

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

Official School Name West Salem Elementary School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 475 N Mark Street  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City West Salem                      State WI                      Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 54669-1224

County \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (608) 786-1662                      Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Web site/URL <http://www.wsalem.k12.wi.us/content/our-schools/elementary-school>                      E-mail rieber.ryan@wsalem.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. Troy Gunderson                      E-mail gunderson.troy@wsalem.k12.wi.us  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name West Salem School District                      Tel. (608) 786-0700

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. Syl Clements  
(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):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 3 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	62	54	116
K	64	49	113
1	61	61	122
2	70	63	133
3	59	60	119
4	78	67	145
5	68	72	140
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>	462	426	888

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 1 % Asian
  - 1 % Black or African American
  - 2 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 92 % 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: 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	19
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	16
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	35
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	895
(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: 1 %  
3 Total number ELL

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

Spanish

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 33 %  
Total number students who qualify: 295
8. Students receiving special education services: 11 %  
94 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>8</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>14</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>6</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>10</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>74</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>2</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>3</u> Mental Retardation	<u>2</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>7</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>11</u> Developmentally Delayed

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

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	39
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	17
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	22
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	5

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	97%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**  
Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2016.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.  
Yes    No X  
If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

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

West Salem Elementary's vision is "Every student, every one, every day." This aligns with the district mission to "Serve with passion."

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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West Salem is a suburban/rural bedroom community of approximately 5,000 people located in northern La Crosse County. The location makes our schools a hub of the community and a valued resource to our community members. With the high regard for education within our community, along with our location near Western Wisconsin Technical College, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, and Viterbo University, we have been able to provide learning opportunities for many up-and-coming educators in our building. We are also located less than a mile from our Cooperative Educational Services Agency (CESA) office, which facilitates and provides easy access to professional learning for our staff. Our elementary school houses over 880 students, making it one of the largest elementary schools in the state of Wisconsin. Over 90% of our student body is white as we are a rural suburb of La Crosse, Wisconsin. Being a rural suburb of one of the larger cities on the west side of the state, it enables us access to our local university system to have access to quality professional development, opportunities and access to students that are seeking the education profession, and the location helps to widen our candidate pool for employment.

West Salem Elementary was built in the 70's when the rural elementary schools in our district were closed after a consolidation movement across Wisconsin in the 1960's. As part of this consolidation movement, the state redrew school boundaries and combined many smaller schools. This was the first step in establishing the notion of one centralized elementary school. As the West Salem School District grew, a middle school was built in 1981. This new building took grades 5-8 out of the original school which was located on Garland Street. As time moved on, the need for a new elementary school arose. A new elementary building was constructed and opened in the fall of 1996. This allowed the West Salem School District to close the old elementary and firmly establish the "campus concept" having an elementary, middle, and high school all in one centralized location. With a growing community, the high school expanded in 2001, and with a successful referendum in the fall of 2016, there will be an expansion of our middle school beginning in the spring of 2017. With this successful referendum and expansion, it will enable us to meet the needs of our growing student population all while maintaining our campus concept.

While the decision to create a single, larger elementary school on the same campus with the middle and high schools was driven by operational efficiency concerns, the even greater advantage of this strategy is that it creates greater educational opportunities by facilitating a K-12 cohort model. From this campus-wide cohort model, West Salem began to invest in the training and formation of grade level Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) throughout the district. What has made our campus a great learning center has been our ability to create grade level teams of teachers, conversations leading to grade level appropriate practice, an active focus on students not meeting benchmarks, and being able to offer more effective intervention strategies. Common grade level assessments, Professional Learning Communities (PLC), common planning, along with an academic and behavioral intervention approach has lead West Salem Elementary to be the premiere elementary school within our CESA. The larger K-12 cohort model offers the benefit of district teachers being able to develop professionally, work on curriculum, and the unique opportunity to commonly bond, which is usually found in much smaller school districts.

The school campus is the "heart and soul" of our community. Over the years, the district has had the opportunity to acquire several adjoining parcels of land from La Crosse County. These land purchases have allowed our campus to both grow and remain centralized. The campus concept benefits West Salem by providing greater resources and more staff development opportunities. It also familiarizes students with the facilities for higher school levels, helping smooth their transitions between levels.

As one of the largest elementary schools in Wisconsin, we continue to use the strengths of our staff and community to provide the best possible environment for students and staff. West Salem Elementary is the only elementary school in the state to be recognized with a Gold Medal of Distinction Award Healthy Schools awarded by the United States Department of Agriculture in the state of Wisconsin. Our food service staff were guests of Mrs. Obama at the White House to celebrate this national award. Our school-wide Positive Behavior/Intervention and Support (PBIS) system has also been recognized within the state of Wisconsin as a PBIS School of Merit.

All of the items listed above help to make West Salem Elementary School and the West Salem School District unique and a destination in our area. However, what sets West Salem Elementary apart has been and will always be our cycle for continuous improvement and our data-driven decision model. This cycle is for staff and students alike. Our attention to detail and focus on assisting those students who need the extra help ensures that we are doing everything in our power not to leave any child behind. Throughout this application, you will read about our strong Response to Intervention (RTI) system and how this has led to us being able to be successful in closing the learning gaps of our students.

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

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

West Salem Elementary School is dedicated to the academic advancement of all students. We strive to foster academic achievement through equipping students with the 21st-century skills necessary to be lifelong learners. Through providing a diverse array of curricular opportunities we seek to deliver high-quality student-centered instruction that is relevant, stimulating, and rigorous.

In 2010 Wisconsin adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). We have worked to better align our curriculum to these standards with the use of supplemental resources. Curriculum Companion helped our educators merge the new standards with our existing educational practices. Development of grade level Overarching Enduring Understandings for each curricular area took place during summer institutes and continued throughout the school year. We continue to refine our practices with collaborative discussion during our Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Our grade level PLCs consist of the six grade level teachers at each grade level. Our building leadership PLC consists of both the principal and associate principal, our two guidance counselors, our two lead teachers, and our school psychologist. Each PLC has established norms or rules that are followed and meet once weekly for an hour time period. This is where planning and data analysis take place to ensure that the needs of all students are being met.

We also integrated the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) into our existing science curriculum during the summer of 2010 in an effort to improve science education for all students. These new standards helped us better set the expectations for what students should know and be able to do.

Instruction at West Salem Elementary is focused on students developing foundational skills through a variety of learning opportunities. Through grade-level teams teachers collaborate to adjust pacing, set learning goals, make modifications, and to supplement/reinforce instruction to meet the needs of all learners. Through flexible grouping and ongoing assessment, teachers utilize research-based best practices. Teachers engage students in creating a purpose for learning via the use of learning targets and “I Can” statements. Previous and ongoing attention is directed at the scope and sequence of content in an effort to ensure common instruction, rigor, and vertical alignment. All educational decisions are grounded in data and focused on what’s best for children.

In English language arts students receive instruction focused on whole group comprehension, small guided reading groups, and word study. Educators embed this learning with the use of mentor texts that introduce new skills and strategies within each Overarching Enduring Understanding (OEU). Our school is also in the process of adopting a new program to address word study. Educators have piloted a program called Words Their Way. Feedback from teacher/parent surveys and student data indicates this program is a good match for our students’ needs. Technology is also a vital part in motivating and engaging students in learning. For instance, 4th and 5th-grade students have 1-to-1 iPad access to support their growth as readers, writers, listeners, and communicators.

The CCSS also drive our mathematics instruction and provide us with vertical alignment. We use Houghton-Mifflin Math Expressions and have recently acquired the newest edition to this series. Attention is focused on mathematical strategies, vocabulary, and problem-solving skills with emphasis on integrating the Standards for Mathematical Practice into the daily instruction. Grade level teaching teams meet weekly to collaborate on appropriate pacing for each math unit based on formative assessments and student needs. During these meetings, we also discuss modifications, enrichment opportunities and set learning targets.

A recent focus has also been to use a scaffolded progression of math vocabulary beginning in kindergarten. Additionally, formative assessments allow educators to continuously assess where students are at and plan accordingly to meet the needs of our students. Formative assessments also drive instruction on reteach days (integrated into each unit) as well as the development of enrichment activities that enhance the learning of the students. As with English language arts, technology is utilized to support mathematics instruction. Students engage with technology through applications on iPad devices as a means to support areas such as

fact fluency.

We are currently in the process of reevaluating the science curriculum resource we use. Currently, we are interweaving thematic units into our reading as well as creating hands-on activities that go along with these units. We are in the process of adopting new curricular materials to help enhance our science curriculum and to improve the learning of our students. At West Salem Elementary School, our students also participate in Environment Day, Farm to School, and make use of our school garden. Students are also fortunate enough have access to the Outdoor Education Center (school forest), this provides rich learning opportunities which extend beyond the classroom.

Like in science, social studies lessons are interwoven in thematic units with English Language Arts. Our school is committed to providing real-world enrichment opportunities to students which connect to classroom content. For instance, students attend field trips to the Eagle Center in Wabasha, Villa Louis and Wyalusing State Park in Prairie du Chien, the Historical Museum and state Capitol in Madison, Smith Valley School House in Medary, the Crane Foundation in Baraboo, and many other local opportunities (Octagon/Garland House, Apple Orchards, and Slide into Safety). Providing our students experiences outside of the walls of our elementary school and incorporating civic learning into the lives of our students helps to provide the opportunity to see how our community operates and those important historical marks that bring history and culture to our area.

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

At West Salem Elementary School, all students from kindergarten through fifth grade receive instruction in music, art, physical education, as well as receiving technology and library services. This instruction focuses not only on key ideas and concepts for each area but also on holistic disciplinary literacy. The importance of reading and math is integrated throughout all curricular areas within our school. An example of this is the incorporation of non-fictional text and reading strategies into our social studies curriculum. We use our social studies time to integrate our non-fiction learning targets of reading into our day.

Our music program is provided to students twice weekly totaling an hour of instruction that focuses on appreciation, vocabulary, skills, and authentic experiences. All students take part in piano lessons in second through fifth grade. By fourth grade, students are self-paced in their learning on pianos and able to advance their knowledge at an engaging pace with guidance from the teacher. Once students begin reading music notation in first grade, they begin to take part in experiences in composition for a variety of instruments including voice, drums, keyboards, and xylophones.

Individual grade-level concerts are held throughout the school year to provide students with rich performance opportunities that incorporate singing, movement, public speaking, and art. We also offer choir to our 5th-grade students to enhance their music opportunities.

Our physical education (PE) curriculum develops physical, cognitive, and social-emotional skills. Students attend PE four days per week, giving each student two hours of instructional time. The elementary PE curriculum is standards-based and follows the SHAPE (Society of Health and Physical Educators) National Standards. Our goal is to have physically literate students who enjoy being active. Some highlights of our physical education program include: participating yearly in the American Heart Association's Jump Rope for Heart program; every fall a physical education teacher promotes our Walking School Bus to get our students active; PE Nights for parents and their students; and a rhythm dance program. In addition, we were honored with the 2015-2016 "Let's Move! Active Schools" as part of First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move initiative for "creating an active school environment that promotes physical activity and physical education."

Art instruction occurs one time for a 60 minute period each week. Our art teachers base their curriculum on both the new National Core Arts Standards as well as the Wisconsin Visual Arts and Design Standards. The curriculum is sequential in that students build upon their art skills from previous years and extend artistic learning beyond the elementary school level and into the middle and high school. Our art department also runs an after school art program further extending art instruction beyond the normal school day. After

School Art is offered to a student in the fourth and fifth grade and is utilized by over 50 students annually.

Once a week our students partake in 30 minutes of technology instruction in addition to a 30-minute visit to our library. They learn about authors, book genres and explore personal interests. Students also practice inquiry and research skills, to become critical thinkers. Working in collaborative groups allow students to direct their own learning. Some of the highlights in our library include celebrating and participating in many of the events, but one that we take particular pride in is our Read Across America week. During this week, we acknowledge the birthday of Dr. Seuss through week long activities that include dress up days, classroom activities, and buddy classroom reading events.

While in the library, students also learn how to improve their 21st-century skills. Technology skills are taught as we value innovation in our district. Our building has a 1:1 iPad program for our fourth and fifth-grade students, with lower grade levels having access to technology in both classrooms and technology classes. Students actively use technology to research, create projects and explore their creativity through research projects and using blogs, Prezis, and podcasts to share their research. Information literacy and digital citizenship are key components of our technology curriculum, preparing students to be informed, safe and responsible users in an increasingly digital world.

The library provides collaborative leadership with the classroom teachers, assisting in curriculum instruction and assessment. The curation of digital resources and tools provide both staff and students access to a multitude of opportunities to further their learning.

We utilize a comprehensive developmental guidance program led by our two school counselors. Our classroom guidance lessons are designed to focus on areas related to academics, careers, and personal/social relationships. Every child in our building sees the school counselor in their classroom at least once a month during Classroom Guidance. Lessons taught during these times are designed to meet the American School Counselor Student Standards as well as specific areas of need for students. An example of this is when our school counselor received multiple referrals for anxiety-related concerns. In response, she designed a lesson to share with all students how to recognize and manage anxiety. Additionally, students have access to other services provided by our school counselors including small group work, individual counseling, and responsive services any time. Our school counselors also go to great lengths to establish positive relationships with parents and families, actively serving as a resource for them. Through networking and community outreach, they have also established positive connections with community-based counselors, therapists, and family resource organizations. An example of external community-based programming offered in our building is the "The Too Good for Drugs" curriculum. These lessons are delivered to all K-5 students focusing on personal wellness and taught by specialists from Coulee Council on Addictions. We also utilize the D.A.R.E. program with our fifth-grade students, which is brought into our building by the La Crosse County Sheriff's Department. This emphasis on relationships and growth of the whole child reinforces and supports our philosophy of "it takes a village to raise a child".

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

At the universal tier 1 level, we continually evaluate and work to strengthen core instruction. Teachers focus on knowing each student and their learning style. They use formative assessment and collaboration time to discuss and evaluate student growth as part of the professional learning community framework. They formulate and implement an effective instructional plan and evaluate its effectiveness. Teachers use a variety of strategies, structures, and groupings to meet the needs of our diverse learners.

Following the Response to Intervention (RTI) guidelines, we expect that 80% of our students will meet proficiency with universal instruction (tier 1). We monitor this goal with benchmark assessment data 3 times per year. Benchmark assessments include AIMSweb, Measures of Academic Performance (MAP), Phonological Awareness and Literacy Screening (PALs), Fountas & Pinnell and the standard-based report card. Benchmark assessments are given to all students, kindergarten through 5th grade. With this triangulated benchmark data, we identify students for Tier 2(supplemental) and Tier 3(intensive) intervention. Our school is strongly committed to early intervention both academically and behaviorally.

In academics, students scoring under the 25th percentile on benchmark assessments in the areas of reading and math are placed in small, targeted tier 3 intervention groups. Interventions are provided during a forty minute, uninterrupted period, 4 days per week. Tier 3 interventions focus on fluency, comprehension, and phonemic awareness. Through the review of our universal instruction and using assessment data, the areas of fluency and comprehension are the areas that our struggling readers struggle in the most. Students scoring in the 26th to 40th percentile range on benchmark assessments are given Tier 2 intervention. These interventions work with students on writing, fluency, and phonics. These interventions differ from the Tier 3 interventions by the intensity of the instruction. All academic interventions are progress monitored weekly through AIMSweb probes. Progress is reviewed monthly by both the RtI team and the PLC team. Through this data review and discussion, decisions are made through team consensus regarding individual student progress and intervention changes if needed to close achievement gaps.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

At West Salem Elementary School we pride ourselves on building a supportive community environment focused on developing relationships with students, staff, and families including valuing them for the work that they do. We attribute the academic success of our students to the fact that instruction is designed for each student as staff gets to know them as individuals first and learners second. This emphasis on the power of relationships allows for personalized learning as well as investment in student and teacher success.

As a Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) school, behavior intervention is integral to our student success. The expectations that we have throughout the school for the students are to be safe, respectful and responsible people. A school-wide data tracking system (TRENDS) is in place with data and guidelines to help identify those students that are in need of behavioral interventions. A student reported 6 or more times with a level 1 incident (take a break, reminders redirections), 3 or more times with a level 2 incident (out of activity, buddy room, notice to specialists), 2 or more times with a level 3 incident (office referral) or 1 time with a level 4 incident (in or out of school suspension) qualifies for a tier 2 behavioral intervention. Tier 2 interventions used in our school include the Check in Check out (CICO) program, Social Academic Intervention Groups (SAIG), and behavior contracts. Our primary intervention is CICO consisting of the following components: morning “check-in” with an assigned staff person with daily goal setting, teacher feedback 6-8 times each day, afternoon “check out” with same assigned staff person and a daily report home. The teacher feedback throughout the day is in the form of verbal praise or reminders. Teachers also use a points based behavior reward system. The points allow for data collection and monitoring of the overall success of the intervention. Weekly averages are reviewed by the leadership team, at data meetings conducted weekly to assess student success and length of time in the program. Students who have achieved an average of 80% or better on their CICO sheets over 4 weeks and did not meet any of the data rules using the TRENDS, which is the behavior data warehouse that is used, successfully exit the program. Those who do not meet the exit rules will be evaluated via a Child Study Team meeting with possible results being an intervention change or consideration for Tier 3 behavioral interventions.

Incorporating yearly themes, our school recognizes students through the use of PAWSitive tickets. Students are given one of these tickets if they are caught being respectful, responsible, or safe in our building. When students get one of these tickets, they write their name on it and enter into weekly drawings or collect to fill out Bingo Cards and redeem for a small prize. Additionally, students that received tickets throughout the past week are acknowledged on our Monday morning all-school announcements, school-wide rallies, and grade level lunch announcements. Those students who are noticed demonstrating outstanding character and behavior receive a commendation note home to families. This acknowledgment system reinforces what we call the West Salem Way and allows our students to become role models for each other, contributing to the positive climate of our school community.

This focus on relationship building is also exemplified through our “Classroom Buddy” program, in which older and younger students are paired in a mentor/mentee format. Teachers also frequently invite students to join them for special small group lunches in order to allow for visiting and personalized interactions. Students in our fourth and fifth grade are selected to participate in the Council of Kids organization which creates and plans activities that build community and pride in our school. The Council of Kids also gives students the opportunity to practice leadership skills.

Our Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) also builds pride in our school community. They meet monthly to collaboratively plan events for the school and make decisions regarding resources needed to support our acknowledgment system. The PTO awards individual classroom grants. These grants provide capital for our staff to do creative things for students in their classroom that they may not have budgeted for. Annually, the West Salem Board of Education offers grants to staff that submits an application for an innovation grant. This grant is awarded to teachers who successfully complete an application that shares innovative and creative practices within their classrooms. This grant is budgeted for and awarded to staff

to ensure continued resources in an effort to ignite creativity, innovation, and excellence in the classroom.

To ensure that all stakeholders are included in establishing the positive learning environment family/community surveys are conducted and time is allotted to organize the data and use the feedback to incorporate changes. One change that we have implemented due to this feedback is to begin math interventions for students that mirrored the interventions that we have in place for students reading. This was a need seen by staff and parents alike and will help to benefit our school more as we continue to move forward.

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

West Salem Elementary takes pride in its family and community engagement. One of our strongest organizations for engaging the families and community is our Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). PTO's mission statement reads "Our mission is to provide unity through a supportive network of parents, staff, students, and community." PTO works hard to provide fun, educational, and low-cost events for all families in our district. Such as bowling, roller skating and tailgating events for games. In addition to this, they help raise money for our school and use all of that money to purchase library resources, school supplies, and playground equipment for our students. They also award grants to all teachers yearly to help them offset the cost of classroom supplies.

The multiple events that our PTO conducts throughout the year do a wonderful job of helping to engage our families to build the relationship between our school and the community. There are a number of events within the community, as stated above, however, there are also events that help tremendously to improve our student success. Some of our highlighted events to improve student success are our math, reading, and science nights at school. Specifically looking at our reading night, West Salem Elementary Title I staff partner with our PTO to provide a family reading night. During this time, our PTO brings in community leaders to read to our students, while our Title I staff meets with parents to help inform them of best practices and what parents can do at home to help with their child's literacy. At the conclusion of the evening, every student leaves with a new book of their choice. These books are made available through donations to the school and resources purchased by our PTO. This is a night of education for the students and parents.

The district Outdoor Education Center (OEC) is a place where students make regular visits for hands-on environmental experiences and parents are invited to join them. The community is also invited to events at the OEC, such as family hiking and moonlight snowshoeing. These activities allow for our families and students to gather away from the school, yet is an area that all of our students visit and where a great deal of learning occurs outside of the school.

Other amenities that our district provides to the whole community is our fitness center, Heider Center, and pool. The fitness center is open to the community and provides a variety of classes and walking/running track access at a discounted rate for community and student members. The Heider Center is a state of the art performance center that hosts both student and professional entertainment and is located in our High School. The Heider Center provides opportunities for our students to see and experience the arts. It is unique for our school district to house and maintain the community swimming pool. We offer swimming lessons, lap lane, and open swim time for the community.

One event that stands out to our community members is our yearly Veterans Day Program. We invite any member of the community who currently serves or has served in the military to join us for a recognition program followed by a reception. Many community members get involved in this event including Veterans and observers. Our students and staff make them feel welcomed and appreciated through various songs, speakers, student handshakes, playing of Taps and presentation of the flags done by our Girl and Boy Scouts. Yearly, we have a large number of community members participate and comment on the quality program put on by our school.

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

West Salem Elementary School values passion and creativity as our focus is on every student, every one, everyday. We believe that Professional Development (PD) is vital to igniting that passion and creativity to best serve our students each day. We take a systematic approach, looking at school-wide data and other evidence to provide direction for our yearly professional development plan. Through this professional development plan, we identify areas that we feel that we need to improve and continue to circle back to past professional development to sustain and review areas that we have worked on in the past.

Our PD is supported at the district level philosophically and financially. We know our students learn best when we invest in high-quality training for our staff. Our district calendar has built in staff development days to provide time for collaboration and alignment that increases our capacity at the whole school level. Teacher mentors are provided for all new teaching staff. In addition, we work closely with the professionals at Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA) 4 to provide the most up to date best practices with fidelity. A recent example includes the implementation of Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) as a Tier 2 reading intervention to help close the gaps and bring student achievement up. Moving students up from Tier 3 to Tier 2 intervention, and Tier 2 to Tier 1 intervention is something that we do well. Our data analysis indicated that we should focus our attention on reading. We partnered with the reading specialist from our local education agency to learn and implement LLI with fidelity and integrity. This was a series of on-going and in-house sessions to support teachers' in their continued use of this intervention and ensure success. Further data analysis indicated that as LLI became a common Tier 2 practice, the need for intervention decreased.

We highly emphasize collaboration between teachers, teaching teams, and grade level peers through our Professional Learning Communities throughout our whole school. When staff attends out of district training, these small groups or individuals become leaders while sharing their knowledge with others. An example of this PD strategy was our implementation of AIMSweb, a progress monitor tool for reading which compliments our use of LLI. One individual received training and in turn trained our Lead Teachers. Lead Teachers then trained grade level teams. From there, teachers were able to progress monitor weekly to ensure students were working towards grade level benchmarks and to see if changes needed to be made to interventions. Through our analysis of data and systematic approach to PD, we are able to build capacity for teachers to meet student needs at the building, grade, and individual student level.

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

The philosophy of West Salem Elementary School is one of collaboration, where grade level teams and leadership teams work together and have shared leadership. All staff are encouraged to be leaders in some capacity. Our district has adopted the foundation and characteristics of Servant Leadership. Servant Leadership is a philosophy where the actions by an individual enrich the lives of others, build better organizations, and helps to build a better world around them. Servant Leadership is taught in-district to staff who are interested. We believe we are here to serve the whole child. This philosophy of leaderships also assures that we meet the needs of every child.

This climate and approach allow us to seek and utilize the leadership and strengths of each individual as they participate on various teams. Each unit grade level team selects a Team Leader to be their liaison and voice for the unit when other team leaders and administration are together. Administration meets monthly with this team of Unit Leaders to keep lines of communication open, gather feedback, and participate in shared decision making.

A unique tool that West Salem Elementary uses to help with our success has been the implementation of Lead Teachers. West Salem Elementary uses two Lead Teachers who are assigned to lead multi-grade teams (kindergarten - 2nd and 3rd - 5th grade.) Their responsibilities include: data collection and analysis for all students within their grade levels; grouping and planning for our daily intervention/enrichment period; supporting and providing instructional materials for teachers; scheduling and overseeing benchmarking and progress monitoring assessments; and sharing data with administration, the Leadership Team, as described below, and with our grade level teams. These professionals have greatly impacted our

ability to reach student needs as well as support our teaching staff. Lead teachers are also members of the building's Leadership Team.

West Salem Elementary's Leadership Team consists of building administration, building Lead Teachers, school counselors, our curriculum director, the school psychologist and our Title 1 teachers. This team meets weekly as a PLC and analyzes data, plans interventions for our students, and sets professional development for our elementary staff. If data is concerning at the school or grade level, the Leadership Team puts together Curriculum Teams to analyze the area of concern and look for solutions. If the data is concerning at the individual student level, our team would recommend the student to our Child Study Team (CST). Our CST's consists of the student's classroom teacher, the Lead Teacher representing the grade level, an administrator, the school psychologist, guidance staff, and any other specialist that may work with a student of concern. Together they look at data, review past interventions, modifications, and accommodations for the student, student progress and where to direct next efforts to close the learning gap for that child.

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

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The African proverb “It takes a village to raise a child” resonates strongly with us at West Salem Elementary. As one of the largest elementary schools in Wisconsin, it is a huge commitment by staff to view all students as “our” students and support and collaborate with one another as we work to ensure all students attain high levels of learning. Our school vision statement, “Every Student, Every One, Everyday,” addresses staff support and collaboration, reminding us to keep each student as our focus, at all times.

Our intervention time, known as Panther Time, is a time when students who are not meeting the benchmarks set by our Response to Intervention (RTI) Team, receive thirty minutes of individualized instruction from our lead and Title teachers. During this time, students that are meeting or exceeding benchmarks are being enriched with Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) activities. This all hands on deck” approach by our staff has been key to contributing to the growth of our students. With our practices of early identification and a common philosophy that our kids deserve the best opportunities possible, we have been able to meet the needs of students who score at or below the 40th percentile using our AIMSweb and MAP assessments. We have administered targeted intervention and watched our special education referrals drop significantly. This has been done by close observation of data collection and bi-weekly progress monitoring. When a student shows signs, through data, that they are struggling, our monitoring process identifies these students quickly. This quick identification of students allows us to assist students before they get too far behind. By making timely intervention a priority, we ensure consistent work with our students that are struggling. Through this practice, our data consistently shows that by the time our students reach 5th grade, we have just a few (in a class of 120) remaining in tier 3 intervention.

Acknowledging that not all students learn the same way or at the same rate is one of our core beliefs and the key to providing intervention to our students. We help each student reach to achieve his or her personal best and help them to believe in themselves so they are able to succeed. On our latest Wisconsin’s school report card, our highest scoring area (with a score of 95.1 out of 100) was for “Closing the Gap.” This section of our state report card is an area that measures the success of schools in closing achievement gaps in the areas of reading and math between student groups (comparing low-income students, English learners, students with disabilities, and members of racial or ethnic groups with their peers). On the previous report card, we scored 67.2 out of 100, raising our achievement in this area by almost twenty-eight percentage points. The increase in this area is evidence that our efforts in our tiered response to students academic and behavioral needs, along with our commitment to collaboration are working and that we are living our vision, mission, and purpose every day.