

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
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 2 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	10	8	18
K	11	13	24
1	17	17	34
2	11	16	27
3	12	15	27
4	9	7	16
5	10	10	20
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	80	86	166

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 5 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 93 % White
 - 0 % 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: 5%

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	2
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	4
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	6
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	130
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.05
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %
0 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
none

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 66 %
Total number students who qualify: 110

8. Students receiving special education services: 8 %
14 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>1</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>5</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>6</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>2</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: 10
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.	6
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	3
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	3
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 22:1

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	94%	96%	94%	95%	95%
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 all the students in academic skills, healthy physical and emotional development, appropriate social interactions, and positive attitudes in order to enhance the development of each individual's unique potential.

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

Our building is a school of choice school.

PART III – SUMMARY

Akron-Fairgrove School District is nestled in the small rural Michigan communities of Akron and Fairgrove. The educational process takes place for approximately 311 students within two buildings, Akron-Fairgrove Elementary and Akron-Fairgrove Jr/Sr High School. Our elementary school serves grades preK-5 and is located in Akron. Our secondary school serving students in grades 6-12 is located in Fairgrove. Each building has its own principal, and the district has 30+ personnel. The district's teaching staff is comprised of 19 certified teachers with approximately half of them having a Master's Degree. The elementary staff consists of 9 full time teachers. Seventy-Five percent of the elementary teaching staff have Master's degrees. We departmentalize in our 4th and 5th grade classrooms. One teacher teaches all science and math and the other teaches English Language Arts. We have proved that this scheduling has increased student achievement based on local and state assessments.

The school district covers approximately 125 sq. miles with two major bus runs carrying students to school. The community is a place of family life in a safe uncrowded and caring atmosphere. The district is located in Michigan's "Thumb" area, heart of fertile farmlands with many people working outside of the community.

The elementary building has a GSRP (Great Start Readiness Program) where we serve 18 full time preschoolers. The lead teacher holds an early childhood specialization. The associate teacher holds the required credentials. This program is rated with 5 Stars based on the Program Quality Assessment. We always have a waiting list for our preschool program.

In the past, the elementary school has incorporated Power Hours where students are given individualized instruction based on local assessments and teacher input. We continue to implement this when possible, but adjust groups as needed based on data. We have noticed an increase in student growth in math and ELA in comparison to previous years due to the small group individualized instruction.

This is our fourth year working with the Excellence in Education team. We have incorporated a model called the Focused Instructional Model into our daily math instruction. This includes daily warm-ups, bi-weekly assessments and students graphing their own progress. The power standards used are all based on the Common Core Standards.

Our elementary special education percentage is approximately 9.5%. The resource room teacher is highly qualified and a great resource to teachers and students.

Some unique features of the district include offering FREE lunch and breakfast to ALL students k-12, and offering a free-of-charge driver's training program to qualified students. All students in 9th-12th grades have access to iPads and the opportunity to take it with them upon graduation after attending school within the district a minimum of 3 years. All students k-12, have an opportunity to use iPads, ChromeBooks in the classroom and computers for daily online experiences.

The elementary school was labeled a focus school for the 2013-2014 school year. We were assigned a facilitator to guide our staff through data and strategy development. The elementary school was taken off the Focus School list in March 2016. In January 2017, the elementary school received the honor by the Michigan Department of Education as being a Reward School for the 2015-2016 school year!!

Akron-Fairgrove started a balanced calendar for the 2017-2018 school. Our enrollment has increased from 285 on our 2016 count to 294 at our 2017 fall count. The balanced calendar is the talk of all surrounding schools and it has worked very positively for us!

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

At Akron-Fairgrove, we teach the core curriculum using a variety of instructional strategies, such as whole group, small group instruction and center-based learning, as well as differentiating instruction to meet the needs of all students.

In reading/language arts, we use a reading and writing workshop model based curriculum (MAISA-Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators) which is aligned with the common core state standards. Instruction is based on the "Big 5" ideas of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary. Students in kindergarten through second grades use a Saxon Phonics program and grades 2-5 use Words Their Way which is more of an individualized program. The daily reading instruction includes word study, writing, grammar, and leveled reading during guided reading. Students are encouraged to make choices from classroom libraries during independent levels.

Our k-5 math curriculum engages students to solve real work problems. We use the Georgia Math curriculum. Many teachers are trained to use Number Talks in the classroom. Teachers use an inquiry based approach and encourage student discussion with rich vocabulary. Teachers in 1st-5th grades use the Focused Instructional Model daily. The Focused Instructional Model is implemented in classrooms first by analyzing data and choosing eight to sixteen key concepts, or power standards, that students will focus on throughout the entire school year. All classes have 60 minutes or more per day for math instruction. Each lesson begins and ends with a focus on the learning objective and integrates whole group instruction, student independent practice and integrates technology with programs such as Prodigy or Moby Max.

Our science curriculum follows the GLCEs and Next Generation Science Standards. We reinforce reading strategies through the use of nonfiction science texts. Teachers use student interest to guide instruction. Lessons incorporate hands-on activities and experiments.

Our social studies curriculum follows the MAISA curriculum, which is aligned to the state standards. During the social studies units, students are engaged in real life, higher order thinking activities. The curriculum focuses on "Myself" for kindergarten, "Families and schools" for first grade, "Local Communities" for second grade, "Michigan Studies" in third grade, "United States Studies" in fourth grade, and "Early American History" in fifth grade.

Our building houses a Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP). This Michigan's state-funded preschool program for four-year-old children with factors which may place them at risk of educational failure. The program is administered by the Michigan Department of Education, Office of Great Start. Funding is allocated to each intermediate school district to administer the program locally. Research on preschool programs and specific research on GSRP indicates that children provided with a high-quality preschool experience show significant positive developmental differences when compared to children from the same backgrounds who did not attend a high-quality preschool program.

We firmly believe that the curriculum and our instruction have boosted our school to have the best MSTEP scores for 2017 in our county. Our 3-5 grades placed at the top of the county in all tests except science, which we placed 2nd. We are proud to say we were above the state average in every test.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Even though we are a small, rural school, we want our students to value physical education and music. All students in kindergarten through 5th grade receive a 30 minute PE class daily. We use the EPEC curriculum for PE. We want our students to learn about giving back to organizations. They raise money for the American Heart Association by participating in Jump Rope for Heart and Hoops for Heart. Students in the upper elementary are learning the fundamentals of sports we offer at our school. This includes basketball, volleyball, track, softball and baseball.

Another popular event is our Relay Recess. We were the first elementary school in the county to start this event. Typically, students are involved in field day activities during the day and take part in the silent lap event, all to honor cancer victims. All funds raised go the American Cancer Society.

Our school has been part of the Farm Bureau sponsored ACES (All Children Exercise Simultaneously) event for many years. All students and staff are excited to incorporate exercise into the day.

Our school partners with our intermediate school district to offer students in kindergarten, second and fourth PE-NUT (physical education and nutrition) lessons. The nutrition educator teaches a nutrition lesson and offers a healthy snack to the students during each visit.

We believe the arts are important for our students to become well rounded individuals. Music class is everyday for grades kindergarten through 5th. Students perform songs during the annual Christmas program. We would like students to also sing during our end of the year assemblies. The music class is a great feeder program for the junior high band class.

Students take part in civic learning. We have an annual Veteran's Day program where students honor local veterans.

Our student council is a very active group in our school. Student council projects include food drives, personal hygiene item donations for our local veteran's home, penny wars to raise money for the Tuscola County Imagination Library, and a clothing drive for the local foster care closet.

Due to the generosity of NextEra Wind Farms, our school has increased the amount of technology. They have provided our school the opportunity of purchasing iPads and Chromebooks. We are very close to being a 1:1 technology building. NextEra coordinated our KindWind teacher professional development day in 2017. Teachers were engaged in hands-on activities that could be planned for the classroom. The day concluded with a field trip for teachers to a local wind turbine.

We also two other computer labs in our building. Students in the 4th and 5th grades use google classroom for assignments and communication with their teacher.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

At Akron-Fairgrove Elementary School, we strive to make sure that we meet the needs of all our students. We consistently assess and analyze student scores and collaborate with our teams to ensure that our students are getting the best instruction and intervention in a way that provides them with multiple opportunities to be successful. We use a variety of different instructional strategies, differentiation, technology in every classroom, interventions and supports such as Title 1, At-Risk , MTSS (Multi Tiered System of Supports), Blueprint and the MiBISi (Michigan's Integrative and Learning Support Initiative), to make certain that no student falls between the cracks and that all students are making growth.

Technology has played a major role in our educational program here at Akron-Fairgrove Elementary School. Obtaining grants has allowed us to purchase technology across all grade levels. Our teachers utilize their document cameras, projectors, and smart board technology to bring new experiences to our students. By making instruction more visual, our teachers are able to engage the students, meet their needs, and provide opportunities to expand curriculum beyond a textbook, as well as differentiate classroom content. Our younger students are working with iPad technology, using apps to explore new books and practice core content while receiving intervention. Our older students are able to work with Chromebooks and Google Classroom and are taking ownership of their learning. You can find our students working on presentations, submitting papers electronically, or participating in intervention programs such as: NewsELA, ReadWorks, MobyMax, Compass Learning, Spelling City, Epic, Prodigy, Study Ladder, amongst others. Our students also have access to two computer labs where they participate in additional online and technological activities. For a rural school, one would find us quite advanced in our utilization of technology. This use of technology has allowed us to really make education personal and individualized to our students.

Intervention has been a strong suit of Akron-Fairgrove Elementary. Although we may be small in size, this has allowed us the flexibility and individualized programming needed to run interventions successfully, meeting the needs of all our students. Our teachers are magicians with time management, building differentiation and intervention into their daily lessons. One would find teachers regularly using strategies such as: direct instruction, flexible reading groups, collaborative learning groups, peer to peer instruction, Daily 5 instruction, research based interventions, growth mindset, and MTSS strategies.

We have a Title 1 support teacher, who is in constant collaboration with the teachers, and works with a variety of small groups or individual students, using evidence based strategies and researched based programming. We have three Title 1 paraprofessionals who pull groups of at-risk students, practicing and building academic skills through the use of intervention and differentiated instruction.

Our special education teacher provides both pull-out and inclusive services as well as provides Tier 3 small group instruction and intervention for both special education and Tier 3 general education students.

We have an early literacy consultant and a math coach who visit regularly, offering both the teachers and students support and guidance to continue to build programming that best meets the needs of our student population.

Our staff collaborates together and serves on a variety of different committees and teams. Under the MTSS model and the MiBISi initiative, we have a District Improvement Team, Student Improvement Team, Title 1 Support Team, District Network team, Reading Team and Behavior Team. Teachers also serve on our Curriculum Committee. These teams meet frequently to analyze the needs of our building and our district, collaborating and reviewing data to bring supports back to the building, allowing for increased opportunities to ensure success for our teachers and students.

We also have academic teacher leaders, who offer guidance and collaboration to other teachers in order to ensure our students are getting the supports they need. Our teacher mentor program has also helped to support our new teachers in analyzing and identifying students and providing the individualize instruction and intervention those children require to be successful.

In addition to all that is listed above, our staff holds grade level team meetings to discuss interventions and match students to the diverse instructional strategies that would best meet their needs. Child Study Team Meetings are also held regularly to meet with parents and discuss any concerns that might be preventing the student from making growth, while brainstorming different strategies that may be more successful in helping them to meet their goals.

At Akron-Fairgrove Elementary, we feel that assessment is key in collecting data in order to identify the needs of students and guide us in the ways we can meet those needs. Our whole building participates in the DIBELS reading and DIBELS math assessments, completing a beginning, middle, and end of year assessment. Students are regularly progress monitored, both at grade level and at academic level. Our grades k-3 utilizes the BAS assessment, creating IRIPs for students and developing intervention plans. Our school also works with the Excellence in Education program, assessing and progress monitoring math using sixteen core math power standards that are directly aligned with the common core. Teachers also employ pre-tests/post-tests, chapter and unit tests, quick checks, exit tickets, and other quick assessments to continue to monitor student growth.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Akron-Fairgrove prides itself on being positive and engaging. Teachers strive to make the educational setting a positive and welcoming environment. Our classrooms encourage adaptive seating, warm colors and soft lighting. We provide opportunities for students to move and learn through multiple learning styles and gross motor breaks are built into the daily schedule. Technology provides visual stimulation and allows differentiation, making assignments personal to student growth. Our balanced calendar allows for breaks to be built into the school year, providing mental health days for students, staff and faculty.

Through our work with MiBISi, we participate in a school wide positive behavior intervention program. We focus on our STAR expectations (Show safe behavior, Take responsibility, Always show respect, Reach for Goals). Students are able to earn STAR student cards, which they bring to the office, sign the celebrity notebook, receive a note to go home and pick a number, placing their card in a corresponding slot on the bulletin board. Students then have an opportunity to be selected for an additional mystery reward. Additionally teachers sent home positive postcards home every week, noting 2 or 3 students who have been great examples or are making progress towards their goals. Teachers use Class Dojo to communicate positive behavior to parents and students are able to earn points for making good choices, redeeming them for small rewards. In addition, you will find many teachers utilizing positive behavior supports in their classroom, such as marble jars, earning letters, token economies and reward tickets. Assemblies, Field Trips and Reward Days are also built into our school year.

At Akron-Fairgrove we make it a priority to work on empathy and social skills with our students. Students are provided with empathy and bullying support lessons through Class Dojo and programs such as Second Step and Bully Blockers. Our teachers and principal have an open door policy, encouraging students to seek advice and support. We work hard to establish relationships with our students by having fun with them, eating lunch with them, or going out to recess with them. We want our students to feel safe and we want our school to feel like family.

That family mentality is the format for our teaching environment. Being able to trust each other is imperative to our ability to grow as a building. Our administration has worked to provide opportunities for team building and collaboration. Staff meetings are held regularly and our teachers are encouraged to speak freely. Events are provided to allow the staff to have fun together and build relationships. Our building will often have “family potluck dinners” or have group events to encourage relationships beyond the professional environment. We support each other and we work together. Often our administration will bring in lunch for the staff, just for appreciation, and our principal and superintendent make a point to let the staff know verbally how they are valued and appreciated. Our superintendent even delivers birthday cards with gift cards and comes with a large stocking full of handcrafted gifts for staff during the holiday season.

Our elementary staff has strong ties to the community and school. This is evident by 61% of our elementary staff either graduated from A-F or married an A-F graduate and chose to stay in the community and raise their families.

Our families and community are very important to us. We work hard to communicate to them via Class Dojo, newsletters and Facebook. We invite families into our building and hold family events throughout the school year such as: Donuts with Dads, Muffins with Moms, dances, picnics, field days, STEM nights and concerts. Fostering relationships between our community, our families, our students and our staff is a major contributing factor to our success as a school district.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Engaging families and communities is very important to our school staff. The education of children is a partnership between the home and school. Parent involvement is crucial to the academic and social

development of each child. We want every child to have a successful educational experience. This goal becomes reality for a child when parents and school staff work together. Parents are the most important partners in achieving this goal. They play a key role in the education of their children.

Akron-Fairgrove Elementary school-wide family involvement is a collaborative effort of parents, teachers and administration. We offer flexible meeting times & varied activities designed to support and encourage the involvement of all parents.

To ensure the involvement of all parents Akron-Fairgrove Elementary School we offer several flexible meeting times and activities during the school year. These activities include, but not be limited to the following: back to school night; parent-teacher conferences; student performances; school website access; Donuts with Dads; Muffins with Moms; flexible IEPs meeting times; progress reports and report cards; school and classroom newsletters; literacy and math nights; school-wide picnic; curriculum council meetings; school improvement meetings; parent teacher organization; school Facebook pages for communication; and transportation if needed.

To ensure we provide timely information about the academic curriculum, assessments used to measure progress and grade level expectations, we communicate with parents in a timely manner by providing: school and class newsletters – school and classroom newsletters should provide parents with a preview of core curriculum that has been and will be covered; report cards and mid-term reports for all students; parent teacher conferences held two times each year, Nov. and March and upon parent request; school website access; Powerschool online grading system; student handbooks that include the School/Parent Compact; email, phone calls, Class Dojo; curriculum maps available online; Friday folders; monthly parent involvement activities; and preschool to kindergarten preschool transition program in March.

To ensure we provide parents a description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress, and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet, we provide the following: back to school night. This gives the school the opportunity to discuss curriculum with families. The curriculum is accessible on the elementary website; forms of academic assessment used-DIBELS Next for Reading, DIBELS Next for Math, AIMSweb for writing, Progress monitoring assessments; proficiency levels for DIBELS Next; and proficiency levels for DIBELS Math computation.

We provide parents the opportunity to interact with teachers regarding the education of their children. To ensure all parents have the opportunity to interact with teachers, Akron-Fairgrove Elementary School provides: parent-teacher conferences held twice a year; holding annual meeting at convenient time; provide convenient times for parent meetings, ex. coffee with principal, lunch with principal; communication through multiple means including telephone, email, school Facebook, PTO meetings and Class DoJo; child-study and IEP meetings at the parent's convenience whenever possible; participation and involvement on the school and district improvement team; teacher office hours; surveys at conferences, which allows for suggestions from parents; and responses to parental suggestions in a timely manner.

We believe there are shared responsibilities for high academic achievement. We provide frequent reports to parents on their children's progress through: parent-teacher conferences two times each year; quarterly report cards; mid-marking period reports for all students; Friday folders; benchmark/progress monitoring assessment reports; assessment results in report format; e-mail/telephone conversations; Class Dojo; school newsletters; classroom newsletters; Power School online grading system; school reach automated system; and school Facebook pages.

We provide parents reasonable access to staff and offer opportunities for parents to volunteer, participate and observe their child's classroom through: school/classroom newsletters inviting parents to be involved; teacher accessibility before and after school; teacher office hours; scheduling of child study/IEP meetings at parent convenience when possible; parent-teacher conference options- afternoon or evening; creating a volunteer need list; personal calls to parents inviting them to the school/classroom; several parent involvement activities throughout the school year; PTO meetings; school Facebook pages; chaperoning field trips; and classroom observation as requested by parent.

We believe in building capacity for involvement with our parents by providing information and assistance to them regarding the state and local academic standards and assessments. To ensure that parents are informed we do the following: provide parents with parent friendly GLCE/Common Core handbooks; Common Core PTO guidelines; provide parents an opportunity to see benchmark assessment materials (DIBELS Next/DIBELS Math) and discuss results at parent teacher conferences; provide parent-friendly benchmark/progress monitoring reports (DIBELS Next/DIBELS Math) These reports are easy to read and show graphs of where their child is and where their goal is; provide progress monitoring results that guide student intervention groupings; back to school night; send home parent report on the state assessment; and offer parents the opportunity for additional assistance with any question regarding assessments.

We also provide parents with the following materials and opportunities for training: summer practice packets; kindergarten registration packets contain materials for preschool parents; take home reading materials; community events information as it becomes available; community resource information; literacy/math nights which inform parents of specific games and activities to strengthen math and literacy skills; information in school/classroom newsletters; STEM night activities; and student academic games, learning websites, iPad apps lists on elementary school website.

We try to coordinate parent involvement activities with other programs by coordinating our GSRP preschool program in all parent involvement activities. We strive to use the resources available to our parents through our local ISD such as Parenting with Love and Logic. We also involve other county agencies (Tuscola Behavioral Health and Tuscola County Health Department) when it is appropriate. The Parent Teacher Organization is largely involved in many aspects of the elementary school. Our elementary has conducted Preschool/Kindergarten round up night with Great Start Tuscola.

Akron-Fairgrove Elementary School will provide support for parental involvement by: providing every effort to meet parent requests to ensure that families' needs are met in order to create positive parent involvement; scheduling activities at different times (morning, noon, evening); providing other accommodations as necessary; and having open lines of communication through phone calls, emails, Class DoJo and Powerschool.

Our community is very giving. Local churches donate school supplies and Christmas gift to needy families. The local bank provides food at after school sporting events. Our local library plans literacy and STEM events for our students to participate in. The Rotary Club donates dictionaries to all 3rd graders each year.

Community and family engagement is a very important key to academic success for our students. We appreciate all support from stakeholders.

3. Professional Development:

Staff professional development is based on the Comprehensive Needs Assessment in the school improvement plan. Our needs assessment has shown student improvement in reading and math. The academic goals of the school improvement plan are all students will be proficient in English Language Arts and all students will be proficient in math.

Professional development in math will include working with the Institute for Excellence in Education (IEE). Excellence in Education has provided teachers in grades 1-5 with training on the Focused Instructional Model (FIM). The Focused Instructional Model is implemented in classrooms first by analyzing data and choosing eight to sixteen key concepts, or power standards, that students will focus on throughout the entire school year. Our teachers will have access to a coach from Excellence in Education to help mentor and guide them through the process during the school year. IEE's coaches work side-by-side with educators, modeling new methods and co-teaching in classrooms, for the specific purpose of empowering educators to make continued improvements to their practice.

Professional learning in reading includes DIBELS data reviews to ensure students are receiving the appropriate intervention to meet their academic needs. Staff involved are general education teachers,

special education teacher, Title I teacher and principal. The MTSS reading and behavior have training provided by MiBLSi. Each training is specific for reading or behavior. Teachers have also received training in the use of the MAISA ELA and Writing units.

Professional learning is sustained and ongoing. At the district level, we have five days for district-wide professional development. This PD is geared towards district focused initiatives. Surveys are used to plan accordingly for professional development.

Our district has a new teacher mentoring program where new teachers are assigned mentors who have scheduled times to meet regarding teaching and learning. New teachers are encouraged to attend the New Teacher Training program through the ISD.

Our school district is part of the MiExcel Blueprint. Our major focus is to synchronize all district and school level systems for dramatic improvement in student and teacher performance in a short amount of time. Professional development includes training with the collaborative learning cycle/problem solving driver and currently working on creating visions of ambitious teaching.

4. School Leadership:

At Akron-Fairgrove Elementary, we believe leadership is a collaborative effort with the principal and staff. Communication plays a major role, due to the fact that we have only one section per grade. Teachers work together across all grade levels to ensure students are prepared for the next grade. Besides the principal, we have veteran teachers who take on leadership roles as well. All groups, such as our school board, administrative team, which includes the superintendent, high school principal and elementary principal, teacher leaders and probationary teachers play separate, but important roles in our school.

Our leadership teams include a School Improvement Team (SIP), District Implementation Team (DIT), District Network team (DN), behavior team, reading team, and curriculum committee. Our DIT, SIP and DN teams are made up of the same members to ensure consistency and follow-through.

Our school improvement team works together to review and refine our plan for increasing student achievement through high quality instructional activities and strategies. We work towards Michigan's school improvement plan of gather, study, plan, and do.

The DIT team works to ensure we have the systems and processes in place for effective innovations. One objective of our DIT is to complete the DCA (District Capacity Assessment) that measures the district's capacity to implement MTSS (Multi-Tiered Systems of Support). We base our goals on what areas we need to plan for. We continually update our Communication Plan to inform staff about our work with MTSS. The key elements the DIT team work toward a continuum of evidence based practices, data based decision and problem solving, universal screening, continuous progress monitoring, focus on fidelity of implementation. The focus areas of MTSS and the DIT team are reading and behavior. The reading and behavior teams work together to 1) plan and coordinate implementation efforts, 2) communicate these efforts to staff, school community and administration, and 3) develop and assess resources for implementation.

The DN team follows the Mi-Excel Blueprint. This is an opportunity for our district to create urgency and leverage systemic support for the dramatic improvement and sustainability of student, teacher, and leader performance. It is designed to create a stronger systemic focus on and support of high quality teaching and high levels of student learning. The DN has implemented numerous systemic practices that have improved communication between administration and staff.

Leadership decisions are made with student interest being in mind. The principal is visible in the building and makes every effort to check in classrooms daily. Being visible is the key to open communication and making sure that staff trust one another and have an open-door policy. Leaders try to work collaboratively to ensure student achievement.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

In the past, our school was labeled as a focus school. We didn't want that label to define who we were! With the help of facilitators and administrative support, we had no excuse but to get better at what we do. Serious conversations took place. No excuses were accepted. We made the plan to become a Reward School and we did just that.

The one practice we implemented were Power Hours. Essentially power hours is our building name for intervention groups. Within these power hours, intervention groups were made based on universal screeners and progress monitoring.

We previously used the RTI model for intervention and have since transitioned to the MTSS model. We use DIBELS Next for Reading and DIBELS Math for our universal screener and progress monitoring of students in K-5. Teachers are involved in analyzing data from these assessments. Building level data reviews are held three times each year after benchmark assessments. Through data reviews, teachers are able to see which students are not meeting benchmark expectations. Those students are then placed into intervention groups during power hours to receive additional support. Between benchmark assessments teachers administer progress monitoring assessments. Teachers then modify and adjust power hour groups according to consecutive growth on progress monitoring. Time is also allotted at each staff meeting for teachers to discuss any questions or concerns related to assessments, data analysis, and student achievement.