

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mr. Robert William Watson

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

Official School Name John F. Farrell-Emmett Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 3300 Kinney Road

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

Emmett MI 48022-3528
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County St. Clair County

Telephone (810) 384-1300

Fax (810) 384-8010

Web site/URL

<http://www.yale.k12.mi.us/index.php/schools/mainmenu-schools-emmett>

E-mail bwatson@yopsd.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*Mr. Kenneth Nicholl

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail knicholl@yopsd.us

District Name Yale Public Schools Tel. (810) 387-3231

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. Peter Bullard

(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	0	0	0
K	20	16	36
1	18	23	41
2	22	18	40
3	23	14	37
4	13	14	27
5	15	16	31
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	111	101	212

*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
 - 93 % 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: 2%

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	2
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	3
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	5
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	203
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.02
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 39%
 Total number students who qualify: 83

8. Students receiving special education services: 17 %
36 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>0</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>2</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>3</u> Developmental Delay | <u>4</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>27</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 13
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.	9
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	3
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	3
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 24:1

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%	97%	97%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2018.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

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

Our mission is to assist students in becoming life long learners and responsible citizens who will have a positive impact in their communities.

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

Our building participates in the school of choice program.

PART III – SUMMARY

John F. Farrell-Emmett Elementary School is located in the heart of Emmett, Michigan and is a part of the Yale Public School District. Our community was originally settled by a large population of Irish Catholic immigrants who came to the area to farm. Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church operated a school named after the parish priest, Father John F. Farrell. The building was later sold to the Yale Public School District who chose to honor the tradition and values of the community by renaming the school, John F. Farrell-Emmett Elementary School. Our building is comprised of kindergarten through fifth grade classrooms. We serve approximately 217 students of which 33 percent are school of choice.

The majority of our families are made up of two working parents who travel out of the area for work on a daily basis. The majority of our students are bused or transported by a family member to and from school each day. Thirty nine percent of our students qualify for free or reduced lunches. Our district also provides free universal breakfast for all students. Based on data collected when students are enrolled in our building, 70 percent of our student population is at-risk. Seventeen percent of our students have been identified and receive special education services.

School of choice families choose our building due to our high academic standards and proven performances on state assessments. Our most recent overall school index score of 99.10 percent as reported on the Michigan School Data Parent Dashboard for School Transparency reflects our commitment to high academic expectations for every student who attends our school. Various programs are offered to our students during and after school hours. Before or after-school academic programs are offered at various times throughout the school year and summer. These programs are aimed at providing intervention for students who are below grade level benchmarks based on data from district assessment tools. These programs are usually targeting mathematics or English language art skills. Two challenges that effect these programs are funding and transportation. If funds (grants, general budget) are available, the programs are offered to students, but having readily available transportation becomes an obstacle for many of them to attend. To avoid transportation issues, our staff has set aside an hour each week to provide an additional mathematics opportunity for every student in grades two through five called What I Need Time (WIN Time). Students rotate from classroom to classroom and work on a common mathematics concept for several weeks at a time.

The culture of our building is also very warm, inviting, and family oriented. Our philosophy is that family engagement is an effective and necessary component of school improvement and student success. Our building has a Student Needs Assessment Committee that meets on a regular basis to discuss academic and behavioral needs of identified students. Our committee is made up of the student's classroom teacher, our resource room teacher, our school social worker/counselor, our speech pathologist, and the child's parent. Through these meetings, customized interventions are discussed and implemented for each child to provide them an opportunity for a positive learning experience. Our building started hosting family engagement nights where a free dinner is provided to everyone in attendance. These evening events provide our students in attendance their very own presentations delivering such topics as character building and anti-bullying messages in a fun and safe environment. Our parents are presented topics that provides tips and strategies to assist them in helping their students become more successful as students and citizens in their communities. It is important to note that during these family engagement nights, our staff is represented by all departments (certified and non-certified) that make up our team at John F. Farrell-Emmett Elementary School. Our building's staff believe that we are all responsible for the success of our students and it is very important that this message is shared with our families by our actions. As we continue this program, our building is going to become more specific in the goals of our engagement evenings by writing goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, result oriented, and time bound.

Volunteers are also a critical component to our students' development as productive citizens. All of our volunteers go through a thorough background check prior to being allowed to work with students. Parents, grandparents, and community members are given the opportunity to volunteer in our building in various capacities. Invitations are also offered to those parents that might need some encouragement to participate and be active in our school.

This culture and environment that exists in our building is one reason that 33 percent of our students are school of choice students. Parents of neighboring school districts see our assessment numbers and through word of mouth hear, about the culture and environment of our building and they want their family to become a member of the John F. Farrell-Emmett Elementary School Family.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

Core instruction for reading and writing comes from the Michigan Association of Intermediate Administrators (MAISA) program developed by the Oakland Schools Literacy Team and piloted and reviewed by teachers statewide. This program is aligned with the Common Core standards and is aligned across grade levels. This program was chosen by our district and building due to the Universal Design for Learning framework that is embedded in the units of study. This program provides opportunities for every student to learn and show what they know. Teachers have high expectations for every student, regardless of their level as a reader.

Our instruction revolves around a workshop model in both reading and writing. In reading, students are encouraged and assisted to select books that are of interest to them. In writing, students are encouraged to create various pieces within a common genre. This approach allows for individualized instruction while still teaching a common skill to all students. A major component to both our readers' workshop and writers' workshop is the conferring piece. This component provides the teacher the opportunity to really find out what the student knows and is understanding on a personal level.

Teachers use the STAR Reading assessment (a universal screener) program which is computer adaptive and uses a combination of the cloze method and traditional reading comprehension passages to assess forty-six reading skills across eleven domains to collect data that drives instruction for each student. Teachers also use the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills with our kindergarten and first grade students to gain more insight into how our students are developing as readers. Teachers also administer Developmental Reading Assessments to students as needed. Data collected is then used by the teacher to create lessons focused on specific skills. Paraprofessionals work closely with the teacher to reinforce the concepts.

1b. Mathematics:

Our mathematics program uses Math Expressions which is published by Houghton Mifflin. It is an inquiry based mathematics curriculum that builds deep understanding of mathematical relationships. Our teachers worked with our regional educational service agency consultant to broaden their understanding of the program. The program is aligned with the Common Core and instills a sense of why and develops critical thinking skills for the student.

In our early elementary grades, lessons revolve around using manipulatives and also allows students to explore number relationships. In our upper elementary grades, lessons revolve around teaching multiple strategies in solving problems. This allows students to choose which strategy works for them. At all grade levels, our students are taught to draw, write the equation, answer the equation, and label their answer (DEAL). This strategy deepens their understanding of word problems and is reinforced at each grade level. Another strategy that is used within all lessons across grade levels are Kagan strategies. These strategies are not only used in mathematics, but all core subject areas. Talk Moves has also been embedded in our instructional practice. This strategy benefits our students listening skills and has created a positive learning environment where everyone contributes. What I Need Time (WIN Time) has provided extra support for all students in grades three through five. What I Need Time is held once a week for one hour during the school day. This allows all students to participate. Specific skills are targeted based on data from statewide assessments. During this time we also have an enrichment program for our higher achieving mathematics students in grades four and five. They work with a retired high school educator on higher level mathematics concepts during this time.

Grades one through five use the STAR Math assessment (universal screener) program which is computer adaptive and focuses on numbers and operations, algebra, geometry, and measurement. This data is used to create learning targets and success criteria for math lessons.

1c. Science:

At this time our science program is going through a restructuring of how content is delivered in the classroom. Our teachers are working with the regional educational service agency consultant in delving into the dimensions of the Michigan Science Standards (performance expectations from the Next Generation Science Standards). This shift from traditional science curriculum to a student based performance expectation program requires a change in how science is taught. Our teachers have been developing lessons that require our students to critically think and explore the relationship and understanding of scientific explanations as related to the world around us.

This conceptual shift in science instruction has given our students the opportunity to get up out of their seats and truly investigate concepts in a hands on learning environment. Students are encouraged to take intellectual risks and discuss their findings using Talk Moves and other Kagan strategies in a non-threatening environment. Through these discussions, our students are engaged and take ownership for their learning.

Our building also uses Mystery Science to enrich our students' understanding of concepts. This program is Common Core aligned and supports the Next Generation Science Standards. We are using this program as a bridge from our traditional approach in science instruction to the present where lessons will be performance based.

All of our students participate in a schoolwide learning fair. The emphasis of this fair is focused on science and social studies. Our fourth grade students complete a hands-on science experiment and present their findings to our school and community members at the fair. Our lower elementary students participate in the fair as well with science based research projects.

All fourth grade students are also privileged to meet on a weekly basis with a retired high school science educator. During these weekly meetings the students are exposed to hands-on experiences that focuses on science phenomenon. The instructor works very hard aligning the experiences to our current science standards.

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

The Michigan Citizenship Collaborative Curriculum is the primary program of study used at John F. Farrell-Emmett Elementary School at all grade levels for the purpose of social studies instruction. Additional resources used by the staff are Social Studies Weekly, Scholastic publications, and the Michigan Open Book Project. Teachers also search out resources to supplement their lessons using online resources. At this time, our building and district is still developing a cohesive plan of action.

The Michigan Citizenship Collaborative Curriculum provides our teachers a research-based approach to instruction and assessment. Grade level content spirals, with a focus on individual and family responsibilities in the lower elementary grades, local and state government topics in the mid elementary grade levels, and national government and history issues in the upper elementary grade levels. As our students progress through the grade levels, teacher expectations for student's examination and construction of responses need to show a progression of maturity and higher level thinking.

As mentioned in the science curricular response section, all of our students participate in a schoolwide learning fair. The emphasis of this fair is focused on science and social studies. The fifth grade students specifically work on creating displays, projects, and oral presentations connected to important United States history events. Third grade students present facts about Michigan in a variety of mediums.

Results from the Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress are used to guide our instruction and target specific concepts that need to be addressed and focused on through a variety of educational practices such as Kagan strategies.

Special guests and field trips bring social studies to life for our students with real life applications and hands

on learning experiences.

Cross curricular strategies in all core content areas are utilized in social studies to help build connections and a deeper understanding of all concepts.

1e. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

All of our students are fortunate to receive instruction in physical education, visual arts, music, and technology on a weekly basis. Students in kindergarten through second grade receive two sessions of music, one session of physical education, one session of visual arts, and one session of technology each week. Students in grade three receive either two sessions of physical education and one visual arts or two visual arts and one physical education session, one session of music, and one session of technology each week. Fourth graders receive two sessions of visual arts, one technology session, one physical education session, and one music class per week. Fifth grade students receive two physical education sessions, one technology session, one music session, and one visual arts session per week. Each session is forty minutes long.

Our specials (art, music, physical education, and technology) are very important curriculum areas for our students. Our instructors of these subjects are highly qualified and do an excellent job with our students considering the amount of time they have with each grade level.

Our visual arts program provides our students an opportunity to creatively express themselves in various mediums. Finished art pieces are displayed throughout the building and on our Facebook page. Our art lessons introduce students to great artists in history and hopefully develops an appreciation and respect for all art forms. Our entire student body recently collaborated on a mural in our gym. They created a school family tree with individual hand prints representing the leaves of a tree.

Our technology classes spiral throughout the grade levels. Each of our students are given a school email account. Basic skills are introduced in kindergarten and are built upon at each grade level. Our older students use Google Classroom to collaborate on projects and assignments not only assigned in the technology class, but that are also embedded in the core curriculum areas. Skills taught and practiced on in our technology class can be applied to life/career skills by our students. Recently we have started providing coding opportunities for our students. Our students are engaged and enjoying this opportunity working with robots.

The music program at John F. Farrell-Emmett Elementary focuses on several aspects of the Michigan Merit Curriculum standards, benchmarks, and grade level content expectations. Students are introduced to movements, beats, range, pitch, and melodies to name a few of the concepts that are taught. This year our program is expanding not only from choral music, but delving into instrumental music as well. Our students are very excited about this new feature of our music program.

Physical education lessons are designed from the Exemplary Physical Education Curriculum (EPEC) which is a nationally recognized program. This curriculum not only promotes traditional objectives of a physical education program, but is also aimed at developing attitudes and habits that will sustain and promote a physically active lifestyle for our students beyond the school years.

Our building is also participating in the Building Healthy Communities program. Through this program, all of our students receive information about eating healthy foods and becoming physically active. Our school received new playground equipment to increase our students' physical activity during recess time. An after-

school healthy kids club was implemented this year. Students who participate in this program walk in our halls for a period of time and participate in an activity in our gym. Each session ends with a healthy tip presented by our student leadership team and a snack. We currently have over fifty percent of our student population participating.

Each class in our building is scheduled to visit our library at least once per week. Students may visit the library throughout the school day with their teacher's permission, Monday through Friday, during unscheduled classroom times.

Our school social worker visits classrooms and provides programs that promote personal body safety, personal hygiene, and social skill lessons for all of our students throughout the school year.

We participate in the Michigan Attorney General's Cyber Safety Initiative. Representatives from the attorney general's office visit our school and present lessons on cyber safety. All of our students have the opportunity to participate in this presentation.

We annually host a Bubbylonian Encounter presentation sponsored by the St. Clair County Child Abuse and Neglect Council. This program is a sexual abuse prevention program. Our first and third graders attend this presentation.

3. Special Populations:

We take great pride at John F. Farrell-Emmett Elementary School in the support we provide to all of our students. We continually monitor students' progress and growth using STAR assessments as well as data from the Michigan Department of Education's MI School Data site. As a staff, we look for trends and patterns in our student population concerning achievement and growth. Students and student subgroups are identified and comparisons are made in order for staff to provide appropriate instruction to close achievement gaps for these students and subgroups. Using MI School Data reports, our economically disadvantaged population makes up approximately fourteen percent of our students in the bottom thirty percent in language arts and approximately eleven percent in the bottom thirty percent in mathematics based on Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress results.

Students who are identified needing additional support (Tier II) are referred to our Student Needs Assessment Committee. The committee with input from all stakeholders construct a detailed action plan. This plan is implemented and places responsibility for enactment on all stakeholders (student, parent, and teacher). Progress monitoring and documentation occurs to see if goals are being met. The committee reconvenes in thirty day increments to evaluate the student's progress and effectiveness of the plan.

Classroom teachers work with those students and groups who need Tier II intervention, while our paraprofessionals work with our general population of students. Teachers match instructional and intervention strategies to the student's strengths and target their specific weaknesses. Games, graphic organizers, visual aids, and hands on experiences are examples of strategies that are implemented and reinforced with the students. Lessons may be delivered in short sessions and assignments may be divided into smaller chunks to give students the opportunity to respond and receive feedback promptly.

Students requiring Tier III intervention work one on one, or in very small groups with our resource room teacher. Besides receiving core instruction in the classroom, our Tier III students receive individualized instruction targeting their skill deficits for a longer period of time. Student understanding is continuously monitored so misunderstandings can be immediately addressed.

As mentioned earlier, John F. Farrell-Emmett Elementary does provide a mathematics enrichment opportunity for our fourth and fifth grade students who are performing above grade level expectations. One side benefit of this program is the inspiration and motivation that it provides to our student population. Our upper elementary students work very hard for the opportunity to be invited to participate in this program.

We also offer before and after-school language art programs at various times throughout the school year.

Students who are identified needing additional support are invited to participate in the programs. This opportunity is available to kindergarten through fifth grade students. Teachers supervise these programs and students are grouped by grade/ability level.

A summer reading program is also offered to students. This program meets for a minimum of six weeks for approximately one hour each week. This is a very relaxed program structured more like a book club. It is supervised by a teacher and students confer on a weekly basis with the teacher.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

At John F. Farrell-Emmett Elementary School we start off each day in a very positive manner. Our bus drivers greet the children as they pick them up at bus stops. When the children are dropped off at school they are greeted at the door by the building principal. If a driver has any concerns about a child on their bus, they contact the principal and share their concerns. As students make their way to their classrooms, they are greeted in the hall by staff members. When students arrive at their classroom, their teacher is at the door to welcome them in for the day. After all the buses have dropped off students, the building principal goes to each classroom and with morning greetings. Each day, a group of students visit the office to lead the building in the Pledge of Allegiance and to sing the National Anthem over the speaker with the principal. At this time an eating healthy message is shared with the students. From this point on, teachers begin to review the schedule for the day with their students and instruction begins.

The staff and parent-teacher organization at John F. Farrell-Emmett Elementary take great pride in our building's appearance and approach-ability. Classrooms are neat and orderly. Materials for students are easily accessible. Technology devices are present in every classroom for students use. Bulletin boards are colorful and bright. They always have pertinent information on them for our students and visitors. Students' work adorn our hallways and are shared on our school's Facebook page as well. Our classroom hallways and bathrooms were recently painted by staff and parent-teacher organization members (volunteering on their own time) over the summer. Bright color combinations were used to create a positive mood. On the walls, staff placed motivational quotes to remind the students of how important they are and to inspire them to be the best they can be. Our staff workroom is very comfortable in appearance. Staff members painted walls and used color coordinated table cloths to create a relaxing ambiance where staff can unwind at lunch time.

Our building has developed a strong sense of team and each individual is encouraged to share ideas and thoughts on what we can do better to provide a positive learning environment for our students. Our teachers are given a degree of autonomy to be creative in their delivery of curriculum. Our teachers have the support of the building principal to take intellectual risks that may improve student learning experiences and achievement.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Engaging families and our community has always been important to our building. In the last two years our building has worked even harder making connections with all of our families a priority. We have also continued to maintain and connect with our community based organizations. Our family engagement nights and Student Needs Assessment Committee program are only two important programs that highlight our partnerships with our parents. Through classroom newsletters, the Remind app, email, our school Facebook page, and a building newsletter, our parents and community are well informed of student achievement and school events. Our parent-teacher organization also sends out a newsletter and has a Facebook page that keeps our families informed of school events and news.

Our community is very supportive of our school. The local fire department visits our kindergarten class every year and discusses fire safety with the students. The students have the opportunity to interact with the fire personnel and observe many facets of a fire engine. Our local Lions Club chapter provides Constitutional booklets to our fifth graders each year. The local Knights of Columbus donate winter coats to our building on an annual basis. Several businesses and organizations make donations to our annual fundraiser. We have had several Boy Scouts (former students) choose our school for their community project in fulfilling their requirement to become an Eagle Scout.

Our school is also very supportive of our community. Our staff annually sponsors a local little league team. Baseball has a traditional significance in our community. The village park is the central hub of community activities during the summer with baseball at the heart of these activities. Our school grounds host a Little

Free Library which is available to everyone year round. We are also in the process of securing and supplying a second Little Free Library in the village park. Throughout the year, various community groups utilize our building for their organization events (i.e. Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Emmett Little League, and New Life Christian Academy Sports Program).

Historically our students and staff have worked together on projects to raise funds for various community organizations and causes. The lessons taught and modeled during these projects help our students understand the importance of helping and supporting others in need. This action supports our mission statement of building responsible citizens who will have a positive impact in their communities.

3. Professional Development:

Professional development in our building is closely aligned to our school improvement plan and district needs. We work very closely with our county's regional educational service agency and their consultants during professional development days.

Professional development topics have traditionally centered on mathematics and English Language Arts. This year we are continuing our focus on Michigan's Essential Elements of Literacy while also focusing on Michigan's Science Standards (performance expectations from the Next Generation Science Standards).

Districtwide development days are scheduled by our central office administration. We currently have two full days and four half days of in-service scheduled districtwide. We also have numerous districtwide grade level meetings working with the professional consultants. Teacher leadership members meet with the regional educational service agency consultants to map out an agenda for districtwide in-services. Lessons are also designed at grade level meetings that are then implemented into classrooms.

Paraprofessionals also receive professional development on a districtwide level. Our building was chosen to host professional development in-services this year for the paraprofessionals. Several classroom teachers modeled readers' and writers' workshop lessons with an emphasis on the paraprofessional's role in conferring in the classroom.

Professional development is also provided to all staff members focusing on various topics through Safe Schools at the beginning of each school year. Our district also provided Active Shooter Response Training for all employees at the beginning of the school year

Our building principal also attends monthly principal meetings at our county regional educational service agency. These meetings provide current best practices and the latest research in educational methods that can then be implemented into our building as aligned with our school improvement plan.

As part of our evaluation process (Five Dimensions of Teaching and Learning), our teachers take a self-assessment at the beginning of the school year. Based on their findings, they select areas to focus on throughout the school year. As a building, staff selects one common focus area to work on developing and improving. During staff meetings and through weekly staff notes, articles and videos are shared and discussed that complement the focus areas. The articles and videos also support our school improvement plan goals.

Due to the culture of our school and the implementation of our professional development strategies, we are seeing positive growth for all of our students. This growth and achievement is reflected by our Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress scores as compared to scores of schools within our district, county, and state.

4. School Leadership:

The main leadership role at John F. Farrell-Emmett Elementary School is fulfilled by the principal. Other school leaders include the Superintendent of Yale Public Schools as well as the Assistant Superintendent. The main day-to-day operation of the school is overseen by the principal as our school is located away

from the main campus of the district. However, all school leaders work together to ensure that the students are successful and safe on a daily basis.

The philosophy of our principal is that our building is not successful without teamwork and trust. The principal, teachers, and support staff all work together to ensure that the building is run in a safe and engaging environment. All stakeholders (teachers, parents, support staff, and most importantly students) are encouraged to discuss any important events with the principal's open door policy. The principal personally listens to questions, concerns, and ideas from all stakeholders.

The relationship between our school leader and students is one of the most important aspects of our school. Each morning, the principal greets the students as they arrive at school and waves them good-bye each night. During the day, the principal is often seen visiting classrooms, eating lunch with students, checking in if someone is having a good/bad day, and helping with student led projects. Our principal knows each student by name and where their interests lie outside of the school. This allows the students to trust our leader as they know that each and every one of them is important in our building. These are some of the reasons the principal was awarded the Michigan Elementary and Middle School Principal Association's Region 6 Principal of the Year in 2016.

The teachers take on various leadership roles each school year. They volunteer to be on various committees and teams such as the School Improvement Team and serve as districtwide curriculum department heads. Teachers also initiate programs and activities that will benefit all of our students and community. Staff members attend various community events and participate in local activities that create strong connections between the school and community.

Staff's participation and support of students and families in our community has created an environment of trust and support. Although it may not be easily measured, there is a special feeling that exists in our building due to our sense of family, community, and passion for learning. Our students sense this feeling as well and because of this, they work very hard and give one hundred percent effort the majority of the time.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The practice that has been the most instrumental to our school's success focuses on relationships. One can believe that the complexity of this topic can be quite challenging for a school to focus on and build a successful program. At John F. Farrell-Emmett Elementary School we hold building relationships as a high priority. Relationships must be developed between all team members. This includes students, parents, community, and staff. Our school family understands and believes that we are responsible for every student at our school. The staff realizes that as challenging as building positive relationships can be, developing these relationships are relatively simple when we focus on communication, honesty, trust, and respect.

As a staff at our school, we are aware that we all have strengths and weaknesses. Together we use our strengths to create an inviting learning environment for our students. We help each other grow and learn to become better educators and citizens. We overcome our weaknesses by admitting them and allowing others to help us during challenging times. By being transparent and modeling this team effort with our students and families, they realize that we have much more in common than one might expect.

The entire staff develops positive relationships with our students. The message shared is that academic progress and achievement are important, but the welfare and development of the whole child is the ultimate goal. Conversations about what interests students have outside of school all lead to developing a relationship that is open and honest. Respect and trust are present and again, everyone shares common ground.

Open communication with families is used on a regular basis by staff members. Regardless of the medium used, these contacts build relationships with our parents that are informative and respectful. Information shared between parties build a team concept. Parents realize that their input matters and become more willing to work with us to solve challenges. Through these discussions, strategies and resolutions can be created and implemented, many times putting fears and a sense of isolation to rest.

The relationships that have been created with our community has aided our efforts in providing a technology device for each student in our building through our fundraising efforts. Community support has also allowed our yearly staff fundraiser to become not only a very profitable endeavor, but a holiday event that is looked forward to by the entire community.

The relationship that is highly prized is the one between staff and student. It is our goal that every student believes and truly understands that they have someone behind them and believing in them. Based on student surveys, our students' responses reflect that they understand that we truly care about them as individuals.