

U.S. Department of Education
2018 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Dr. Tami Kampwerth

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

Official School Name Aviston Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 350 South Hull Street

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

Aviston IL 62216-3407
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Clinton County

Telephone (618) 228-7245

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Web site/URL http://www.avistonk-8.org

E-mail tkampwerth@avistonk-8.org

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Dr. Tami Kampwerth

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail tkampwerth@avistonk-8.org

District Name Aviston Elementary School District 21 Tel. (618) 228-7245

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. Brad Eversgerd

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

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

Date _____

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

Part I – Eligibility Certification

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

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group and all subgroups, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 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):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 0 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 1 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	26	14	40
K	24	25	49
1	24	21	45
2	14	17	31
3	22	15	37
4	17	16	33
5	17	20	37
6	24	21	45
7	14	14	28
8	29	16	45
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	211	179	390

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 % Asian
 - 0 % Black or African American
 - 1 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 98 % White
 - 1 % 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: 2%

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	7
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	0
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	7
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	385
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.02
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1%
2 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: 9%
Total number students who qualify: 35

8. Students receiving special education services: 16 %
63 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>4</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>8</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>5</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>12</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>32</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>1</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: 13
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.	20
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	4
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	7
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	0

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 19:1

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	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 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.

To prepare and educate children through attention to their intellectual, social, emotional, moral, and ethical needs.

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

Aviston Elementary School District #21 thrives in a 20 square mile area in northern Clinton County, Illinois. Surrounded by dairy, grain, and livestock farms, the district currently has 392 students in preschool through 8th grade. The community has roughly 2,000 people who live in the village of Aviston, which lies in the center of the district. The community is near St. Louis, Missouri, as well as Scott Air Force Base in Belleville, Illinois; both of these metropolitan areas provide employment for many residents. Aviston is a quiet town that is centered on the school and St. Francis of Assisi Church. The elementary school was formerly located in facilities built in 1921 and owned by the church, which leased the buildings to the public school. In 1998, the superintendent and board of education began working on modernizing the facility and making it accessible. Fortunately, the Illinois Capital Development Board Grant became available to the district, and it was determined that the best option would be to build a new school. A referendum was placed in front of the voters, who overwhelmingly supported the concept of a new school building. Ground was broken in August 2000, and in October 2001, the school opened its doors to 240 students. Among the elementary districts in Clinton County, this school is one of the newest and most modern facilities and the community takes great pride in this fact.

The new facility, along with a reputation for high test scores and a positive environment, brought significant growth to the district and the enrollment quickly ballooned to 331 by 2006. While it was hard to believe, there was no denying that the school had completely run out of room in just five years. Another referendum was placed in front of the voters to add a six classroom addition onto the existing building. This referendum passed and in October of 2007, the new wing was opened for students.

As the school entered new facilities, the district was accepted as a LITES School (Leaders in Technology Enhanced Schools). This jumpstart on new technology turned the Aviston Elementary district into a pacesetter for the area. Teachers were provided Smart Boards and new computers and significant professional development upon the move to the new facility. A grant provided a television studio within the building. This ability to broadcast news to the entire school on a daily basis is the foundation of one of the school's most unifying traditions. The daily newscast involves students as engineers, on-air announcers, and creators of content that keeps the whole school informed about important events, the weather, and what's on the menu for lunch.

Aviston Elementary thrives in spite of extremely low operating expense per pupil. The district spends just \$6,404 per student (ranking #368 out of 374 elementary districts in the state, which spend up to \$34,000 per student). While district funding levels are low, the school is served by a dedicated staff of teachers, an assistant principal, and a superintendent/principal who all wear many hats in order to make this small rural school successful. Finances present many challenges to staff and students, but the overwhelmingly high test scores of the district prove that there's more to education than a large budget.

While the district is known for its top-notch scores on standardized tests, the district is also known for well-developed extracurricular programming. Sports for boys and girls, as well as band, jazz band, and choir, scholar bowl, and math team are all part of the culture of the community. The Sports Boosters, Band Boosters and PTA provide high levels of financial support to all of these activities. When there's a game or contest in the gymnasium, Aviston Elementary students can count on every seat being filled by supportive community members who care about them and enjoy watching them participate.

The school is the hub for the community and a variety of activities. The local parish has use of the school for religion classes before the school day 3 times per week. The local YMCA hosts an after school latch key program during the school year. Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts and a large 4-H group are welcomed into the facilities. The outreach of the school is necessary, because in this small town, the school represents the community as a whole. If there is an activity that can benefit students, the doors are open and no fee is charged.

The demographics of the school reflect a changing environment. Fifteen years ago, free and reduced lunch rates hovered around 2%. That number has gone as high as 21% in recent years, but has leveled off at about

13%. The district has also seen changing demographics culturally, with students who are the children of Mexican immigrants enrolling. Furthermore, with the addition of several subdivisions in the past 15 years, people have used online resources and school report cards to guide them into moving to Aviston with the intent to specifically be a part of the district. The district welcomes all students, assesses their needs and teaches accordingly.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Aviston Elementary School District was an early adopter of the Common Core Curriculum Standards. Staff used a curriculum mapping process to look at their existing curriculum for English/language arts, math, science, social studies, computers, art, music, and PE. Work began in 2006, as the school grew from a single class at each grade to two classes at each grade level. At that time, it became clear that a different type of teamwork would need to be developed to ensure consistency in curriculum. New administration who had experience in curriculum mapping brought this technique in, trained staff, and monitored the developments. Because the staff had practice using curriculum mapping with the Illinois Learning Standards, they found it seamless to apply the same strategy to the Common Core Curriculum Standards, which was implemented in 2009-2010.

Preschoolers begin learning about the world of reading and math by using the Creative Curriculum as the basis for their learning; this curriculum links to the Early Learning Standards. Aviston Elementary uses a blended preschool concept. Students aged 3 through 5 with or without Individualized Education Plans share space together. A well-developed centers approach gives students opportunities to self-select activities in literacy, math, science, art, and music using play-based activities. Students work on academics in small groups with their teacher. This tuition based program sells out every year, however tuition is waived for children with special needs or students who have concerning scores on screening tests. The transition to kindergarten is made easier by the communication between preschool and primary teaching staff.

The Illinois Common Core Curriculum Standards guide the reading and English/language arts programs. Reading Street, by Scott Foresman, was chosen in 2008 by the staff for use with the K-5 students. This series is still in use, but to ensure alignment with and coverage of the IL CCCS it is supplemented heavily with a variety of non-fiction, online resources, and classroom libraries. In order to foster excellence in reading and writing, primary teachers use a balanced literacy approach to instruction. Daily shared reading, a variety of writing, guided reading, independent reading, classroom read-aloud time, and vocabulary building activities are utilized.

In grades 6-8, students utilize a McGraw Hill series as a reading text. Again, this is heavily supplemented with non-fiction, and online resources, such as Common Lit, Front Row Ed, and classroom novel sets. Ninety minute blocks are devoted to English/language arts learning in these grades. Teachers are focused on using writing as a tool for thinking. Frequent individual conferences are used with students as a means of individualizing their learning and keeping the focus on individual goals.

Students in grades 1-8 utilize Accelerated Reader. This program promotes and encourages independent reading and motivates students to become lifelong readers. Using Renaissance STAR Reader reports, teacher create rigorous goals and students are held accountable and rewarded appropriately while maintaining logs of daily reading activity, summaries, test scores and reports.

The transition to the Illinois Common Core Math Standards was possibly the most difficult undertaking for students, parents and teachers. Working with local school districts, Aviston was a leader in piloting two different curricula. Eventually, the district invested in the My Math curriculum from McGraw Hill and the Glencoe Math junior high curriculum. Five other local districts chose the same curriculum, and Aviston Elementary School was the hub for staff professional development. The districts all saved money by sharing the cost of training. Most beneficial has been the professional network created among teachers in the local school districts. The ability to share successes and have assistance in problem solving has been a plus. Teachers meet annually and informally through email, Google+, and conversations to improve math teaching.

The math curriculum is supplemented through various means. Star 360, Accelerated Math, Front Row Ed, Prodigy, Engage New York, One Stop Teacher Shop Daily Homework, and lessons from Saxon Math series are utilized. Grades 6-8 use math activities from www.ilclassroomsinaction.org. Staff training continues to

be provided internally by an Aviston teacher who is a certified Area VI math service provider. Staff is committed to having students utilize higher order thinking skills and daily assignments reflect this.

Science in K-2 is a standards based approach. The units have been developed with the assistance of various online resources, non-fiction, and textbook instruction. Grades 3-5 use a textbook base and focus on the NGSS using the processes of STEM to do hands-on activities to encourage scientific learning through experiments, student led discovery, hands on exploration, nonfiction reading, study of scientific phenomenon, and real life scenarios to explore earth science, life science, and physical science. Using the NGSS standards, the teachers supplement with Interactive Science from Pearson, Mystery Science, Brain POP, and science interactive notebook activities pulled from the Science Penguin on Teacher Pay Teacher. Grades 6-8 use a Glencoe McGraw Hill science series; the curriculum has been aligned with NGSS and includes units in earth science, life science, and physical science. Activities include work on STEM topics, creating models, and preparing for a traditional science fair.

Social Science in the K-3 classrooms utilizes a textbook but supplement with non-fiction and various online resources. Intermediate grades maintain an English language arts program that is social studies based. Pearson my World social studies consumable work texts integrate reading and writing in each lesson. The ELA curriculum is guided by the social studies work text (primarily nonfiction), engaging students in storytelling, literacy instruction, vocabulary building, communication skills, inferencing, summarizing and the application of reading strategies on a daily basis. Students in grades 6-8 focus on daily current events. American History is taught over two years of coursework, while ancient civilizations are studied by sixth grade. E-texts are used by students and small group and pair work is used along with technology in the classrooms.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Art class in 6th-8th grade introduces students to the basic elements of art and how to incorporate them into artwork. Throughout middle school, students study artists of the past and how elements of art are utilized in their work. Building on this knowledge, the students apply the elements to their own artistic creations, inspired by the artists studied. Fine arts field trips to Union Station (architectural elements/history), Sheldon Theater (history of musicals), and St. Louis Art Museum (focus on artists/elements discussed in class) reinforce concepts. K-5 art focuses more on make and take crafts and seasonal art pieces that typically also combine writing.

Music programming begins with kindergartners learning about rhythm and progresses through 8th graders learning about the history of rock and roll. The district has a band program that begins in 3rd grade with recorders and learning about producing sound and reading music. Fourth graders may choose to play an instrument and (free) weekly lessons are provided. The band practices three times per week and participates in organizational contests and marches in parades. A choir is also available for students in grades 5-8 and a jazz band is a popular activity for music lovers.

Physical Education/Health classes are held each day for all grade levels. Curriculum focuses on fitness, games, skills, and healthy lifestyles and includes an activity period daily. Students have 9 weeks of health class each year in grades 6-8. A purchased textbook is supplemented with outside speakers from the local health department, Hoyleton Youth Services Life Skills, and St. Joseph's Hospital.

Foreign language—An elective in Spanish was offered for many years, but budget cuts, changing staff, and lack of qualified applicants have put this program on hiatus. Currently instruction in foreign language relies more on awareness of commonalities in word origin and exposure through vocabulary lessons and stories of diverse cultures. Imagine Learning is a software program used by students to improve Spanish to English language learning.

Technology—Aviston's infrastructure is robust and students have ample access to technology. Younger students mostly use technology for improving reading, spelling and math. Students are exposed to keyboarding beginning in third grade. Students in 4th-8th grade utilize technology on a daily basis for information, development of projects, writing, creating visual displays, etc. Students in grade 6-8 receive 9

weeks of computer class each year. The focus of the class is keyboarding, using word processing and presentation software, and internet safety. Google Classroom activities have been put in place and two Chromebook labs have been added. The goal of technology is to seamlessly embed it into the existing curriculum.

Junior Achievement--Students in grade 6 have an opportunity to participate in Junior Achievement class. Students are exposed to the world of business and work and they learn about handling household accounts and planning for a career. A field trip to Biz Town is the highlight of this class. Students attend a day-long simulation at a dedicated Junior Achievement facility where they take on the role of local government, business, and industry.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

As staff became more comfortable with the CCCS, it became clear that a new system of accountability would need to be developed in order to better communicate about the attainment of standards, as opposed to a single letter grade for math, reading, and language arts. The district transitioned to Standards Based Assessment in 2014 for grades K-4. The staffs' goal was to create a system that was formative, differentiated, observable, and based on real-life application. Above all else, this led to a school-wide focus on writing as a key to demonstrating learning. As a result of standards based assessment, staff have been much more flexible in delivering instruction and assessing attainment utilizing multiple methods. While K-4 does all reporting using standards based assessment, grades 5-8 have also changed their practice on grades and students are often given opportunities to redo tests for additional credit after an additional mini-lesson or review from a teacher. Moving to a building-wide philosophy that completing a single test doesn't end the necessity for understanding a concept or material has been a major shift in teaching that has resulted in positive outcomes for students.

The PARCC assessment scores are an important data set for our staff. Because the test is standards based and writing focused, the staff uses the information as an indicator of student achievement. Review of this data helps staff focus on how they can strengthen the curriculum; it also informs decisions about students as they move to the next grade. PARCC data is provided to inform individual students and parents; staff members utilize the data to drive instruction.

Grades K-4 use assessment and apply it to a tiered instructional intervention program for reading called ALLSTARS. This is a locally developed daily 30-minute program which divides students into small groups for reading/language arts instruction. A variety of assessment tools, including DRA and Star Reader, are utilized to check student achievement. Based on this data, flexible small groups are developed. The groups are managed by the classroom teacher, Title I teacher, and paraprofessionals. The ALLSTARS program is not just a remediation program; it exists to accelerate student achievement whether the individual child is at grade level, below grade level, or significantly above grade level. The goal is to make this a small group time that impacts every child. The ALLSTARS program has amassed a great deal of materials over the years and our students enjoy the time spent getting individualized instruction. By focusing on early reading skills, the school has found students make significant gains.

Staff utilize a variety of instructional methods. Grades K-2 use the Daily 5 program, which enables the instruction to be set in small differentiated groups according to students' abilities. Students select from authentic reading and writing choices, working independently toward personalized goals, while the teacher meets individual needs through whole-group and small-group instruction, as well as one-on-one conferencing.

Throughout the school, efforts are made to accommodate every kind of learner. Whole Brain teaching is used as a form of interactive learning and student engagement. This allows teachers to teach items in small "chunks" and students to then become the teacher as they turn and teach a partner in the room. The environment of whole brain is very energetic and allows students to create movements and gestures with their learning. This connects all learners and allows learning to become an environment sparked with student engagement.

Technology based supports in the classroom also provide interventions and tiered instruction. Front Row Ed, Prodigy, iReady are frequently utilized by staff. Students are motivated by technology and online interventions accelerate learning.

Special education students are served in the regular education classroom to the extent possible. Core classroom teaching is the first step in making sure all students succeed. Classroom teacher commitment to their students with IEPs is evidenced by their ability to work with the special education staff to plan for student growth. The district is quick to react when students struggle. The RTI process is utilized and parents are involved in problem solving. When possible, special education teachers push into the regular education classroom to provide instruction and support.

A free tutoring program is available for students in grades 5-8 immediately after school. This is a program that can be used as a drop in or as a regular weekly night of 45 minutes of assistance. Paid staff assist students in completing homework or in reteaching a mini lesson. Staff also help students prepare for projects and tests. Tutoring has benefited many students and the school has seen a great deal of improvement in student achievement as a result of this program.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

The school climate and culture is positive. Foremost, small class sizes help teachers know students well; this leads to improved relationships that encourage hard work and effort. Student motivation begins in the classroom. Several teachers use online motivational applications to encourage good group behavior. Achievement by the group is rewarded with additional computer time, recess, or preferred activity time. Parent contact is frequent. Aviston Elementary school maintains 100% parent/teacher conference contact each year. Whole brain techniques have been employed for gaining student attention without shouting. Teachers are committed to a culture of positive discipline

Each day begins with positivity using televised announcements. There are welcoming words from the superintendent/principal, student activity reminders, and information about upcoming events. A Character Trait of the Month program is utilized to highlight skills such as hard work, persistence, creativity, and 110% effort. Students introduce themselves and appear in the local newspaper. Likewise, students are rewarded for achieving Accelerated Reading goals and are recognized for honor roll.

A social worker is contracted to work with students who are experiencing difficulties at school or home that impact their learning. The social worker provides individual counseling as well as small group counseling. Programs developed at Aviston Elementary include Girl World and BOB (Boys on Bullying), which seek to make students aware of bullying and how to help other students who are being targeted. These programs also address the many changes that occur in adolescent groups during grades 6-8.

Our teaching staff is loyal to the district. In spite of statewide financial difficulties, the teachers have stayed and worked hard together. Teachers work in teams, which creates a local support system. The faculty consists of teachers who live in or near the Aviston community and they take direct ownership of not only their classrooms, but the work of the district as a whole. Staff works with administration to solve problems together and the parents of students support the programs and classrooms in the district through volunteering, help with supervision, and financially.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Strategic planning processes have been used by the school district under the leadership of the superintendent and board of education. Through strategic planning, community members, businesses, churches, teachers, non-certified staff, and board members work together to determine long-term goals for the district. These goals are turned into action statements and are used as guiding ideas for the school board. The planning process was used in 2009 and again in 2015. These sessions laid the groundwork for many positive interactions with the community. The strategic goals are discussed quarterly at board meetings. By involving stakeholders in the process of planning, the district has been able to develop positive relationships that benefit the community.

The district has an active Parent Teacher Communication Committee. The parents and teachers fundraise and offer fun activities for students. One of the most notable things the parents of this organization accomplish each year is Teacher Appreciation Week. Efforts to decorate every door in the building with an inspirational message, small gifts, and luncheons all demonstrate the genuine warmth parents feel for teaching staff.

The Sports Booster parents have provided all of the funding for uniforms and equipment for district extracurricular programs. They raise funds and assist by working the door at all sporting events. When Illinois finances were at their lowest and the school needed to remove all sport activities from the budget, the Sports Booster parents were able to roll up their sleeves and pay for all of the officials for all games and contests in addition to the uniforms and equipment.

Band Parents support all music programs. They are on hand for parades, concerts, contests, and

performances. They manage concession stands at all extracurricular events and use the funds to pay for uniforms, instruments, music, transportation, and other necessary items. Through their efforts in supporting the arts, the school's music program has been able to thrive and grow.

Parent concerns are also addressed by the school district. When daycare options in the district were very limited, parents expressed their worries about finding quality after school care to the board of education. From this interaction, the superintendent reached out to the local YMCA and developed a partnership that provides Y Kids after school care every night after school until 6:00 PM. This has been very well received and has helped students have a safe nurturing environment after school hours without leaving the building.

Aviston Elementary also works with local universities to provide a place for pre-service teachers to gain experiences. Field 1 and 2 observers, as well as student teachers, are welcomed into the building. Staff believe in giving back to the profession and have found that building relationships with teacher education programs at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, McKendree University, and Greenville University have positive benefits for everyone.

3. Professional Development:

Professional development is key to the exemplary test scores demonstrated by students at Aviston Elementary. The transition to the Common Core Curriculum required a great deal of training, planning, and communication. Staff took on the task willingly. They attended training over summer break to ensure students at Aviston have access to the best possible curriculum. Local training provided through the Regional Office of Education was key in preparing staff for the CCCS. An Aviston staff member has also been involved in "train the trainer" activities for improving math education; this has been quite beneficial for the school district.

Administration at Aviston has cooperated with other local small school districts to develop roundtable professional development. This has resulted in collegial relationships and sharing of information among county schools. When a new math curriculum was needed as a result of the changes brought by CCCS, this administrative group worked together and encouraged teachers from several schools to study new curriculum resources together. When a decision was made to purchase, five districts made the change at the same time. This resulted in the ability to share resources from the same publisher for training. It also created a robust group of educators who were committed to the success of the program they chose through careful study. Local high schools have appreciated this cooperation and notice that students are more consistently prepared upon entering as freshmen.

Limited budgets have led to creative solutions for professional development within the school. When a teacher learns about a new online tool or shows success with a new concept, such as whole-brain learning, they are encouraged to share information with peers during the school day or at school improvement meetings. Aviston has local experts in Google Classroom, Star Reader, using Microsoft Office tools, etc.

Professional development in social emotional learning has been quite impactful as well. A contracted social worker has assisted staff in dealing with catastrophic student illnesses, attention deficit disorder, depression, suicide, and trauma informed classrooms. The training has done more than help staff understand students. It has also raised the level of empathy and teamwork in the building as coworkers share struggles and successes in helping students.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership of the district maintains a philosophy of empowering teachers to make decisions to benefit their students. The school is served by a superintendent/principal who holds the dual position and is the only full-time administrator in the district. The superintendent/principal manages all aspects of the district including finance, policy, curriculum, personnel, evaluation, purchasing, transportation, cafeteria, discipline, and extracurricular activity supervision. A part-time assistant principal/classroom teacher assists with discipline, scheduling, personnel, extracurricular activity supervision and evaluation. Administration takes pride in knowing students well, which results in a school where discipline is rarely an issue. Both

administrators place a great deal of faith in the teaching staff, aide staff, and non-certified workers. This results in a workforce willing to seek solutions and develop programs that lead to student success. Administration is stretched thin at times, but the positions have been held by the same two women for more than 13 years; their knowledge of the staff, students, and community is a valuable asset.

Leadership is also distributed among staff. The size of the faculty leads to many opportunities to reach consensus. Staff frequently volunteer for committee work for handbook, curriculum, technology, etc. Staff are encouraged to try new curriculum, materials, technology, and methods of instruction. Emphasis is placed on “local experts” and often district leadership recommends that teachers visit their coworkers’ classrooms to learn about new discipline methods or whole-brain teaching. New staff members are welcomed and are given opportunities to be part of the informal team. The district is right-sized for including staff in many decisions.

The board of education is also supportive of innovation. Their support and trust in the staff empowers all of the educators in the building to try new technology, materials, and approaches.

Because funding has always been a concern, the sense of ownership for the outcomes of our students is key to the exemplary test scores posted by this school. Staying abreast with the latest textbooks, technology and resources is not always financially possible; however, the staff is diligent about finding effective tools for the students. Teachers and administrators wear many hats and are respectful of one another’s time while giving generously of their talents. Many staff can be found tutoring, coaching or leading after-school programs.

Teachers accommodate parents when they schedule opportunities to meet to discuss progress and/or concerns regarding students. They email, text, call, and provide notes home communicating necessary information. The direct communication is impactful and leads to positive relationships that benefit students.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Aviston Elementary School is honored to be nominated as a National Blue Ribbon School due to exemplary test scores. Incredible effort goes into this measurable achievement. However, Aviston Elementary School is much more than a tradition of excellent test scores. The entire school community is dedicated to individual student growth that seeks to cultivate a lasting love of learning in each child. Teachers, administrators, staff, parents, and the entire learning community want to be difference makers for these children. The dedication is immeasurable and is visible everywhere in the school.

Staff at Aviston Elementary care about every detail of the students' experiences. It starts every summer, when teachers check to see when the wax is dry on classroom floors so they can return and begin preparing. Attention to detail continues with staff who spend untold hours preparing challenging lessons and assessing student work. Late in the evening, or during weekends, and in early mornings, staff can be observed helping students, communicating with parents, and researching instruction and interventions. Teachers attend professional development willingly. Staff takes on leadership roles, formally and informally. Positive relationships with students are evident. Everyone working at the school takes ownership and is dedicated to making the school a great place for children.

Credit also goes to parents and the community for the success of Aviston Elementary School. Parents support reading, homework, the arts, athletics, school attendance, and appropriate classroom behavior. There are positive relationships with the churches, volunteer organizations, mayor, village council, police department, and volunteer fire department. A variety of agencies in the Clinton County area, including hospitals, youth charities, and service organizations also cooperate to support Aviston Elementary through special programming and assistance. The community's dedication is vital to the success at Aviston Elementary School, which extends far beyond exemplary test scores.

There is no secret ingredient, no special program, no single strategy that makes this school a Blue Ribbon Nominee. This school is small, tightly budgeted and definitely rural, but it's a welcoming place where dedicated caring people work together to set the course, support the mission, and celebrate the success of Aviston Elementary School's tradition of excellent achievement.