorn snack. We also celebrate with special Read Across America Week, Red Ribbon Week, Rodeo Week and Play 60 events.

We place an emphasis on culture — respect, responsibility and productivity — and relationships. Staff members develop strong bonds with each child getting to know who they are and what motivates them — ensuring students feel safe and respected. We treat every choice (or mistake) a student makes as an opportunity for learning and growth and help them assume responsibility for those choices/mistakes. We develop a sense of consistency by training all staff members to use the Love and Logic language so that students know what to expect when interacting with an adult.

We nurture the whole child by supplementing needs that may not be met at home. We provide a breakfast program for all students, on-site vision, dental and hearing screenings and clothing and in-school snacks for those in need. Through Blessings-in-a-Backpack, we send disadvantaged students home with snacks and easy-to-make meals for the weekend. To assist working parents, we provide morning and afterschool care for students. These efforts ensure students are well fed, healthy and rested, which improves students’ abilities to focus and participate in the classroom.

Student leaders initiate student-led projects that strengthen our sense of family and community and promote health, wellness, activity and citizenship. The student council established an on-site apple orchard outdoor classroom to study sustainability, agriculture, pollination, nutrition and conservation. They also started an advanced reader’s library. Our Play 60 club sponsors a monthly walk-to-school event, hosts Brain Breaks and shares uncommon fruits and vegetables during lunchtime. Peer mediators volunteer for mediator training to develop listening, fairness and empathy skills that help them assist students who are struggling socially. We also host a peer group to assist disabled students.

We create an environment where all staff members are welcome to share their ideas and thoughts. In addition to weekly PLC meetings, we host two staff meetings a month dedicated to “glows and grows.” The meetings begin with a recognition ceremony and staff share personal or professional accomplishments, or ask members to brainstorm ideas to help them address a challenge. At a recent meeting, professional staff presented special cards to each support staff member with personalized messages of appreciation. Support staff expressed deep gratitude and thankfulness. This simple gesture made them realize they are an important part of our Mountain Bay learning community.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

At Mountain Bay, we emphasize the importance of good citizenship and civic engagement. Student leaders serve as community and school ambassadors via a variety of student organizations and clubs, such as Student Council and Play 60. Recently, we raised funds to help the Everest Metro Police Department purchase a police dog. We also contribute within the community by raking leaves for those who need assistance, raising money for the Red Cross, organizing food drives, writing letters for Valentines for Veterans and the Honor Flight programs. Every year, we host a special Memorial Day ceremony to honor Veterans and invite Veterans from across the community to attend.

To make families and community members feel like a welcome part of our Mountain Bay community, we host events showcasing student projects, art, musical talents, STEAM skills and clubs. Our Color Run, Fall Festival, School Rodeo, Play 60 events, Wax Museum, Track and Field Day, and Science Fair are popular

events for family and community members that generate pride and emphasize the value of education.

We host a variety of events designed to engage families in their student's academic, social, athletic and extracurricular interests. Regular literacy and math family events provide families the opportunity to read and solve math problems together. Families attend class plays, cheer spelling bee contestants and attend author parties. Our Donuts with Dad, Muffins with Mom and Great Start with Grandparents mornings allow students and family members to enjoy a nice meal, read the free book and take part in a STEAM activity. To more actively engage our Southeast Asian population, we host Hmong Family nights twice a year where families enjoy a dinner, listen to a guest speaker, complete a reading activity and end the evening with games.

Our District has a robust communications program that utilizes print, digital and social media platforms. All of the District websites were redesigned at the beginning of this school year. Each school utilizes the same template for consistency's sake, but can customize its website with school colors, logos, photos, videos and content. The website provides parents the latest news, success stories, events and opportunities. We also utilize Twitter and Facebook to provide parents with a behind-the-scenes look at classrooms, share achievements and awards, and publicize events. Our social media fan base has grown tremendously and we've found that Facebook has become one of our primary communication channels with parents, extended family members and the community. Our District communications person drafts articles for the local TV, radio and newspaper outlets and has broadened public awareness. We also utilize phone calls, email, classroom newsletters, notebooks and digital notes to communicate with parents and family members. By utilizing a variety of communication platforms we are able to reach parents, family and community members in a manner best suited to them — be it a website, social media site, email, personal note or phone call. This has improved our engagement with families and the community — allowing us to share information about new initiatives, how those initiatives will affect them and why it matters. By sharing accomplishments, challenges and information, we have fostered communication that is critical to students' success.

3. Professional Development:

The DCE District invests in teachers, paraprofessionals and administration by basing compensation on individual professional development (IPD). IPD courses are offered throughout the year — including summer, evenings and weekends — at the DCE Professional Development center. Last year, 2,413 IPD opportunities were offered and DCE teachers completed 25,695 IPD hours.

Each person's IPD plan is developed around his/her specific needs with the assistance of a supervisor. IPD offerings are determined based on staff input, committee and team leadership meetings and teacher feedback. All suggestions are thoroughly researched and consultations with subject matter experts determine training session best practices. Teachers may serve as IPD instructors upon the approval of the curriculum team and are rewarded double credit for those hours.

IPD opportunities vary from deep dives into new instructional models, literacy and math instruction, to autism, technology, exercise and child development. Research indicates Wisconsin is battling high rates of youth suicide, depression and anxiety and Wisconsin schools lack mental health support. To address these concerns, we provide IPD sessions that address special learning needs and traumatic childhood experiences. Earlier this year, Dr. Judy Romano spoke with staff about Adverse Childhood Experiences to build awareness and best practices concerning the effects of traumatic experiences on children. We partnered with United Way's Youth Coalition of Marathon County for a series of mental health IPD sessions and DCE's Superintendent took part in a "Kids in Crisis Town Hall: Wausau" to discuss youth mental health.

Our math coach is training to become a U.S. Math Recovery Intervention Specialist to assist us in improving our early math intervention efforts. This intensive research-based intervention uses continual assessment in a small group and 1:1 setting to specifically identify deficits in the student's developmental progression. Interventions are tailored to meet the individual needs of each student based on their early numeracy understanding. Once she completes this training, she will train our teachers in the methodology.

To ensure our teachers have a deeper understanding of literacy instruction that will carry over to their core instruction teaching, all teachers are taking Primary Literacy Intervention training. We also host book groups that allow staff to read and discuss texts concerning math instruction, positive mindset, attitude and understanding and accepting change.

Four staff members take part in the DCE Digital Leadership Consortium (DLC) in partnership with Discovery Education. The Consortium maximizes teachers' impact on student learning, helps teachers integrate education technology and digital media into instruction and design successful instruction strategies. The Consortium members serve as leaders in technology integration and train other teachers within our building and across the district. As a result of these training sessions, teachers have successfully integrated technology into the classroom, students are more engaged, they are collaborating within and outside the classroom via their iPads, they are able to use tools that help them advance at their own pace, they have more voice and choice in how they demonstrate learning and have been able to dig deeper into subject matter.

4. School Leadership:

We do have established staff and student leaders in our school who assume the lead on projects that suit their interests and subject matter expertise. Our three instructional team leaders head curricular initiatives in math and literacy, while others assume primary responsibility for RTI and PBIS systems. Student leaders serve as ambassadors for our community, fostering projects that bring together students, staff, families and the community. Our Principal is always visible, constantly building and maintaining relationships with students and staff while modeling respect, honesty, caring and transparency. But it is not just the responsibility of our leaders to ensure that every staff member, teacher, administrator, student, family and community member involved with Mountain Bay feels safe, respected and valuable. In fact, every one of the individuals at Mountain Bay is held to high standards and expected to serve as a role model of excellence, trust and respect.

We do this by creating a strong internal community composed of individuals — any one of whom can be a leader, share an idea, offer an opinion and provide support. Every staff member — principal, custodian, teacher, teacher's aide, cafeteria worker, administrator — is willing to get involved whether it's helping with bus duty, preparing for the Color Run or wiping down tables. And everyone has the opportunity to be a leader. We encourage people to be creative, take risks, share new ideas and have the courage to make mistakes — because we thrive on “big ideas” and the lessons we learn and the growth we experience from making mistakes. We research our big ideas, ask ourselves “why” we should or shouldn't do this and then work collaboratively to ensure collective ownership and buy-in on our decisions.

We believe that “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts” — recognizing the strength of our individuals and the even greater power of our combined talents as a whole. We build upon a shared vision, utilize data-based strategies to back that vision and work relentlessly to improve what we do and how we do it.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

We believe that our collaborative environment and systems most significantly impact our students' academic and social emotional gains, which in turn allows us to close achievement gaps. Our staff has a diverse range of experience and knowledge. Collectively, we are able to use our diverse knowledge and collaborate around the main issues of instruction, learning and student growth.

Our collaborative system is multi-layered within our building and throughout the district. At the building level, we have an Instructional Team Leader (ITL) group comprised of representatives from different grade levels, building interventionists and guidance counselors who represent, and serve as spokespeople, for all staff. This group participates in the August data retreat where we compile and study data from the previous year and create goals and academic focuses for the upcoming school year based on areas of greatest need. ITL meets twice a month during the academic year to share ideas and concerns such as building behavioral concerns, event operations and ways to improve or streamline building procedures. This collaborative team serves as the voice of our school and is crucial to decision making.

Collaborative weekly grade level team meetings include classroom teacher, the literacy and math interventionists and a special education teacher. During these meetings, staff discuss individual student needs, core curriculum planning and instructional ideas, unit assessments are reviewed and results analyzed, and the overall climate of the grade level is considered and adjusted accordingly. These grade level meetings drive classroom instruction, help determine student groupings for focused and intentional instruction, and help us identify students in need of specific intervention.

Collaboration is also addressed vertically in our building through our newly established vertical team meetings. These meetings take place twice a year — fall and spring. Kindergarten and grade one staff meet to discuss the needs of all students who score below proficient on our district wide screener. The homeroom teacher discusses which classroom strategies have been used for these students and interventionists note interventions they utilized for those individual students. First and second grade teachers meet and go through the same process, then second and third grade teachers, and so on. This process allows our teachers to clearly communicate the instructional needs of students who fall below the proficient level and set up a seamless continuum of instruction and intervention for individual students from one grade to the next.

At the district level, staff is encouraged to participate in district wide committees such as standards based grading, various curricular teams, the district culture committee and so on. These opportunities set the tone for a collaborative environment throughout our district, giving voice to all while ensuring consistency of culture.

While it is difficult to single out a specific practice as being the one practice that makes a difference for us, we believe our collaboration has been the most influential aspect of our building's success. This practice gives all stakeholders a voice in what we are doing each and every day as well as ownership in enacting it.