

**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) [X] Title I    [ ] Charter    [ ] Magnet    [ ] Choice

Name of Principal Ms. Mary Jo Tye

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

Official School Name Oriole Lane Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 12850 N. Oriole Lane

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

City Mequon                      State WI                      Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 53097-2322

County Ozaukee

Telephone (262) 238-4220

Fax (262) 238-4250

Web site/URL

<http://www.mtsd.k12.wi.us/oriolelan>

e/

E-mail [mtye@mtsd.k12.wi.us](mailto:mtye@mtsd.k12.wi.us)

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\*Mr. Matthew Joynt

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

E-mail [mjoynt@mtsd.k12.wi.us](mailto:mjoynt@mtsd.k12.wi.us)

District Name Mequon-Thiensville School District    Tel. (262) 238-8500

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 Ms. Kathryn Houpt

(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):
- 3 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 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	20	21	41
K	32	34	66
1	35	32	67
2	36	33	69
3	23	42	65
4	48	30	78
5	34	39	73
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
<b>Total Students</b>	228	231	459

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 11 % Asian
  - 3 % Black or African American
  - 5 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 76 % White
  - 5 % 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: 4%

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	8
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	10
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	18
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	466
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.039
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	4

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

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):  
Russian, Urdu, Hmong, Chinese, Polish, Vietnamese, Spanish and Arabic

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 10 %  
Total number students who qualify: 44
8. Students receiving special education services: 12 %  
54 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>12</u> Autism               | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>1</u> Deafness              | <u>8</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness        | <u>2</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>3</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>26</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment    | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>0</u> Mental Retardation    | <u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities | <u>1</u> Developmentally Delayed               |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 23
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	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.	11
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	5
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 24:1
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%	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.

<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   
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.

The mission of the Oriole Lane Elementary School community is to inspire students to engage in their intellectual, social, and emotional growth, now and in the future.

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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In 2012, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) identified Oriole Lane Elementary School in the Mequon-Thiensville School District (MTSD) as a Title I ‘Focus School’ for its disproportionate gaps in achievement among student subgroups. We could hardly believe it.

The designation was surprising for our school leaders and staff because we all thought we were doing well. Oriole Lane Elementary School is one of three elementary schools in MTSD, a north shore suburb of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The district serves approximately 3,500 students and their families in a community that embraces world-class learning opportunities and rich athletic, arts and co-curricular offerings. The majority of Oriole Lane students eventually matriculate to Homestead High School, where college preparatory classes are strongly emphasized; approximately 90 percent of Homestead graduates are college bound. Overall, our students were achieving at high rates, as was the expectation for a school in our high-achieving district.

However, we were not adequately addressing the learning needs of all students—particularly the needs of students who were coming to us from situations of poverty. That was a profound and difficult realization, and one that has led to a transformative journey.

The first step in our transformation was to develop a plan for improvement informed by research and best practices. Our building leadership team began this work with intent and passion. We began by identifying our school's greatest areas of need. Next, we collaboratively identified the research-based strategies that would have the most significant impact on our greatest areas of need. From there, we developed our school growth plan goals and action plan for improvement.

To meet every child’s academic and social-emotional needs to the fullest, all Oriole Lane educators began to use professional learning communities to collaboratively analyze student work, review data, develop measurable goals for individual students and create action plans for all students. We found that when the analysis of student work focuses on the same cohort of students over an extended period of time, these insightful conversations allow teachers to make discoveries on how students construct meaning of key instructional concepts, processes and practices. As a result of the insights gained through this systematic process, teachers inherently became more purposeful and intentional as they selected instructional goals designed to meet the specific needs of each learner. This has allowed us to harness the power of the collective intelligence that already existed in our school to solve problems and meet the needs of all students.

This work was nothing short of a shift in our school culture. Our school transformed its approach to teaching and learning. Each teacher owned every student in his/her classroom, with every grade level owning all of their students. Today, teachers use data to understand the specific needs of each child. With our school growth plan guiding our work, high-impact instructional strategies and practices are aligned, taught and assessed frequently to determine their effectiveness in meeting the diverse needs and interests of students. And, professional development is aligned and strategically planned to support our school growth plan.

What has been the end result for learners? Regardless of where our students come from, what they look like or what they come to Oriole Lane knowing or not knowing, they are achieving. This has been demonstrated on our most recent DPI School Report Card for the 2015-16 school year, in which Oriole Lane earned 99.6 of 100 maximum points in the category of ‘Closing Gaps.’

Not only have we found high levels of success in closing achievement gaps, but we have also found that our full student population benefits from this intentional focus. Our school’s overall student achievement continues to significantly exceed expectations according to DPI. In fact, on the most recent DPI report cards, Oriole Lane achieved the second-highest overall school score for a 4K-5 school in Wisconsin, with a score of 95.7.

In just five years, we were able to make changes that impacted all students—every child in the school.

We have met the goals we set out to achieve. However, we know that the journey we embarked upon is not over. Benjamin Franklin said, “Without continual growth and progress, such words as improvement, achievement and success have no meaning.” We embrace the call to continuous improvement because it is our moral imperative to do so. We will keep striving to meet each student’s individual needs to inspire that child to engage in his or her intellectual, social and emotional growth, both now and in the future.

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

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

A child's early school years are an important time for learning. It is in elementary school that we build the foundation for children's pathways to lifelong success. We believe successful learning occurs in an environment that is age appropriate, interactive, challenging and engaging. Our dedicated teachers have been trained to deliver high-quality, whole-group instruction, tailored, small-group instruction and one-on-one support. We ensure that all children's voices are heard and that they receive the support necessary to succeed. While students are exposed to all four core curriculum areas, the emphasis at Oriole Lane Elementary School is on growing student skills in literacy and mathematics.

Our literacy programming is based on a Reader's and Writer's Workshop model driven by instructional standards, focused on strategies and guided by student data. We offer students tools for selecting and comprehending literature. Students learn to ask questions, make connections and explore different genres, authors and texts. They work at their own level and make progress by learning to work through direct instruction of skills in various formats, including whole-class instruction, small-group work and individual conferencing. Students engage in grade-level text through read aloud and content area work, and read a variety of texts at their independent reading level. In addition to our dedicated teachers, Oriole Lane provides a full-time literacy specialist to work with individuals and small groups of students and lead professional development for teachers. We ensure our students receive research-based, rigorous and differentiated instruction.

Challenging content and authentic problem solving that fosters perseverance and interest are hallmarks of our mathematics program. Instruction is designed to develop mathematical practices to build students' conceptual understanding and problem-solving skills. Students work both individually and collaboratively to become successful math thinkers. Oriole Lane employs a full-time math specialist to support our high-quality teachers and students. Teachers have been trained to provide multiple levels of support to ensure all students are challenged throughout our mathematics curriculum.

Our teachers use inquiry-based, active, hands-on investigation to engage students in authentic applications of science, with a strong emphasis on teaching students how to use the scientific method. Students engage in science investigations and experiments by first looking at all the evidence before making a statement of fact. By teaching the scientific method as a technique for students to develop conclusions, students learn how to answer a question in a logical manner. Science instruction is a key tool used to ensure students develop problem-solving skills that empower them to participate in rigorous science coursework in the secondary setting.

Preparing students to be responsible citizens of our nation, state and local community is the focus of social studies instruction at Oriole Lane. Across students' elementary school experiences, teachers use social studies instruction to grow understanding of the history, traditions, geography, economic and political contexts and values that influence society. Through a strong community partnership with Junior Achievement, students at every grade level engage in early lessons on entrepreneurship, financial literacy and work readiness. This enhances the school's social studies curriculum with authentic applications and experiential learning that enables students to put their new knowledge and skills into practice.

Oriole Lane also offers a half-day four-year-old kindergarten (4K) program. The instructional focus of the program includes structured time for teaching and learning through the use of hands-on, activity-based, small-group centers and concentrated efforts to equip students with school readiness skills to excel within the curricular K-12 framework. The 4K program includes outreach activities and programming for students and their families to build a positive culture for early childhood education.

Teachers in the 4K program facilitate learning activities to improve students' early literacy, numeracy and social-emotional skills. Using a workshop model, we meet the literacy needs of all students while fostering a love of reading and writing in a literacy-rich environment. Our approach to teaching numeracy provides an



in-depth focus on mathematical topics supported through rigorous classroom reasoning, extended time devoted to practice and reflection and high expectations for mastery. Students in the 4K program are introduced to art, music and physical education that support the core curriculum. Every 4K child's experience is also supported by dedicated instruction to foster social and emotional growth.

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

Oriole Lane features comprehensive programming in the areas of art, music and physical education. Opportunities in these curricular areas cultivate the whole child by allowing students to showcase their creative abilities, build their social-emotional intelligence and explore their passions.

A robust, comprehensive music program is an integral part of every child's education. All Oriole Lane students take a general music class that builds their skills in music through singing, instrument playing, movement and critical listening. In these classes, students are exposed to music from various historical and cultural traditions. Creativity and collaboration are encouraged as students learn to read and perform music.

Beyond the general music programming, students in upper elementary grades also have access to elective options in orchestra and band. Fourth- and fifth-grade orchestra students attend two large ensemble rehearsals before school and receive one 30-minute, small-group lesson during the school day each week. Band is offered to students beginning in fifth grade. It is in elementary performing arts programming that Oriole Lane students are taught their first sounds on an instrument and are shaped into young musicians.

Oriole Lane also provides all students with a rich visual arts program. Art class provides a means of developing fine motor skills, while nurturing and engaging the imagination. The school's art specialist uses a variety of media (e.g., drawing, painting, ceramics) to teach students self-expression, creativity and the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. In learning how to see things in the world around them, channeled through the artworks they create, children discover details and other useful information that become internalized in their intellectual and emotional growth. Students explore the components of art through a wide variety of methods, including hands-on art making, interactive presentations, discussions, written reflections, cross-curricular collaborations, integration with literature and critical thinking exercises. Through these activities, students discover how art influences society, develop an appreciation for art history and learn how to generate personal and meaningful connections with their own art-making. As students explore and develop these new skills, they are able to develop a strong sense of self, refine their technical abilities and expand their capacity to think critically and creatively about their world.

Physical education is a part of all students' curriculum at Oriole Lane. These classes provide each student the opportunity to participate in a comprehensive program consisting of skill development, team sports and physical fitness activities. The curriculum is designed to enhance the cognitive, motor, affective and fitness development of each student. Students receive instruction in rules and strategies associated with a variety of sports, and also have experiences that prompt them to question, analyze and communicate concepts. Through engagement in physical education classes, students develop lifelong habits that promote wellness and physical activity. The program promotes the spirit of cooperation, leadership, fair play and friendly competition.

Oriole Lane students also learn valuable skills and quality habits in their use of technology. Every classroom is equipped with a mounted projector, document camera and SMART board. The school is a Google Apps for Education school, and all students and teachers are able to communicate and collaborate through their Google Apps accounts. Oriole Lane employs a full-time research and digital learning specialist to support teacher growth and instructional planning. By engaging in meaningful digital learning opportunities, students learn developmentally appropriate online research and communication skills. By the end of fifth grade, they understand the importance of building a positive digital footprint and are on the path to becoming information-literate adults.

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

We strive to achieve our organizational goals while meeting the diverse and individual needs of all students. Through universally designed and standards-based instruction, each student is provided individual, in-class, differentiated support aligned to desired outcomes for future college and career success. Classroom teachers provide high-quality instruction by facilitating differentiated and individualized learning opportunities with the support of leveled materials and effective curriculum resources, along with additional instructional support.

Oriole Lane uses a tiered approach to instructional support for intervention and enrichment. To inform decisions regarding additional student support, all students are universally screened three times per year. Assessments are designed to measure critical academic skills shown to be strong indicators of student learning and curricular performance. Screening results provide a benchmark against which a student's skill level can be gauged relative to local and/or national criteria. Screening assessments provide one source of information on student achievement and are triangulated (taken in context) with other available data. Our students are screened in reading (PALS and Fountas & Pinnell for students in grades K-2 and NWEA MAP in grades 1-5) and mathematics (Counting and Cardinality in kindergarten and NWEA MAP in grades 1-5).

To identify students who are at risk or in need of intervention, the Oriole Lane Student Review Team (SRT) uses local comparative data for district student performance, with benchmarks established for each grade level to determine a cut score that engages the team in further research regarding a student's performance. Typically, this cut score represents those scoring at or below the 30th percentile. If a student is flagged below the 30th percentile, the SRT triangulates the data and determines needs for intervention or enrichment. Intervention and enrichment services are provided in all instructional settings (Universal or Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III).

Tier II services include standards-aligned instruction with supplemental, small-group instruction that may include specialized materials. Students receiving this additional support are still full participants in the core curriculum and classroom differentiation delivered to all students.

When students with significant needs for additional support are identified, individualized and measurable goals are created specific to the skills identified. The SRT determines intensive interventions to be delivered through Tier III services, which are delivered by content specialists. Student progress is continually monitored. The teacher-to-student intervention ratio is no more than 1:3 and interventions are typically delivered daily.

Regardless of the tiers of services Oriole Lane students receive, the progress of all students is monitored regularly. Teachers collaborate regularly and purposefully on grade-level teams to monitor student progress with support from the school's literacy and mathematics specialists, a research and digital learning specialist, the elementary gifted and talented coordinator, an English language learner teacher and the AVID district director. Through systematic progress monitoring, each student's progress is tracked and compared to that individual's or group's current and historical performance.

Through the progress-monitoring process, grade-level teams create plans to support every child's academic and social-emotional needs and determine opportunities to grow and improve outcomes. In this way, the student's progression of achievement is monitored and instructional techniques adjusted to meet his or her learning needs.

Oriole Lane provides tiered intervention and enrichment services resulting from grade-level team collaboration and progress monitoring during a block of time referred to as WIN (What I Need). This dedicated block of time lasts 30 minutes per day and is facilitated by specialists and content area teachers who use research-based literacy and mathematics programs and targeted interventions. Students are selected and grouped through a data-driven process identifying those who are below, at or above grade level. Our SRT meets to discuss each student to set goals, monitor progress and develop an individualized plan to achieve the instructional goals set forth in the plan. Students are flexibly grouped in reading or math according to their greatest area of need.

Staff members at Oriole Lane also recognize that to meet student needs, support cannot exist only while school is in session. In addition to the WIN block, the school provides summer support to students who need it. Students are selected for summer intervention based on various assessment instruments and teacher feedback. During summer intervention, students receive individual or small-group instruction based on their individual needs. This targeted instruction aims to engage students in reading, writing and/or math throughout the summer, helping to maintain and grow student learning.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### **1. School Climate/Culture:**

Every Oriole Lane student—regardless of what he or she looks like, who his or her parents are, what his or her temperament is or what he or she shows up knowing or not knowing—every student receives what he or she needs every day to have the skills and tools to pursue his or her ambitions and live a fulfilling life. At Oriole Lane, our commitment to this practice of equity is a foundational and pervasive component of our school culture. We work with passion to support each child according to his or her needs, both academically and in terms of social-emotional support.

To ensure a school climate where learning and growth are the focus, we have adopted Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS), a proactive, systematic approach to foster strategies for defining, teaching and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create a positive school environment. We introduce, model and reinforce positive social behavior, as well as clearly communicate behavioral expectations. This approach is critical in attaining consistent behaviors among all students, with the goal of maintaining an environment where each and every student feels safe, connected and supported.

Our school climate is also one of celebration. We acknowledge and reward students' positive behaviors to motivate them to continue making good choices. In addition, we celebrate the positive actions of our students monthly in assemblies that build school spirit and connections among students of all ages.

We strive for an environment where teachers feel valued and supported. We know that if the adults in our organization feel valued for their work, the focus on student learning will remain our top priority. Relationships among all educators and staff members within our building are built over time and are based on trust and mutual support, along with shared accountability around our goals for teaching and learning. We also leverage a teacher-leader model, ensuring that educators develop ownership and play an active role in school decisions.

The culture of a school is shaped by the engagement of all members of a school community. At Oriole Lane, we share focus, pride, ownership, care and concern among all members of our family. Our success hinges on our common purpose and vision of support, and the contributions of all are integral to our success.

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

We recognize the profound trust that parents place in a school and its educators to care for their children and nurture their growth and achievement. We work with intention to maintain relationships with our Oriole Lane families. To that end, frequent classroom-to-home communication is essential. Each fall, meet-the-teacher nights allow students to feel settled in their classrooms before school begins, and curriculum nights for each grade level provide parents with grade-level expectations for the year. In addition to parent-teacher conferences in the fall and spring, teachers ensure frequent communication directly with parents regarding classroom updates, expectations, academic or social-emotional updates, upcoming events and volunteer opportunities.

School-to-home communication and engagement is transparent, frequent and informative. Our school growth plan is clearly posted within our building. A weekly e-newsletter, the Oriole Observer, communicates important school information and shares news, upcoming events and opportunities. District-to-home communications are approached with a collaborative mindset, with Oriole Lane staff members and district-level personnel working together to ensure timely and effective communication of district-wide initiatives, events, news and opportunities.

One of the most effective parent-school connections is the Oriole Lane Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), a parent group that excels at both fundraising and fun-raising, along with planning and facilitating activities for students to participate in. The PTO's annual carnival, for example, typically raises approximately

\$10,000 for our school and is a highlight of the year for many of our students and families. The principal meets monthly with the PTO board members, attends all PTO meetings and provides an update of important events, while also answering questions from parents.

We further recognize the role our community plays in supporting its students and schools. Oriole Lane staff members and students connect with our larger community through the leadership efforts of our student council. Through these initiatives, all Oriole Lane students can experience the power of selflessness by giving their time, talent and energy to those in our community.

Our expansive school grounds provide an example of the importance of a school to its community. When an invasive plant species, teasel, began to overtake a beautiful, large outdoor classroom space at Oriole Lane, students from Homestead High School planned and promoted a day of service for community members to bring their garden tools to assist in its eradication. Community members turned out in droves in support of the effort.

In addition, local community members volunteer their time to talk to students about their professions through our connection with the Junior Achievement program. These volunteer professionals extend students' knowledge of future opportunities and contribute to shaping young people's future identity.

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

Oriole Lane Elementary School's School Growth Plan (SGP) includes goals developed to support literacy, numeracy and the social-emotional wellbeing of all students. These three goals are also aligned to the Mequon-Thiensville School District Strategic Plan. Our professional development is strategically planned in support of the action steps in our SGP, which are grounded in data. Building Leadership Team (BLT) subcommittee members provide professional development to specifically address students' greatest areas of need, as determined by our data analysis.

Collaboration and ownership of our students' growth has been pivotal in our success as a school. Our team of K-5 educators gathers for half-day professional learning community meetings, which occur twice per month. In addition to this substantial collaborative time, we further address our SGP literacy and math goals during staff meetings, vertical team meetings (4K-2 and 3-5), committee meetings and full-day professional development days. These collaborative learning opportunities enhance teachers' understanding of best instructional practices, and teachers then have planning time to infuse these strategies into their lessons. This work focuses teacher attention on the needs of each student.

To close achievement gaps, our BLT has focused on explicitly teaching character trait vocabulary and targeted Costa's Levels of Thinking & Questioning vocabulary, grade-appropriate affixes and roots and high-frequency words (K-2) so that students will improve on the MAP Reading Vocabulary strand as measured by the spring MAP Reading Assessment. Based on student data, the team determined that addressing these areas helps to meet our students' greatest needs. In "Visible Learning for Literacy," John Hattie writes, "Vocabulary is a strong predictor of reading comprehension. Teaching vocabulary will not guarantee success in reading just as learning to read words will not guarantee success in reading. However, lacking either adequate word identification skills or adequate vocabulary will ensure failure."

This year, BLT members are engaging in a book study to enhance our understanding of the use of SMART Goals for teachers and students. The book, "More Than a SMART Goal: Staying Focused on Student Learning," by Anne Conzemius and Terry Morganti-Fisher, has and will continue to benefit students as teachers apply their new learning to student goal setting.

Finally, teachers have time devoted to develop and refine curriculum in all content areas. Teacher teams use the state standards as a guide, determining which content is essential for students. They collaborate to determine the best ways to teach the information to the students and then work to create common assessments that determine if students are meeting standards.

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

Oriole Lane's principal has provided leadership to the school for 23 years, and the passion she brings to her role is inspiring. The principal's leadership style is to construct a shared vision with members of the school community, convene the conversations, insist upon a student-learning focus, evoke and support leadership in others, model and participate in collaborative practice and help pose the questions and facilitate dialogue that address the issues of practice at hand. This work requires skill and new understanding; it is much easier to tell or to manage than it is to perform as a collaborative instructional leader. Oriole Lane's principal has embraced a changing leadership dynamic during her tenure. She serves as a model of 21st century educational leadership.

Using a shared leadership approach, Oriole Lane teachers are involved in decision-making processes across many areas. While the principal facilitates the development of the SGP, members of the BLT analyze data and determine action steps that will ensure the school achieves its goals. The BLT revisits the plan monthly to check progress and update the plan to meet changing needs. It is also the responsibility of BLT members to take ideas back to their grade-level teams that, when implemented, will improve student learning. BLT members are also tasked with bringing ideas from each of their teams back to each BLT meeting for discussion.

Teacher leaders make up the PBIS Team at Oriole Lane. The PBIS leadership team members, site team members and the principal make decisions regarding the implementation of these structures. Team members determine how teachers can help students become caring, responsible, respectful and ready to learn, and develop lessons to teach and support the children in their understanding of how to behave in certain situations. Team members determine incentives and consequences and work with students to ensure they receive the feedback necessary to be successful.

Teacher leaders also make up the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) site team. Site team members take leadership roles in implementing the system and receive training throughout the year, including intensive training during Summer Institute. The strategies they learn, share and implement engage students in the learning process, with a focus on the five elements of writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization and reading (WICOR).

The shared leadership model at Oriole Lane has been and will continue to be successful. The principal has established a culture of transparency, and she employs an open-door policy by welcoming staff into her office to discuss both successes and challenges in our important work. This policy helps build relationships that are based on trust, allowing staff members to feel safe, supported and valued.

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

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Oriole Lane Elementary School has improved outcomes by aligning goals and improvement efforts to results, using data to strategically implement continuous improvement efforts and share responsibility for student outcomes. To maximize the academic achievement and personal growth of each student, staff use a Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) process. The PDSA improvement cycle is a strategy in which teams determine goals, monitor progress and make rapid changes when results are not achieved.

In the 'Plan' stage, teams review and analyze data outcomes to determine areas that need to be improved. Oriole Lane staff members collaboratively review data through the analysis of student work during Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Through teacher collaboration, research-based strategies are identified, measurable goals are developed and action plans are created that will have the most significant impact on student learning.

Once these action plans are developed, staff members engage in the 'Do' stage, in which team members implement the action plans to improve outcomes. These strategies provide teachers the opportunity to engage first-hand in influencing student achievement and engagement outcomes. For example, with the support of data collected through formative assessments to measure academic progress as well as social-emotional surveys to measure individual engagement, teachers meet with small groups and individual students to identify goals and track progress. One way Oriole Lane tracks progress daily is through teacher conferencing notes, which indicate the level of progress a child is making. Exit tickets are also used to track progress toward the attainment of goals.

In the 'Study' phase, team members monitor progress and analyze whether the improvement strategies are making a difference. Oriole Lane leaders use problem solving sessions, in which each teacher discusses the needs of his/her students with the principal, specialists and school psychologist. As a result of the insights gained during these sessions, teachers inherently become more purposeful and intentional as they select instructional goals designed to meet the specific needs of each student. Other supports may also be identified to assist the teacher in meeting student needs. Problem solving sessions allow us to harness the power of the collective intelligence that already exists in our school to solve problems and meet the needs of each child.

With the support of instructional leaders, the Oriole Lane staff use progress monitoring to Act. In the 'Act' stage, the team makes decisions and further engages in the improvement efforts. In this stage, the principal and specialists work to ensure teachers have the resources they need be successful in reaching and surpassing intended outcomes. Supports identified during problem solving sessions are put in place for students. These high-leverage strategies are taught and assessed frequently to determine their effectiveness in meeting the diverse needs and interests of all our students during the Act stage.

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At Oriole Lane, the Plan, Do, Study, Act process defines 'How We Do the Work' to deliver our mission and guarantee success for all students. The process of using data to drive organizational change helps support the efforts that staff members put forth to engage in their work.