

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 [] Choice

Name of Principal Mr. Scott Kaese

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

Official School Name Ivy Hill Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 2211 North Burke Drive

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

Arlington Heights IL 60004-3249
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Cook County

Telephone (847) 398-4275

Fax (847) 394-6556

Web site/URL https://www.sd25.org/ivyhill

E-mail skaese@sd25.org

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Dr. Lori Bein

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail lbein@sd25.org

District Name Arlington Heights School District 25 Tel. (847) 758-4900

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mr Brian Cerniglia

(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

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 7 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 0 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 9 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, 2018 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	51	41	92
1	59	70	129
2	70	57	127
3	50	49	99
4	51	61	112
5	50	54	104
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	331	332	663

*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):
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 49 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 6 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 42 % White
 - 0 % Two or more races
- 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2017 – 2018 school year: 21%

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

Due to a high number of international families visiting the United States for work, the varying lengths of projects cause Ivy to see more families enrolling and transferring throughout the year.

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	52
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	82
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	134
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	634
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.21
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	21

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 21%
138 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Assyrian, Bengali, Cantonese, Gujarati, Hindi, Japanese, Kannada, Korean, Malayalam, Mandarin, Marathi, Mongolian, Odia, Pashtoo, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Tamil, Telugu, Ukrainian, Urdu.

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 9%
 Total number students who qualify: 62

8. Students receiving special education services: 6 %
39 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>2</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>4</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>4</u> Developmental Delay | <u>8</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>20</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.	30
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	20
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.	3

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 22:1

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

Required Information	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	96%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

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

Our school vision is "Be Courageous." Our vision is meant to be concise, so it is on the forefront of everyone's mind, yet all encompassing

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

We at Ivy Hill Elementary School strive every day to help create courageous learners. We embrace our motto, “Be Courageous” as we strive to build a courageous learning mindset for our entire learning community. We feel this mindset unlocks our students and staff, allowing them space as learners and educators because any potential fear of the unknown or failure is now seen as an opportunity to grow academically, socially and emotionally. “Be Courageous” is the foundational piece to all of our current and future success because it has become ingrained into everything we aim to accomplish.

Ivy Hill Elementary is a school of over 680 students that welcomes, celebrates, and embraces diversity within its entire school community. We excitedly celebrate and honor the approximately 25 different languages spoken throughout our student body from kindergarten through fifth grade. Students can be seen walking the halls in their “I am Ivy Hill” t-shirts which symbolize unity as an Ivy Eagle, while recognizing each student’s uniqueness. With our diverse student body, we capitalize on every opportunity to learn from each individual student about all the various cultures.

Inside our classrooms, we are on a mission to cultivate learners who are courageous and empowered so students are prepared to tackle any challenge that comes their way. We build personal relationships so that during life’s adventures, our students own the tools to guide them through. We do this by creating a courageous and kind environment that embraces each student’s uniqueness, while fostering creativity and collaboration.

We value educating the whole child and developing students’ social-emotional well-being. It starts with our staff being trained in Responsive Classroom. At the four day and one day workshops, teachers learn strategies to help create safe and joyful learning communities where each student is celebrated and can thrive. Responsive Classroom trains teachers to support students in developing a strong classroom community as well as how to help students develop social and academic skills. Since implementation, our teachers have created responsive classroom environments with activities like, but not limited to, morning meetings, energizers (whole group brain break activity), and encouraging students to develop and document personal hopes and dreams. By having our teachers create these responsive environments, students feel connected to their teacher, classroom and Ivy Hill. Students realize school is a place for learning in a fun and supportive environment where risks are encouraged, and their uniqueness is valued by everyone.

Another way Ivy Hill works to support the emotional growth of all students is through the implementation of different social emotional programs that focus on a variety of important topics. All first- through fifth-grade students participate in a four-week Second Step Bullying Prevention Program that teaches students how to recognize, report, and refuse bullying and also emphasizes the role of the bystander. Additionally, kindergarten through fifth-grade teachers also utilize the Second Step curriculum weekly to teach social emotional skills to their classes that focus on social problem-solving, developing coping skills, and developing empathy. For both of these curricula, students complete home links with their parents or guardians about the topics covered. These home links help to create a common language between home and school and also help to foster a positive school community.

Our staff consists of approximately 70 teachers and teaching assistants with diverse educational training, who are committed to providing daily instruction to students in the areas of literacy, mathematics, science, social science, technology, information literacy, music, art, physical education, and social-emotional learning. A full-time social worker and speech therapist, as well as a part-time school psychologist, occupational therapist, and physical therapist also support our students. All of our staff members are highly qualified, with experience ranging from first year teachers to over 20 years of experience in education.

There are currently 30 sections of kindergarten through fifth grade, with class sizes currently between 18-24 students. Ivy Hill also offers a variety of specialized instructional programming both in and out of the classroom, such as special education services, advanced classes, reading and math support, and instruction for English Language Learners. Ivy Hill has a diverse English Language (EL) population that makes up approximately one third of our school population. To meet our various needs, we have several flexible

instructional models to support our English Learners. These models are correlated closely to the WIDA standards to integrate language development and content learning at all grade levels. To ensure we are consistently meeting the needs of all our students, we utilize a Response to Intervention model that has been implemented at all grade levels, providing a three-tiered approach to interventions in academic and social/emotional areas. In addition, enrichment support is provided to students and teachers in order to meet the range of needs of our students.

Parental support at Ivy Hill continues to be an integral part of the school culture. An active Parent Teacher Association provides the student body with many special programs each year pertaining to academic, social, and emotional growth.

Ivy Hill is a wonderful school where students, families and staff come together on a daily basis to create an environment that embraces diversity, challenges thinking, fosters creativity and provides opportunities to grow together.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

Our instructional practices focus on empowering students to take ownership of their learning. Valued elements of reflecting, feedback, self-assessment, choice, questioning and documenting are embedded into each curricular area. With our guided approach to learning, student needs are met on a daily basis through extensions or reteaching of content. Our Common Core aligned curriculum provides teachers avenues to differentiate instruction, focus on process, and help students develop a growth mindset.

In Reading, teachers use a workshop approach utilizing the programs Schoolwide Reading Fundamentals and Be A Writer. Schoolwide Reading Fundamentals is our reading workshop-based curriculum, implemented in Kindergarten through fifth grade classrooms. The program contains 18 lessons in five units, eight Interactive Read Alouds, and 10 Mini Lessons. These lessons support a gradual release model and provide opportunities for engagement, modeling, and independent practice. The reader's workshop model provides opportunities for teachers to differentiate material for student needs, meet with guided reading groups, support students independently through reading conferences, and provide time for students to use technology-based reading websites and applications such as Freckle, Raz-Kids, and Epic!

Our additional literacy instruction focuses on foundational reading skills that students need to become successful readers such as phonemic awareness, phonics, and handwriting. Our Kindergarten students start building their reading knowledge with the Jolly Phonics program, which provides tactile ways for students to learn letter sounds and sound patterns. Additionally, our K-2 students use the Fountas and Pinnell word study program that contains a scope and sequence that allows teachers to choose a variety of lessons based on current student need and performance. Our K-2 students also participate in the Handwriting Without Tears program to work on letter formation through fine motor activities with blocks, chalkboards, and paper. Our grades 3-5 students use the Words Their Way program that teaches word patterns, word parts, and new vocabulary. This program is tailored to meet students at their level and provide individualized instruction based on ongoing student assessments. These include formal and informal assessments for each unit of study, F&P Benchmarking and small group progress monitoring.

1b. Mathematics:

Our math curriculum is Math in Focus: Singapore Math, which provides opportunities for students to gain an in-depth understanding of standards, fluency with skills, and to build self-confidence in their problem solving skills. Math in Focus is a research-based program that focuses on classroom learning, discussion, and practice. It strives to balance conceptual understanding, visual learning, and problem solving. This curriculum prepares students for state and formal assessments, as well as mastery of Common Core State Standards content and mathematical practices.

Math In Focus concepts are taught through a sequence of concrete to pictorial to abstract learning opportunities. Concrete learning happens through hands-on activities with math manipulatives, such as counters, coins, number lines, or base ten blocks. Pictorial learning uses pictures, drawings, or other forms that illustrate the concept with something more than abstract numbers. Finally, abstract learning requires students to use numerals, strategies, and problem-solving methods to solve problems. Math In Focus fosters differentiation by providing remedial, extra reteaching, and enrichment supports. Students demonstrate their learning through formal assessments that are tailored to measure current understanding along with providing opportunities to transfer their knowledge into new mathematical pathways.

While meeting the needs of our individual students is at the forefront of our minds, Ivy Hill provides an advanced math class for 5th grade students; this class implements the curriculum, Big Ideas to accelerate students into the middle school program.

1c. Science:

Our Science approach and curriculum align to the Next Generation Science Standards and set the framework for our teachers to design unique and engaging experiences for our students. Our teachers find every opportunity to have students explore their thinking through hands-on and real-world applications. Students learn a variety about life science, earth science and physical science. One unique aspect about our curriculum is that it aligns and integrates into our Schoolwide Reading Curriculum during one of our Content Units. This allows teachers the opportunity to use texts to enhance and deepen a student's level of understanding. Our science program and approach foster student curiosity by providing opportunities to collaborate, innovate, explore, and discover endless possibilities. Assessment of understanding is integrated through inquiry-based experiences that ask students to document their learning and reflect on why certain outcomes occurred.

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

Our social studies curriculum explores the relationship between individuals and society, from friends and family to global networks. In a school setting, the disciplines of civics, economics, geography, and history are central to our students' preparation for college, career, and civic life. Our students experience social studies through thematic units and a combination of teacher created units and various textbooks, nonfiction readers, primary sources, and maps. One example of inquiry is with our 5th-grade students who become famous characters during our Wax Museum projects, along with experiencing the Revolutionary War as they write persuasive letters taking one side or the other, creating an engaging debate. In addition to being assessed during these experiences and projects, students are asked to share their learning through culminating formal assessments.

1e. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

As part of our curriculum, we are committed to providing instruction in not only the traditional subject areas, but also in 21st century skills such as collaboration, technology integration, communication, global awareness, creativity, and problem solving for all of our students. Instructors collaborate across our school and across subject areas, including STEM related topics such as programming, 3D printing and digital song creation in addition to traditional media such as paint, clay, and band and orchestra instruments.

The library media center supports the curriculum by providing weekly lessons for kindergarten through fifth grade in areas such as digital citizenship, research skills, computer/iPad skills and coding. In addition, weekly lessons are tailored to integrate with each grade level curriculum (i.e., study of nonfiction text, light and sound lessons, study of Illinois landmarks, etc.). Our library firmly believes in "a book in every hand" and provides students the opportunity to browse and check out books, Kindles or audiobooks on iPads. This extends the reading experience after leaving the library. Our library hosts programs to connect students to the value of reading. Some programs are Tournament of Books (modeled after March Madness brackets with winning books donated to Lurie Children's Hospital), Genre Badge Program, Dinosaur Research Club, our very own beloved Ivy Hill Eagle's Books program, which is a designated book shelf with "award worthy" books selected and presented by the librarian each January, and the One School One Book program. To further engage our students in the area of STEM, the Library Media Center offers opportunities in broadcasting through our rotating morning announcement crews, coding lessons with the Hour of Code using both online and hands on activities, Scratch Jr. Club, Scratch Club, Origami Bookmark Club, Comic Club, Green screen production, Breakout problem solving experiences, movie making through the Book Trailer Competition, and Coding Night for students and their families. The library media center consistently

hosts locally and nationally known authors to give students the opportunity to learn more about the art of writing and illustrating. Some of the authors we have had are Henry Cole, Peter Reynolds, Ethan Long, Aaron Blabey, and Peter Brown just to name few.

Our physical education (P.E.) department focuses on teaching students persistence, teamwork, courage, confidence, and determination through various athletic experiences and special courses throughout the year. Another engaging part of our classes is that we continue to expand the use of technology. In P.E., students wear heart rate monitors, and they are taught the significance of monitoring their heart rate. Through heart rate monitors, students can see in real time the effects of exercise on the body. Each student from third grade through fifth wear a heart rate monitor and can quickly determine if they are within their target heart rate zone, allowing them to set and reach personal goals.

The music program at Ivy Hill Elementary School plays an important role in the school community. Through participating in music classes, students create, perform, and respond to music in a variety of ways. They create original music using various instruments such as xylophones, world music drums, and various non-pitched percussion instruments. Creating music allows students to put their knowledge of these various musical concepts into practice. Another essential component of the music program at Ivy Hill is performance. Each grade level puts on a performance for the school community and for their families. These programs give students a full musical experience, as they learn songs and dances, as well as develop characters and practice speaking parts. When students leave Ivy Hill, they have developed an appreciation and love for music, confidence in their abilities to create and perform, and will continue to keep music in their lives in any way.

The visual art curriculum fosters a highly personalized and passionate learning environment for diverse student interests and learning styles. Weekly art classes expose students to a range of visual art mediums including drawing, painting, collage, printmaking, textiles, sculpture, clay/ceramics, and digital arts including 3D design and printing. Students are fully involved in the creative process including research, design, creation, reflection, and presentation of student-led projects based on a theme. There are multiple opportunities for students to make real connections outside the art classroom such as field trips to the Art Institute of Chicago, art shows at the Arlington Heights Memorial Library, school art shows through Artomé (partner company), and a digital art museum through Artsonia where parents are able to view student portfolios, share art with their personal communities, and even contribute to the art classroom budget through purchasing student art. Ivy Hill has a dynamic arts department, providing opportunity for students to engage with the arts through multiple media.

3. Special Populations:

At Ivy we believe in the importance of empowering our students to grow to their full potential in all areas. Our goal is to provide the space that all of our students need to feel courageous in their learning and in being themselves while learning. This requires our staff to constantly evaluate data to meet the needs of our diverse learners using differentiated instruction, intervention, and assessments. Five times a year, classroom teachers, the school psychologist, interventionists and administrators meet to analyze data to determine how to best meet students' academic goals by using the Response to Intervention (RtI) approach. Data are gathered from various sources such as AIMSweb, Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), Fountas and Pinnell, and various classroom assessments. The staff then utilizes Learnmetrics, a digital data management system, to store all student historical assessment data mentioned above. This system allows all student information to be color coded and sorted based on district criteria. Students who meet district criteria for intervention are discussed to determine interventions that best meet their needs. Students receive interventions through various support systems within the school. Students are provided Tier 2 interventions by a variety of ways such as pull out programs with reading and math interventionists as well as in classroom programs provided by general education teachers. Students who receive Tier 3 reading and math services use the same direct, systematic programming as the special education program.

Once placed in an intervention, students are continuously monitored for progress to determine if the current intervention is working, or if it needs to be modified or changed. These data are also used to determine when

a student is ready to move back to Tier 1 or move to a Tier 3. Students who qualify for further support and services within our special education program receive programming that may include a small group, pull out with specialized, or systematic instruction or support within the large group, regular education environment. Special education interventions are systematic direct instruction that provides more opportunities for student responses. Student progress is monitored weekly, and parents are informed of student progress at reporting periods and annual reviews.

A focus of special education is to ensure that students are placed in the least restrictive environment. This means that when students meet their goals, they are re-benchmarked and new goals are set. Our goal with all students is to provide opportunities of reintegration into regular education once we feel the achievement gap has closed enough to make them successful in that environment.

Ivy has many program options available for our diverse EL population. All students are given the WIDA screener that determines their proficiency in the various English Language Domains. Our staff uses this data to then determine if students will receive our sheltered instruction program or resource support. Our sheltered Program is available for students in grades K-2. These classes receive full-day language support with an EL certified classroom teacher and a teaching assistant by using the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model and other EL strategies to meet the academic needs of each student. Students also can receive support with our resource program where EL and classroom teachers work together to look closely at language proficiency levels to decide which small group model would be most beneficial. These types of instruction might include, co-teaching, push-in small group instruction or pull-out small group instruction.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Once a small neighborhood school, Ivy Hill has grown over the last few years to the largest elementary school in Arlington Heights District 25 with nearly 680 students. We are enrolling students year round, with many new families coming from outside the country. Even though we have become the largest school, you would never know it as our school culture still embodies a sense of connectedness that values relationships and view each other as family.

“We are Ivy Hill” is more than our motto, but a belief that resonates within our entire community. It can be seen throughout the school on a daily basis. There is a sense of pride, belonging, and ownership to being an Ivy Hill Eagle by students and staff. We have been able to maintain our connections as a staff by enjoying each other’s company through monthly celebrations, book clubs, and memorable experiences such as our 50th Anniversary and High School Senior Walk. Many former students, staff and parents come back to reminisce about their memorable experiences at Ivy Hill. Each student is celebrated and given an “I am Ivy Hill” T-shirt to represent they are part of our school and culture. Our goal is to create a space where families feel immediately welcome as our amazing staff, dedicated front office, and supportive PTA answer questions and provide additional resources to families enrolling mid-year, to help create a smooth transition.

The Ivy Hill staff thrives on finding every opportunity to build relationships with students throughout the day. As students enter Ivy Hill, they are greeted by our uplifting staff with good mornings, hi-fives, and even a visit from our Eagle mascot. Once inside, students visually see five principles that we strive for everyday: Be Courageous, Kind, Unique, Collaborative and Creative. These are the driving forces for our students and staff. Teachers foster a sense of belonging by setting aside time to build relationships amongst students through daily morning meetings. Students greet each other, share on various topics, and participate in a group activity. Teachers’ intentional and purposeful planning creates a safe environment where students feel empowered and willing to take risks due to feeling connected to their teachers and classmates. Our successful school culture is powered by each member of our learning community, because they feel valued and supported by each other.

Our school principals empower all of our teachers to be their best selves by building teachers’ confidence to be courageous in their lesson planning and professional growth opportunities. Being part of a continual learning environment, it naturally allows teachers to create a similar environment for their students by putting students first, having high expectations for learning and a willingness to always help. Ivy Hill’s culture of creating relationships based on trust, support and a common vision will continually have everyone feeling a sense of belonging and pride to say, “We Are Ivy Hill”.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Ivy Hill is truly a place where people and partnerships are valued and appreciated. Ivy Hill has developed a strong community connection through open communication, thoughtful partnerships and a willingness and desire to get involved whenever possible. We see that when the parent/community is involved, our students have more buy-in to what they are learning. We hope to harness that as much as possible.

Ivy Hill has been on a mission to change the conversation for parents with their children through Twitter and SeeSaw, a digital portfolio. By using these platforms, it creates instant engagement in what is happening in classrooms throughout the day and can help parents talk to their children about their activities. Rather than asking the typical question, “What did you do at school today?” parents can now ask more direct questions like, “I saw you working on your science project. How did it turn out?” This creates a space of familiarity for the student, leading to a more engaging conversation. Parents have shared their appreciations for their level of insight into the various types of learning experiences. In addition to sharing with parents, we also look for opportunities for them to get involved during the school day. Our parent community is also an integral partner in their child’s education. By having almost one hundred percent of

our parents attend Curriculum Night, Parent Teacher Conferences, and various educational evening throughout the year, parents are vested partners in the success of not only their own children but our entire school. Parents also find opportunities to get involved through mystery readers and classroom volunteers, and being an important piece in the success of the LMC. Parents are invited to sign up to assist in book shelving, checkout, and inventory. Through the LMC, parents have the opportunity help out and see their children in the school setting. We also value our strong partnership with the Arlington Heights Memorial Library; they support classroom lessons and provide extensions for our students through Summer/Spring/Winter Reading Challenges. Our Parent Teacher Association provides wonderful opportunities for our students that support our vision of being courageous and kind. Enriching experiences such as Chess Club, Run Club, Lunchtime Readers Book Club build relationships and extend learning. Other programs build a better appreciation of each other like Everybody Counts that teaches children about various disabilities and coping with various challenges.

We partner with the Arlington Heights Fire Department to build an awareness in our students through experiences such as Red Ribbon Week, Weather and Fire trailer. We also have a great partnership with Futabakai, a Japanese School located in Arlington Heights. One of our first and second grade classrooms partner with the similar grades to create memorable experiences for everyone involved. Through this exchange, students learn to appreciate another culture by building relationships that go beyond words.

3. Professional Development:

Ivy Hill is strongly rooted in a foundation of continual growth and progress. As such, everyone in our building, administrators, teachers, and students alike, embraces their role as a learner who has the potential to evolve and develop. The combination of strong administrative support and our teachers' ongoing pursuit of excellence in their practice has led to powerful, ongoing professional development opportunities, which include personal goal-setting, attending conferences, and taking advantage of learning from colleagues within the walls of our own building.

A few weeks into each school year, Ivy Hill's administrators meet with all staff members to discuss learning goals and how each individual wants to grow as an educator. Teachers' goals are based on a combination of the needs of their students, as well as current educational trends and best practices. These goals are then used to help determine common professional development strands across the entire building. Over the course of the past two years, many staff members noted a desire to learn more about supporting their students' need to grow as mathematical thinkers and problem-solvers. As a result, the principal provided the opportunity for teams of teachers to attend conferences led by experts, such as Greg Tang and Jo Boaler. Likewise, many teachers have set goals in regard to meeting the diverse needs of their students in reading. To support teachers in this area, another team of teachers had the opportunity to attend the Jennifer Serravallo conference. In addition, each grade level was given time and space to collaborate with our District Literacy Coordinator to figure out ways to plan for and accommodate such varying student needs.

In addition to attending conferences by leaders in the field, we also value the expertise of our own teachers, so we try to create opportunities for us to learn from one other, as is evident in our "Walk the Halls" experience. Teachers who choose to participate are given an hour to walk the halls of our building, look at student work, and visit classrooms. After the "Walk the Halls" experience, teachers then reflect as a group to highlight new strategies that other staff are utilizing to maximize student engagement and improve achievement. This commitment to learning alongside one another can also be seen in our most recent voluntary book study. Over forty staff members have joined in this book discussion aimed at how we can provide opportunities for students to gain control of their learning, which aligns with our district initiative to personalize learning for all students. These types of experiences have helped to grow a sense of community in our teachers as learners, and, at the same time, unite us all around a common vision and goals for our students. Teachers at Ivy Hill feel empowered to continue to grow their practice, with the support of administrators, by continually reflecting, experimenting with new ideas, and connecting with colleagues with similar interests and goals.

4. School Leadership:

Leadership is fostered and shared throughout the halls of Ivy Hill. Our holistic and servant leadership approach creates an environment that demonstrates consistent communication, reflection, improvement, and ownership.

Servant leaders help people grow by consistently focusing on others well-being and fostering relationships. This approach is important to Ivy because we believe it creates an energy and a trusting space to be courageous as a teacher and staff member. Our principal and assistant principal set the expectation that every voice is of equal value, and they provide pathways to have them consistently heard. Through their servant leadership approach, our principals continually challenge staff to grow through reflection on best practices, provide growth opportunities, all while maintaining a focus on what is best for students. Teachers feel comfortable and safe to confidently share their own ideas with our principals through individual meetings, grade level team meetings and Building Leadership team as they listen intently to every possibility. The open and supportive dialogues allow teachers to identify what they need to improve their practice, which then directly impacts the success of our students. Two of the most recent ideas have included designing flexible classrooms and increased technology integration into guided teaching practices. We also believe in the leadership potential of our student body.

Each year, all fourth- and fifth-grade students have the opportunity to apply to represent their classroom on our Ivy Hill Student Council. After elections, two students from each classroom meet on a monthly basis to discuss ideas, share concerns, and brainstorm solutions to the problems facing our school community and beyond. Additionally, we have three student council representatives that then meet with the principal to form our Student-Principal Advisory Board. This year, the Student Council has led a “Kindness Campaign” that has united our entire student body around the goal of bringing kindness to others. This campaign has included a kick-off assembly, the creation of a “kindness chain” around our building, and a weekly raffle during the lunch hour to recognize the students for their kind acts.

Though we are extremely proud of our Student Council, student leadership in our school is not solely reserved for this select group of students. As a school, we have embraced our district initiative of Personalized Learning, which encourages all students to use dedicated class time each week to work on something about which they are passionate. Over the years, students have coordinated many philanthropic efforts that showcase their understanding that their impact can reach outside our school walls. Student run initiatives include an after-school party that raised money for Lurie Cancer Center, developed a fundraiser that led to a significant donation to Chicago’s Comer Children’s Hospital, and created a whole-school assembly to raise awareness during Food Allergy Awareness Week. Given the support of our building administration, our teachers feel empowered to cultivate and support the leadership desires of our students.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Here at Ivy Hill, “Be Courageous” is the foundational piece to who our students and staff are, because it sets our daily intention to help unlock every teaching and learning opportunity.

We make it known that our students, teachers and staff can embrace their fears and develop the confidence to try new things and we realize a challenge does not stop us. We own any challenge because we see them as learning and growing experiences. Students and staff embrace their mistakes and realize we can learn through failure. Through our social emotional learning experiences, students learn the value of kindness and supporting each other. Developing the comfortable and confident muscle within our students to try new things, with an open mind, is what our courageous environment fosters. It is important that Ivy Hill creates the space and time for students to pursue, share, learn and express their passions. Within that, our students embody kindness at its most pure form, through student-run fundraisers, community engagement activities, clubs, and collaborative efforts. The message “Be You” is common language amongst our teachers as our students are allowed the space to learn what makes themselves unique.

Through our community and example that our active PTA sets, our students celebrate their strengths and share them with others. Our academic pathway begins with exploration. At Ivy, we value providing students the opportunity to discover subjects and topics creatively and purposefully. Students are encouraged to find various pathways and focus on the process of learning rather than the product. We judge academic success based on our student’s ability to answer the question “how did you learn?” as opposed to, “what did you learn?” We encourage our students to question and our goal is for our students to share their understanding of the curriculum, rather than, simply, the answer.

In order to guide our students down their academic pathway, we utilize our standardized academic results as information for our teachers. Test results, assessment and classwork, is taken in by teachers and staff and utilized to further their knowledge about their individual students which helps inform teaching strategies personalized to their student’s needs.