

Part I – Eligibility Certification

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group and all subgroups, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2018 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 2012 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: 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, or 2017.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
9. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
10. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
11. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
12. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2017-2018) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 2 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 4 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
 - Rural or small city/town
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2017 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	20	23	43
1	17	20	37
2	9	17	26
3	19	31	50
4	15	24	39
5	21	16	37
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	101	131	232

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 14 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 2 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 79 % White
 - 4 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2016 – 2017 school year: 7%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain.

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	11
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	6
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	17
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	233
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.07
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	7

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 8%
18 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 42%
Total number students who qualify: 97

8. Students receiving special education services: 9 %
20 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>0</u> Autism | <u>10</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>0</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>0</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>10</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

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:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	12
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	8
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	6
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 18:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013
Daily student attendance	96%	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 2017.

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

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

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

Hospers Elementary is committed to establishing learning and discovery experiences, that enable our students to achieve their greatest potential. By engaging in challenging academic and diverse educational environments students are empowered to develop deep knowledge and strong character that will better equip them to become active, responsible citizens.

16. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

PART III – SUMMARY

The MOC-Floyd Valley Community School District is located in the northwest corner of Iowa, serves a population of just under 10,000 people in five different communities. The district covers 251 square miles, employs a faculty and staff of more than 150 experienced professionals and a K-12 enrollment of just over 1400 students. Hospers Elementary is one of two elementary schools that serves K-5 students in Hospers, Iowa who live in the towns of Granville, Alton, and Hospers.

The mission statement of the MOC Floyd Valley Community School District is, “Fostering learning, excellence, and civic responsibility.” We try to provide our students with a rigorous, well-rounded education so that when they leave us they have many options available to them as possible. In addition to our strong focus on academics, we support character development and service. These areas of focus are demonstrated via our District Belief Statements and Core Values (Caring, Cooperation, Effort, Responsibility, Respect, Excellence, Integrity and Creativity) that guide all decisions by everyone that makes up the MOC Floyd Valley Community School District. Students, parents, community members, and school personnel worked together during the strategic planning process and continue to support these values throughout the district.

Personalized classes and character-building programs help to lay a strong foundation for our early learners at Hospers Elementary. Students receive a solid basic skills education, emphasizing language arts and mathematics, as well as activities, such as orchestra and band to stretch their learning in multiple areas. Foundational to all that we do at Hospers Elementary is building relationships. We have a very caring and dedicated staff that truly does, “Whatever It Takes” to stretch our students and help them grow. This philosophy is supported on a daily basis via lesson plans, instructional time, and during intervention/team planning sessions, as needed, in order to meet our student’s needs. Each staff member supports the efforts of others and strives to work together to meet a wide variety of individual differences at Hospers Elementary. Training opportunities, workshops, small groups, book studies and common planning time occur on a regular basis and are daily happenings that are in place that support the staff and encourage them to stay positive and professional throughout the school year.

Hospers supports the district curriculum development process, common formative and summative assessments, and grade level benchmark curriculum based measures (CBM) systems that are in place to monitor our students progress throughout each academic year. They are challenged to make instructional decisions based upon this data and find ways to support their peers during our professional learning communities (PLC) early out release times and make suggestions if materials, resources, or additional training is required in order to serve our students. Leadership relies upon the direct expertise of the classroom teachers and supports instructors to identify and make suggestions. Building leadership uses a “Team Approach” when making decisions that impact the student’s success in the areas of academics and behavior. Informal and formal meetings are held to gather input from all stakeholders before decisions are implemented whenever possible. It is the staff’s belief, shared with all parents, that they are their child’s first teacher and are vital to their child’s success at Hospers Elementary.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

At Hospers Elementary, we have focused our efforts in the areas of literacy and math, believing these two areas are vital and lead into the areas of science and social studies. Our literacy and math programs are based upon the philosophy of teaching our students to be “Strategic Thinkers”. We use the ideas of thinking strategically and mathematical thinking when developing our K-5 lessons, provide research based universal instruction to all our students, and identify those that need additional support/interventions or stretching opportunities to further challenge their learnings. Student “Action Plans” are written for each student within our building and monitored 3 times per year with our Curriculum Based Measures (CBM data) by our classroom teachers. We have embraced the ideas of Cognitively Guided Instruction and the Gradual Release of Thinking Strategically within our classrooms.

Our kindergarten through second grade math classrooms set the foundation by providing instruction in the domains of operations and algebraic thinking, number and operations in base ten, measurement, and data and geometry. Third through fifth grade classrooms develop these along with fractions and decimals and work to expand their thinking and progress into real world situations that involve math concepts and operations around them. Students, who are proficient, are provided opportunities for enrichment, while students not proficient are provided additional instruction and practice to help them reach proficiency. We have found Front Row, (math software program) to help meet the diverse needs of our students along with Every Day Math Materials during our whole group universal instructional sessions. Multistep problems that require our students to use their “Thinking Skills” are always what we use to challenge our students to use throughout the day by “Shifting” their thinking in order to solve real world problems. Our students work on being “Efficient” along with being fluent math problem solvers while being able explain their thinking processes to others in a sharing, collaborative classroom setting. We monitor and check these skills with our CBM measures periodically so our students can chart and document their growth in all domains throughout the year. Math instruction at Hospers has moved toward a more “Discovery-Based Approach” to learning that allows students to wrestle with problems in groups while injecting the thought process into learning. Our students find multiple ways to find the correct answer and actually take turns leading some of the math instruction in their classrooms. Math anxiety is lower at Hospers Elementary and our students are very used to teachers and their peers asking, “Tell me why you think that?”

Literacy development at Hospers Elementary constitutes the majority of our day for all our K-5 students. We give 120 minutes per day in all K-5 classrooms to developing a passion for reading and writing on a daily basis. A workshop model is used at Hospers to meet the needs of our students throughout the year, along with guided instruction, Individualize Directed Reading sessions, conferring with peers and instructors, literature circles and multiple intervention programs. Progress monitoring on a weekly basis has proven to work for our students in part because the general education teachers are active participants in our literacy intervention programs. We have found Lexia, (software program) to be useful for both our general education teachers, resource staff and parents in orders to extend what we are able to offer our students each day at Hospers. We challenge our students and their families to read each and every day for 15 minutes. We use both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards throughout the school year, but most importantly we model how to be “Life Long Learners”.

One of our science area goals was to increase the “inquiry-learning” experiences for our students. With that in mind, we participated in professional development opportunities involving the implementation of Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), Mystery Science Curriculum, and additional STEM lessons within our K-5 classrooms. We applied for multiple STEM materials via Iowa Grants, Sioux County Grants and local business partnerships. Hands on materials, resources, speakers and field trips have provided our students with many real-world applications in the area of science and health. We are very fortunate to have these additional opportunities at Hospers Elementary and know that these resources are not as available everywhere.

Social studies is the area we have just recently started to edit and update within our district. We are participating in state sponsored professional development workshops this school year and will make updates and changes to our grade level benchmarks, performance level descriptors and monthly assessments this summer. Learning to be active, knowledgeable and responsible citizens is part of our district mission and truly is supported on a daily basis at Hospers Elementary.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

The MOC Floyd Valley Community School District recognized a few years ago the importance of technology in the learning process. A plan was developed to enhance what we do for our students in regards to technology and it was decided to appoint qualified instructional coach in the area of technology. This format has ensured that staff at Hospers have been able to infuse technology directly into our classrooms and enhance learning as well as share ideas and expertise with our students. We have always had “Fix it Tech Staff”, but now we have instructional resources to help meet the needs of our students directly within our classrooms. This integration of technology within our classrooms have proven to be much more efficient and effective meeting our “Essential Learnings” at all grade levels in multiple curriculum areas.

Hospers Elementary schedule supports a strong commitment to making sure our students are physically active each day. Our students get 25 minutes every other day with a certified Physical Education teacher that follows a specific curriculum based upon the Spark Program that all district instructors participated in a few years ago. They also, throughout the school year expose our children to organized team sports along with the concepts of individually being active on a daily basis. We have 3 scheduled recess times that total 60 minutes per day for our entire K-5 classrooms which are supervised by classroom teachers and support staff. Staff encourages everyone to be active and take advantage of parent purchased playground equipment and or participate in group activities out on our fields, courts and open areas. Specific K-5 nutrition and health objectives are covered within our science lessons and taught by our classroom teachers throughout the school year and assessed on a monthly basis, which also support the idea that each of us must be responsible for overall health and well-being.

It is certainly a highlight at Hospers Elementary the various opportunities our K-5 students have in the area of the Arts. We offer a wide variety of experiences in both the visual arts and instrumental/vocal arts areas during our normal school day. In addition to our required art and music classes our students may choose to play a strings instrument beginning in 2nd grade, become a member of the Pride of the Marching Band as a 5th grader, sing in an additional choir in 4th grade and participate in our musical shows every year at Hospers Elementary. Along with our academic core areas, students have the freedom to construct a program that helps meet their unique abilities and interests via these optional areas. Our building shares these instructors with the other buildings within our district rotating on a 6-day schedule. Participation in these programs is voluntary and students may join in multiple areas over the years that they attend Hospers Elementary in a variety of ways that truly expand and stretch their learning.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Hospers Elementary Leadership along with our Literacy Instructional Coach have developed K-5 Literacy Non -Negotiables that have guided our district the past few years. This document has been edited and is reviewed on an annual basis with our entire staff. It is our belief these literacy non-negotiables guide our work at the classroom level as we seek to remove assumptions and work toward more common and effective practices. Addressed are the areas of word work, fluency and accuracy, comprehension strategies, and the writing process. We provide suggested times and formats to use during read alouds, whole group instruction, small group instruction, Individualized Daily Reading (IDR) sessions, and closure/sharing activities. Assessment procedures both summative (state and district) and formative (mandated vs suggested) in nature are identified and reviewed at the beginning of each year; and staff has the opportunities to edit and update as needed at this time. Our building goals are set based upon the philosophy that our entire staff knows our students as readers; they document individual student growth, and instill a love for reading throughout the entire school year. Everyone strives to create an atmosphere where students

are motivated to read at Hospers Elementary!

One intervention that has made a significant impact over the years at Hospers Elementary is our Reading Recovery Program. We have two teachers trained in the program which was implemented back during our 1999-2000 school year. We are very fortunate to be able to stay involved in the program via district funding and the continuing education component for our staff over the years. Participation with Reading Recovery first impacted only our 1st grade program, but has since influenced our entire building when you consider the resources, materials, and professional development that has filtered throughout our staff over the years. Building leadership works closely with the instructor and utilizes the expertise she provides throughout the building and takes advantage of all the opportunities Reading Recovery provides within our area. Reading Recovery is a 1 to 1 program that gives identified 1st grade students additional reading and writing instruction that is very specific to each child for 16-20 weeks. The daily 30-minute lessons are jam-packed, fast-paced lessons that are highly coordinated with our classroom teachers and parents while in Reading Recovery. We invite parents to observe at least one lesson and help them realize the important role they play at home rereading every night and encouraging the skills worked on each day at Hospers. The majority of our Reading Recovery students are discontinued from the program; but if needed we are able to transition them into our Title I Program through 3rd grade when additional reading support is required in a small group setting. Multiple staff, students and parents have attended the professional training meetings, webinars and “Behind the Glass” lessons. We have invited MOC Floyd Valley School Board Members, PLUS Coordinators, and various business leaders to come and observe our lessons in order to help educate our community that additional time and support for our children does make a difference and that early intervention is vital at Hospers Elementary. Knowing how to read well sets the stage for almost all other learning at school and throughout our lives, thus making it our top priority for all students at Hospers Elementary.

Throughout our K-5 math instructional time, Hospers students work on being “Efficient” along with being fluent math problem solvers while being able explain their thinking processes to others in a sharing, collaborative classroom setting. Teachers monitor and check these skills with our CBM measures periodically so our students can chart and document their growth in all math domains throughout the year. Math instruction at Hospers has moved toward a more “Discovery-Based Approach” to learning that allows students to wrestle with problems in groups while injecting the thought process into learning. Our students find multiple ways to find the correct answer and actually take turns leading some of the math instruction in their classrooms. Math anxiety is lower at Hospers Elementary and our students are very used to teachers and their peers asking, “Tell me why you think that?”

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

A dedicated and passionate staff of teaching professionals serve the students at Hospers Elementary. The caring professionals provide a safe and respectful environment where students are empowered and engaged in their learning. Hospers Elementary begins each year with a, “Meet the Teacher Night”. During the night, families meet the teacher, put supplies away, and become informed about the upcoming year. We have 98% of our families attend. Our school has developed, over the years, a family like atmosphere. Many of our students have siblings, cousins, and parents that attend or did attend our school. Each student at Hospers Elementary is taught social skills through the Educational and Community Supports, Bully Prevention in Positive Behavior Support Curriculum. Students learn how to handle social situations through the use of the strategy stop, talk, and walk. This helps build safe social interactions for all our students. It allows our students to feel a part of a community inside their classroom as well as throughout the building. Each classroom has a buddy classroom which consists of an upper grade class partnered with a lower grade class. These buddy groups meet several times a month to work on building themes which are the MOC-Floyd Valley School district belief statements. The themes for this year are: respect, responsibility, cooperation, creativity, caring, work ethic, integrity, and excellence. They learn about these themes through engaging activities they complete with their buddy. Each week, one student from each class is picked to go to Cookie Club. This student is celebrated in a small group with the principal. The student will share why they were picked to join cookie club, have a cookie, and receive a gift from the principal. Each student will get the opportunity to join cookie club sometime throughout the year. The students look forward to going to cookie club; it is a highlight of their year. During Homecoming, each year, past students return to share their positive experiences from Hospers Elementary at an assembly. You can find our principal throughout the school, visiting classrooms, working with small groups in her office, or checking in on students throughout the day. Thursday after school you will find the staff at a Positive Popcorn Pivot Party. This is a time for the staff to support and encourage one another. During the week post- it notes are hung on the board in the lounge to thank, encourage, and support one another. The school motto at Hospers Elementary is that we do “Whatever It Takes” to make sure our students are successful. Our staff works together to share ideas when a student may be struggling or needing to stretch to learn. This can be done within grade levels or across grade levels. Our Special Education Teacher, Reading Teacher, and Instructional Coaches are available to meet with staff and share helpful ideas throughout the year. Everyone at Hospers Elementary is dedicated to creating a positive setting for all students to learn and grow.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Hospers Elementary has many opportunities to engage families and our communities. Parents are encouraged to attend class parties, field trips, eat lunch with their child, visit classroom activities and take advantage of volunteering opportunities. One hundred percent of our parents attend parent teacher conferences twice a year to discuss their child’s progress. Each grade level has a music performance where the gym is always packed with parents, grandparents, and community members. We have multiple volunteers that help throughout the year consisting of parents, grandparents, community members, Northwestern College students, high school students, and business people, who have service hours to donate. These volunteers complete a variety of different tasks, but mostly work with students one on one or in small groups. Our parent group, Parents Lending United Support (PLUS), is a superb organization. It was started in the late 80’s. All parents are members of the group. PLUS kicks off the year with root beer floats at the “Meet the Teacher Night”. They support our school, teachers, and staff by organizing and coordinating events, meals for conference night, fundraisers, teacher appreciation events, and our school carnival each year. The PLUS motto is, “Many Hands Make Light Work”. Some adoption programs we have at our school, are, adopt a firefighter, adopt a pilot, and adopt an engineer. These programs have events monthly when students get to interact with the visitors and do several interesting learning activities. Hospers Elementary participates in a number of service projects throughout the community, like raking leaves and picking up trash, to demonstrate how to clean up our neighborhood. We visit a local nursing home and interact with the residents on a regular basis. We bring in several community members as

resources for our classroom, agriculture in the classroom, and Very Important Person (VIP), to name a couple. VIP is when a parent or family member of each child comes to the classroom once a week and shares about their career or job to expose our students to a variety of career options. Another community member is a local bank that teaches our students how to save money. The Sioux County Conservationist visits several classrooms with many different conservation programs throughout the year. Our Marsville opportunity incorporates parents and community members along with other local schools to work together to create Mars here on earth. We have a 5th grade choir and band that all students can participate in and travel to contests in the spring. Our library has birthday books available for parents to purchase for their child on their birthday or other special occasions. Their picture is put inside the book and they get to be the first one to check it out. Hospers Elementary staff works tirelessly to shape students who are ready for the real world and know multiple ways to be active in their community.

3. Professional Development:

Two years ago, our district received the statewide Teacher Leadership Compensation Grant. It has enhanced and provided additional supports for all teachers within our district. It has allowed us to incorporate an instructional coach for math, literacy, and technology at Hospers Elementary. Instructional coaches meet with teachers to offer support, encouragement, and offer resources and suggestions to improve their lessons and their students' learning. Having instructional coaches available to assist teachers has made an impact on our students' success. A couple of years ago several of our teachers went to a conference that was focused on the Professional Learning Community (PLC) approach created by Richard and Rebecca DuFour. The teachers that were at the conference put together some ideas of how our district could use the approach to enhance learning for our students. Hospers Elementary teachers now meet in PLC teams with their grade level colleagues. Our district has set up a schedule for early dismissals two times a month so that our grade level teachers can meet as a unified group of professionals. During this PLC time, they discuss curriculum, best practices, technology, activities, go over data collected to track progress, and make necessary changes as needed. This time to collaborate, with a specific process in place, has increased our student success rate. Our teachers worked during the summer with a curriculum expert, Lori Nebelsick-Gillett, to create performance level descriptors for each essential learning. Then, they developed the formative assessments to guide teachers and students in the learning process. The teachers, who worked with Lori continued their work as the school year started to help other staff throughout the year. One other approach our district has used for professional development is APL Instructional Skills. A couple of years ago all our teachers were trained in the APL strategies and effective instructional strategies it requires. Studies have shown that appropriate use of the APL strategies does improve learning. Our district has supported new staff by training them in the APL strategies after being hired before getting their classroom in the fall. One or two times per year, we complete instructional rounds in our school with all district administrators, mixed K-12 teachers and instructional coaches coming and observing lessons taught in our Hospers Elementary classrooms. They have been able to see teachers using the interaction sequence, which is part of the APL approach, and the learning that takes place when properly carried out within a lesson on a regular basis. Hospers Elementary staff continually strives to find new ways to reach all learners in their classrooms via professional development opportunities.

4. School Leadership:

When you step inside the doors of Hospers Elementary, you witness a unique tone of belonging, a high level of support, and passionate professionals. Our principal has been cultivating this atmosphere for 20 years. She is driven to make sure all students and staff feel safe, encouraged, and strive to do their best. Our principal empowers teachers to teach and work with students. She does this by allocating resources and time in a manner that maximizes what teachers and students are able to do. She is actively involved in curriculum development and professional development. She is current on educational practices and shares information with staff members on a regular basis. She continually researches to find new strategies to achieve higher standards of learning for all students. She meets with staff to problem solve and determines how to best serve individual students and their families. She shares strategies with teachers to assist individual students who may be struggling socially, emotionally, or academically. She has been instrumental in creating opportunities for our teachers to think outside the box to reach students where they are and build lessons to scaffold learning for all students. The principal has a clear understanding of the

achievement levels of all students within her school. She creates a school newsletter each month with 3 different fifth grade students. This newsletter is sent home with each child each month. You will find students playing games, working in small groups, or working one on one with the principal in her office throughout the day. Fridays are cookie club day where students get to share a success story and a cookie with the principal. The principal works side by side with our parent group (PLUS), she works with fellow administrators, instructional coaches, and she is the director at our preschool. She also conducts book studies with staff to help them create action plans to improve learning for all. The principal regularly meets the needs of anyone who steps into her office. She has an open-door policy and can be found throughout the building. She advocates for students and works tirelessly to make sure all of their needs are being met daily at school as well as in their home. She is key in creating events for our families at Hospers Elementary. She has been successful in creating an environment where everyone loves to be a part of the caring community at Hospers Elementary.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Hospers Elementary is proud of the academic success of our students and the progress we are making in preparing our students for the challenges they will face beyond their time at Hospers Elementary. The one practice we believe has contributed to the rise in our academic success is the use of APL teaching strategies. In 2004, our district began training staff in the APL strategies. The district has seen direct results from using APL strategies in the classroom and is committed to training all new staff before beginning school each fall. The creators, Dr. Jean T. Anastasio, David Perry, and John Zalonis created APL to work with professional educators. To this end, they are committed to assisting educational organizations in planning and implementing a meaningful and ongoing staff development program. It is becoming increasingly evident that school districts and organizations, that identify and implement comprehensive staff development programs, are reaping some interesting and exciting dividends. Hospers Elementary is no exception. Results include increased staff morale, meaningful and positive communication systems in place, productive time on task management, improved planning and organization, consistent and positive classroom management, application of proven classroom instructional techniques and skills, and much more. Our teachers begin each day with a posted agenda and objectives. They communicate the object of a lesson prior to presenting it, manage time more efficiently, and facilitate learning. They give clear directions which improve classroom conditions, and engage all learners. Teachers model within lessons how to provide an exit option in group discussion, and set a positive tone within their classrooms. Teachers use these APL strategies to help manage student anxiety, reinforce desired behaviors, give student feedback, and provide closure within each lesson. Effective school research clearly indicates that providing staff with meaningful, practical and ongoing staff development is basic to reaching quality performance goals. Our teachers have been committed to using APL strategies throughout their day to enhance the learning opportunities for their students. Since Hospers Elementary began using APL strategies, our students' behaviors and learning have been very positively impacted.