

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	7	7	14
K	19	8	27
1	11	10	21
2	23	11	34
3	14	15	29
4	23	14	37
5	15	16	31
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	112	81	193

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 % Asian
 - 0 % Black or African American
 - 5 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 93 % White
 - 2 % 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: 6%

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	3
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	9
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	12
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	198
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.06
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	6

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):

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 36 %
Total number students who qualify: 70

8. Students receiving special education services: 27 %
52 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>6</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>2</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>2</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>16</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>7</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>4</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>13</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</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: 2
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.	11
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	6
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	13
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

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%	96%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 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.

Dedicated to educate and prepare each student to succeed in a changing world.

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

Maple River East Elementary was formed in 1992. Four communities came together to consolidate into Maple River Schools. At that time, the high school was located in Mapleton, middle schools in Minnesota Lake and Amboy, and elementary schools in Minnesota Lake and Good Thunder. It is located in Minnesota Lake, Minnesota, a community of about 700 residents. Currently, the district still has an elementary building in Good Thunder and Minnesota Lake, with the middle school and high school in Mapleton.

The town is on the shores of Lake Minnesota, which is an old glacial lake. The lake was developed as the glaciers melted. Once the lake covered over half million acres, but it is down to 1800 acres in Faribault County. Some of the best farmland in the world is located just outside of town. Due to this, many families in the area are tied to the agriculture business. here is a strong family structure within the communities which helps with school support.

Our student population is approximately 36% free and reduced lunch. Ethnically, we are 93% Caucasian, 5% Hispanic, and 2% other races.

Twenty-seven percent of our population receive Special Education Services.

Our district mission statement is "We are the Maple River School District dedicated to educate and prepare each student to succeed in a changing world."

In 2005, we made a distinct turn in our curriculum after a few years on the school needs improvement list in the state. We worked hard to implement a structured curriculum which focused on aligning curriculum and instruction to assessment. Also at that time, we implemented our Professional Learning Communities (PLC). We meet between six to seven times per school year to meet at grade level to discuss best practices of instruction, internal tracking of data and overall methods to improve the curriculum and delivery methods to our students. Since the inception of our PLC, we have made steady improvement in our curriculum design and brought the education of our two elementary schools closer together.

Maple River Schools began implementing The Leader in Me, the school-version of The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People (Stephen Covey) in 2007. The Leader in Me is Franklin Covey's whole school transformation process. It teaches 21st century leadership and life skills to students and creates a culture of student empowerment based on the idea that every child can be a leader.

Maple River has implemented a STEAM program, which has quickly become a favorite class for many students. The hands-on building activities and online coding, allows students to express themselves in ways they cannot in their regular subjects. The support from teachers, PTO, parents, administration, and the school board, has played a huge role in the program's success.

In kindergarten, first, and second grade, students have had opportunities to create projects in a single day setting. Kinders had fun creating bear dens, making paper plate marble mazes, and creating bridges to cross a 12-inch span. In first grade, students made coffee filter leaves to watch colors changing, made paper robots, and practiced measuring their heads to create reindeer antlers. In second grade, students were excited to make wind-powered cars to race, build tents, and made sleighs.

In third, fourth, and fifth grade, students work on multi-day, cooperative building activities. Third graders have made pinball machines and created new animals. Fourth graders have made ballooned powered buses to see how far they could travel and made scale & 3D models of dream classrooms. Fifth graders made compound machines to move a plastic egg and created a carnival game that incorporated concepts from their force and motion unit. All of the upper grades are actively coding online using Code.org and love making familiar characters move on their screens.

The Maple River Elementary Title One program services students in grades K-5 who are in need of extra reading and math support based on their STAR Reading, STAR Math and NWEA Data. Students receive

support 25 minutes each day with either a teacher or para. During their WIN (What I Need) Reading time, students work on phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension skills specific to their grade level and need. In addition, students needing more intense skills practice receive individual interventions with a paraprofessional two to three days per week. Student progress is monitored and groups/interventions are modified every six to seven weeks to meet the changing needs of students.

Maple River Schools has begun implementing the Foundations in Sounds and the Barton Reading and Spelling program in our elementary schools. Students who are below grade-level benchmark and who are not making progress in the Title One program, are screened and placed in either the Foundations or Barton program depending on their screening results.

Both the Foundations in Sounds program and the Barton Reading and Spelling program focus on building auditory memory and phonemic awareness, as well as basic phonics skills. Students in these programs receive intense 1-on-1 intervention 1 ½ - 2 hours per week by a tutor trained in the program. Student growth and progress is monitored through post-tests built in to the program, as well as growth shown on STAR and NWEA tests.

The board of education felt the need for students to have access to iPads. The first year we shared these devices at our two-section grade level. This past year all of our students have their own handheld device. Our K-2 students are using iPads, while our grade 3-5 students are now using Chromebooks. With these devices students now have access for supplementary learning programs such as Accelerated Math, Accelerated Reading, Reading Eggspress and others. They also provide opportunities for students to access their math and reading lessons. Students are motivated by this method of learning. This has been a benefit to the students to continue learning.

Education has changed since the 1850's when the first settlers of the town arrived. It has always been an important part of our community and always will. We have been recognized multiple times as a Reward School. A Reward School is a state based award for excellence. We take great pride in that feat and celebrate when the students accomplish these awards. We continue to provide our students with a safe and supportive learning environment while continuing to make improvements to our system to provide the best education for our students.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

At Maple River East Elementary, we use the Journeys reading text. It is a comprehensive, research based program that provides all students with a direction on passing the rigorous standards. It has both print and digital components. Students work on skill mastery and enjoy the high-quality text. It provides a high volume of problem solving and critical thinking skills, and challenges them to analyze complex text.

For our math series we use enVisionmath 2.0. It offers us the ability to use the text in a variety of formats including print, digital or a combination. It is very rigorous for our students and gives them visual learning strategies, and project based learning. It has the ability for our staff to customize for the students learning. EnVisionmath 2.0 encourages our students to be deep math thinkers in having them deepen their understanding. It forces them to look for relationships and try different approaches when solving problems. It is a challenging curriculum. The other piece the faculty likes is the differentiation of the curriculum. It allows for teachers to pinpoint learning styles through tiered learning, centers, flexible learning and technology.

We are currently using MacMillan/McGraw-Hill's science program Science: A Closer Look. The teachers enjoy using the activities that help to promote the inquisitive spirit of exploration in the students. It helps to build upon a lifelong understanding of science concepts.

Scott Foresman Social Studies is our curriculum of choice. The use of reading and hands-on activities helps the students experience rather than just read about topics. It provides many options for the teacher to use to engage the students and adapt their lessons. Using this variety it is our hope that the students develop a love of learning.

All four of our core classes are based on standard based curriculum however, teachers will supplement with other materials to reinforce the curriculum.

Embedded into the above curriculum, our district uses a variety of computer programs to help progress monitor student growth and achievement including: IXL, STAR Math/Reading, and Study Island. IXL is a reading/math supplement that gives further practice on the concepts being covered in class. This program also will give further explanation and assistance on problems students are challenged with. STAR Math/Reading is designed to progress monitor students to show monthly growth. The growth correlates to the Minnesota State Standards. There are numerous reports that analyze both classroom and individual strengths and weaknesses in all areas. This programs also is a useful tool when communicating with parents on student progress in the core areas. It gives clear assessments in the form of graphs that are easy to understand. Study Island is a reading and math supplemental program that gives extra practice programs at a challenging level that corresponds to the concepts being taught in class.

Maple River Preschool uses The Creative Curriculum for Preschool along with an assessment called Teaching Strategies GOLD that is aligned with the curriculum. The Creative Curriculum is a comprehensive, research-based curriculum that features exploration and discovery as a way of learning, enabling children to develop confidence, creativity, and lifelong critical thinking skills. It is designed to help educators at all levels of experience plan and implement a developmentally appropriate, content-rich program for children with diverse backgrounds and skill levels. The curriculum provides guidance on how to set up the environment for high level of learning to take place, how to teach to each child according to where they are at developmentally, along with more guided "studies" to follow.

The 38 research-based objectives are the heart of the curriculum and define the path teachers take with children in their classroom. They inform every aspect of teaching, include predictors of school success, and are aligned with the MN state early learning guidelines.

When teachers implement the curriculum, they look to the objectives for development and learning to guide

them. These objectives define the knowledge, skills, and abilities that teachers are help children acquire in our program. So we teach to where the child is at, along with use their interest to motivate them to practice the skills they need to learn.

(Description taken from the Creative Curriculum website, Touring Guide.)

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Physical Education is taught by a licensed professional each day for 25 minutes. During this time, the students are taught about teamwork, movement, game strategies, as well as, health and wellness strategies that are pertinent to elementary age level students. We also tie into the Jump Rope for Heart fundraiser every other year. It is a great fundraiser for a good cause. Many of the students have been affected by loved ones with heart conditions, so it hits close to home. Currently we follow the national standards in P.E./Health. We will be updating and writing standards that are in line with the New Minnesota Standards this spring.

Maple River Elementary Physical Education curriculum is following the National Physical Education Standards. Our current plan is to look at and modify our curriculum to meet and follow the newly released Minnesota Physical Education Standards. Using the National P.E. standards, our K-2 programs focus on gross motor skills, hand-eye coordination, social skills (conflict resolution and sportsmanship). We also introduce and incorporate a healthy emphasis on wide variety of daily exercise to enhance the fitness level of our students. Our objective is to create an atmosphere of fun and enjoyment so our students develop a positive attitude toward physical activity. The grades 3-5 curriculum is a balance of units that focus on team activities and individual skill building units which included fitness goal setting and fitness testing. While fitness is vital to good health, providing and introducing a wide range of activities is paramount.

The elementary philosophy over the years has been movement based. Providing a good foundation and positive frame of mind towards exercise has been a priority. Most of our curriculum has been created with this in mind. The health lessons that are taught follow the National Health standards. Community/consumer, personal, environmental, substance, family life, growth and development, injury prevention, physical, nutrition and communicable diseases are the categories our lessons are based on. Our goal is to use rain days (primarily in the spring and fall), days between Major P.E. units, and days when the gym is unavailable to teach our health lessons.

Maple River has a newly implemented program this year called STEAM. The first year of our STEAM program is quickly coming to an end. Our students have had failures and successes in creating. At the beginning of the year, when students had an idea that didn't work out they looked to the adults in the room to solve their design problems. Now, they look to their fellow classmates and themselves to make changes and persevere to a final product. Students have amazed us with their conversations and their willingness to work as a group. The students are becoming great problem solvers and are able to have true collaboration with fellow students.

The second semester brought a schedule change that allowed K-2nd graders to have STEAM once a week. They are always excited to find out what we are doing on their STEAM day. The K-2nd graders had a chance to use microscopes and pan balances. Kindergartners learned about the butterfly life cycle, made a bird's nest, and drew maps. First graders tried out secret decoders with their spelling words, used shaving cream to create art, and made mobiles that told others about them. Second graders used their 5 senses and adjectives to describe the outdoors and they made their own board games! A favorite for all three grades is when building toys were brought in and they were able to create on their own. Some groups made extraordinary structures cooperatively!

The upper grades have truly impressed everyone with their creativity! Third graders made musical instruments that they then took to music class and created a song to play on the instrument. They created marble mazes out of recycled material and are working on roller coaster that a match box car will go on. Fourth graders took on making a parade float that told about one of our states. They had requirements of finding information about their state, displaying it on a miniature float, and then either pulling it or driving it down the hallway. They also created a container to mail a single Pringle chip to the other elementary school.

They were allowed very limited supplies and had to creatively test their package to see if their chip would stay in one piece. The fifth graders made incredible geometry cities that not only brought in all of the STEAM aspects, but also included social studies when we made sure that our cities had all of the necessary components to run. They are currently working on making a mini golf course hole that will be played using a marble instead of a golf ball.

Maple River East doesn't have a gifted and talented program per se. What we have done successfully is to implement a program based on Accelerated Reader and Accelerated Math for all of our students, including students who excel in math and reading. These rigorous programs are geared for each individual to progress at their own pace and continue to improve their math and reading skills. The excitement they show when they are accomplishing these programs is exciting to see.

Maple River's Elementary classroom music is set up to be in line with the Music Department's District Goals of Creation, Public Performance, Reflection, Connecting to a Broader Perspective and Developing Lifelong Musicians. We start in kindergarten and first grade by teaching basic elements of music such as beat, rhythm, melody, tempo and dynamics. We work a lot on singing and learn about different kinds of instruments--both classroom and orchestral. There are a lot of movement activities, both creative and beat-keeping, as these help "solidify" the concepts for the students. The activities in kindergarten music loosely connect to Maple River's Kindergarten curriculum to help reinforce literacy. Students songs both by rote and by reading and talking about the lyrics. By second and third grade, students learn to read music, both in singing and by playing the bells. They continue to practice the basic concepts they have learned. When playing or singing as a group, the students are often asked to reflect on their performance and give feedback to improve it. Towards the end of the year, we try to include at least one composition/improvisation activity.

Fourth and Fifth Grades continue to work on singing and movement, and we reinforce music reading skills by playing the recorder. In preparation for middle school music, we also work a lot on reading notes and counting. Fourth grade spends a few weeks reviewing band instruments, in preparation for Beginning Band in 5th Grade we include some listening activities as well, and encourage the students to share "what they hear" in terms of tempo, dynamics, mood, lyrics, etc. This prepares them for a trip to the Mankato Symphony Orchestra in May.

All students K-5 prepare a Music Program for public performance either in the winter or spring, and we try to showcase as many different activities as possible at this program. If possible, we watch a video or listen to a recording of our performance and reflect on what we did well, and what we could improve.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Maple River East Elementary is guided through the use of its Professional Learning Communities. Each time our PLC's meet, we look at where our students are learning and progressing, how we are doing on our curriculum maps and where we need to get our students to have them ready for the next grade level. We use the data generated from our test results as well as our other assessments used throughout the year. This monitoring helps us to see where the needs of our students are and how we can best use our resources to help these students.

A Response to Intervention Program called (WIN-What I Need), a direct and targeted instruction in reading, is provided to small groups of students in each classroom 25 minutes every day. No other pull-outs are permitted during these periods. Three to five staff work with students utilizing intervention strategies to meet individual needs. Formative, summative and Star Enterprise assessments are used to inform instruction, grouping and regrouping of students. Fluency measures are administered three times a year using STAR to ensure students are meeting grade level benchmarks. Students not meeting benchmarks receive additional support with biweekly assessment monitoring.

In Kindergarten, Early Literacy STAR is given as a benchmark in September and then every six weeks. We use this assessment to form instructional groups within the Kindergarten classroom based on Percentiles achieved on the test. Every six weeks those results are analyzed and groups rearranged as needed. Unfortunately, the teachers don't always think this gives a true picture of the student's ability.

First graders also take Early Literacy STAR in September and scores are used the same way they are used in Kindergarten. However, once a first-grade student has a sight word vocabulary of 100 words (Dolch PrePrimer, Primer and 1st Grade lists), he/she transitions to taking the STAR Reading Test. As with Early Literacy STAR, STAR scores are for instructional grouping purposes within the classroom. Students scoring below the 40th Percentile qualify for Title One services during that 6 week session. Accelerated Reading goals and reading levels are also determined by the STAR Reading score.

The best indicators we have found to track student growth in grades 3-5 are STAR Reading and STAR Math. The test is given every 6 weeks at our school. After the 3rd test, it provides a trend line which helps us target the students who are projected below state and MCA standards. There's also a report that shows state standard breakdown which we can use to help us target standards our students are struggling with.

The NWEA test is given to students in K,1 and 2. The test is administered in September for baseline data and then given again in January and May. From this data, our teachers are able to tell which students are above, at and below grade level in a variety of strands in both reading and math. They are then able to tailor instruction for individual students using that strand data. It's also used as a qualifier for Title One services. For primary grades, this assessment seems to be more in-depth and on-target than the Early Literacy STAR and STAR test which is why it's been continued at K-2. NWEA also creates a Growth Target for each student which is important to track as well

Our child study team meets twice a month to discuss strategies to help struggling learners. The team consists of the classroom teacher of the struggling student, special education teachers, school psychologist, principal and others that may be of help. The special education teachers help to identify appropriate accommodations for each particular situation.

Once accommodations are recommended, they are used for six weeks. These interventions are specific to each student that has been brought up. Some interventions are as simple as moving them to the front of the room or sitting them close to others that are on task. We have also used extra tutorial programs such as Math Facts in a Flash, small reading groups, or IXL. In some cases, the intervention is not academic but more social. In these instances, the student works with the counselor to help develop their needed social skills. These can be addressed either individually or by small group awareness groups.

Our district utilizes both the Foundation in Sounds Program and the Barton Reading and Spelling System for students who are below grade level in reading and who have not shown adequate growth through Title One services. These students are provided 2 hours per week of one-on-one instruction in either Foundation in Sounds or Barton. The Barton curriculum has also been shown to be very successful with dyslexic students and is being used in our Special Ed department as well.

Maple River East runs an after-school program that gives students that are struggling 14-16 extra hours in the spring of the year to help them catch up on skills they may be lacking or missed during the school year. These small groups are taught by teachers two days per week from February to the end of March. Teachers identify areas of weakness and move the students in the direction of proficiency.

In the summer, we have special education classes for ten days. This is spread out through three separate non-consecutive weeks. This allows for the students to not have a big summer drop off in their knowledge and learning.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Maple River East Elementary uses the 7 Habits program to develop leadership skills in all students. "The Leader in Me," which is based on the principles of Stephen Covey's "7 Habits of Highly Effective People", continues to be implemented at Maple River East Elementary. The focus of the program is to help students develop their leadership potential through applying the 7 Habits (Be Proactive; Begin With the End in Mind; Put First Things First; Think Win-Win; Seek First to Understand and Then Be Understood; Synergize; and Sharpen the Saw) in their everyday lives.

This leadership development is done through students applying and being "hired" by staff in various areas. For example, students can be in charge of keeping a library shelf clean, sweeping gym floors, reading morning announcements, recycling, spreading positive messages throughout school, and being a reading buddy with a younger student. Members of our 5th grade serve on a site Leadership Team which plans and implements site-wide activities. In the past few years, they have been in charge of our Pennies for Patients drive for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

The Accelerated Reader program and student Data Binders are two more ways we incorporate "The Leader in Me" program into our students' everyday lives through goal setting, using time management to meet those goals, and celebrating our successes. Monthly assemblies are also held to model each of the 7 Habits and recognize students whose behavior exemplifies being stand-out leaders. These assemblies are led by teachers with help from the student body.

Our elementary school counseling program is also an integral part of our support system for our students. Elementary school years set the tone for developing knowledge, attitudes, and skills that are necessary for children to become healthy, competent, and confident learners. The elementary school counselor supports all students (K-5) personally, socially, and academically. The elementary school counseling program services that include the teaching of developmental guidance lessons, small group counseling, and individual counseling.

The counselor provides services to every student through developmental guidance lessons. Each classroom has developmental guidance once every two weeks throughout the year. Topics include peer relationships, problem solving, conflict resolution, positive behaviors, understanding self & others, identification of feelings, self-regulation, effective coping strategies, social skills, test anxiety, career exploration, and much more!

The elementary school counselor works with students who have similar experiences in a small group setting. Small groups offer the opportunity for students to further develop social skills and gain peer support. Small groups topics include friendship building, self-control, anger management, family changes, grief/loss, leadership, and social skills.

Working one-on-one with students who are struggling personally, socially, or academically is also a goal of our counseling program. Individual sessions can range from a one-time meeting to long-term and meeting regularly throughout the year. School Counselors are not therapists and do not provide therapy. However, the counseling department would be happy to connect you to outside resources. The counselors consult and collaborate with students, families, school staff, and community professionals to develop an individualized plan unique to each student and situation.

Maple River East has a strong Parent-Teacher Organization. They provide our teachers with extra funds to purchase materials for their classrooms. One example of this is when they provided us extra funding to provide flexible seating for our students in the classroom. In the past, they have also helped in providing reading incentives for the students in conjunction with their Accelerated Reader program. Some examples of the incentives they have helped with include: helping to provide transportation to field trips, helping with a Culver's Custard Treat incentive, rec center rental and organize a district wide activity, which helps

to bring families from throughout the district together.

The PTO also helps organize the Backpack Food program. This program is run for all county elementary schools in the county. Each Friday we receive food which is placed in the backpacks for the students in our schools to help them through the weekend. It is a program that the students need to sign up for but is not based on a financial need. We have about 25% of our students participating in this program.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Teachers and parents collaborate in setting achievement goals. (Classroom Instruction that Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement by Robert Marzano; Visible Learning, John Hattie, pp 163-167; Seven Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen Covey, pp 135-137) Student learning will be a collaborative effort among student, teacher, and parents. Each student will keep a personal data file including baseline performance, goals, and strategies to reach goals. Teacher and parents identify strategies that they will implement to help each student be successful. After each summative measure, students graphically monitor progress to share with parents. Individual classrooms will collaboratively establish and set measurable achievement goals utilizing the same process identified above. Each classroom's results are graphically posted. To close the achievement gap, the district will provide professional development for teachers and paraprofessionals to ensure strategies are in place for students to become independent, self-directed learners. Having students feel a sense of self-efficacy enhances a student's ability to learn and, in fact, will accelerate learning. Learned helplessness is a risk which has a negative impact on student learning. The greatest risk is among students in the special education and Title I populations for whom much additional help is provided. Maple River East provides a variety of volunteer experiences for our students families such as field trips, book fairs, and parent breakfasts. We welcome parents into our building to enhance the child's education.

Throughout our k-5 education the students are exposed to Junior Achievement (JA). We have several community members come in to teach our students during JA. The community is a big supporter of our school. We receive donations from the local fire department, Lyons Club, the local thrift store, as well as some school supplies from Cubs Grocery and Walmart.

3. Professional Development:

Professional development will align with district, site and PLC strategies. Professional development activities funded by the district must align with the strategies identified by district, site and PLC improvement plans. Approval for professional development funds will meet established criteria and reviewed by administration. Professional development for the professional and paraprofessional staff will be determined then offered and delivered through the Professional Learning Communities within the school. These initiatives will be based on scientifically based reading instruction strategies. Staff will be provided summer curriculum writing days upon approval. The Maple River Reading Curriculum is aligned with the Minnesota State Standards in Reading. Through our PLC process the curriculum has been charted with a calendar curriculum map to assure that all content is covered in a timely manner in a systematic approach. All classroom summative measures are aligned with state test specifications.

We have provided our staff with many different opportunities to improve their craft. Two of the main topics we have done recently are in the area of technology and Multi-Tier System of Supports.

We have had Renaissance Place come to our site and give us training on their program. We use their Accelerated Math and Accelerated Reading extensively at our elementary. During this training, we learned about the programs we use on a daily basis. This in depth, onsite training allowed us to ask specific questions and use our own information to make the training more meaningful.

Another staff development training area we have focused on is Multi-Tier System of Supports. This is a program that has shown us the importance of working with teachers to show them the importance of good instruction at Tier 1. This is the most important step in teaching students. Students that need a little more help would get intervention skills at Tier 2. Tier 3 students would be students that need extra help and

possibly Special Education. The thought behind this system of supports is reach students with interventions which may get them back on track before they need Special Education.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership model at Maple River is one of teacher leadership. Much collaboration is used at all levels through our PLC's. The results are telling of how impactful our model is on student learning. Things discussed at PLC's promote professional development, instruction, collaboration and data analysis. The principal allows for the teaching professionals to lead in their areas of expertise.

It is empowering to allow teachers to show their talents outside of teaching and contributing in other ways to the school. Leading a PLC, an IEP meeting or a school activity allows the teachers professional talents to show and these less structured roles allow them to display their creativity.

This leadership gives them the sense of ownership which carries over into all aspects of the school climate and creates a dynamic sense of professional environment. Students see these teachers in different roles, which allows them to have a relationship with teachers who are not their classroom teacher. The teacher in turn takes the role of teacher for all not just his/her own classroom and creates a positive learning environment.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The one attribute which most impacts the quality of our educational system at Maple River East is the quality of our teaching staff. We take great pride in hiring the best candidate. Through a rigorous interview with a number of our staff members we are looking for the person who best fits into our school system. Once we have secured this person we use our mentoring system to engage our new teachers and connect them to a veteran teacher. This gives them an immediate connection to someone who has been successful in our system in the past to be able to go to and ask them all sorts of questions from where in the text book do I find out how to set up my lesson to where is the paper needed to refill the copier.

After our initial process with a mentor, we then expose the new people to our grade level team members from other schools. We have them meet with these other professionals from across the district at their grade level. We meet approximately seven times during the year on the third Monday of the month for a two-hour session. During these sessions, we analyze data, discuss best practice and plan for the upcoming month to make sure we are all getting through our curriculum maps in a timely manner. This really helps our staff get on track and stay on that track so we are able to get through our curriculum by the end of the year. These meetings are integral in the development of not only our new staff members but also the constant updating of our curriculum. We have found that through having these meetings, we are updating and giving the same tests throughout the district. When we do this, we are able to collect usable data in which to base the changes that may be needed in our curriculum to best suit the students and expose them to challenging curriculum.

All of the above, starts with obtaining the best candidate that we can. Once we have secured this individual we then go to work and inundate them into our system. The system has proven effective over time.