

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. Tyler Lemen

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

Official School Name Ferdinand Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 402 East Eighth Street

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

Ferdinand IN 47532-9234
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Dubois

Telephone (812) 817-0900

Fax (812) 367-1194

Web site/URL

https://www.sedubois.k12.in.us/3/H

ome

E-mail tyler.lemen@sedubois.k12.in.us

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Dr. Jamie Pund

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail jamie.pund@sedubois.k12.in.us

District Name Southeast Dubois County School Corporation Tel. (812) 817-0900

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. Kent Uebelhor

(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):
- 3 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 5 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	22	16	38
K	30	26	56
1	33	21	54
2	21	20	41
3	20	28	48
4	23	21	44
5	0	0	0
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	149	132	281

*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
 - 0 % Asian
 - 0 % Black or African American
 - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 95 % White
 - 1 % 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: 8%

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	11
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	23
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	289
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.08
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	8

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0%
1 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 17%
Total number students who qualify: 49

8. Students receiving special education services: 22 %
62 Total number of students served

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

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>6</u> Autism | <u>2</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>2</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>3</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>10</u> Developmental Delay | <u>8</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>61</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>2</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: 1
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.	14
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	6
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.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 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	98%	98%	99%	98%	98%
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. 2012

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school’s mission or vision statement.

Ferdinand Elementary School is committed to providing a quality educational program designed to maximize student potential for lifelong learning in a safe environment.

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

Nestled in the rolling hills of southwestern Indiana, Ferdinand is a small, rural town whose adult residents rely on both skilled and semi-skilled work. Ferdinand's landscape is of an agricultural nature; as a result, many residents rely on agriculture as a source of income, while others work as professionals in local businesses and also nearby coal mines and factories.

In this small community of just over 2,200 residents, many families are of German descent, with roots extending multiple generations. However, in recent years, an increasing number of Hispanic families now reside in the area. The addition of Hispanic families has added broader and welcomed diversity. Additionally, a widening gap of socioeconomic levels has further increased Ferdinand Elementary School's diversity and need to reach students of all levels, especially those most at-risk. Consequently, our teachers and special needs instructors are serving a larger number of students with disabilities and academic deficits. These factors have led to growth and change among our faculty, staff, and student body, as our changing student population has presented both challenges and benefits.

We serve preschool through fourth grade students, including programs for special needs preschoolers, regular education preschoolers, learning disabled, emotionally and behaviorally challenged, speech and language-delayed, high ability, and general education students.

Ferdinand Elementary School's rich history is accentuated with accolades due to academic excellence, student growth, and laudable attendance rates. The school has been awarded the state's Four-Star School award since its inception and has been a consecutive recipient for thirty years. In order to qualify for this prestigious award, schools must score in the top quartile in the state on accountability measures, including Indiana's standardized test, ISTEP+, maintain exemplary attendance rates, and also show exceptional growth of students. Finally, Ferdinand Elementary School has maintained an Exemplary School status and an "A" rating by the state of Indiana since the inception of this rating system, established in the 2011-2012 academic year.

Many factors play a significant role in the success of Ferdinand Elementary School. First, our mission statement permeates all we do: "Ferdinand Elementary School is committed to providing a quality educational program designed to maximize student potential for lifelong learning in a safe environment." Other success factors include: our current building leadership, rigorous curriculum, numerous programs and initiatives, and certified and support staff who are exemplary, which is evidenced by the fact that seven of our faculty and staff members are recipients of the Peabody Leaders in Education Award.

First, our current building principal has an unparalleled leadership style. He is intelligent, articulate, and maintains high expectations for teachers, support staff, students, and our patrons. He is open to new methods of instruction, readily supports professional development, and is keenly aware of the daily happenings of all classrooms; this is demonstrated by frequent walk-throughs and observations of our classes. He is a "hands-on" principal who relates to both adults and children and has made it his business to know the students and families of Ferdinand Elementary School in order to best meet the needs of all. He maintains an open-door policy for all stakeholders and is the epitome of an outstanding principal.

The curriculum at Ferdinand Elementary School follows Indiana's Academic Standards, but is greatly enriched by the standard of excellence held by classroom teachers and our building principal. The rigor of our curriculum is regularly lauded by those in the community, and we note that new students often must work diligently to close curricular and achievement gaps. Finally, our after-school remediation programs for language arts and math, as well as our intervention programs during the school day, provide concept and skill development in areas of deficit. Data has shown these practices greatly reduce the disparity in achievement levels among students.

Ferdinand Elementary School boasts a number of programs and initiatives, which all contribute to the success of our school. One such program promoting a brain and body connection, Minds in Motion, wires the brain for learning. Additionally, students engage in the Positivity Project, in which positive character

traits are focused upon throughout the school year. Junior Achievement, a program with a business emphasis, greatly enhances the curriculum at Ferdinand Elementary. Our school offers opportunities for students to become members of the robotics teams, serve as ambassadors for the school, or participate in Destination Imagination, a club for creative thinking.

Our support staff, including our counselor, special area instructors, speech and language teachers, and resource instructor all provide quality instructional platforms which align with our school's mission statement. Each and every Ferdinand Elementary School staff member works to provide a positive educational experience; this includes our instructional assistants, cooking, cleaning, and office staff, as well as bus drivers, who help launch and culminate each school day in a positive manner.

At Ferdinand Elementary School, highly effective teachers abound. The standard of excellence held by our principal, patrons, and entire community pervades our mission. Teachers constantly use data to inform instruction and are encouraged to seek professional development through workshops and professional reading. Teachers, at all levels, work in whole group, small group, and one-on-one settings to meet students at appropriate starting points and are in constant contact with parents via personal conferences, email, phone calls, newsletters, and classroom websites. The RISE evaluation system for certified staff encourages teachers to document methods, use data as a constant compass for planning and instruction, and reflect on best practices and strategies.

As a previous recipient of the National Blue Ribbon School Award in 2012, Ferdinand Elementary School is held in high esteem by surrounding schools and communities. The award has affirmed our numerous accomplishments and has encouraged us to never become stagnant or rest on our laurels. We have noted an influx of transfers from surrounding communities, in part, due to our history of excellence, and we believe the previous award has attracted a growing number of prospective classroom teachers seeking employment at our National Blue Ribbon School.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

At Ferdinand Elementary School, we abide by a ninety-minute uninterrupted block of instruction to teach reading fluency, comprehension, and language skills. Teachers utilize both a basal reading series and a variety of literature, whether it be trade books, poetry, newspaper and magazine articles, recipes or any other source of real-world text with which students might interact. We believe it is the mix of both traditional instruction and contemporary practices, such as close reading, that effect solid language arts instruction. Many teachers use the Daily 5 Cafe as their framework for this portion of the day. All teachers use weekly assessments which include cold reads. The Accelerated Reader program is an additional resource used for the assessment of reading comprehension. Grading period goals are set by each grade level team for minimum point and percentage expectations. All K-4 classroom teachers also use Dynamic Indicators of Basic Literacy Skills (DIBELS) to benchmark and progress monitor students' fluency and comprehension.

The structure of the ninety-minute language arts block in classrooms at Ferdinand Elementary School includes a fluency portion, mini-lessons on targeted comprehension skills, and reserves a great deal of the block for interaction with texts from a variety of genres. Peer discussion is encouraged, and many classrooms implement book club groups and literature circles as well as whole group, small group, and one-on-one instruction.

Within the language arts curriculum, an important component is writing composition, using the six-trait writing model as our framework. Writing instruction is rooted in the traits of ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions. Grammar and conventions are taught primarily in the context of written expression.

Because research affirms the importance of reading aloud to students on a daily basis, every classroom instructor consistently models reading aloud and plans for self-selected reading time within the language arts block. For upper grades, this time includes a daily status check, in which teachers track students' daily reading and hold students accountable for a minimum of thirty minutes of nightly reading.

1b. Mathematics:

Mathematics instruction follows Indiana's Academic Standards and is centered on high expectations and a tradition of excellence. In both 2016 and 2018, Ferdinand Elementary School was the number-one ranked school in the state of Indiana for ISTEP+ math pass rates. In 2017, Ferdinand Elementary School finished in third place in this domain. It has been a tradition for Ferdinand Elementary School faculty to welcome neighboring schools to observe our practices in math instruction. In addition to our Ready Math program, we incorporate math meetings, daily standards instruction and review, and daily math facts. We have boasted a Math Facts Hall of Fame for years, in which students compete to finish in the top ten for each grade level; subsequently, those students' names are placed on the Wall of Fame in our gym. Most students aspire to leave their mark at Ferdinand Elementary School by acquiring a top position on the Wall of Fame. One recent fourth grader stated to her classroom teacher, "I want to leave my mark on this school and get my name on the Wall of Fame!" Additionally, there is a major emphasis on critical thinking and real-world problem solving within our curriculum. Mathematical discourse is woven deeply into all aspects of math instruction at Ferdinand Elementary School; students are encouraged, on a daily basis, to discuss, not only their answers, but their mathematical reasoning as well as alternative problem-solving methods and strategies.

All classrooms hold math meetings at their respective math boards. During this time, students review calendar and time concepts, work on a problem of the day, review money concepts, conversions, and a variety of review problems. This meeting is held daily. Students work on math board with a partner, individually, and, for those needing extra help, in small group.

Because all instruction is rooted in Indiana's Academic Standards, a daily standards review, consisting of four review problems, is completed in class. Students are assessed on targeted standards on a weekly basis.

Similarly, the Ready Math portion of math class includes targeted standards work and problem solving. The program uses reflective thinking, alternate problem-solving strategies and thoughtful mathematical discourse. The i-Ready portion of the program is an online curriculum designed for students and is based on diagnostic testing at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year. Instructional groupings and academic placements are made based upon the results. Student growth, areas of difficulty, and areas of strength are focused upon. Due to the nature of the computer-adaptive program, an individualized learning path is created for each student. This online program supplements face-to-face instruction.

1c. Science:

Our science curriculum focuses on the various branches of science, including physical science, Earth and space science, life science, and engineering and technology. The hub of science instruction at Ferdinand Elementary School is experiential learning, including experiments and investigations, and uses a hands-on approach, stressing the use of the scientific method. Students are challenged to make observations, think critically, hypothesize, infer, and deduce results. Students benefit from actively engaging in scientific practices, such as asking questions, gathering and analyzing data, and engaging in scientific discussions. Application of science concepts is the central theme of all science learning since the curriculum focuses on critical and analytical thinking. Indiana's standardized assessment, formerly ISTEP+, but reformatted this year as ILEARN, is comprised of a science component at grade four, and the students of Ferdinand Elementary School consistently score well above the state average in science. In the spring of 2018, students at Ferdinand Elementary School passed the science portion of ISTEP+ at a rate of 98.1% as compared to the state average of 57.6% for their fourth grade Hoosier peers.

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

Ferdinand Elementary School's social studies curriculum follows Indiana Academic Standards and embraces the practice of using community resource personnel to enrich instruction. Individuals utilized include: local police officers, the town manager, firemen, EMTs, farmers, and business personnel in the community. One major focus is the Positivity Project, an initiative based on intense immersion in one positive character trait per week, each of which contributes to individual, team, and life success. Another program implemented at Ferdinand Elementary School is Junior Achievement, a curriculum focused on business concepts and entrepreneurship. This program allows our students to interact with community professionals, who leave their places of employment during school hours, to teach real-world business concepts to Ferdinand Elementary School students. Equally important, Agriculture in the Classroom, an outreach program of Purdue University, is a community-centered program many grades utilize as a portion of their curriculum to teach both basic and advanced agriculture concepts. Finally, field trips serve as an essential part of the social studies curriculum at Ferdinand Elementary School. In recent years, students have traveled to an Amish community to experience various aspects of Amish culture, including visiting their homes and school, and students have even partaken in a meal prepared by Amish residents. Other field trips include: a trip to Indiana's New Harmony, a community founded on the socialistic principle of utopianism, a trip to an urban community to expose students to a variety of architecture and broader diversity, and trips to various historic destinations, involving students in activities related to historic time periods, such as soap and candle making, bee keeping, wood carving, weaving, book binding, and paper cutting.

1e. For secondary schools:

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

Ferdinand Elementary School is host to a full-day general education preschool program for four-year-olds. Enrollment is limited to twenty-four students split into two sections. Students begin each day with Minds in

Motion, a circuit that wires the brain for learning and focuses on the brain and body connection. Big Day for Pre-K is the curriculum used as a framework for instruction. The curriculum is research-based and focuses on social skills, play, and kindergarten readiness. The heart of instruction centers around play and social interactions to acquire learning. Students are immersed in literature as an additional springboard for knowledge. Our kindergarten teachers have observed, on a regular basis, that students attending Ferdinand Elementary School's preschool are notably more prepared for kindergarten, both socially and academically, than are their same-age peers who have attended outside preschools.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Our school offers special curricular areas which complement academic curricular offerings at Ferdinand Elementary School. Our art curriculum is modeled on the Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE) program, which promotes learning across four disciplines within the arts: aesthetics, art criticism, art history, and art production. Our art classes meet once weekly, and within those forty-minute time frames, we strive to educate students about specific elements and principles of design and how these are used to create and appreciate art. We align the curriculum with the Indiana Academic Standards for Fine Arts and incorporate various cross-curricular projects: flag collages for Veteran's Day and social studies lessons, advertisement design for Newspaper in Education Week, and origami butterflies, inspired by a science metamorphosis unit, to name just a few. Furthermore, student work is regularly on display in the school's hallways, at the two school art shows, where each student has a work matted and framed, and biannually at Krempp Art Gallery, located on the campus of Vincennes University Jasper Center. Our art program seeks to flourish student critical thinking skills in an imaginative, yet real-world way.

Music education at Ferdinand Elementary School is comprised of singing, movement, rhythmic activities, instruments, composers, music history, and theory; these skills correlate with state and national standards. Students in all grades attend music class once per week for forty minutes. Community outreach experiences, such as singing at the local nursing home and senior center, enhance the curriculum. Community resources, such as guest performances, are utilized regularly to educate and inspire students in the field of music. Each school year, students in all grades, preschool through grade four, participate in an annual art and music show, which combines song, dance, and public speaking to afford students the opportunity to experience performance in a public venue.

Library class is offered once per week for forty minutes and allows students the opportunity to garner library skills, but centers mostly on the occasion to acquire and read books of all genres, on a variety of topics and interests, and for all ages.

Students attend computer lab for forty minutes one time per week; instruction focuses mostly on keyboarding and word processing skills. Indiana's 2019 reformatted standardized test, ILEARN, a computer-adaptive assessment, requires students to type all written responses, including essay answers and writing prompts. To prepare for this new expectation, students utilize the program, Typing Club, to master necessary skills.

Technology is woven seamlessly into our school curriculum and is used as a tool for all other learning. Our school boasts a one-to-one ratio of Chromebooks to students. As a result, students are familiarized, at an early age, with digital citizenship and the use of applications to acquire information. Ferdinand Elementary School students rely on technology as a natural component of their learning. In the past two school years, teachers have capitalized on the use of Google Classroom as a vehicle for instruction. A considerable amount of professional development has enabled teachers to use this tool to make learning more interactive, practical, and engaging.

Physical education is taught by classroom teachers one time per week for forty minutes. Skills focused on include: balance, agility, flexibility, strength, and endurance. Ferdinand Elementary School is currently pursuing an Upgrade grant, through the Welborn Foundation, to strengthen physical education instruction and wellness. The grant will augment current physical education equipment, structure our curriculum in a more uniform manner, and provide training of faculty in physical education instruction. Additionally, our Wellness Team heightens our health curriculum through the planning, promotion, and execution of

initiatives such as Walking Wednesdays, monthly Walk to School Days, a Health and Wellness Fair, and a Ferdinand Elementary School Family 5K each spring.

Character education is delivered via the Positivity Project. This program empowers students to build positive relationships. Throughout the year, the twenty-four character strengths identified by psychology are introduced and focused upon through interactive literature, YouTube videos, vignettes, and positive quotes. Further, Ferdinand Elementary School Ambassadors execute projects incorporating the entire faculty, staff, and student body, which are service-based and community-oriented. Examples include: food drives, coat collections, nursing home visits, kindness initiatives, service at the Community Food Bank's Community Meal, Veteran's Day program commentating, Secret Santas for faculty, and letters of appreciation for faculty and staff.

3. Special Populations:

Special populations served by Ferdinand Elementary School are our previously mentioned general education preschool students, special needs preschool students, intervention and remediation students, special needs K - 4 students, high ability students, speech and language-delayed students, and our Hispanic population.

Our special needs preschoolers engage in the Spark curriculum, another program centered on play as an agent of instruction. Children are immersed in age-appropriate literature to acquire background knowledge, language skills, and preferable social interactions. Students may enter at age three and typically spend at least two years in the program to reach developmental goals, including physical, social, and academic targets.

Students with disabilities are serviced by our special needs teacher and provided with supports deemed appropriate by each student's Individualized Education Plan. Though services are received from the special education teacher, most supports for these students are offered within the general education classroom. If required, these students receive accommodations to their assessments, classroom environments, and/or instruction, which is a decision agreed upon by each student's personal case conference committee. This committee, comprised of parents, teachers, resource personnel, administrators, and counselors, meets at least once per year to discuss progress and concerns regarding the student, while also creating measurable academic or personal goals for the impending year. Although a student's case conference committee is required to meet only once per year, the members of the committee are expected and encouraged to communicate throughout the year to ensure the student is reaching his or her highest potential.

The faculty and staff of Ferdinand Elementary School hold a strong belief in the growth mindset, that all students are capable of growth and change. It is often noted that students facing academic challenges simply need more time with content. As a result, we provide interventions for both math and language arts. Careful planning of our master schedule allows the majority of assistants in the building to descend upon targeted grade levels during their intervention times to facilitate instruction and learning among students showing skill deficits. At all grade levels, classroom teachers also work within intervention groups, often modeling whole group instruction to the assistants prior to smaller group breakout sessions. These sessions occur five times per week for twenty minutes each.

High Ability (HA) students are challenged within the regular classroom setting via differentiated reading, writing, and mathematics assignments and also through a once-per-week pullout program so they are placed with comparable students and appropriately challenged by analogous peers. High Ability students are encouraged to join and lead our robotics teams, Destination Imagination teams, and also participate in an HA Day in the summer to further their immersion in STEM-related activities and spend increased time with compatible peers.

Ferdinand Elementary School provides speech and language services for students in pre-K through grade 4. Summer speech camp is also offered via a grant from our local Psi Iota Xi sorority. In speech, a variety of evidence-based practice strategies are used in therapy. These include: auditory discrimination training, modeling, auditory bombardment, repetitive drill and trials, visual and tactile cues and prompts, phonemic awareness training, and direct instruction. For language, the various evidence-based practice strategies

include picture prompts and cues, modeling, system of least prompts, simultaneous prompting, time delay, verbal rehearsal, direct instruction, auditory bombardment of language targets, and verbal repetition. In speech and language therapy, various activities are utilized to target goals. Therapists read stories, find words and sounds in magazines, play games, and learn through interactive play. Constant communication with teachers and staff takes place on how to best create carryover in meeting speech and language goals.

Our Hispanic population is assessed once per year using the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA). Depending upon the level attained on this assessment, students either attend language classes in the resource room or are placed on consult if functioning at higher levels.

In conclusion, various students within our school family require one-on-one and small group sessions with our counselor to discuss familial and peer interactions. Conflict resolution is encouraged, and coping strategies are taught to aid students in better managing situations and direct students toward positive outcomes. Select students are scheduled weekly, while others are seen on an as-needed basis. Our counselor serves the entire student body by visiting classrooms once per grading period and engaging students in lessons related to positive social interactions and relationships.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

The climate at Ferdinand Elementary School is one of positivity, excellence, openness, and engagement. A robust work ethic permeates our school culture. All stakeholders are firm believers in communication and collaboration. Teachers often plan lessons and assessments collaboratively to best meet student needs. It is common to see teachers and teams of teachers arriving early, staying late, working in the building on weekends, and also spending a substantial amount of time in their classrooms during summer months. Consequently, it is no coincidence that six of our teachers and one support staff member have been chosen as Peabody Leaders in Education, a program which honors heroes in education who help students achieve their true potential.

Teachers and support staff feel valued and supported daily by our building administrator. He uses email and notes to provide positive feedback, but accomplishes this mostly through face-to-face communication on a daily basis. Our Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) shows support through monetary donations for classroom supplies, donations of books from the Scholastic and Usborne Book Fairs, Staff Appreciation meals at Christmas and during Teacher Appreciation Week, and mutual respect among all is apparent. Notes of appreciation and encouragement are common via email throughout the year and especially during Teacher Appreciation Week.

Similarly, instructional assistants support students and our school's mission by working in their respective roles as crucial contributors to the success of our students. Our instructional assistants engage in professional development on our organizational day and have also participated in training led by classroom teachers. This training involves instructional strategies, scaffolding of questions, behavior management, and best practices for effective communication.

Parents support our mission consistently and contribute to the positive, successful climate of our school; this is evidenced in attendance rates over the past four academic years. Ferdinand Elementary School parents clearly understand the impact of regular attendance. In 2014-15, our attendance was 98%, followed in 2015-16 with a 98.5% attendance rate, 98% in 2016-17, and 98.3% in 2017-18, in comparison to the state average of 95.9%. Furthermore, Ferdinand Elementary School parents are an integral part of the team in demanding excellence. Parents provide the expectation that their children complete homework, master skills, and read each evening. Parents of students in all grades sign math homework as part of a dual accountability system for ensuring complete and correct work, and parents of our students are devoted to the practice of ensuring students read a minimum of thirty minutes per school evening.

The climate of our school is best exemplified by our students, the most essential stakeholders. We often receive feedback from visitors and substitute teachers regarding the superior behavior of Ferdinand Elementary School students. It is evident in student conduct, achievement, and growth that an aura of success abounds. As an example, students set academic, social, and fitness goals and review and adjust these goals throughout the year. Depending on grade level, teachers manage this in a variety of ways. In grades two, three, and four, students plot their own data points on line plots to chart and track personal growth throughout the year on measures such as Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). Furthermore, all students recite the school's mission statement each morning to begin their academic day. Most students are able to deliver the school's mission from memory and are capable of explaining its meaning: "Ferdinand Elementary School is committed to providing a quality educational program designed to maximize student potential for lifelong learning in a safe environment." Students strive to achieve a place on the Wall of Fame in the gym or on the Pride Wall in the hall by the office. Achievements fall among the following categories: Top Ten Accelerated Readers, Math Facts Hall of Fame winners, Principal's Award recipients, and attendance award winners. Also honored on the Pride Wall are Ambassadors, Destination Imagination participants, and the Ferdinand Elementary School Choir.

The standard of excellence at Ferdinand Elementary School is further evidenced by the accolades and awards earned by our school: Four Star School Award - thirty consecutive years, Exemplary School with

an "A" rating - seven consecutive years, National Blue Ribbon School - 2012, and invitations to the Indiana Department of Education for recognition as a top ten ISTEP+ pass rate school in both math and language arts.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Families are an integral part of everything we accomplish at Ferdinand Elementary School. We launch each school year with an orientation session for parents. In this session, teachers share crucial information regarding year-long communication, academic expectations, rules and procedures, and strategies for ensuring student success. Approximately one month into the school year, one-on-one scheduled parent-teacher conferences are held for every child. Our principal demands 100% attendance, and if parents cannot be physically present, a follow-up phone call or FaceTime conference is conducted. We have a long-standing tradition of 100% participation in parent-teacher conferences.

Because communication affects every aspect of teaching and learning, all parents are communicated with on a weekly basis via a classroom newsletter, either e-mailed in digital form or sent in hard copy format. Constant e-mail contact, phone calls, Remind messages, web site information, School Reach texts, and our Ferdinand Elementary Facebook page keep parents and the community abreast of upcoming events, current accomplishments, and highlights of our school day and year. Our student information system, Harmony, allows us to be in constant communication with parents; by way of mass e-mail messages, we are able to contact parents at a moment's notice to remind them of pertinent school-related information. Harmony also allows parents to remain current regarding their child's achievement levels; progress reports are available each quarter, and digital report cards are e-mailed quarterly as well. However, student grades are readily available on a daily basis, as our building administrator encourages all teachers to maintain current grades for reporting purposes.

An additional mode of engaging families and the community-at-large is the use of parents and grandparents as classroom volunteers. Some volunteers spend an entire instructional day per school week assisting in the classroom, others volunteer by serving meals in the cafeteria, still others assist on an as-needed basis for special projects. Many work tirelessly on our Big G Box Tops campaign to raise needed funds each year through the collection of box tops. These volunteers count, clip, bag, and total box tops to assist us with this effort. Volunteerism by our parents and grandparents is to be credited for the success of our biennial carnival, as these individuals schedule, plan, and help execute activities, alongside our faculty members, to make the carnival a success.

Ferdinand Elementary School is a strong proponent of public relations and maintains an open-door policy for parents, guardians, grandparents, and significant others to visit our students and partake in activities within our school community. Examples include visitors engaging in the following: lunch with students, visits on special days, such as Grandparent's Day, Poetry Cafe, Art and Music Show nights, Fourth Grade Wax Museum, our walk-a-thon, and the school's biennial carnival.

As previously mentioned, community resources are relied upon to supplement and enhance instruction. Various examples include: business professionals with the Junior Achievement program, agriculture experts for Ag in the Classroom, guest readers from the community, and representatives from the Boy and Girl Scouts of America, 4-H, and Girls on the Run.

Finally, our community newspaper, The Ferdinand News, is an additional agent in promoting our school, its accomplishments and activities, and highlighting the vital role Ferdinand Elementary School plays in our tight-knit community.

3. Professional Development:

Continuing education and professional development have always been strongly encouraged and supported in our building. All members of the faculty and staff seek opportunities to grow through such experiences and are eager to engage in professional development opportunities. Many times, the information obtained from professional development experiences is shared with colleagues at faculty meetings via modeling so

all members of the faculty can benefit, even when monetary constraints and logistics don't allow for all to attend outside workshops. Our principal strongly encourages each and every staff member in the direction of professional development and is open to finding the financial means for us to attend. He has readily made known to faculty and staff the financial resources available for us to attend workshops and encourages participation at every turn.

In the last two school years, our school corporation has networked with other corporations in our county to hold a county-wide professional development day in mid-January. A keynote speaker and multiple break-out sessions on technology, trauma-informed approaches, project-based learning, using data to inform instruction, and round table discussions with our grade-level teaching counterparts within the county are offered on this county-wide PD day. We have participated for the last two academic years and have found the networking aspect to be of special benefit. We are rarely given the opportunity to collaborate with teachers outside our corporation, and the fresh perspectives and ideas shared are beneficial in raising levels of effectiveness. Further, on our organizational day within our own corporation, an additional professional development day was planned, organized, and executed by our local administrators. Both faculty and staff members gained valuable insights and information to launch a successful school year. Other examples of professional development in which our faculty and staff have participated in the last school year include: Alternative Augmentative Communication Strategies, Handwriting Without Tears, Brain-Based Practical Approach to Kindergarten, CPR, Crisis Prevention Institute training, School Nurse Leadership Academy, Trauma-Informed Care, Suicide Prevention, Hoosier Educational Computer Coordinators Technology Conference, Magnify Project-Based Learning, STEM PD, Managing Behavior in the Classroom, Ready Math, Conscious Discipline, and Math Extravaganza, to name only a sampling.

Webinars, professional articles, and professional reading are also sources of professional development in our building. In the past, teachers have held monthly book club groups using various professional reading, such as *Who Moved My Cheese?*, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, *Small Group Instruction*, *The First Days of School*, *Teach Like a Champion*, and *The Innovator's Mindset*. In addition, faculty members have met in book club groups and read works of fiction simply for enjoyment, as we feel a strong need for teachers and staff members to enjoy and model reading as a pleasurable activity.

4. School Leadership:

Our building principal is unparalleled in his ability to lead our school. He is an avid communicator, who is both eloquent and capable. Whether he is communicating with parents, teachers, staff, or students, his approach is positive, productive, and informed. Teachers feel his constant support and are communicated with regularly in various ways. He is a natural leader who makes decisions with ease, he is an open listener, a problem solver, and both an idea generator and an action-oriented administrator. Teachers in our building have commented on numerous occasions that our administrator makes our work in the classroom less complicated, as he supports our work with parents, students, and curriculum, and makes it readily known that he is a resource to whom we can turn in any type of need.

The principal at Ferdinand Elementary School holds exceedingly high expectations for all contributors to our school family and does not hesitate to model those high standards as the compass for all to follow. As one teacher stated, "He leads by example." His open-door policy is one of welcome but also often serves as a reality check on difficult topics with students and parents regarding behavior, attendance, rules, procedures, and school protocol.

Our administrator is highly visible and an active participant in each and every happening in our school. He initiates creative projects, including dress-up days for Riley Children's Hospital, dress like a 100-year-old for the 100th day, Book Character Day, and many more. When asked to describe our principal, students consistently noted he is intelligent, energetic, humorous, caring, and a good listener. One student stated, "He never doubts us." Another said, "I am trying to be more like him; he always notices when we are down. He is a hero!" Further, another student commented, "If there were a Hall of Fame for educators, I would put him in it, for sure!"

When asked to comment on our principal's leadership, one teacher noted, "He has a clear vision for
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Ferdinand Elementary School, and, through his positive leadership, inspires me to work even harder to improve our school." Another responded, "Our principal shows compassion to all, and he incorporates laughter into everyday life." Also, one staff member noted, "He supports us at every turn. He encourages us and is capable of providing constructive feedback in a positive manner when needed." Finally, "Our administrator is a caring leader who listens to many points of view to effectively make good decisions. He is a people person who genuinely cares about his staff. He is not afraid to make a decision, stick with it, and problem solve until the idea becomes reality." One teacher's statement summarized our principal appropriately and succinctly when she shared, "Every aspect of the educational process is respected and valued by our principal, and his personality is infectious."

Additionally, our principal involves various stakeholders in the leadership framework at Ferdinand Elementary School. He organizes committees for various programs, activities, and happenings and relies on the talents and abilities of a wide variety of teacher leaders, teaching assistants, and other support staff to plan, organize, and facilitate programs. The number of committees this year alone approached thirty. His expectation for involvement is realized in the fact that most teachers volunteer for multiple committees. In this way, teachers and support staff leaders share their talents in various ways, whether it be their curricular or technical knowledge, artistic or musical talent, written or verbal communication skills, or ability to motivate and inspire others.

Further, the ultimate goal of all we do is student advancement, whether it be academically or socially. Student leaders, known as Ambassadors, much like a Student Council in other schools, meet monthly to brainstorm and execute both school and community-centered projects. This year, these student leaders led a community food drive, visited a local nursing home, created cards and filled bags for Cancer Care patients, assisted with Grandparents' Day, launched a kindness initiative, served as Secret Santas for teaching staff, and emceed our school's Veterans Day program.

In conclusion, all stakeholders, from our principal, to our teaching staff, to our support staff, to our students, are called upon to lead in various ways in order to ensure the success of Ferdinand Elementary students, our school, and our broader school community.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Choosing only one strategy or practice which deems Ferdinand Elementary School highly successful is an arduous task, as there are numerous practices, evidenced in this document, which are all integral pieces of the larger picture. However, the one strategy from which all others originate is consistent communication. It is the one strategy from which all others flow.

Clear, concise, consistent communication from our principal is the pinnacle of the hierarchy of success at Ferdinand Elementary School. Our administrator communicates openly, honestly, and often with faculty, staff, students, parents, and community members. We are kept abreast of important information, expectations, and ongoing tasks. He also communicates, on a regular basis, the expectation of success; it is clear that our objective is to help everyone succeed and reach maximum potential.

Communication among faculty and staff is another component of our success. Teachers and staff members collaborate and work synergistically, communicating ideas, resolutions, strategies, and plans, to best meet the needs of all learners. In this way, we continue the rich tradition of success upon which our school is built.

Communication between teachers and students is constant, constructive, and respectful. Daily communication, in the form of feedback, questioning, conferences, and simple compliments, all form the foundation for the ever-powerful connections which must be established for all other learning to emanate. From this daily communication, the expectation of success, achievement, and growth is imparted each and every day. Teachers are often heard using past groups' exemplary behavior and achievements as accomplishments for which current students should aspire.

Finally, communication between the school and home is vital to Ferdinand Elementary School's success. It has been an established tradition for every classroom teacher to publish a weekly classroom newsletter comprised of pertinent information, activities, and skill and assessment guidance. We rely heavily on our Harmony student information system to send both mass and individual emails, we use School Messenger, the Remind app, the local newspaper, and also our Ferdinand Elementary School Facebook page to keep the community apprised of all we do, whether it be activities or accomplishments. A great deal of positive feedback from our parents affirms the benefits of the constant communication which takes place between home and school at Ferdinand Elementary School.

We truly believe it is this successful communication hierarchy that is the heart of our A-rated, Exemplary, Four Star, National Blue Ribbon School, Ferdinand Elementary.