

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)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 3 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban
 - Rural or small city/town
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2017 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

| Grade | # of Males | # of Females | Grade Total |
|-----------------------|------------|--------------|-------------|
| PreK | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| K | 12 | 11 | 23 |
| 1 | 14 | 12 | 26 |
| 2 | 23 | 17 | 40 |
| 3 | 17 | 18 | 35 |
| 4 | 25 | 15 | 40 |
| 5 | 20 | 24 | 44 |
| 6 | 14 | 21 | 35 |
| 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 | 125 | 118 | 243 |

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 11 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 84 % White
 - 3 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2016 – 2017 school year: 1%

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 | 0 |
| (2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year | 3 |
| (3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)] | 3 |
| (4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016 | 244 |
| (5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4) | 0.01 |
| (6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100 | 1 |

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 12 %
28 Total number ELL

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

Spanish, Polish, Thai

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 37 %
Total number students who qualify: 89

8. Students receiving special education services: 8 %
20 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>3</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>2</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>1</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>3</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>6</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: 5
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 | 2 |
| Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher. | 18 |
| Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc. | 10 |
| Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students. | 10 |
| Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc. | 1 |

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 14:1

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 | 93% | 98% | 98% | 98% | 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.

Gibraltar Elementary School strives to work in partnership with teachers, parents, and community to effectively educate all children to achieve at their highest potential while providing a safe and nurturing environment. Our school promotes a passion for lifelong learning and respect for self and others with an appreciation for individual differences.

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

As an elementary school, Gibraltar strives to give students a strong educational foundation through solid academic programs and enrichment activities. Gibraltar’s goal is to prepare students for a world of opportunities beyond its doors, from postsecondary education to fulfilling careers in a 21st-century economy.

Door County, named after the access it once provided to early travelers to Wisconsin, now acts as a gateway for nearly two million summer vacationers looking to escape the express lane of urban life. The Door Peninsula provides access to miles of Lake Michigan shoreline, acres of pristine state park forests, lighthouses, limestone cliffs, and quaint local businesses. Right at the tip of the peninsula lies Gibraltar Area School District. This district embraces the historical calling of the peninsula, acting as a door providing access to high-quality public education for the communities of Egg Harbor, Baileys Harbor, Fish Creek, Sister Bay, Ephraim, Ellison Bay, and Gills Rock. Each of these small communities is unique and has its own rich history. In days gone by, each village supported its own country school, an integral part of the community. In 1985, the village schools merged into one district located in Fish Creek. Currently, Gibraltar Elementary School serves approximately 243 children from grades K-6. Now, a modern, single campus serves all students in the Gibraltar Area School District.

The students and families of Gibraltar Elementary are a blend of longtime Door County residents and new families to the area. Some families today still depend on the waters and fish of Lake Michigan, just as our early settlers to Door County did. A majority of our students are Caucasian; many deeply-rooted families are of Belgian and Scandinavian heritage, and new generations range from Polish to Hispanic. Our English Language Learner population has grown over the last five years. We now employ the support of two English Language Learner teachers in elementary level classrooms.

Through active parent and community involvement, a balanced and engaging curriculum, and a system of support that helps all students be successful, Gibraltar Elementary has many strong pillars that guide and strengthen our students and staff each day. Continuing to seek out the very best gateways of success for each student, Gibraltar Elementary has embraced an all-encompassing pathway for student success through a multi-layer support system. This model is what sets Gibraltar Elementary apart from many other schools. We are committed to helping all students meet and exceed educational goals without labeling or limiting students.

Gibraltar families are educated, engaged, and committed to supporting the school district. Families stay involved through after-school events, classroom participation opportunities, and a rigorous academic curriculum. Weekly parent volunteers in the classroom and an active parent advisory council improve and enhance the programming offered at Gibraltar Elementary School. Our parents are invested in the school community and provide the necessary link between home and school to help our students achieve high expectations both academically and socially.

As a rural school, Gibraltar Elementary relies on local businesses and supporting agencies to strengthen our students and give them access to unique learning opportunities often only found in larger schools. The strong relationship with our local parent group, “Friends of Gibraltar,” helps form relationships with various local groups and provides opportunities for students to experience and explore arts, science, theater, and future careers. Friends of Gibraltar focuses community fundraising to fully implement one-of-a-kind learning experiences for Gibraltar students, opening doors for each and every student, no matter their income level or ability. Gibraltar Elementary also works closely with local state parks, the YMCA, Northern Door Children’s Center, and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeastern Wisconsin to develop our students into active, healthy, involved citizens and members of Northern Door County. Gibraltar Elementary supports regular field trips to the state parks to learn about the biodiversity of the area and also coordinates an annual 5K event with the YMCA to develop strong and healthy hearts within our students. Gibraltar Elementary works diligently with local preschool centers to ready every student for an inclusive setting when entering Gibraltar Elementary. The school also works with Big Brothers Big Sisters to provide approximately thirteen students positive role models within the school and community.

Just as Door County historically served as a gateway to Wisconsin, all of the unique opportunities provided to Gibraltar Elementary students act as portals through which students learn, grow, and thrive. By enriching each student's life with experiences that endeavor not only to open the mind of the learner but also to embolden a spirit of confidence, Gibraltar Elementary School honors its historical identity while embracing a vibrant future.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

The formative years of a child’s education are extremely important. At Gibraltar Elementary School, we understand that a strong foundation of academic skills is a vital component of student success. All academic areas at Gibraltar are important and are a part of the daily schedule; however, strong foundational skills in reading and math are crucial for success in all other academic areas.

In 2012 the Gibraltar Area School District officially adopted the Common Core State Standards. Currently, all of our core subject areas and curriculum are taught using these standards. Every standards-based resource the school utilizes is selected through an extensive curriculum inquiry cycle. Teachers continually review data and resources that match specific school needs to help all children find success.

Our literacy curriculum combines The Teachers College Reading and Writing Project Units of Study and Fountas and Pinnell’s Systems of Strategic Actions into a reading and writing workshop. Students are taught to think within the text by searching for and using information, word solving, monitoring and self-correcting, reading with fluency and summarizing their reading. Strategies of inferring, synthesizing, making connections and predicting are taught so that students think beyond the words on the page. Finally, students are taught to read like writers by analyzing and critiquing the author’s craft, and then to apply this knowledge in their own narrative, informational and opinion writing. Through the Units of Study, students learn the components of various types of fiction and nonfiction text. They consider the big lessons that characters learn and how those lessons transfer to their own lives. Students learn to have in-depth conversations around books. Gibraltar Elementary strives to teach students to read about the world and to learn how authors encourage empathy toward others. A fundamental goal of our reading program is to develop life-long readers and writers who use literacy to advocate for a better world.

Mathematics instruction at Gibraltar engages and challenges all students. It centers around practical problem-solving techniques and incorporates the Standards for Mathematical Practice into all lessons and activities. In our spiral-based math curriculum, we teach number sense, patterns, and counting, measurement, place value, fact fluency, geometry, money, and fractions. Our mathematical instruction guides students to understand the “why” behind the math concepts and not just the “how.” Our math instruction forges analytical thinking, logic, and reasoning. By focusing on the thinking that occurs within, behind, and beyond the math, students leave Gibraltar Elementary with a strong fundamental understanding of mathematical principles.

Project Lead the Way and the Next Generation Science Standards have recently enhanced our science curriculum. By using hands-on activities that incorporate the scientific process and real-life problem solving, Project Lead the Way develops skills in our students that transfer to 21st-century jobs and careers. We are teaching students to address problems through methodological and scientific ways. Through this process, students realize there are many ways to creatively solve complex problems. One early example of this type of instruction occurs in kindergarten. Students are tasked to design a better paintbrush. Students approach the problem as an engineer. Thinking like an engineer, they look for materials in the environment that solve design problems while manufacturing creative and unique products.

A central goal of our social studies curriculum is to develop and maintain strong citizens at the local, state, and national levels. Throughout elementary school, students are engaged in learning how to be a responsible citizen, exploring cultures and traditions around the world, and studying in-depth components of the history and government of Wisconsin and our nation. Our curriculum also focuses on the school’s core behavioral expectations: “Be Safe, Be Respectful, and Be Responsible.” We not only teach these principles through our standards-based social studies curriculum, but also by highlighting the following character traits: respect, responsibility, citizenship, kindness, tolerance, integrity, perseverance, courage, self-control, and honesty. Students at Gibraltar Elementary practice civic learning on a daily basis in school so they can use these traits effectively in our community. Staff engages students in monthly activities that align with these character traits and encourage positive behaviors in the classroom, playground, hallways, and

community. We continually recognize students who demonstrate these positive character traits during monthly assemblies throughout the school year.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Arts are essential to the core curriculum at Gibraltar and set us apart from other schools in the state and country. Gibraltar Area Schools is surrounded by a vibrant community with local artists that contribute to the school through volunteering in classrooms and offering free or inexpensive programs for students in the building and offsite. Elementary art students at Gibraltar are fortunate to explore a broad range of artistic experiences through curriculum two to three times a week.

The primary goals of our elementary school K-6 art program are to demonstrate core artistic techniques, learn about important art styles, think imaginatively, and appreciate visual arts. Through a blend of content knowledge and skills, students think critically and transfer understanding when making meaningful decisions during the production of artistic projects. Students work with a wide array of mediums including cray-pas, pencil, pastels, fabric, and watercolor paints. One popular activity includes creating a clay sculpture that is fired and painted. Students are excited and engaged with the immersive experience provided by our art department.

Showcasing our student art is not a problem. The Link Gallery of Children's Art, located in the Door Community Auditorium attached to our school, provides an excellent public forum for our students to display artistic creations. This gallery presents four to five exhibits per year of student work based on curated themes that challenge students to reflect and respond using visual arts and writing. The gallery hosts receptions giving students the opportunity to articulate their work to public visitors. Students at Gibraltar Elementary gain valuable communication and presentation skills when completing these projects. In addition, students are able to receive valuable recognition and constructive feedback from peers and adults.

Commitment to artistic experiences for our students goes far beyond pencil and paper. All students in grades K-6 also engage in a dynamic music program two to three times a week. By the time students at Gibraltar reach the end of elementary school, they know 10 historical and influential composers, recognize the instrumental music families, can read musical notes, and can play the xylophone. Part of what makes the music department unique is the curricular focus on using student performance to develop positive character traits and self-esteem within each and every student. Students who are exposed and participate in the arts are more involved in school and perform better in academic programs.

Our physical education program encourages long-term healthy lifestyles by utilizing surrounding community and natural resources to actively engage students in lifelong physical fitness. Our program, in which all students K-6 participate three times a week, includes swimming at the YMCA, hiking in Peninsula State Park which is adjacent to our school, and participating in individual and team sports. All of these activities are aligned with the Wisconsin Physical Education standards. Students are encouraged to participate, see opportunities for growth, and persevere to improve skills. Students participating in this program collaborate with each other, developing leadership skills and engaging in friendly competition benefitting the well-being of all students.

Gibraltar Elementary is highly dedicated to providing all students with excellent communication skills. Our Foreign Languages program centers on an inclusive K-6 Spanish curriculum for all students, two times a week. Spanish classes enhance the students' interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational communication skills through diverse games, songs, and activities. This curriculum also emphasizes the use of language to investigate cultural practices through compare and contrast learning, using authentic resources to explore similarities and differences between students' lives and the lives of others. In addition to directly supporting communication in Spanish, these courses also encourage students to exercise language beyond the classroom, allowing students to grow as global citizens. The frequent and universal exposure to foreign language at a young age prepares students to find success and to gain valuable experience about the diverse world in which we live.

With a focus on emerging literacies, our library media program incorporates a wide array of technology for

students to use both inside and outside of the classroom. Through early and regular library visits, our district media specialist promotes a love of literacy not only through hardcover books, but also through the use of iPads and laptop computers and instruction in safe, powerful, and appropriate use of digital media. By exposing students to rich and varied literature, students learn to communicate, transfer, and apply deep literacy skills as they grow into mature readers. By the time students leave Gibraltar Elementary, they are skilled in operating Google Drive and can write, share, and edit documents. Students are also proficient in developing, editing, and sharing a multimedia presentation to peers and adults. Though library meets only one time a week, the use of library media technology is incorporated into daily classroom lessons and activities.

Gibraltar Elementary students receive rich curricula that enhance academic skills as well as social-emotional growth and career development. Facilitated by our school counselor, Grades K, three, four, and six receive the research-based curriculum Second Step, Skills for Social and Academic Success. Grades K-5 receive life skills lessons that give students strategies to control anger, mindfulness techniques, and ways to self-regulate their bodies. Students meet three times a month while sixth grade has Life Skills lessons every other week. The lessons taught through Life Skills with the school counselor supports classroom academic work by preparing students to be mentally and emotionally ready to learn.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

The learning environment at Gibraltar Elementary School utilizes a three-tiered “response to instruction” (RtI) philosophy in all core areas. The three levels of support are as follows: Tier one is universal instruction in the classroom for all students. Tier two incorporates collaborative planning of differentiated instruction within the classroom for students not meeting grade level expectations. Tier three is intensive daily instruction with a specialist outside of the classroom that supports core curriculum and is designed to close grade-level achievement gaps. By providing multiple levels of support, Gibraltar faculty ensure academic growth for all students.

Individualized core content area instruction within the regular education classroom is central to every student’s experience in our school. All students have inclusive access to core instruction with peers in the regular education classroom. In the past five years, we have placed a concerted focus on tier one instruction. Our goal is to have 80 percent of students routinely successful in daily lessons, activities, and assessments. At the tier one level, teachers use a variety of strategies to help all students be successful, including modeling sound reading and writing every day to the whole group. Students collaborate with peers to discuss literacy strategies used within the classroom. Teachers focus on skills children need to continue to gain mastery as readers and writers.

Unlike many RtI models, tier two interventions at Gibraltar Elementary occur exclusively within the classroom. Tier two interventions are facilitated through faculty and staff collaboration and instructional services within the classroom offered by specialists. Each grade level team is involved in a grade level Professional Learning Communities where the classroom teachers, principal, reading specialist, interventionists, and specialists in the areas of English Language Learners and Special Education teachers collaborate on the needs at that level. These collaborative conversations occur twice each month. Teachers monitor student growth regularly through formative assessments and establish action plans for those needing more focused instruction at tier two. An instructional coach works with teachers to fine-tune their craft ensuring that all student needs are addressed during the development of lessons and can be differentiated based on the needs of individual students. Gibraltar’s Curriculum Inquiry Cycle is relevant during these grade level PLC meetings. We are continually evaluating our curriculum using this cycle to best meet the needs of all students. This cycle reviews achievement at each grade level and adjusts the curriculum to help all children find success at the tier one level and provides resources for tier two instruction within the classroom.

In addition to the Wisconsin state standardized assessment, the Forward Exam, Gibraltar Elementary School uses Renaissance STAR as a universal screener, assessing for benchmarks in math and reading three times each year. Gibraltar gathers additional literacy information through the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System. Gibraltar also administers the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screener to ensure all

students have mastered foundational literacy skills. As assessments are completed, grade level teachers hold data meetings noting strengths and incorporating opportunities for growth. Students who have not yet reached identified benchmarks receive additional in-class instruction, targeting specific needs. If these additional efforts do not lead to expected growth, additional tier three instruction outside of the classroom is provided if the student meets pre-set entrance criteria.

Tier three interventions in literacy include a diverse selection of supplemental resources. Two resources include Fountas and Pinnell's Leveled Literacy Intervention; a comprehensive literacy plan where on-the-spot adjustments are made for the needs of each student and Orton Gillingham, a multi-sensory reading methodology approach for decoding and encoding words, focusing on phonics. Additionally, prior to classroom instruction, an interventionist teaches and models skills to tier three students, which gives individual students an opportunity to build confidence for participation in classroom instruction. Tier three interventionists also review skills previously taught by classroom teachers which ensures student understanding and long-term retention.

Students receiving tier three interventions participate in academic check-ins matched to their deficit skill area every two weeks to track their progress towards benchmarks. Educlimber, our online data warehouse management system, tracks this progress. Student progress meetings are held with parents and staff every six weeks. Students generally receive interventions for approximately six weeks. After that time, a team of parents and teachers assess to measure the effectiveness of the intervention and determine if additional tier three supports are indicated. If the student has reached grade-level expectations, the student then participates in the classroom activities with peers. If the student has not met grade level expectations, the intervention can continue or a new intervention can be scheduled.

In order to maintain student growth and achievement, Gibraltar teachers collaborate with the elementary principal and interventionists in data meetings held three times a year in September, January, and May. These meetings focus on analyzing data from various sources including classroom, district assessments, and formal and informal observations. This group calculates classroom performance and expect 80 percent curriculum proficiency. The team then discusses support measures for students who are not attaining adequate growth. Discussions center around small group skill development in each curriculum area and resources teachers need to be successful, whether it is additional materials, coaching for short-term interventions with identified students, or a deeper dive into the core curriculum and standards to address learning needs.

Data meetings determine goals and objectives for bi-monthly collaboration meetings. These collaboration meetings, which include grade level teachers, support staff, special education teachers, and interventionists, provide an opportunity for all these instructional professionals to work together with guidance from the elementary principal. Discussion in these meetings centers on progress toward the grade level goals established at data meetings and supports for students who are not meeting grade level expectations. These meetings are teacher-driven with an emphasis on closing gaps for all students.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Our school is committed to the four As (Academics, Arts, Activities, and Athletics). By providing diverse opportunities in these different fields, we ensure all students feel valued, welcomed, and confident in the school setting. To recognize and support the four As, Gibraltar Elementary School hosts a monthly student assembly. During this assembly, students and staff recognize both academic and social accomplishments. Each month focuses on a different character trait. Students and staff are able to nominate students who demonstrate this trait. These nominations come directly from our students and staff and work to build encouragement and a sense of being a part of a larger community.

In addition to the monthly assemblies, our school Positive Behaviors Interventions and Supports team has implemented a schoolwide positive behavior program with all students. Students earn Viking Vouchers for demonstrating the 3 Bs (Be Safe, Be Respectful, and Be Responsible). These vouchers can be used to purchase items from our Viking Way Store. Our Viking Way Store contains much more than trinkets and toys. Our most popular item that students earn is time with teachers. Teachers design extra fun activities, which are also content-related, for students to engage further in the curriculum while having fun. One example of this is our school kitchen staff. They design a fun and healthy snack for students to create and share with their classmates. Students who redeem their Viking Vouchers for time with the kitchen staff learn about healthy food choices while also reviewing measurement skills. Students can also donate their Viking Vouchers to a different charity each month. The school reimburses each Viking Voucher at .03 cents. Our students have donated hundreds of dollars to local and national nonprofit organizations. Our Viking Way, Viking Way Store, and Viking Vouchers go far beyond simple external rewards for positive behavior. The Viking Way develops lasting relationships and fosters positive citizenship.

Our elementary teachers have various leadership positions within the district to capitalize on their talents and skills as teacher leaders. At Gibraltar, teachers can take part in various Professional Learning Community groups including Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports, Elementary Building Leadership Team, District Leadership Team, K-12 Literacy Team, and many other curriculum-focused ad-hocs that come together to review and revise curricula when the data shows we are in need of improvement. These are all paid stipend positions within the district, demonstrating the district values their input, time, and knowledge. Teachers can also participate in various social activities like staff lunches, haunted trolley rides, scenic boat cruises, and various wellness activities like yoga and fitness classes on campus scheduled after school. Gibraltar Elementary School invests in taking care of teachers socially, emotionally, and professionally. In doing so, we have a very low turnover rate of teachers and subsequently see that it is reflected in our student achievement data year after year.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Gibraltar Elementary values the families and community members of this district for actively supporting the elementary school through projects, committees, and special events supporting our school toward consistent improvement. This deep support includes the Gibraltar Elementary Parent Advisory Council, the Viking 5K, Friends of Gibraltar (FOG) special events and field trips, music concerts, and family literacy nights. These activities provide opportunities for parents to be in the school, which in turn, strengthens ties with our community. We take advantage of these connections with our community to discuss academic and social progression gaining valuable feedback and helping to improve overall academic achievement.

The Gibraltar Elementary Parent Advisory Council is an active group that meets several times each year to problem solve issues and brainstorm ideas to make Gibraltar Elementary a place for students to learn, grow, and thrive. The council is actively progressing towards a special designation as a “Green” school and are working on ways to lessen the impact Gibraltar has on the environment through reducing our food waste in the cafeteria, recycling paper and bottles in the classroom, and conserving water in the school. The school regularly communicates these goals to all stakeholders.

The Gibraltar community strives to live healthy lifestyles and hosts many competitive fitness events ranging from 5Ks to a 50-mile race, that attract visitors throughout the year. Gibraltar Elementary reflects these community values by hosting our own 5K race. By partnering with the Northern Door YMCA and our local hospital, all students and staff are able to take part in this unique experience. Students can also participate throughout the school year in a running club to prepare for the race in June. The YMCA also helps coordinate the race course, while Door County Ministry Health provides medical support and the medals for all participants. This community-wide effort encourages our children to be healthy and active.

A local parent organization, Friends of Gibraltar (FOG), builds connections with the community by engaging nonprofits and local businesses to help bring unique projects and events into the school. Elementary students travel to local fruit orchards, art galleries, farms, museums, and participate in multicultural celebrations with live music and food from selected countries. FOG helps surround students with professional, positive role models who love what they do, so students can see a path to happiness through meaningful engagement in different career fields. FOG connects the community to the school through a printed school newsletter three times per year that is distributed to every residence in the district, even if they do not have a student in school. FOG also curates an art gallery that is open to the public that exhibits student art based on various themes. While many schools are able to provide one or two stand-alone programs, FOG ensures that these events are provided throughout the school year to all students free of charge. Through these one-of-a-kind experiences, FOG and Gibraltar engage minds, empower learning, and achieve excellence in learning for each and every student.

3. Professional Development:

The District Growth Plan developed by our superintendent and approved by our school board drives our professional development opportunities. Besides outlining our district academic goals and objectives, it also provides clear and concise pathways for growth in curriculum and instruction, assessment, and systems of support. Our professional development centers around this plan and also references the state standards as benchmarks. By investing in our teachers, Gibraltar Elementary leverages teacher knowledge into student success.

Central to the focus of our professional development is the concept of shared responsibility. Groups of teachers work together to further knowledge and improve curricular practices. Teachers are encouraged to develop and participate in professional development that is meaningful to them. A deep wealth of knowledge exists among our staff who have been trained in many different pedagogical areas including Project Lead the Way, Teachers College Units of Study in Reading and Writing, Everyday Mathematics, as well as various technology supports such as Google and Smartboards. As a district, we foster this process through structuring specified professional learning days, monthly collaborative conversations, and after-school workshops. The process to develop these days is multi-faceted and cooperative. Teachers submit proposals for collaborative work at each professional development day. This is an opportunity for teachers to learn from other staff, design engaging curriculum, and proactively plan for instruction using data and assessment. By using this internal approach, students are the greatest beneficiaries because teachers are participating in professional development that will directly benefit their students and their needs.

Through participation in national, statewide, and local conferences, teachers further individual expertise and bring back new knowledge to share with colleagues. For example, our math data pointed out that fact fluency was an area in need of improvement for multiple grade levels and classrooms throughout the school. Approximately 10 staff attended a local math conference that focused on number sense activities to improve fact fluency. These expert staff then presented concepts to improve number sense and awareness skills. Staff then analyzed the current math curricula for places to incorporate these number sense activities into our daily math activities. Finally, after these adjustments were made, staff continued to evaluate data to measure the effectiveness of these ongoing improvements.

Following this same model, the literacy component of professional development centers on using assessments to build focused lessons that strengthen textual comprehension skills. Professional learning sessions mimic a workshop model where teachers and support staff participate in a mini-lesson that guides

teacher growth. Teachers then reflect on writing samples and reading assessments in order to set individual goals for students. After individual goals are set, staff meet in grade-level teams to analyze patterns of student strengths on which to build further instruction. Finally, monthly collaborative conversations in grade level Professional Learning Communities assess professional learning, guide classroom coaching, and review effectiveness of classroom instruction.

These various professional development activities work simultaneously to support staff and boost student achievement in many ways. Staff are utilizing a professional development structure that is pertinent to their needs and student achievement. By engaging in consistent professional conversations regarding student achievement, it has become common practice. Teachers are not discouraged to talk about what isn't working. We work collaboratively to find practices and strategies to help all students grow and achieve at a high rate.

4. School Leadership:

Collaboration is the heart of the leadership philosophy at Gibraltar Elementary School. Teams of teachers and administrators collaborate regularly to determine a purposeful path of action that has a direct impact on student learning. The teams responsible for learning at Gibraltar Elementary are the District Leadership Team, Building Leadership Team, Positive Behaviors Intervention and Support Team (PBIS), and Response to Instruction (RtI) Leadership Team. Staff apply and are asked to be part of these leadership teams. The elementary principal helps ensure collaboration, communication, and a shared vision is maintained between all of the leadership teams.

At the beginning of the year, the superintendent and the school board share a district growth plan that, based on data, sets goals for the school district. The District Leadership Team, made up of the superintendent, administrators, teachers, and support staff, clearly articulate a plan which will guide the district to obtain these goals. With the use of data and feedback from staff and community members, the District Leadership Team delegates specific instructional targets to building-level teams. For example, this past year, the superintendent and the school board voiced a concern for the performance of English Language Learners. The District Leadership team then developed a goal specifically to improve and measure outcomes for all English Language Learners. The District Leadership Team also gathered data and resources for schools to help accomplish this goal.

Next, The Elementary Building Leadership Team, under the umbrella of the District Growth Plan, gathered grade-level data to formulate academic and climate/culture goals for the elementary school. The Building Leadership Team facilitated communication between district-level faculty and classroom teachers. This team also clearly identified English Language Learner students that needed support in the classroom. Bilingual support teachers' time was reallocated to co-teach in classrooms and provide one-on-one and small-group support for English Language Learners. The Building Leadership Team met bi-monthly to check progress and update the goals. Lastly, this team received feedback from staff members to continuously build lasting change.

The Building Leadership team is, in turn, supported by the RtI Leadership Team and the PBIS Team. The RtI Team is made up of specialists, the assessment coordinator, and administrative members to review data in our data warehouse, monitor student progress, and constantly evaluate and refine our three-tiered RtI approach to meet the needs of all learners. Likewise, the Positive Behaviors Interventions and Support team made up of the Dean of Students, teachers, and support staff works collaboratively with other leadership teams to ensure positive behavior throughout the entire elementary school. These teams continually evaluate and monitor the progress of English Language Learner students and pinpoint curriculum standards and expectations that need improvement. The PBIS team monitors behaviors that impact learning and develops social skill lessons for all students. Currently, we have seen strong improvement in our literacy district assessments with English Language Learners due to this collaborative effort between the leadership teams.

Our collaborative approach to student improvement focuses all staff, administrators, and parents on specific

needs of children. We have a clear focus and goals. We work together to achieve the goal and give the necessary support and resources to teachers to help all children learn.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Gibraltar's academic success is a result of a concerted focus on the implementation of Response to Instruction (RtI). RtI provides the overarching structure supportive of all district initiatives inclusive of academics and behavior. Foundational to our RtI at Gibraltar is the philosophy that all students deserve success in the classroom and will grow with appropriate supports. Through this growth mindset, additional supports are placed within general education classrooms as needed so all students have access to content experts, exposure to the core curriculum, and connections with peers and teachers. RtI in the general education setting promotes inclusionary practices with the teacher, interventionist, coach, special education teacher, and peers. All of these constituents collaborate to provide supports to close achievement gaps. Possessing the belief that all children can grow is imperative for building confidence in each and every student.

At Gibraltar, RtI is defined by a number of important facets including: high-quality instructional methods, balanced assessments, collaboration of stakeholders, fidelity of programming, and culturally responsive practices. Furthermore, our RTI process involves using multi-level systems of support to identify and respond to student needs. These supports include meaningful family involvement, data-based decision making, and collaborative leadership. A comprehensive coalescence of these aspects contributes to increased instructional quality, equitable access to high-quality effective programming, analysis of individual student growth, and support of learners with varied abilities and needs.

These facets have led our Response to Instruction at Gibraltar to outline four essential components for comprehensive implementation. First, implementing a school-wide, multi-level instructional and behavioral system involving all students focuses our support in the general education setting. Second, using a universal screener, with success defined as 80% of students reaching benchmark, to identify students in need of support. Third, selecting a progress monitoring process to assess students' academic and behavioral performance and measure student responsiveness to instruction. Finally, data-based decisions are made to ensure high-quality instruction and movement within the multi-level system. When these four components are implemented, we know students are receiving the highest quality education and success is achievable.

The implementation of RtI at Gibraltar has led to demonstrable improvement in every aspect of our school, especially in closing our achievement gaps. We use this measure to determine if our school is succeeding in helping lagging groups catch up while also holding high standards for all students. By focusing on this score, we are able to assess long-term progress of students and can ensure a commitment to continual improvement. In the 2012-2013 school year, our overall closing gaps school score on Wisconsin's School Report Card was 66.5/100. Our reading closing gaps score stagnated at 41.9/50 while our math closing gaps score lagged at 24.6/50. Gibraltar measured as average when compared to the gap closure of schools throughout the state. Through the implementation of RtI, Gibraltar experienced a surging trend in gap closure in subsequent years. In 2016-2017 our total school closing gap score vaulted to 91.9/100. Our reading gap closure jumped to 50/50 while our math gap closure soared to 41.9/50. These results are concrete proof that we are serving the needs of our community while preparing all students for future aspirations due to our implementation of Response to Instruction over the last six years.