

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 Dr. Jill Martin

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

Official School Name Hawthorn Elementary School South

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 430 North Aspen Drive

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

Vernon Hills IL 60061-1616
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Lake County

Telephone (847) 990-4800

Fax (847) 918-9251

Web site/URL http://es.hawthorn73.org

E-mail martinj@hawthorn73.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. Peter Hannigan

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail hanniganp@hawthorn73.org

District Name Hawthorn Community Consolidated School District 73 Tel. _____
(847) 990-4200

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. Robin Cleek

(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
 - 0 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 7 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	49	47	96
1	65	57	122
2	70	58	128
3	67	57	124
4	62	62	124
5	60	63	123
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	373	344	717

*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
 - 46 % Asian
 - 3 % Black or African American
 - 16 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 32 % White
 - 3 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2017 – 2018 school year: 16%

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

In Vernon Hills, Illinois, we have many large businesses that employ and sponsor work visas from all over the world. Many of these families enroll their children at Hawthorn and stay for a short period of time. Our mobility rate is affected by families enrolling and transferring throughout the school 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	55
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	59
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	114
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	717
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.16
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	16

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 33 %
235 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Albanian, Arabic, Bengali, Bulgarian, Cantonese, Chamorro, German, Greek, Gujarati, Hebrew, Hindi, Ilocano, Japanese, Kannada, Koran, Lithuanian, Malayalam, Mandarin, Marathi, Mongolian, Oriya, Panjabi, Pilipino, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Swahili, Tamil, Telugu, Tigrinya, Ukrainian, Urdu, Yoruba

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 17 %
Total number students who qualify: 122

8. Students receiving special education services: 10 %
69 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>25</u> Developmental Delay | <u>5</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>29</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>4</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: 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	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	32
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	25
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	15
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 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%	95%	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.

It is our mission at Hawthorn Elementary South to inspire all students to embrace learning in an ever-changing world.

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

PART III – SUMMARY

“Welcome”, “Bienvenido”, “желанный”, “환영합니다” to our habitat of happiness. At Hawthorn Elementary South, we are proud to promote joyful learning that inspires approximately 720 students from the richly diverse communities of Vernon Hills and Mundelein, Illinois. Our students in kindergarten through fifth grade speak 36 languages and come from all over the world. Thirty-three percent (33%) of our students are English Language Learners, and 18% are identified as from low income families. Our students are representative of different racial or ethnic groups; most of our students are identified as Asian, White, or Hispanic. Additionally, 10% of our students qualify for special education services and approximately 33% of students in the 4th and 5th grades qualify for accelerated reading and math programming. Our dedicated educators profoundly believe that all children can learn and will do whatever it takes for every student to grow and thrive academically, socially and emotionally. We work diligently to build trusting relationships within our school that create and nurture a love of learning. We are proud of our accomplishments in establishing a collaborative culture where every child can work to exceed his or her potential.

We have high expectations for our students and staff, and value our family and community partnerships. The PTO, the Elementary South Family Alliance, Education Foundation and our Welcome Council all work together to strengthen and enhance our relationships and bring joy to our community. It is our collective responsibility to connect with each child in a way that motivates and inspires him/her to achieve academic and social-emotional growth.

Our story starts in the 1840’s, when a farmer named John Locke, donated land for the first local one-room schoolhouse. In 1986, Hawthorn Elementary South was built to house the district’s 2nd and 3rd grade students. The 1990’s brought continued expansion to Hawthorn and the first school of choice. Then, in 2004, a brand-new facility of choice was built to service 900 students. A complete reorganization of teachers and students caused anxiety and angst across the district. Elementary South was referred to as the “default” school should you not “get into” the choice buildings. It was time to rally the troops, build new teaching teams, develop a positive climate, and work hard on behalf of the children. Due to the dedication, care and strong work ethic of our new team, we quickly became a community where all individuals were celebrated for their unique qualities, and both academic and social emotional growth became the priority.

At Hawthorn Elementary South, we value a well-rounded education including language arts, math, science, social studies, fine arts, physical education, health, and technology. We follow our guaranteed and viable curriculum based on the Illinois Learning Standards, with academic units written by our internal teacher experts. Our teachers are trained in Bernstein’s Artful Learning, which stimulates and deepens academic learning through the arts. We also use Howard Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences to thoroughly understand our students’ strengths, challenges, and learning styles. Our units of study are constructed with the Understanding by Design framework. We believe that there is an art and science to teaching, and that the professionals have autonomy to deliver instruction that supports the standards.

Each year, we create a schoolwide theme to build relationships and unity in our school. Our first masterwork was based on Edward Hicks’ Peaceable Kingdom, to reflect the enduring understanding that Hawthorn Elementary South is a safe place to learn and grow. Every student and staff member painted his or her own ceramic tile to symbolize peace, and together constructed a beautiful 8-foot x 29-foot tile wall entitled, “Peace Begins with You and Me.” For the past 14 years, we have identified a different schoolwide enduring understanding to unify and focus our efforts for the year ahead. Themes such as, “Take a Walk in Someone Else’s Shoes” based on Untitled Work by Keith Haring, engage students in collaborative art projects and learning experiences.

What key strategies have changed our culture and moved us forward? We are a community of learners, continuously striving to discover new ways to help our students. Our recent milestones come from three impactful staff development experiences: “The Professional Learning Community at Work” Institute, presented by Richard and Rebecca DuFour, which helped us gain a big-picture view of the PLC collaborative process and customize instruction to meet student needs. We value collegiality through the Professional Learning Community process, and provide our teachers with common planning time to engage

in daily dialogue around their instruction and their students. A weeklong summer institute at Harvard entitled “Closing the Achievement Gap: Strategies for Excellence with Equity” focused our thinking around opportunities for all children and guided the development of our multi-tiered system of support to help students who struggle. Finally, we attended “Schools of Promise” in Syracuse, New York, which refined our beliefs and practices with regards to inclusive environments; all students now participate in a rigorous core curriculum that is differentiated. Together, these three learning experiences shaped our thinking and confirmed our commitment to equitable educational opportunities for all students. We truly create a habitat of happiness where all children feel safe to take risks to learn and grow.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

In English language arts, curriculum, instruction, and assessments are based on a conceptual, authentic Understand by Design framework created by our teacher experts. We believe in a well-balanced, comprehensive system that prioritizes student engagement while meeting the individual needs of all learners. We strive for the literacy experience to be one of joy, promoting deep learning through the use of authentic, diverse texts and resources.

Students engage in 120 minutes of ELA instruction each day. This extended block of time allows for grade level units framed by essential questions that are reflective of the Illinois Learning Standards that incorporate the Common Core Standards for ELA. Our block includes guided reading, novel studies, literature circles, foundational literacy skills, phonics, embedded targeted writing instruction, explicit skill-based instruction, independent reading and writing, formative assessment and common summative assessments. Within this literacy block, we also devote forty minutes each day to a tiered model of support that best meets student needs. Known as the acceleration block, students engage in remediation, extension, and enrichment activities based on student choice, skills, previous learning experiences, interests, learning gaps, and learning styles.

To monitor student growth and progress, we use a variety of formative and summative measures including common grade level assessments, standardized assessments (MAP, Fountas & Pinnell, FastBridge), progress monitoring tools, goal setting, and student feedback. Our collaborative teacher teams (grade level, special education, English language learner, reading specialists, and enrichment) regularly meet together to analyze our students' assessment data using the four PLC questions; this work serves to inform instruction, identify students in need of intervention, monitor subgroup progress, adjust units of study, and evaluate our overall performance. It is our goal to ensure a deep comprehensive understanding of literacy concepts and a love of literature.

1b. Mathematics:

Students engage in an 80-minute mathematics block each day, including sixty minutes of core level instruction based on content standards and 20 minutes of acceleration time to pre-teach, reteach, enrich, and intervene. This ensures the consistent implementation of our guaranteed and viable curriculum for all students. Our math units are grounded in developing students' conceptual understanding, and we incorporate various manipulatives, technology tools, and learning experiences to ensure application of learning in new contexts. Our focus is personalized learning, problem solving, critical thinking, and authentic, real world application.

As in all of our core subject areas, teachers who specialize in special education and English language learning co-teach our core curriculum with general education teachers. They support students in their progress toward meeting grade level standards by implementing high impact accommodations and modifications. We also work to integrate STEAM and fiscal literacy into our core program. For example, we partner with a local educational resource company and our parent community to host STEMapalooza for our students each year.

Our professional learning community model is used to inform math instruction. Teachers collaborate each week to analyze student assessment data (common grade level assessments, MAP, Fastbridge) in order to evaluate progress and adjust instruction as needed. They then use flexible groups and instructional centers to allow for small group, targeted instruction for students needing varying levels of support or enrichment. For example, we use the BUILD math-center process to differentiate instruction. Teachers incorporate buddy games (B), utilize manipulatives (U), engage students in independent practice (I), focus on learning (L), and

“do math” (explicit instruction and guided practice) with the teacher (D). It is our goal to acquire a deep conceptual understanding of content in a rigorous, engaging manner.

1c. Science:

The implementation of inquiry and problem-based learning approaches to ensure students’ mastery of Next Generation Science Standards serves as the foundation of our science curriculum. Teachers utilize student inquiry and curiosity to drive content and experiences in our mission to develop lifelong science enthusiasts. Open-ended activities, projects, and experiments provide our students with rigorous core content in personalized and engaging ways.

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) is embedded in all of our science units. Integrating engineering and mathematics with science promotes our students’ exploration of concepts from a variety of viewpoints. In addition, the integration of technology to collect data, support arguments, create models, and collaborate among peers guides students in their practices. It is our goal to encourage students to value innovation, inquiry, research, and discovery.

Teachers and administrators regularly analyze assessment data, including unit assessments as well as district-wide common formative and summative assessments, to further improve instruction and ensure curricular alignment between and among grade level teams. Effective planning and communication among team members ensures equity and opportunities for all learners.

Science is abstract and motivates children to ask critical questions such as “how” and “why.” Using skill application and the scientific method teaches students how to think, learn, solve problems and make informed decisions. These skills are integral to every aspect of a student’s life and prepare them for real world decision making.

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

Our social studies curriculum is standards-based in accordance with the C3 Framework, vertically coherent, and aligned with English language arts standards. This interdisciplinary approach motivates students, develops critical thinking skills, and ensures lessons are applicable to real world situations. Our social studies units are also scaffolded to reflect our students’ growing understanding of the world around them: my world, families and neighborhoods, our community, our state, our nation, and our world. An inquiry approach within this model promotes student’s natural curiosity and inspires their positive participation in our global community. Students are assessed using grade level common assessments that require deep understanding and application of key concepts. We want students to be civically engaged, socially responsible, financially literate, and culturally aware.

We frequently partner with our community and local organizations to support student learning in social studies. At the Hawthorn Museum, students learn the history of their community from 1800’s farmland to current day. Exploring the impact of past decisions helps students learn about current events and future implications. Community service personnel and parent volunteers come to share experiences which inspires students, and creates career awareness. Visits to the fire department, local library, volunteering to read to senior citizens and engaging with community activities help students appreciate their community. Local corporations facilitate Junior Achievement, teaching students the basics of business, financial literacy and free enterprise. The program inspires and prepares young people to succeed in a global economy.

Our school sponsors a student government organization, SAGES, to represent classes in schoolwide decisions. Spirit days, door decorating contests, and philanthropy are the basis of the program. SAGES also raises money to support local charities. The goal of SAGES to help students become responsible citizens, develop moral and civic virtues, and positively participate in their communities.

1e. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

We are committed to a child's healthy social and emotional wellbeing and the development of the whole child. Through the arts, we create an environment where students feel connected and valued, empowering them to take risks and become confident, independent members of our community. Each week, children engage in art, music, library, physical education, health, and social emotional learning.

Twice each week, students participate in the visual arts program. We encourage them to experiment with materials, use critical thinking to solve problems artistically, and create meaningful real-world connections. Each forty-minute art class is student-centered, and incorporates student choice reflective of student interests. We offer a wide variety of materials and mediums in our program, including: clay, paint, paper mache, sculpture, fiber arts, printmaking, weaving, pastels, metal tooling, collage, recycled art and digital technologies. Technology is implemented into daily instruction; for example, students photograph and upload artwork into digital portfolios through an online art gallery called Artsonia. Artsonia allows students to reflect on personal growth and the art-making process by writing artist statements that are viewed by teachers, students, and families. Each year, student work is showcased at a district-wide Art Show. Approximately 300 works of art are selected and put on display at the Cook Memorial Library in Vernon Hills, IL during Youth Art Month for community member viewing.

Since music is a world language, this department prides itself on celebrating diversity and inclusion. The Winter Choral Program incorporates songs that span a wide range of cultural heritages. Students participate annually in an Asian New Year Parade to celebrating cultural differences. Whether performing on different instruments, dressing up in cultural garb, or viewing the parade, all students enjoy the festivities. Each year, children in grades 1, 3, and 5 participate in a spring concert where the repertoire includes sign language, dancing, movement, acting, multiple instrumentation, and singing. The music department works closely to ensure that there are cross curricular connections between all academic areas.

The band and orchestra program includes over 50% of our 4th and 5th grade students. Students elect to meet before school where they work to develop ensemble skills and artistic sensibility. Students attend small group lessons during the school day, receiving individualized and differentiated instruction. Social and emotional understanding through teamwork and self-expression is encouraged and fostered. Throughout the year, band and orchestra students showcase their achievements and accomplishments at evening concerts, school assemblies, and other performances.

Students in kindergarten through 5th grade participate in 40 minutes of daily physical education. A total of 200 minutes of physical activity each week supports our students in acquiring essential skills and knowledge through team building, fitness-based activities, and cross curricular activities including reading and math games. The PE department brings all students in our school together through special activities and units such as the annual Pumpkin Chase Race, PE Nights, Jump Rope for Heart, rollerskating unit, climbing/gymnastics unit, and field day. Parental involvement is encouraged and welcomed at these special events. For example, PE Night provides parents an opportunity to participate in physical activities with their children. Jump Rope for Heart is an opportunity for the school community to raise funds for the American Heart Association. On average, the school has raised \$8,000 for the American Heart Association.

Our library media specialist is a certified librarian with a fixed/flex hybrid schedule to facilitate collaboration with teachers that supports student success. All students have access to a collection of approximately 15, 000 educational resources. Intellectual freedom is supported, as students are exposed to a variety of children's literature. This encourages free choice and promotes the idea of literature acting as both mirrors and windows for life experiences. Library curriculum focuses on information literacy, with an emphasis on digital citizenship and media literacy. This empowers students to become proficient in creating and consuming online content, including locating and evaluating sources. A makerspace has been implemented to provide students the space for collaboration and independent creation. Community

partnerships include the Cook Memorial Public Library, which co-sponsors an annual Principal's Read Night and a Summer Reading Program. Both events create a positive reading partnership between the library and school.

3. Special Populations:

Our diverse and special student populations are a point of pride. We tailor instruction, interventions, and assessments to meet the diverse and individual needs of our unique student populations. Hawthorn believes that all students deserve and will have access to a guaranteed and viable curriculum. While achievement gaps have occurred, they are being addressed through many different approaches.

Co-planning and co-teaching is used to address gaps and student needs. Co-teaching allows for the inclusion of our special needs population into the general education setting for all subjects. In addition to academic benefits, our co-teaching model allows for related services such as speech/language, social work, and occupational therapy to push into the classrooms as well, to enhance the learning of both the special needs population as well as their typical peers. Inclusion allows for all students to feel part of the community, to develop a sense of belonging, and to be included in all aspects of their school day with their peers.

Achievement gaps are addressed through dedicated blocks of time in both reading and math which are set aside each day to remediate, extend, and enrich students. Students who struggle with their reading and math skills are carefully placed in tiered interventions to address the gaps in learning. Students qualify after the team analyzes a variety of assessment data and classroom performance samples. They are placed in six-week learning cycles based on a targeted learning outcome and are progress monitored to ensure that the intervention is helping their academic achievement. For students meeting standards, extension activities take them deeper into the learning standards. For students who have mastered grade level standards, enrichment utilizes critical and higher-order thinking skills and real-world application to demonstrate their knowledge of above grade level standards.

Our diversity and high English learner population is also a pride point. To aid in closing the English learner achievement gap, our EL teachers are assigned to one grade level and target language and content supports, modified assessments, and tiered interventions. Spanish speaking teachers and assistants provide intervention in both native language and English. The EL teacher, LBS1, and grade level team are all able to collaborate to tailor instruction and embed best practices for all students.

We believe that students benefit from choice and personalization in their learning. Students are provided accommodations and opportunities to meet their individual needs, capitalize on their strengths and address their challenges. For example, sensory circuits have been stationed at each end of the school to allow students who need deep compression and movement breaks the opportunity to independently regulate their bodies. Additionally, students experience a variety of flexible seating options throughout our learning communities. Physical spaces are arranged to increase group collaboration, accommodate all learning styles and enhance learning productivity. These choices aid in the achievement of optimum levels of learning for every child.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

As you enter our school the archway reads, “We may all be different, but together we are a school.” This quote reflects our school’s culture, as the habitat of happiness at Hawthorn Elementary South is grounded in a strong sense of community among both teachers and students. Our quote also represents this year’s schoolwide Bernstein Artful Learning unit of study. Each year we adopt a different work of art to serve as a focus for joyful learning and engagement opportunities that serve to further promote our positive school culture. All of our units are connected by a single theme: unity.

Instituting our schoolwide Bernstein’s Artful Learning units, in which our entire school community comes together to construct a creation piece reflective of the intended theme, helps to ensure that students know Elementary South is a safe place to learn and grow. Our first masterwork was based on Edward Hicks’ Peaceable Kingdom. Every student and staff member painted and kiln-fired a tile to express their understanding of peace; the tiles were then joined together to create a beautiful 12 foot by 30 foot wall entitled, “Peace Begins with You and Me.” Themes such as “Making Good Choices” based on the masterwork A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of LaGrande Jatte by Georges Seurat helped our students learn about pointillism and, more importantly, that “every dot counts.” Our collective world pointillism piece of 700 thumbprints proudly hangs in our school. Other schoolwide units, based on themes such as balance, metacognition, discovery, empathy, joyful learning, and growth mindset, have helped us learn and grow together.

Celebrating joy and unity creates an environment in which our teachers feel valued and supported. Teachers report that they enjoy coming to work each day, and know they are respected members of our school’s community. They feel empowered to make choices in their classrooms that serve the best interest of students. Moreover, the support our teachers provide one another is more akin to a family than a workplace; staff members are skilled in providing ongoing, constructive, collegial feedback. As a result, we benefit from a high teacher retention rate (91%) at Hawthorn Elementary South. Our staff strive to make our school their professional home.

Our school is a place where teachers come to work each day with enthusiasm, students feel emotionally safe and open to learning, and parents are proud to send their children to school.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

We believe educational success is the shared responsibility of the student, family, school and community, therefore we commit to working together with parents and families to support student growth and celebrate achievement. Involving families and community members into our school is an essential core commitment that we value. Families are encouraged to participate in many different aspects of the school. Parents volunteer in classrooms to teach “Art Adventure”, an art appreciation program organized by our PTO. They read with students, practice math flashcards, facilitate centers, help publish writing, and much more. Additionally, we have many volunteer opportunities such as climbing unit in PE, Field Day, “Capabilities over Disabilities” Week stations, Halloween, Valentines Day and end of year parties. Parents love joining us and volunteering during the monthly "Birthday Bash" celebration where students are served a snack while having a special dance party with the Principal! Ice Cream Fridays once a month is yet another great opportunity for parents to become involved.

The culture that has been created at Elementary South is warm, welcoming and one that encourages parent participation while fostering continued learning for students. The goal is to involve parents on many levels; via the volunteer opportunities listed above as well as through curriculum nights, family fun parties and educational sessions on various topics provided to parents throughout the year. The Leadership Team, which includes parents/community members, meet twice monthly to discuss a variety of topics that support the staff while focusing on the continued success of students. The implementation of this team is a great example of how Elementary South is continuously thinking outside of the box to provide the best education

possible to their students.

Ultimate student success is derived from a strong alliance with the teacher, student and parents. Communication is paramount, and the teachers provide continuous updates regarding the progress of each student. There are standard biannual conferences; detailed trimester report cards as well as Proud Eagle Reports sent weekly detailing the growth of each student. The staff at Elementary South initiate contact with parents to discuss any questions they may have regarding their student. The school and each classroom have several modes of communication; a weekly newsletter, websites, Facebook pages, Instagram and Twitter accounts, as well as text messages and email updates. There are countless ways to stay informed and communicate with the teachers and staff at Elementary South.

3. Professional Development:

At Elementary South, our approach to professional development focuses on the connection between teacher growth and student achievement. All professional development opportunities also reflect our interest in building professional learning communities (PLC) at the team, school, and district level. We analyze student data and seek input from all stakeholders via surveys and focus groups to assess professional development needs. We then identify intended outcomes, develop corresponding measures to assess our progress, and devise a comprehensive plan to deliver ongoing, embedded learning experiences for staff.

PLCs are the vehicle through which connections, learning, and reflection occur at the deepest level. Building schedules are created strategically for teachers to have common planning time to collaborate with their grade level team and specialists. Our guaranteed and viable curriculum provides these teams with a clear understanding of what students need to know and be able to do. In their meetings, the PLCs analyze student work and assessments, and utilize an action research approach to improve instruction. Team members are empowered to share their goals, growth, and accomplishments at faculty meetings and at district level grade level curriculum leadership team meetings.

Professional development opportunities at the district level include before and after school workshops, demonstration classes, national speakers at Institute Days, district wide curriculum meetings on Early Release Days, and online courses. Instructional coaches are also available to support our teams in understanding standards, designing assessments, increasing rigor, and implementing high impact instructional practices to improve student achievement.

4. School Leadership:

When you walk through the doors at Elementary South, there is an immediate sense of joy that has been built by the principal's vision of a collaborative and positive culture. As a servant leader, the principal strives to take care of the community. Building a strong community creates an environment in which the staff can focus on the most important aspect of school: the students. The principal values excellence by engaging staff in the decision-making processes, and by empowering staff to develop ideas that contribute to success in our learning community. Positive relationships are used in developing impactful school improvement plans and cultivating a strong leadership team. The trust instilled by the principal utilizes the expertise and trust of staff in making decisions that affect students. The safety, achievement and success of the students is always at the core of decision making by the principal and the entire staff. This includes looking carefully at data by all stakeholders in academic areas as well as social emotional data. Leadership is dispersed throughout the school, as staff are empowered to be both instructional and empathetic social-emotional leaders within their classrooms. Students know the principal is their supporter and committed to their success. The principal intuitively knows what students and teachers need and inspires everyone in the building to do their best. The strong communication style and positive energy of the principal keeps all stakeholders well informed of best practices and what is needed for all students to be successful. Stakeholders are included in the Leadership Team and provide valuable input from the community. The district's strategic plan is embodied through the principal's commitment to building strong, trusting, collaborative relationships within our school and the community. The principal welcomes and inspires the input of all.

Leadership is not only the job of the principal. We believe teacher leaders are necessary for change to be effective. For example, we recently experienced a large paradigm shift when moving away from pull out services in special education and English language learners to incorporate an inclusive model of instruction for all students. Providing professional development to know and understand the mindset was critical to making this change. Teacher leaders who tried the co-teaching model ahead of others shared their experiences for this initiative to be able to move forward as a school goal. Teacher leadership is key to advancement and school improvement.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

While we have tried many different strategies for school improvement, the most impactful delivery model has been the implementation of a guaranteed and viable core curriculum for all students with room in the schedule for daily acceleration. A quality curriculum is the foundation of an effective school and our teacher experts have spent many years writing our units using the Understanding by Design framework. Stage one of the curriculum design, what do we want students to know and be able to do, and stage two, our assessments, require consistent opportunities for all students to be exposed to rigorous curriculum standards. Stage three of our unit design allows teachers the freedom and autonomy to put their own spin on their teaching. This is the art and science behind the instruction and provides the joy and motivation to daily lessons.

Our guaranteed and viable curriculum not only is made up of the basics: language arts, math, science and social studies, but is also inclusive of social emotional learning, art, music, physical education, and health. Technology is integrated as a tool into our units. Core instruction ensures that all students have protected time to experience the curriculum and are not pulled from core instruction. In addition, all students have acceleration time to get what they need to close gaps, extend knowledge of content standards, and engage in enrichment. This personalization not only gives students what they need to make significant growth in their learning, but also gives students time for passion projects where they can explore their own personal interests.

We believe our instruction must be joyful! Hawthorn has defined joy in classroom with 6 C's: choice, connectedness, challenge, collaboration, creativity, and communication. Giving students choice such as topics, ways to show their thinking, and/or flexible seating allow students to learn what intrigues them. Being connected to their learning with real world application makes learning personal. Challenge offers personalization, problems solving, project based learning and critical thinking. Collaboration teaches students to work together, debate and discuss. Creativity allows students to integrate the arts, movement, drama and presentation. Communication entails constant feedback to review and refine work. The C's of joyful learning spark curiosity, motivate and inspire students to reach their full potential and make academic and social emotional growth. Making sure every child engages deeply in the guaranteed and viable curriculum that is differentiated, personalized and joyful motivates all students to achieve at high levels.