

U.S. Department of Education
2019 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Ms. Jennifer Dowd

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

Official School Name Fred and Sarah Machetanz Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 4961 E Nelson Road

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

Wasilla AK 99654-8413
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County__

Telephone (907) 864-2300

Fax (907) 864-2380

Web site/URL https://www.matsuk12.us/mze

E-mail Jennifer.Dowd@matsuk12.us

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Dr Monica Goyette

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail Monica.Goyette@matsuk12.us

District Name Matanuska-Susitna School District Tel. (907) 746-9200

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Dr. Donna Dearman

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

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

Date _____

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

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

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

Part I – Eligibility Certification

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

1. 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, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2019 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.
3. 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.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2013 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, or 2018.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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 (2018-2019) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

- Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
 - 25 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 5 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 11 High schools
 - 6 K-12 schools

47 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

- Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
 - Urban or large central city
 - Suburban
 - Rural or small city/town
- Number of students as of October 1, 2018 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	10	3	13
K	40	35	75
1	34	38	72
2	37	37	74
3	34	37	71
4	40	35	75
5	37	36	73
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	232	221	453

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 10 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 2 % Black or African American
 - 6 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 2 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 73 % White
 - 6 % 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 2017 – 2018 school year: 17%

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

Machetanz Elementary is 35 minutes north of Anchorage and our Joint Air Force and Army Base is within commuting distance. Twenty percent of our families are military and as families move out new families move in.

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, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	48
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	30
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	78
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	467
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.17
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	17

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 3%
14 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Tagalog, Spanish, French, Hungarian, Inupiaq, Yup'ik, Ukrainian, Russian

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 25%
 Total number students who qualify: 114

8. Students receiving special education services: 18 %
81 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>1</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>14</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>18</u> Developmental Delay | <u>13</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>28</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: 6
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.	18
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	14
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	9
Student support personnel e.g., school 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 25:1

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

Required Information	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	94%	94%	95%	94%	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 2018.

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.

Machetanz will provide our community a safe, proactive, and responsive environment to grow socially, emotionally and academically through STEM and Place Based Service Learning opportunities.

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

Machetanz Elementary is a neighborhood school within a district that provides choice for parents. Parents apply for a boundary exemption if they would like their student to attend a different school other than their neighborhood school. Boundary exemptions are approved if there is room to accommodate the student at the school.

PART III – SUMMARY

Machetanz Elementary, home of the Musk Ox, is a large Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) elementary school in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough situated along the Palmer Hay Flats, state land that is rich with wildlife and migrating birds. We were the first elementary STEM school in the district and state. Our student population is diverse and come from families with a wide range of cultures, values, and beliefs.

Machetanz Elementary opened in 2009 and enrollment continues to grow as the area develops. The school opened as a traditional neighborhood school using the district adopted curriculum. Two years after opening, the school housed a STEM school within the school. Three years later parents and staff were surveyed and overwhelmingly supported the whole school becoming a STEM school. Our school welcomes all students in the district that want to attend as well as the students that live within the district neighborhood boundaries. Currently, forty-two percent of our students attend on boundary exemptions as families want the STEM education for their students.

Our mission is to provide our community a safe, proactive, and responsive environment to grow socially, emotionally and academically through STEM and Place Based Service Learning opportunities. When we speak of our community, we are referring to our students, their families, our staff, and our business and agency partners. We value place based learning and incorporate a service aspect when possible with our community partners. Our mascot is the musk ox. In the wild, musk ox surround and support their young, elderly or sick when faced with danger. As a staff we operate much like the musk ox in the wild. Daily, students and staff recite our Musk Ox Motto which is “We care about others, our actions, and our learning to make a positive difference today and every day.” In our daily communication and problem solving with students, we refer to our motto so that we can demonstrate our commitment to our mission of creating a safe place for all to learn.

Students receive support in a variety of ways. All of our students loop with their teacher for two years starting in kindergarten. This system provides a way to form strong relationships where teachers know the social, emotional, and academic needs of all of our students on an intimate level. Our teachers also check in with former students throughout the year continuing the relationship and connection. We are currently working towards being a Trauma Sensitive School. Many of these practices are already in place and we are looking at school wide systems for sustainability.

On a daily basis our students are immersed in science exploration as our reading curriculum is integrated with our science curriculum. Students are also provided with hands on learning opportunities for science and engineering. Throughout the year we complete universal screenings that provide us academic data about each of our students so that we can provide them additional services needed through our Multi-Tiered Systems of Support model (MTSS). Students that receive Tier 2 or Tier 3 levels of support are progress monitored weekly and we review data in teams every 6-8 weeks. Students that are not identified through universal screenings and show the need for additional support are identified through the classroom teacher using data and a team meets to determine the level of supports to be provided for students to be successful.

In our classrooms, teachers may provide direct instruction to whole groups of students, but more often are working with small groups using a blended model for teaching. Students rotate through stations throughout the lesson with each station designed to meet individual needs. Within the last year we were able to secure funding through fundraising and grants to go 1:1 with chrome books for our students. Teacher use technology to personalize lessons for each student daily. Students collaborate using a variety of cooperative learning structures.

In addition to academic supports we also implement daily social emotional learning opportunities into our schedule. This is provided in whole class instruction as well as small group for those students that may need additional supports. We have high expectations for student achievement as well as behaviors and we provide the structure and supports for students to be able to meet their fullest potential.

Celebrating student success is key. Weekly, our students meet with the principal to start our day. Students recite the pledge, Musk Ox Motto, and sing the National Anthem together. We celebrate student success in school wide programs such as our Mileage Club Program, academic clubs, sports clubs, and community service efforts. We also celebrate students that go on to compete at the district or state level with our Running of the Musk Ox where students line the halls and chant “Let’s Go Musk Ox, Let’s Go!” while the students that will be competing run the halls.

For students to feel connected to school we build relationships, make teaching relevant, and provide students with a myriad of activities. In addition to academics, our students are provided with a wide range of co-curricular activities including band and choir, art, Science and Math Olympiad, Lego Robotics, Girls Who Code, Battle of the Books, Junior Native Youth Olympics, Spelling Bee, Cross Country Running and Track, basketball, Birds and Bogs Birding Club, and others that change from year to year based on student interest.

Family nights are well attended at Machetanz. We host academic events such as science night as well as those that support being physically active and trying something new from Olympic themed events, to juggling and school dances, or Halloween carnivals, and movie nights. We do not have a PTA or a PTO but we do have a strong groups of parents that volunteer on a regular basis. These parents come to the school and read with students, do art projects, help the teachers in the classroom as well as in the library and with the variety of school wide needs. Our parent volunteers are an instrumental part of our success.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

Our curriculum for grades 2-5 is Seeds of Science/Roots of Reading. It integrates science and literacy and meets the State of Alaska Reading/Language Arts standards. Students receive high academic vocabulary, deep understanding of content material and skills for literacy and science. While Seeds of Science/Roots of Reading addresses most reading and language arts standards our teachers collaborated and determined which novel studies each grade level will use to address those standards not met with Seeds of Science/Roots of Reading materials. These novel studies tie into the Seeds of Science Unit being taught. For example, our fifth graders are currently learning about space with the planets and moons unit and their novel study is Space Case by Stuart Gibbs. K-1 classes are heavy in phonics instruction using portions of the Journey's program as well as National Geographic program as they either integrate science with literacy or provided the early literacy skills students need to become proficient readers. We use a station rotation model in all of our classrooms where students are able to work with the teacher in small groups every day, while at other stations students are challenged at their own level. Students receive writing instruction using the Step Up to Writing framework as well as Words Their Way to support individualized spelling lists.

When additional interventions are necessary we provide an array of curriculum materials to help students find success. Using our MTSS model, students may receive Tier 2 instruction using research-based programs such as Lexia, Sonday, Let's Play Learn, Read Naturally or Rewards. Students that need additional support may receive instruction using programs such as Reading Mastery, Spelling Mastery or Corrective Reading. The majority of these intervention are layered with classroom instruction already in place.

1b. Mathematics:

Our school uses the district approved Go Math! curriculum. There is a wealth of differentiated materials allowing for all students to access the material at their level. The program follows the 5E instructional model while students develop mathematical understanding. After using Go Math! materials for the past 5 years, we are finding students are able to explain multiple ways to solve problems and understand the “why and how” in math rather than rote memorization. In addition to our general curriculum, students receive 15-20 minutes a day in math fluency. In late first grade through 5th grade we use an online program called Reflex math. It has increased student engagement as well as provide the ability to differentiate for all students. Our teachers are working smarter not harder using technology to differentiate for all students. Khan Academy is also a resource many of our teachers are using while in the station rotation model for instruction.

When students need additional supports students may receive instruction using V-Math or Connecting Math Concepts as both programs are research based and break down the math instruction to the most basic level by removing some of the language that often creates a barrier for learning. We use program assessments throughout the year, Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), AIMSweb Reading, Math Comp and MathCAP three times a year for benchmark data in Reading, Language Arts and Math. For our struggling students, we also progress monitor monthly to assure progress. Grade level teams meet weekly and school based teams meet every 6-8 weeks to discuss student progress and problem solve in order to maximize growth. Parents are involved with the school team throughout the process.

1c. Science:

Seeds of Science/Roots of Reading is our Reading and Science instruction. It provides an integrated approach to teaching reading and science. In addition to the trade books students read, students conduct hands on investigations throughout the year. All science lessons are tied to the Next Generations Science Standard with the “Do it, Talk it, Read it, Write it” approach. This approach has our students reading, writing and discussing like scientists do on a daily basis. Students must use evidence to support their

statements and have civil discourse.

In addition to Seeds of Science, our students are taught engineering using the Engineering is Elementary curriculum. Our students are outside collecting local stream data, counting birds as part of a National Bird Count, or listening for wood frogs participating in citizen science data collection. We are fortunate to have the Hay Flats and Wasilla Creek within walking distance of our school where our students are able to make observations and connect with outdoors. We partner with over 20 local scientists in the community throughout the year. Cooperative learning structures are used throughout the day providing students with ample time to talk and collaborate with each other about the content

1d. Social studies/history/civic learning and engagement

Our social studies lessons range from students learning about themselves, and their family in kindergarten to their school and community and the Matanuska Susitna Borough from 1st to 3rd grade, then Alaska studies starts in in 4th grade finishing with US History and maps in 5th grade. In addition to integrating literacy and science, we integrate literacy and Social Studies, reading novels such as Colony Kids and Alaska Land in Motion. With our social studies curriculum we are able to provide our students with place based learning opportunities. We partner with local archeologists, museum curators, Alaska Native groups, and local dog mushers when teaching social studies content. Students participate in teacher developed quests while walking around our local cities learning about our community. Connecting students to our community in hands on, meaningful ways while providing service to our community at it is part of our mission. We have garden beds, a greenhouse and chicken coop on campus in which students plant, maintain, and harvest each year. We often donates hundreds of pounds of student grown vegetables to a local nonprofit called Kids Kupboard that feeds kids throughout our community. In addition to the vegetables donated, we also collect nonperishable food every year. For the past five years we have successfully collected and donated aver 4,000 pounds of food each year. This saves Kids Kupboard about \$12,000 in food costs annually.

1e. For secondary schools:

1f. For schools that offer preschool for three- and four-year old students:

Our preschool program is for three to five year olds that qualify for special education services. Our preschool teacher uses the Opening the Word of Learning (OWL) curriculum for academic readiness skills. This program focuses on literacy, math, basic concepts and language. Social emotional skills are taught through the Second Step curriculum. The students that attend our preschool program have the opportunity to be in our school for 8 years. Our preschool program works with our students to master kindergarten readiness as wells as important social skills such as sharing and taking turns as well as engaging students in the school day while following essential school routines. Our preschool students often come in at or just above students that are entering kindergarten without any preschool experience.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Students at Machetanz benefit from the philosophy that we educate the whole child. Students rotate through physical education, music and library/technology which we call specials on a three day rotation schedule. Students spend 45 minutes of their day in one of these special classes. While we are a STEM school we also have a focus on the arts. Students create visual art work in their classrooms as well as in one of our two art clubs and they showcase the art work at our Art Night.

Our physical education program provides all students with the opportunity to grow and achieve their personal best with their physical fitness. Daily interactions using cooperative learning structures, a lot of opportunities for students to show what they can to and share what they have learned. Not only does our PE teacher provide instruction tied to state standards, education for overall healthy lifestyles is also promoted.

Students can participate in early morning running club, jump roping club, and our school wide mileage club.

The mileage club recognizes students each time they have run or walked 25 miles. By the end of the year students that achieve 100 miles or more also earn a physical activity based field trip. We also encourage our classroom teachers to get out and get active with their students with Teacher Tuesdays where students earn credit for their teachers running or walking with them. Our PE program connects PE standards with science and health standards that are taught in the classrooms. We participate in Jump Rope for Heart, raising as much as \$15,000 each year for the American Heart Association. Our PE teacher also facilitates the participation in the statewide Healthy Futures program which promotes 60 minutes of activity a day.

Students need movement opportunities throughout the day in addition to PE and 30 minutes of recess. Students are allowed unstructured time to play, have fun and problem solve without always having adults intervene. Teachers often take students out for a second recess each day and provide movement activities when engagement is declining in the classroom. When students are provided these movement opportunities and the fresh air outside, engagement increases. Opportunities to have an additional 30 minutes of activity are provided to our classroom teachers by our PE teacher on a daily basis.

In music students learn how to keep a rhythm, sing, and perform in front of an audience. They also learn how to play a plethora of musical instruments from Kindergarten through 5th grade. Students in 4th grade all learn how to play the recorder and in 5th grade students can choose between being in the beginning band or the general music program. All grade levels participate in one musical concert or play per year. Students in grades 3-5 are also given the opportunity to join the choir. Our band and choir students can also be selected to participate in the honor choir and/or band. We often have students that participate in both.

We have been moving towards a 21st century library where not only are students checking out books, they have the opportunity to learn to code. We have a maker space in the library where students can design and engineer. Our librarian collaborates with classroom teachers to connect the learning in the classrooms to what is being taught in the library. Students are taught digital citizenship skills as well as research skills needed in the online world. Our librarian facilitates participation in the district and state Battle of the Books competition. Students are empowered to select new books they would like to see purchased for our library. This is the first year for our librarian and she has effectively transformed the library from a place to check out books and read to a place where students can explore digital content, and learn to code while engaging students with books and helping foster the love of reading.

For the past six years we have used social skills curriculum school wide. Students participate in lessons in their classrooms and those needing additional support receive social skill training in small groups. We use Positive Action as well as Second Step. Students get explicit instruction in character education, friendship building and conflict resolution. By ensuring that our students from preschool through 5th grade receive social skills each day, students are able to make better choices at school and at home and have fewer behavior incidences. Machetanz utilizes Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) school wide and explicitly teaches school wide and classroom expectations using the CHAMPS model. When students are explicitly taught behavior expectations and their behavior is monitored and feedback is provided, behavior incidents drop, students feel safer and engagement increases. Our Foundations team works together throughout the year to review and update our school wide expectations for students and teaches them to students. Office referrals have drastically declined when we focused on explicitly teaching and modeling our expectations to our students

3. Special Populations:

We pride ourselves in providing a quality education for all our students at Machetanz. Teachers differentiate their daily instruction in their classroom using a blended model for teaching. Students meet in small groups for Reading and Math instruction. When students are not actively working with the teacher, students are in stations working on work at their independent instructional level. This model allows for differentiation to occur in the general education classroom for our lower achievers as well as our higher achievers without the need to always pull students out of the classroom for instruction. Students with Individual Education Plans (IEP) may be pulled out to receive replacement to the core instruction. When possible we provide support for students with IEPs in the general education classroom. If scheduling allows, students will receive both core instructions as well as needed interventions to to facilitate them making a year's worth of growth

allowing for catch-up growth to close the achievement gap.

We have a part time English Language teacher working with our EL students often on academic vocabulary. Our migrant students also qualify for tutoring services and we provide before and after school tutoring twice a week for those migrant students performing below the 40th percentile on MAP assessments. We know that early intervention is the best intervention. Our kindergarten students that are falling below the 25th percentile on AIMS benchmarks receive additional support with letter names and sounds moving into blending when appropriate. First and second graders that need additional support are invited to participate in our Before School Reading Program and may also receive support during the day with an intervention that the classroom teacher or our instructional tutor provides. We have a high population of students that qualify for our Talented and Gifted Program as well as a large group of students that do not qualify but are high achieving. Due to the rigorous nature of our curriculum, high expectations, teacher efficacy and differentiated instruction we are able to meet the needs of all learners. This includes our students who are achieving below expectations, on grade level and our high achieving students. Students receive modified assignments whether they need to have their assignments simplified or to dive deeper with the content.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Students thrive in a climate of celebrating their successes. We implement positive behavior supports and strive for at least a 3 to 1 positive to corrective ratio of interactions with students. Along with office referrals for negative behaviors we also have positive behavior office referrals and we strive for a ratio of 3 to 1 there as well. Teachers build relationships with students, set goals for academics and behaviors, and celebrate with them in the classroom. The principal celebrates with students during our Friday morning assemblies, when students receive a positive office referral, and when students are nominated for Student of the Month. Parents are notified when students receive a positive office referral or are Student of the Month so they can celebrate with us. Our Musk Ox Motto is displayed on our wall when you first enter the school, and we live by our motto daily in our work with each other. All staff greet students in the hall by name. We give hugs, high fives and fist bumps. Last year students took a climate survey and results were positive with students stating they felt safe and that they had adults at school that they knew care about them.

To support each other and our students our school operates in teams. Each grade level selects someone from their team to serve on the school leadership team. One of our specialist teachers, a special education teacher, as well as a paraprofessional also serve on this team. We meet monthly and bring concerns from grade level teams to discuss and problem solve. We also have a Foundations team that focuses on school wide expectations for common areas. This team seeks input from all staff members prior to finalizing decisions so that all of our staff members feel valued and heard. We are currently working on becoming a Trauma Sensitive School (TSS) and our TSS team recently gave a safety and security survey to gain insights on needs. We build a sense of community with our looping teams and all grade level teachers have common prep so that they can plan and support each other. During staff meetings and professional development days we provide team building activities, and always have an avenue for teachers to discuss good things as well as needs. We also have a staff social contract in we develop each year about how we want to be treated by each other and we do our best every day to follow this contract. Staff are humble and willing to admit when a mistake was made and problem solve together.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

At the beginning of each year we host an open house. Prior to parents meeting their child's teacher, parents meet with the school principal to go over school wide expectations, school data from the previous year highlighting areas of success and showing areas where we would like to improve. We seek parent input, request parent volunteers, and host volunteer meetings where parents can ask questions and provide input. Communication is monthly via a school wide newsletter and weekly from classroom teachers or specialist. We communicate with our parents via our website and Facebook as well. When the state of AK puts out the report card to the public we share that data through newsletters, our website and Facebook. Parents are also provided with benchmark data three times a year as well as progress monitoring data more frequently. We find when parents know exactly what we need and plan to do with the money raised from fundraisers they will not only help with the fundraising efforts but make cash donations as well. Our parents are generous with their time in volunteering at the school in classrooms.

We partner with many local agencies such as the Department of Fish and Game, the Great Land Trust, Kids Kupboard, and the University of Alaska (UAA) while engaging students and families with place based service learning. Our latest project has been partnering with the Department of Fish and Game and UAA teaching students and families bird identifications skills and then completing bird counts on migrating birds. The efforts with citizen science provide a service to our community with local and national research that is currently taking place.

3. Professional Development:

At the school level the principal provides professional development (pd)for staff based on needs, either from teacher requests, from classroom observations or the needs of our community. Professional development is imperative for the continued growth of the staff at all levels and is provided in a variety of manners. It is provided during staff meetings, on longer PD days scheduled by the district or in after school course opportunities provided by the principal in conjunction with UAA for course credit. These courses often reflect the need of the whole building as they are widely attended. Recently our district had to make drastic budget cuts. With this comes a higher pupil to teacher ratio. Our building needed to find efficiencies in teaching and differentiating and finding a way to continue to perform at high academic levels. The blended learning model was presented to staff as a model we could explore. Many staff were interested and either attended a district offered course or the course provided at the school. This professional development was two-fold; it provided additional learning opportunities for staff to look at their teaching practice and reflect on how to best serve and differentiate learning for our students as well as provide teachers University credit for professional development specific to our building.

This year we have focused on professional development around being trauma sensitive as one of our school improvement areas. As our population changes and we are learning more about Adverse Childhood Effects (ACEs) we are providing professional development for all of our staff to help meet students needs as well as recognize the importance of self care and the effects of secondary trauma.

The principal is afforded opportunities for professional development through the district as well. This includes but is not limited to Social Emotional Learning, Effective Performance Management, technology training as well as technology conferences, and PD for growth in advocacy in local and statewide education policy and funding decisions. At any given time, the majority of staff are enrolled in course or professional development opportunity throughout the year.

4. School Leadership:

At Machetanz we have a school wide leadership team where the majority of the big decisions and policies are discussed, debated and decided on as a team with administrator final approval. The team members have assigned roles and a teacher is the facilitator of the group. This is true for other committees throughout the school that the principal is part of. The principal takes an active role with each committee she is on however she uses the shared leadership model. The principal will often play devil's advocate so the teams can debate and discuss all sides of an issue prior to making decisions. All decisions are filtered through the lens of what is best for kids.

In addition to the leadership team, we have a Foundations team and and Trauma Sensitive Schools team that make decisions that impact student learning and staff. Teacher leaders facilitate these teams as well. All three of these teams have a diverse group of staff members so that we can get perspectives from a variety of levels.

Our administrator has been at Machetanz for six years. This has been instrumental in knowing and understanding where we have come from as a staff and where we want to improve as a staff for our students. Our school Instructional Coach is part of two of these teams mentioned above and has been at Machetanz since it opened. Her leadership in supporting staff and students with their needs has been instrumental in our continued growth and maintaining high academic achievement. She has been a mentor for our new staff members and provides professional development for teachers based on their needs.

Several of our staff members have been at Machetanz since it opened 10 years ago and several of our staff members are relatively new. The experienced staff help us maintain our traditions while some of our newer staff have fresh ideas. The blend of experience with our staff keeps us moving in innovative ways without forgetting to continue to do what works and not change for the sake of change. We all strive to do what is best for ALL of our students on a daily basis.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

At Machetanz we believe the integrated STEM instruction using hands on, cooperative learning structures is the primary key to our success. Our curriculum and the cooperative learning structures engage and motivate students to interact, problem solve and construct meaning across curricular areas that they can apply in real world settings.

We know that the majority of the jobs our students will have in the future don't exist today. We need to teach students the skills to be able to collaborate effectively, be able to problem solve when the answer is not Googlable and be innovative. Our curriculum and approach to instruction provides students with ample opportunities throughout the day to talk with peers about the material they are learning. Students participate in civil discourse and are taught to use evidence to back their claims. These skills can be used in any curriculum area and any area in a students' life.

Students are afforded many opportunities to grow as learners. Our staff believe all students can achieve at high levels and provide students with the structures to make collaboration work. Because cooperative learning structures are in place in all classrooms, students aren't able to fly under the radar. If students are not directly accountable to the teacher they are accountable to a partner or a group of partners. Students will claim ownership in their work when its a group effort. If a teacher asks a question to the class and only calls on the students that raise their hand to answer, student that don't raise their hands don't have to be active learners as they know they will not be called onto provide an answer. When students know a teacher is going to ask a question and they may call on non volunteers or require students to share with a partner then learning becomes active. Learning can take place in a competitive environment, individual environment, or cooperative learning environment and we have found that cooperative learning has benefited our students the most. Academic achievement has increased and students are more productive. While cooperative learning can be overused and frustrating for students at times, our staff look for and recognize signs for when a student or group of students may need a different structure. Our teachers are careful to provide clear roles and expectations for participation in cooperative learning groups. This keeps engagement high which ultimately keeps achievement high.