

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. Greg Fairchild

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

Official School Name Banner Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 12610 North Allen Road

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

Dunlap IL 61525-9415
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Peoria County

Telephone (309) 243-7774

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E-mail gfairchild@dunlapcusd.net

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. Scott Dearman

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail sdearman@dunlapcusd.net

District Name Dunlap Community Unit School District 323 Tel. (309) 691-3955

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 Mrs. Karen Disharoon

(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):
- 5 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 8 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	22	24	46
1	24	20	44
2	30	21	51
3	37	31	68
4	41	35	76
5	29	34	63
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	183	165	348

*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):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 19 % Asian
 - 7 % Black or African American
 - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 64 % 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: 11%

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, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	12
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	25
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	37
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	348
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.11
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	11

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 8%
29 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Spanish, Polish, Korean, Filipino, Arabic, French, Hindi, Hungarian, Cantonese, Romanian, Mandarin, Urdu, Vietnamese, Gujarati, Kannada, Bengali, Marathi, Ibo, Telugu, Tamil.

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 14%
Total number students who qualify: 49

8. Students receiving special education services: 17 %
58 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>32</u> Autism | <u>2</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>12</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>24</u> Developmental Delay | <u>8</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>23</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>4</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: 14
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.	17
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.	24
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	9

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 20:1

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	95%	95%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 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 mission statement is: "Engaging all learners to prepare them for the 21st Century." Our motto is: "Banner. You Belong Here."

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

At Banner Elementary, we foster a welcoming environment where all students feel they belong and have a contribution to make. Our motto is: “You Belong Here.” We communicate to students that it is never okay to be disruptive or hurtful, and we abide by three common expectations: 1. Follow directions quickly; 2. Keep hands, feet to yourself; and 3. Speak kindly. We have all students memorize these words and often refer to them as reminders as to why we operate the way we do. These expectations are the cornerstone for our rich tradition of excellence and social responsibility.

Banner is part of the Dunlap Community Unit School District which has grown considerably over the past 20 years, doubling in enrollment. The draw to the community includes Caterpillar and three large hospitals. Banner houses nearly 350 students and has a wide range of cultures represented, including over 21 languages spoken in households. Our low socio-economic rate is considerably low, hovering around 8%. Banner’s enrollment includes three Life Skills classrooms which serves district students with severe cognitive challenges, and have recently created a Motor Lab that meets the sensory needs of these students.

Banner parents are highly involved in their children's’ educational success with nearly 100% attending our fall conferences. In spite of the district’s increasing enrollment, we are dedicated to creating a “small town” feel at Banner where all students feel special. We adapt to the needs of our student population, instructional/curricular changes, and with the ever-changing technological advances.

We recognize that many of our students come to school with trauma and/or other challenging home situations that we have not experienced in previous years. We added a full-time counselor and a service therapy dog as a resource for students. We adhere to the BIST (Behavior Intervention Support Team) philosophy. BIST is similar to the “Love and Logic” ideas and is based on giving students grace with accountability. All teachers have been trained in this philosophy in some manner. Essentially, when students present challenging behaviors, we view it as missing a skill and treat it as such. This includes practicing correct behaviors and/or meeting with a “mentor student” to help them be the best student they can be. We have a BIST Vision Team that meets monthly to discuss how we can best support our teachers with supporting students who demonstrate they need additional help. As a result of BIST, each morning, we intentionally assign staff members at several points throughout the school and their sole purpose is to greet students with a friendly “hello.” Our goal is for each student to be greeted more than once prior to walking into their classroom.

In relation to educational and curricular changes, all teachers participate in PLCs (Professional Learning Communities) where grade level colleagues meet once per week for an hour to collaborate how to best meet the needs of our students. Their meetings operate under the four PLC questions: 1. What do we want our students to know? 2. How will we know if they have learned it? 3. What will we do if they have not learned it? and 4. What will we do if they already know it? All students are assessed in the areas of reading and math three times per year using STAR from Renaissance Learning as an initial screener. Students who fall below the 40th percentile are identified for receiving interventions that target specific skill deficits. Students who do not close the gap quickly are referred to our RtI (Response to Intervention) team which is made up of several specialized staff members to utilize their expertise. Parents are also a part of the team as we develop a specific plan to address deficits. Follow-up meetings are scheduled to evaluate and/or change the plan/s. To address the needs of our higher achieving students, we offer an enrichment program for students who meet the requirements in grades 3rd - 5th. These students are given challenges during an intervention block as well as an opportunity to participate in an after-school program, Enrichment Eagles, one day per week.

All students have access to technological devices; however, we understand that the device does not make the difference in instruction, but well-planned use of the device/s does. Several learning applications are used throughout the day including Freckle, Lexia, FastMath, ABCYa, and Reading A to Z to name a few. The Dunlap District is moving to a 1-1 model (one electronic device per student). Currently, all 4th and 5th grade students are assigned a Chromebook to be used for classroom learning experiences. Students submit their work through GoogleDocs often, and we utilize a learning management system called Canvas where students can submit work. K - 3rd grade students will also be issued Chromebooks next year that will remain

at school.

The Banner community recognizes that there is more to school than academics. We participate in several school-wide philanthropic activities. These include an all-school shopping trip to purchase items for area children in need, collecting socks for a local charity, raising money for St. Jude with Laps for Life, collecting boxes of macaroni and cheese to be donated to a local mission, and a marker recycling program.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

The staff at Banner takes great pride in helping students become lifelong readers. At the younger grade levels (K - 2), students are “learning to read” whereas in the upper grade levels (3 - 5), students are “reading to learn.” Our building places a heavy emphasis on reading and employs several strategies at the younger grade levels. They focus on phonemic awareness, recognizing sight words, studying words and their patterns to help them to decode. Every grade level practices guided reading where they can hone in on students who have similar strengths or challenges. The groups are determined based upon running records that teachers administer regularly. The groups are flexible depending on how students respond. Teachers also engage our learners with Daily 5 (Read to Self, Read to Someone, Listen to Reading, Word Work, and Independent Writing) where we encourage students to increase their reading “stamina.”

All of our students are assessed three times per year (Fall, Winter, Spring) in the area of reading using STAR, an assessment tool that gives national comparisons as well as local. Students who fall below the 40th percentile are considered for additional reading interventions which are administered daily for 30 minutes. Each grade level has their own “Intervention Block” where our Literacy Aide, Title I Aide, and classroom teachers assist with applying interventions to students who have like challenges. Some of the interventions used are Barton Reading and Spelling, Wilson, Sonday, Lexia, PSI, Freckle, and 6-minute solution. Students receiving interventions are progress monitored every two weeks to determine the effectiveness of the intervention. Our goal is to help students quickly (Response to Intervention) close the gap and get them to the point where they are no longer in need of additional support.

We make reading a priority by sharing the joy of reading. The principal does a monthly read aloud visiting each classroom to read a story. We celebrate students who have excelled on Accelerated Reader quizzes each month. We pair up classes (younger with older) to “buddy read” each month as well as having a “Reading Day” celebration.

1b. Mathematics:

Banner Elementary has a strong focus in math instruction throughout each grade level. We practice several different types of learning strategies, including a Singapore Math approach that is visual and focuses on having a deep understanding of number sense rather than simple rote memorization. We also use Rocket Math (fluency of facts) and Freckle (online program) to further enhance our students’ knowledge and skills in math.

All of our students are assessed three times per year (Fall, Winter, Spring) in the area of math using STAR, an assessment tool that gives national comparisons as well as local. Students who fall below the 40th percentile are considered for additional math interventions which are administered daily for 30 minutes. Some of the interventions used are touch point math, FastMath, and reteaching of the concepts previously learned.

Our classrooms’ instructional practices include hands-on, real world application in a guided math type of setting. Students are first taught whole group, then are placed into smaller learning groups to work independently applying the skills learned as well as meeting with the teacher in a small group setting where he/she can target those areas where students are having difficulty or offer challenges to those who require them.

We also celebrate math with a “Math Day” where students travel to different classrooms to interact with engaging math games. At the earlier grades, students are introduced to ten frames where they learn to quickly recognize numbers and their relationship/s up to ten. The Kindergarten students celebrate every ten days with a “guest” (usually a parent) who disguises themselves as “Zero the Hero.” He/she comes every ten

days to celebrate and read a story to the students. On the 100th day, our Kindergarten students parade throughout the building, dressed up as 100-year-old people. This is most memorable to our students and makes learning about numbers enjoyable.

1c. Science:

The science curriculum is aligned to the NGSS (Next Generation Science Standards) where Foss kits are used throughout. The study of science at Banner correlates to science in historical contexts. Students have the opportunity to interact with and discover new learning through our instruction and inquiry-based learning.

At the younger grade levels, science is hands-on and involves a great deal of discovery. For instance, 1st grade studies the properties of sound, water, and air. At the upper grade levels, science is specialized and includes a variety of topics such as earth, life, and physical sciences. One highlight from second grade is the study of life cycles of plants and butterflies. Students “raise” butterflies from caterpillars and are able to see the entire transformation. Third grade students learn the properties of force using magnets. They also learn about earth formations building a volcano. In addition, third grade students study the life of crayfish. Fourth grade students interact with soil properties, circuits (lighting a bulb with batteries), and living organisms (lizards, mealworms, etc.). Fifth grade students study physical science properties as well as the study of space. At the beginning of the school year, students take a field trip to The Challenger Center in Bloomington, IL. They role play being astronauts on a mission, working as a team and landing space crafts and discovering new “planets.” We invite a working engineer to teach our students the properties of force, culminating with a Jet Toy Car Derby where students make cars out of tag board, tape, straws, plastic wheels, and a balloon. They also construct miniature rockets which are launched towards the end of the school year.

All of our fifth-grade students take a state science assessment in the spring as well. In addition to our curriculum, we invite an agricultural guest once per month to present to students. The topics range from how certain crops are used to how animals are raised and their meat is processed. They are engaging presentations geared toward an appreciation of agriculture in Central Illinois.

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

Social Studies at Banner is aligned to the state standards and is taught at all grade levels in engaging ways. Social studies units are taught on a deeper, content level beginning at third grade; however, kindergarten through second grades are intentionally introduced to basic civic learning. Some of these topics are covered within the reading curriculum, but others are more direct. For example, kindergarten introduces several community helpers through presentations by people in those positions that work in our community (fire fighters, dentists, attorneys, etc.). All grade levels also are introduced to civic learning through the Junior Achievement program which entails a member of the community visiting six times to teach students about age appropriate civic topics.

Beginning in third grade, social studies becomes a separate unit of study. Some of the highlights to engage our students in third grade include two simulations (Ellis Island and factory workers). Fourth grade covers several historical topics including world explorers which includes a culminating project, “Famous Person Presentation.” Fifth grade students also cover historical topics (Civil War, The Great Depression, World Wars I and II) as well as taking a field trip the Lincoln Museum in Springfield, IL. In addition, our fifth grade students engage in a third world countries exercise called “Kid Knits.” Members of the community discuss what it is like to live in a third world country and take our students through a simulation where they are given a limited amount of money to decide how to survive for a month. Kid Knits culminates with students using a loom and yarn from Rwanda to make stocking hats, which are donated to a needy organization.

1e. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Banner offers a wide range of non-core subjects to its students. All students engage in Physical Education (PE) daily for 25 minutes. PE helps students prepare for an active and healthy lifestyle through a variety of activities. It aims to develop students' physical competence and knowledge of movement and safety and their ability to use these to perform a wide range of activities associated with the development of an active and healthy lifestyle. Students are tested twice per year (through Fitnessgram) in the areas of cardiovascular endurance, muscular endurance, muscular strength, and flexibility. Students are encouraged to improve in these areas. Students also learn collaboration and sportsmanship through the activities offered during PE.

Students at Banner attend Art classes once per week. Kindergarten classes are 40 minutes in length and 1st - 5th grade classes are 50 minutes in length. All students are introduced at an early age to multiple art techniques and materials including, but not limited to pencil, crayon, oil pastel, charcoal, paper sculpture, cardboard sculpture, relief printing, watercolor painting, both functional and non-functional ceramics, textiles, and screen printing. An important aspect of the Banner art program is the opportunity given to students to learn how to become artists. They are expected to explain their decisions, images, and ideas in both verbal and written form. Because of this the artwork that comes out of our studio is authentic child art that speaks to the sensitivities of children and not those of adults. The art program can be best described in these three sentences: 1) What do artists do?, 2) The child is the artist, and 3) the art room is the child's studio.

Banner students attend Music class two 25-minute periods per week. Students are introduced to several types of music and instruments depending on their grade level. Fourth grade students are introduced to the recorder where they spend a great deal of time playing songs as a class. The music teachers also utilize an online program, Quaver, which allows students to create their own avatar, play musical games, and compose their own music. Flipgrid is also used as a means for students to demonstrate their learning. There are three music performances for parents each year (4th/5th, 2nd/3rd, and K/1st) where students sing and act out scenes. Banner also offers orchestra and band as an option. Grades four and five can choose to be in orchestra whereas band begins in fifth grade. Students typically have one "section" practice and one "whole group" practice per week. They perform three times per year for their families.

Banner has a Tech Lab with 30 Chromebooks and a Technology instructor available to all students. Students are taught the characteristics of digital citizenship and the dos and don'ts in the world of technology. Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grades visit the Tech Lab once per week for 25 minutes where they learn the basics of manipulating features of the device as well as introducing them to various programs (including simple coding). At second grade, they begin to further their coding skills where they program an Ozobot to move throughout the room. Third grade students attend Technology twice per week for 25 minutes. They also learn how to enhance their coding skills as well as learn to use proper technique in keyboarding. Fourth and fifth grade students attend Technology once per week for a 50-minute period. These students continue to advance their keyboarding and coding skills, but they also apply topics/concepts they learn from the classroom with the Technology teacher.

All Banner students are introduced to the Spanish language through our World Language class. The program model is a communicative immersion approach in which students will be learning through routines, thematic units, songs, movement, conversation and games. Formative assessment takes place throughout the unit and following three forms of summative assessment take place at the conclusion of each unit: Interpretive Communication, Interpersonal Communication and Presentational Communication. Students in K - 4th grades have two 25-minute periods with the World Language teacher while our fifth grade students have one 25-minute period. Students at the younger grades are introduced to simple vocabulary words (greetings, body parts, colors, numbers, letters, furniture, etc.) and begin to learn how to speak in complete Spanish sentences. Each year, the material advances and students are also presented with the traditions and features

of the Spanish culture. Our World Language teacher utilizes Flipgrid as a way to assess students at grades four and five.

3. Special Populations:

Banner successfully meets the needs of its diverse learners through a variety of means. All teachers from each grade level use a guided reading and guided math approach where students are grouped according to their strengths/challenges and taught accordingly. We use STAR assessment in reading and math three times per year (Fall, Winter, Spring) as our initial screener and indicator of students who may need additional support. Teachers also use classroom performance as another indicator. Students who fall below the 40th percentile on the STAR assessment are considered for additional interventions to target the deficit skill(s). The master schedule includes a daily 30-minute Intervention Block per grade level where no new concepts are taught or introduced. During Intervention Block, students identified from the STAR assessment are provided with interventions by a classroom teacher, literacy aide, or Title I aide in the areas of reading and/or math. Targeted, research-based interventions are used and progress is monitored every two weeks using STAR to ensure the effectiveness of the intervention. The Response to Intervention team meets with grade levels once per month to share data on how students are or are not progressing. These monthly meetings provide accountability to both the teachers and interventionists to make sure the students identified are being serviced appropriately. The Intervention Block is also used as a time where students with learning disabilities (whether it be learning and/or speech) and English Language Learners are pulled to receive services. As a result, students needing additional academic support are not missing any new content and/or topics. The Intervention Block also allows those students who need a greater challenge to engage in such activities independently (researching, books clubs, Freckle, etc.). The goal for the Intervention Block is to close gaps by targeting identified deficits where the students receiving interventions will no longer need them.

Students in grades 3-5 can qualify for the enrichment program which meets once per week after school. These students are identified using a variety of assessments (STAR, CogAT, teacher recommendation) and are compared to the performance of students district-wide. The top 10-12% of students at each grade level are given the opportunity to participate in the enrichment program.

Banner houses the district's elementary Life Skills program which is made up of three classrooms (K-1, 2-3, and 4-5). The students in the Life Skills program have significant cognitive challenges and require the most support on the student services continuum. Some students are nonverbal and require a great deal of care (physical, academic, hygiene) while others are developing some strengths in independence. The Life Skills program focuses on independent functioning, social skills, community-based instruction, and pre-vocational skills. Many of our Life Skills students use assistive technology to help them communicate their basic human needs. The Life Skills students in grades 3-5 are assessed yearly through an alternate state assessment, the DLM (Dynamic Learning Maps). They are included in all of the non-core subjects with their general education peers resulting in all students gaining a sense of empathy and acceptance.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

School climate and culture begins with our motto, “Banner. You Belong Here” and our Twitter hashtag is #BannerFamily. The staff at Banner is dedicated to building relationships with each and every student who walks into its doors. Our teachers actively attend PTO events, book fairs, meetings, and extracurricular events outside the school day. They also participate in themed dress up days such as PJ Day.

Banner is blessed with a school climate and culture that supports engaging both students and staff to remain motivated and excited to come to school. Our goal is to excite the students and staff so much that they are knocking down the doors to get in rather than to get out. Every morning, students are met at Banner with loud, fun music playing and the principal offering high fives and fist bumps. Staff is strategically placed in three areas of the building each morning to greet as many students as they can as they enter school. The objective is for every student to have a friendly greeting/encounter by a staff member at least three times before they ever sit down in their classroom.

To motivate our students to perform at a high level, our staff uses many ways to celebrate student success based on performance and/or improvement. Teachers nominate students for the “Good News Call of the Day” where the student gets to call their parent. Their picture is taken, posted to Twitter, and then to a bulletin board outside the office. Students are recognized monthly for their performance on AR (Accelerated Reader) quizzes with their picture posted outside the office and name mentioned during announcements. Every student has personal academic goals that are aligned to classroom goals that are aligned to the School Improvement Plan goals. Teachers meet with students to review goals and create plans for improvement on a regular basis. Student work is also displayed in the halls demonstrating a pride in quality work.

All classrooms hold weekly meetings to discuss topics to improve the culture of the classroom and any issues that may have arisen. Each grade level also teaches a social emotional lesson weekly. In addition, the school counselor facilitates a 5th grade SLT (Student Leadership Team) that meets weekly. The SLT provides a voice for students as they offer suggestions to improve Banner.

Teachers have taken ownership in developing a positive culture for themselves. Examples include a remodeling of the staff lounge, hanging staff family pictures in the hallways, and updating the building’s overall appearance.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Banner clearly supports the shared responsibility of a child’s well-being with the engagement and involvement of family support, which is why we actively invite parents and community members to our school.

The Banner PTO provides many opportunities for parents to be involved either during the school day or at larger family events. The PTO organizes all holiday party coordinators (Halloween, Winter, and Valentine’s Day) who provide games and fun activities for the students. They also provide several family events such as a movie night, carnival, ice cream social, talent show, BINGO night, “Bags with Dads,” and a blood drive. Our parental support is a crucial part of an excellent school experience.

Teachers also actively invite parents to the classroom in a variety of roles. Parents serve as monthly guest readers, Zero the Hero (kindergarten), help teachers with copies, and facilitate school library visits. Third grade teachers invite all dads in the winter for a “Donuts with Dads” event. In the spring, third grade hosts a “Muffins with Moms” event as well. Kindergarten hosts a Grandparents’ Day where students interact and sing songs with sign language for their grandparents.

Community members engage with Banner’s learning community as well through multiple ways. Every

classroom has a Junior Achievement community member who meets with the class six times to discuss civic and economic topics. Another organization, Agriculture in the Classroom, visits 3rd - 5th grade rooms to present various agricultural topics. Most of the presentations end with a hands-on activity, including petting a baby pig. Our 5th grade students have an engineer who visits the students weekly as they study physics. The physics unit concludes with a Jet Toy Car Derby with the assistance of a local engineer. Different community helpers visit Banner to showcase their occupations as well (firefighters, attorneys, dentists, etc.).

Parents and other family members are invited to all special events at Banner. Some of these include our all-school shopping trip to purchase items for underprivileged children and coordinating our Laps for Life event where money is raised for St. Jude. Parents and special people are also invited to attend a "Grand Event" book fair which includes having lunch with his/her student and shopping at the book fair during recess time.

Finally, we stay connected with our families on a regular basis through the use of social media apps such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and SeeSaw. Our staff recognizes the value of involved families and strives to engage them on a regular basis.

3. Professional Development:

The approach to professional development at Banner is one that is based upon the teachers' individual needs. For instance, there are some teachers who need additional support in the use of technology tools while other teachers may need additional support in reading strategies. Teachers are given input as to what they want to learn as it fits their individual needs. Each fall, our teachers attend a county institute where they choose which breakout sessions they want to attend. The Dunlap District also has a district School Improvement Day with choice sessions to attend to make it most relevant to our staff.

One way that the principal encourages teachers to branch out to improve is through current educational books. Over the past two years, all staff were given three books (Kids Deserve It, Teach Like a Pirate, and Be the One For Kids) that were designed to improve their teaching strategies as well as encourage them as educators. In addition, optional weekly book studies were offered (A Mindset For Learning and Shift This) to staff in which nearly ten teachers participated. Another way the principal supports professional growth is through the encouragement of teachers to attend conferences to learn additional strategies to add to their repertoire. Teacher requests to attend conferences are typically granted provided the funding is available. Teachers are expected to share out to staff what they gleaned from the conference or workshop. In addition, teachers are encouraged to return to school to further their education. The district provides a large portion of the funding to accomplish this.

Although our approach to professional development is based upon individual needs, all teachers at Banner received training on the BIST philosophy due to its relevance to all staff members. BIST (Behavior Intervention Support Team) is an approach to student behavior that is grounded in grace and accountability. All staff are responsible for efforts in helping our students become the best citizens they can be by being problem solvers. The BIST philosophy is the avenue we have chosen to address such needs.

4. School Leadership:

Banner operates efficiently and effectively as a result of its teachers' involvement in multiple leadership capacities where the principal is a member of each of these committees. Banner's success is due, in great deal, to gathering of thoughts and ideas from various stakeholders.

The ILT (Instructional Leadership Team) is made up of one teacher from each grade level and serves as the team that drives school improvement decisions in the building. The ILT analyzes data from several sources (STAR, Illinois State Assessments, School Climate Surveys) to develop an actionable School Improvement Plan. Each grade level then creates an action plan that is directly in line and supportive of Banner's School Improvement Plan. Each member of the ILT is responsible for gathering input and sharing with their colleagues the expectations of the plan. One member of the ILT is also expected to serve on the DLT

(District Leadership Team) and report back those items that are occurring at the district level that most impact Banner.

Banner has a BIST (Behavior Intervention Strategies Team) Vision Team whose sole purpose is to support the adults in the building with applying the BIST philosophies. This team created a scope/sequence of lessons to be covered at the beginning of the school year for staff to insure consistency throughout the building. They also make suggestions as to how to further support staff and maintain the implementation of the BIST philosophy.

The RtI (Response to Intervention) Team is comprised of two resource teachers, a speech pathologist, school psychologist, school social worker, a general education teacher, and two interventionists. This team is the problem-solving team that assists teachers and parents of students who are having challenges academically and/or emotionally, and have not responded as expected to Tier 2 interventions. Parents are also included as part of the team as we collaborate to create a specific action plan to address deficits. Follow-up meetings are held to report progress and make any needed adjustments.

Banner also has an SLT (Student Leadership Team) that is made up of nearly 20 fifth grade students who were recommended by their teacher as leaders and/or students who display diverse, creative thinking. The school counselor meets with the group weekly gathering their input on ideas to improve the school. Some created videos to market a new marker recycling program. Others created posters that encouraged kindness and displayed them throughout the building. They also discuss and offer ideas for improving the overall climate of the school. In addition, some of these students assist our staff with greeting students as they arrive off the bus in the morning.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Emotionally caring for our students through building relationships is the cornerstone of our success. The heart has to be cared for before the head. We place a great deal of emphasis on creating an environment that is safe, warm, friendly, and inviting to our students. Our goal is for all students to feel they “belong here,” which is our motto.

The BIST (Behavior Intervention Strategies Team) philosophy has been an integral part of how we view students’ actions. It is an approach to student challenges based on grace and accountability. The philosophy provides our staff with consistent words and approaches to misbehavior and taking care of the whole child. Students are taught correct behavior, rather than solely administering consequences. Our students are also greeted each morning by staff in an intentional manner where we desire to start their day off positively as well as looking for students who appear stressed. For those who consistently have challenges, we offer “sheltered arrival,” where one of our staff members takes students through mini lessons on how to positively cope with their feelings in order to have a successful day.

We recognize many students come to school with emotional and physical needs. In order to help these students cope throughout the day, we added a service therapy dog for students to either walk or simply pet to calm down and/or feel comforted. We also added a “Motor Lab” which is a room that contains various equipment for those students who need sensory integration. Some of these include crash pads, swings, a bubble wall, a light table, stationary bike pedals, a marble wall, and battle ropes. The Motor Lab is used as a proactive measure to help students regulate before they have difficulty.

All classrooms conduct meetings on a regular basis as a means for students to voice any concerns. Students develop solutions by discussing and collaborating with each other. There are times where these meetings have led to the counselor offering classroom lessons for entire classes that are topical and specific to classroom needs.

We also value the importance of students having positive role models within the building. We assigned “buddy rooms” where a younger grade classroom is paired with an older class. The buddy rooms gather at least once per month where the older students serve as “mentors” to the younger students.

We also gather student input each year as students in grades 3-5 participate in our school climate survey. The results of the survey over the past three years have shown an increase in student satisfaction in the areas of support for learning, social connectedness/engagement, safety rules/norms, and a respect for diversity.