

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

Official School Name Lakewood Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 2134 West Lakewood Boulevard
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

Holland MI 49424-1327
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Ottawa County

Telephone (616) 786-1300 Fax (616) 786-2080
Web site/URL

https://www.westottawa.net/schools/ E-mail ghareebm@westottawa.net
lakewood-elementary/

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. Thomas Martin
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail martint@westottawa.net

District Name West Ottawa Public School District Tel. (616) 786-2050

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mrs. Kate McCoy
(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):
- 8 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 2 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 12 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	29	15	44
K	34	23	57
1	26	14	40
2	26	16	42
3	24	19	43
4	21	21	42
5	30	18	48
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	190	126	316

*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
 - 3 % Asian
 - 3 % Black or African American
 - 20 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 68 % White
 - 6 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2017 – 2018 school year: 17%

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

At Lakewood Elementary, we house two district-wide preschool classrooms designed for low income families. In addition, we house district wide Autism Spectrum Disorder programs ranging from preschool to 5th grade and a district-wide Moderately Cognitively Impaired program also for grades K through 5. All of these programs experience a high mobility rate, especially the low income preschool programs (GSRP). The K-5 general education population's mobility rate is 9%.

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	37
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	21
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	58
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	341
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.17
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	17

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 3%
11 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, and Haitian French Creole

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 30%
Total number students who qualify: 96

8. Students receiving special education services: 28 %
89 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>25</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>6</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>12</u> Developmental Delay | <u>7</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>3</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>43</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>6</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.	16
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	12
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.	4

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	93%	94%	94%	94%	94%
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.

Lakewood nurtures leaders to prepare students to be college, career, and life ready.

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

One hundred two years ago, the doors of Lakewood Elementary opened and welcomed children for the first time. Located near the shores of Lake Michigan, the school was originally opened to meet the needs of families working at a nearby zoo. During the course of our history, the school has grown to house neighborhood families, a large population of families from within the district who have chosen to attend here, and district-wide Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Cognitively Impaired (CI) programs. Lakewood Elementary is known for its high achievement scores, but also as a place where relationships are formed that continue for a lifetime.

Our district vision and mission statement states that all students will be “College, Career and Life-Ready” by the time they graduate high school. While it can be difficult for a kindergarten student to understand what that statement truly encompasses, it is a statement that Lakewood teachers embrace and make relevant at every level. Our Lakewood Elementary School vision statement of “Lakewood Nurtures Leaders” was chosen to create a foundation for the district vision. At Lakewood, we seek ways to help all of our students see that they are truly capable and can achieve their goals and dreams. The history of high achievement at Lakewood is evident long after our students leave the school’s doors. During our district’s high school Honors Convocation when academic achievement is recognized, historically 30-40% of the Valedictorians and Salutatorians being honored spent their elementary years at Lakewood. With a district that spans eight different elementary schools, that statement is impressive. As a case in point this school year, our high school has five National Merit Finalists. Four of those five students were Lakewood graduates. While we know there are many factors that lead to student success, Lakewood has a proven track record demonstrating that the foundation of educational and social skills our students receive, plays a key role in the long-term success of our graduates.

Research based strategies are utilized daily at Lakewood Elementary School to assure that all students are encouraged and challenged to develop to their full potential. From Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) to Readers Workshop and the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), Lakewood Elementary is able to meet the learning needs of all students. We also embrace a daily inclusion vision that allows all Students with Disabilities to be involved in the general education setting to help improve both academic and social skills through peer modeling and differentiated instruction.

Various traditions have formed Lakewood Elementary into a welcoming community. Our Veteran’s Day program brings in family and community members from around the state to participate in our assembly where the expressed purpose is thanking and recognizing Veterans for their service to our country. Our Maker’s Week held each spring takes time out of our formal learning structure to give students a week-long opportunity to participate in various Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics (STEAM) challenges. Cross grade level groups have choice in what challenges they participate in each day, with community members, our Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO), and families playing a vital role alongside teachers, in funding and providing leadership within these challenges. Community organizations partner with Lakewood to offer after school activities like Girls on the Run and Total Trek Quest where girls and boys are able to further develop social and emotional skills and strategies through small group discussions and completing a 5K run.

Our experienced staff also plays a key role in making Lakewood Elementary the school that it is. With staff averaging 21 years of experience, each member has a well-stocked “toolbox” of best practice strategies that have been used to help form Lakewood students into leaders. The staff not only is invested as a career, but as a family, with 72% of its teachers sending their own children to our school. Truly this confirms the belief that we are the best elementary school in the area.

It’s no secret that the trends, philosophies, and politics of education have changed over the past twenty years. What hasn’t changed is the commitment of the Lakewood Elementary teachers and families to make sure our students are successful. With repeated state recognition as a Reward school, a High Performing School, and most recently as the 15th ranked highest achieving elementary school in the state according to MLive (on-line news source), Lakewood outperforms similar schools by student characteristics and

drastically outperforms the state averages according to MI School Data (State operated school data base). As a staff, we take pride in our ability to adjust and thrive despite the rapid changes in education today.

While honors and high achieving students are wonderful examples that accentuate the education students at Lakewood Elementary receive, the staff and families would all agree that more importantly than accolades and Grade Point Averages (GPA), is the core belief that all students need to feel loved and have a place to belong. We want all students to enjoy coming to school each day. We strive to do all that we can to create a learning environment and community where that can happen consistently on a daily basis. When our former students come back to visit, they don't talk about the math lesson on fractions or the essay they wrote on the colonies, they talk about the relationships that were formed. They talk about the inspiration that has driven them. They talk about the fun memories that were created. And they always have a smile on their face as they share their stories.

Lakewood Nurtures Leaders. We have been playing a role in nurturing leaders for the past 100 years, and look forward to impacting the lives of students for many years to come. While it takes all of us: the staff, principal, parents, community members, and most importantly the students, we know that something special is happening at Lakewood Elementary. We all feel blessed to be a part of it.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

Lakewood Elementary uses the Pearson Realize Reading Street English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum. This curriculum focuses on the big ideas of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, comprehension skills and strategies, word analysis and vocabulary skills, and fluency as it systematically addresses the Common Core State Standards. Students are exposed to an overarching “Question of the Week”, then learn and categorize information in a concept map. Students build background knowledge prior to reading and responding to a weekly selection. They also meet in small groups to build the skills and strategies introduced. Both whole group and small group instruction is utilized to meet readers and writers where they are and take them to the next level in their learning. In addition, teachers administer weekly or monthly “College Career Readiness” tests from the Reading Street curriculum at the end of the designated week or unit. Student results are analyzed and skills retaught as necessary to ensure growth and performance improvement.

Lakewood Elementary uses both benchmark and progress monitor meetings every six weeks to monitor and guide intervention for our reading instruction. These Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) data analysis meetings allow a team to discuss each student’s academic growth. Lakewood’s building principal, special education teacher, school psychologist, gifted and talented teacher, and grade level teachers are all in attendance at these meetings where decisions are made as to how to best improve students' growth, challenge students, and guide instruction. Lakewood uses Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) data to track each individual's progress and area of need. Each grade level spends time discussing student needs in regards to assistance in phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, accuracy, and/or comprehension. These discussions form the basis for intervention and enrichment provided during our daily Response to Intervention (RtI) times in each classroom. In addition, the team also utilizes Fountas and Pinnell Reading Records as another data piece to examine student growth. Students in grades kindergarten through third who are in need of intervention have a Read at Home plan created and sent home to build a collaborative relationship with parents/guardians. These plans inform families of the school intervention plan and also encourage guided reading at home through specific strategies outlined within the Read at Home plan.

1b. Mathematics:

Lakewood Elementary teachers have been thoroughly trained and use the Houghton Mifflin Math Expressions program as a curriculum vehicle. Grade level teams plan their pacing guides for each unit, ensuring all essential big ideas are taught. A “mastery learning loop” concept is used to formatively assess each big idea in which skills are taught, a quick quiz is administered, then item analyzed. Commonly missed items are re-taught to the whole class, and small group instruction is provided for learners needing more intensive support. Students having achieved mastery in the midst of the final learning loop of a unit are provided challenge activities from the curriculum, or are given exposure to skills in the next grade level through extension activities.

During math intervention time, students needing extra support meet with teachers in small groups providing them with core understanding, while other students work to enrich and deepen their skills. Activities include using differentiated instruction cards, math writing prompts, online computer assisted platforms such as IXL Learning, skill building games, and teacher-created hands-on experiences.

Lakewood Elementary teachers meet in Professional Learning Communities (PLC’s) between math units to analyze student performance and plan for the next unit. As the unit nears its end, students are given a formative assessment through a practice test. Because the practice test matches the format of the summative assessment, teachers item analyze each question for the purpose of determining concepts needing to be re-taught to the whole class or in small groups. Following reteaching, the final summative test from Math

Expressions is given. In addition, teachers preview the upcoming unit in their PLC's. The purpose is to share best practices, plan activities and intervention, as well as examine the summative assessment for question formats and vocabulary that need to be embedded into the instruction of the next unit.

1c. Science:

Battle Creek Math and Science kits have provided excellent hands-on science investigation experiences. Using an inquiry approach to learning, students often work with partners and small groups to solve investigation problems. Students are engaged in asking questions, making observations, researching, and making and testing a hypothesis. Experiential learning supports making connections from what is being taught in the classroom to the real world, and is at the heart of scientific endeavors at Lakewood Elementary School. Trips to Meijer Gardens, the Outdoor Discovery Center, and local township parks give our students impact experiences that stimulate interest in the sciences. As standards change from the state level, to the adoption of the national Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), Lakewood teachers have traditionally and will continue to provide district leadership in NGSS training and instruction. Several members of our staff are currently on a committee considering new curriculum adoption to better match the NGSS, and have piloted new curriculum options for the district to examine.

Assessments look different from grade level to grade level and unit to unit as teachers work to assess using more authentic, real-world experiences. While some units do lend themselves to a paper-pencil summative assessment, more often teachers have students develop a final project to demonstrate understanding. For example, third graders create musical instruments in a unit on sound, fourth graders create and analyze habitats when studying ecosystems, and fifth graders create solar system models during their space study. The assessment data as well as the completeness of the projects are analyzed frequently to determine student understanding, the possibility of re-teaching or the ability to extend learning.

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

Social Studies learning begins in preschool and provides the foundation of each classroom's culture at the beginning of the school year, as students learn about establishing a community in their own classrooms. Throughout the elementary years, this learning grows to include their local community, city, state, and nation. Our teachers use a combination of the Social Studies Alive curriculum, as well as the Michigan Citizenship Curriculum (MCCM), an online platform, to engage students in learning. Social Studies content is also integrated into the reading and writing curriculum so that students are putting all of these skills together as they learn.

At the core of success in social studies are the many real-world experiences students are offered. Fifth graders use Social Studies Alive to bring their study of American History to life. Fourth graders learn about structures and functions of government, and then visit our state capital to see what they've learned in the classroom in action. Students learn about economic concepts, and then create and develop a product to sell at a Mini-Market Day to learn firsthand about supply and demand, expenses, and profit. Teachers are constantly looking for ways to connect what is being learned in Social Studies to the real world. Like Science, assessment matches learning, with multiple means of assessment used to assess if students have gained the knowledge needed to achieve mastery.

1e. For secondary schools:

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

Lakewood Elementary School offers two Great Start Readiness Preschool (GSRP) classrooms, an Early Childhood Special Education classroom and an Autism Spectrum Disorder preschool classroom. All programs use The Creative Curriculum which focuses on exploration and play to learn the core subjects as well as build social and emotional skills. All programs meet Michigan's Early Childhood Standards of Quality, which are aligned with Michigan's expectations for children's learning in kindergarten and the

primary grades in all domains and content areas. Early exposure to the core curriculum areas including academic and social foundations provides a direct correlation to student success as they continue their academic career. My Teaching Strategies is used daily to collect information and assess student progress in order to provide necessary interventions or extensions to the students in preschool programs. According to the Michigan Department of Education, the GSRP has shown significant impact on increasing at-risk preschool children's early literacy and math skills as well as reducing the achievement gap in early literacy between higher and lower risk preschool children.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

All students participate in five different specials per week. Lasting 48 minutes, these five specials include: Art, Music, Spanish, Technology, and Physical Wellness. Every student from Young Kindergarten through fifth grade participates in one special per day, with all five being attended over the course of a week. Our specialist teachers follow state and district standards as they plan their instruction. Specialist teachers partner with classroom teachers to support what is being learned in the classroom to integrate grade level standards. For example, as students learn about Human Body Systems, they may participate in online dissections in their Technology class, create art pieces to share and discuss for our bi-annual Art Night, practice recorders for our annual Showcase concert event, and learn about healthy eating habits in Physical Wellness. Our specialists focus on the individual needs of students to build multi-disciplinary skills and knowledge.

ART:

Through art instruction, students are exposed to a variety of art media. Whether it is ceramics, drawing, painting, mixed media, or learning about art history, the arts support essential skills. Students learn to problem solve, use their imagination, and make real life connections to develop new knowledge. Art instruction at Lakewood creates connections with literacy, science, and math. It intentionally teaches students to organize their thoughts through their work and provides students the opportunity to express themselves.

PHYSICAL WELLNESS:

Physical Wellness at Lakewood Elementary teaches all learners the importance of being physically active for a lifetime. Students develop locomotor and non-locomotor activity skills through authentic, real world situations and games. Both highly skilled movers and those that don't have a lot of experience with activity will experience success through a differentiated curriculum that focuses on quality rather than quantity of movement. Learning targets encourage student choice and ensure that each individual learner is challenged to a level that is appropriate. Students develop the abilities, skills, and attitudes to live a healthy lifestyle through our student centered approach to physical activity.

MUSIC:

General music instruction is a comprehensive curriculum that includes, but is not limited to basic music theory of notes, rests, rhythm, dynamics, tempo, notation, melody, harmony, and time signature. Students engage in creating music through singing, moving and playing a variety of percussion instruments, (pitched and unpitched). Students also receive instruction in learning to play the recorder as well as basic keyboard skills and understanding. Multicultural and cross-curricular connections are made through multiple disciplines. Instruction includes a diverse breadth of genres and music history to include multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi-gender representation.

SPANISH:

Learning a second language supports students' acquisition of essential skills and knowledge in many ways. Taught through repetition, songs, and movement, students not only develop increased language skills, but also develop a greater awareness of cultures around the world. By learning a second language, students also gain a greater understanding of their own language.

TECHNOLOGY:

The Michigan Integrated Technology Competencies for Students standards are the basis of learning in our technology class. As students are prepared for real-world experiences, lessons center around developing

empowered learners, digital citizens, knowledge constructors, innovative designers, creative communicators, computational thinkers, and global collaborators. From Coding, which incorporates math skills as well as problem-solving strategies and creativity, to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) activities, to an understanding of Google Suite, students are working to gain skills needed to be successful in today's world. Many lessons also reinforce Language Arts skills including reading, responding, writing, recording, and listening. Differentiation and choice for final products and assignments ensure students are engaged in learning.

SAIL:

Lakewood Elementary also houses the district Students Accelerating In Learning (SAIL) Program that has been established to challenge and meet the needs of our gifted and talented students who are academically advanced in reading. Students are selected for this program based on multiple pieces of assessment data and teacher and parent recommendations. This program challenges students with a faster pace and greater depth of knowledge with their reading and writing skills. Kindergarten through Second grade students participate in this program more fluidly with opportunities in a small group setting. Third through fifth grade students participate in a more extensive pull-out program during their English Language Arts block. The SAIL teacher uses the district Reading Street Curriculum, but also integrates project based learning opportunities into her instruction. Students are able to further acquire reading and writing skills at their current level and pace of learning.

3. Special Populations:

Lakewood Elementary houses a variety of special populations. Both the district Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) program as well as a district Cognitively Impaired (CI) program reside at Lakewood. The ASD program includes a preschool classroom, as well as lower and upper elementary classrooms. Lakewood also has a district Early Childhood Special Education classroom. While these are self-contained classrooms in nature, all of these students spend time in general education classrooms with their peers. Based on their needs, students in both the ASD and CI classrooms participate in varying amounts of core instruction, specials, and classroom activities in their assigned general education classrooms. In addition, general education students in the upper grades voluntarily participate in "reverse inclusion", taking time to work with students in their special education settings. As a result, Lakewood students have developed greater characteristics of empathy, kindness, and compassion because of their interaction with and care for these students with differing abilities.

In addition to these programs, Lakewood Elementary has a resource room program to provide support to students who are educated in the general education curriculum but need support in specific areas. These students have a variety of needs including: learning disabilities, mild cognitive impairments, emotional impairments, ASD, and health impairments. Students are continually assessed and decisions are made annually through Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings regarding what interventions, programs, curriculum, and services are needed to best help these students learn and be successful. Curriculum that is research based and tailored to meet individual needs is used to close the gaps where needed. Students are also assessed by the district's diagnostic team every three years.

Lakewood Elementary has a goal of providing the best least restrictive environment for every student. Therefore, students within all the various special education programs are included in general education classrooms throughout the day. Accommodations are provided in order to foster this independence and allow students to succeed academically while also interacting with peers in their respective grade levels. Students are also supported through a variety of ancillary services including: speech and language services, social work services, psychology services, occupational therapy, and physical therapy.

Effectiveness in all of the programs for special populations housed at Lakewood Elementary is enhanced by close working relationships between our special and general education staffs. Providing accommodations for testing situations is a priority, as well as coordinated communications with parents. Parent-teacher conference times and annual IEPs provide a joint platform to share vital information from all involved staff in a given child's life. In doing so, staff members truly view themselves as relational stakeholders in each child's education at Lakewood.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

The Lakewood Elementary vision is “Lakewood Nurtures Leaders.” With this statement as a lens, we look for ways to show all students they can be leaders in their classrooms, on the playground, in their friendships, and within their families. Being a leader begins with knowing and following the expectations that have been established as a school. These expectations: Be Respectful, Be Responsible, and Be Ready to Learn, are posted throughout the school, and in every classroom.

Teachers use the positive behavior model to support students. Instead of using rewards as a motivating tool, students are recognized for doing what is right and expected. From compliments, to high-fives, to being recognized during a Friday school-wide celebration, we look for ways to affirm the good things students are doing on a daily basis. This model is used by all Lakewood staff, including specialists, assistants, lunchroom monitors and support staff. All are vested in our vision and work together to create the culture that makes Lakewood, uniquely Lakewood.

School climate is established at the start of each school day. Student leaders from fourth and fifth grade read the daily announcements, informing all students of upcoming activities, and then lead us in a school-wide recital of the Pledge of Allegiance. The announcements conclude each day, encouraging all members of the school to “Have a great day, Lakewood!” Students are often heard reciting this statement as well, providing further evidence all students and staff play a vital role in making Lakewood a warm and welcoming place.

Not only does Lakewood Nurture Leaders, but Lakewood is a family. “Buddy” classrooms have been created building wide. Students in lower elementary classes are paired with students in upper elementary classes for the expressed purpose of developing mentoring relationships. Students participate in a variety of academic and social activities involving reading, writing, seasonal crafts, games, and outdoor experiences when their buddy classes meet together. These relationships extend beyond the twice monthly meeting time as students look for each other in the hallways, in the lunchroom, on the playground, and at school wide assemblies. Every student knows that not only do they have staff members that care about them, but fellow students as well.

According to a recent survey, 100% of teachers either agreed or strongly agreed that they feel supported and encouraged at Lakewood. Together, the staff discusses best practices utilized across classrooms. This open communication encourages the freedom to implement strategies that will best meet the social and emotional needs of all students in their classrooms. Instead of feeling bound by academic minutes and schedules, teachers know that they can take time out of their instructional day to build the culture needed in their individual classroom. As a result, students feel they are valued, have a role, and can fully develop as leaders.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Engaging families and our community have played a central role in the success of Lakewood Elementary. Our school has long been blessed with a vibrant and active nationally award winning Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO). The PTO at Lakewood is focused on enhancing the learning experience for all students. It starts in the fall with our school-wide “Move and Groove,” an outdoor running and dancing fundraiser which takes place during our school day. This one fundraiser raises all funds needed to run our PTO budget for the entire year. In addition to providing financial support for field trips, swim lessons, assemblies, and reading materials for every classroom, the PTO seeks input from staff and families to best support learning and instruction.

Our school has also been blessed with a partnership with Fellowship Reformed Church. Through Kids Hope USA, adult mentors from the church are paired with at-risk students at Lakewood to foster positive relationships within the school setting. They work on school work, read, and play games together. Many of

these mentor/student relationships extend beyond our school walls, as some mentors meet during the summer, and even continue their relationship with a student as they transition from our elementary school to the middle school. Fellowship also partners with Lakewood through Hand-to-Hand, a program that sends bags of food home with students on the weekends to make sure they are getting the food and nutrition they need outside of the school week.

Lakewood Elementary also partners with our local township. Across the street from our school is Keppel Park, a nature preserve that is cared for by the township. Over the years, our students have played a role in fall and spring clean-up, bulb, tree, and annual plantings, and the creation of herb gardens and compost piles. Currently, students are creating nature signage for newly created walking trails.

The engagement of families has also been critical to the success of Lakewood students. Anyone walking the halls of Lakewood will no doubt see parents volunteering in classrooms, reading with students, eating lunch in the lunchroom, and running and participating in all PTO and school-sponsored events. During parent-teacher conferences twice a year, Lakewood can boast of nearly 100% attendance. At our end of year showcase event, our playground becomes home to a school-wide picnic and musical performance, showcasing the talents of all students. Our hallways are packed with parents, grandparents, and extended family members excited to see student projects demonstrating what was learned throughout the year. Lakewood Elementary would not be the school that it is without trusting, long-term relationships with our families and community partners.

3. Professional Development:

High quality professional development is a top priority for Lakewood Elementary and the West Ottawa Public Schools. District level opportunities begin in the summer with training that focuses on best meeting the needs of all students. The focus of the last two years, has been on learning how to best work with students who have experienced trauma. Trauma-Informed teaching expertise has been gleaned by way of expert speakers, book studies, and building discussions. District level professional development offerings also include technology training and curriculum focused training. Several Lakewood staff have taken the lead as “Model Classroom” teachers in job-embedded development opportunities. Grade level colleagues from other schools come to observe a Lakewood teacher conduct a math, reading, or writing lesson. The involved staff then meets as a team to discuss and share best practices that could be implemented in all classrooms. Lakewood teachers are also currently piloting a Balanced Literacy approach to our district’s reading curriculum to better meet our school’s specific needs. To further support proper curriculum implementation, the district employs literacy coaches who are available anytime to meet with teachers to further develop their understanding of the reading and writing program. As a result, professional development unfolds in just-in-time fashion. Best practices are quickly learned, implemented and reflected upon in an ongoing cycle.

Lakewood Elementary staff work together to focus our building wide professional development on the needs of our students. Over the last several years, the staff’s focus has centered on teaching a Growth Mindset, using Mindfulness Practices, and trying different forms of Restorative Circles to best help our students advance their learning as well as meet their emotional needs. The building principal uses staff meeting time to focus on this learning. Staff members collaborate through book studies, videos, guest speakers, and peer learning. This allows for time needed to discuss how new learning can be directly implemented in classrooms with real-time speed. As a result, buy-in as a staff is all inclusive, every member has a voice in learning, and every member knows they will leave with ideas to try the next day in their classrooms. This approach builds a true sense of teamwork, as common language and techniques are employed by all adults working with our students. Autonomy to try new things and share new ideas is the outcome.

Currently, our classroom teaching staff is in the process of being trained in Project-Based Learning. This initiative is accomplished in partnership with our Ottawa Area Intermediate School District (OAISD). This approach will enrich our current core curricula by way of further adding in student-driven inquiry, investigation, and reporting on real-world issues. The OAISD has established partnerships with local businesses and organizations, creating a learning bridge from what is being taught in the classroom to

connections in the world today. Our fourth and fifth grade staff is in the process of being trained this year, with the rest of the building scheduled to receive training over the course of the next school year. We are excited to imagine the possibilities that may result as we strive to mesh required curricula with true student-driven and student-led inquiry. Our hope is richer and deeper learning will only enhance what we are already doing well.

4. School Leadership:

The School Improvement Team drives the decision-making process at Lakewood Elementary. This team includes: two Chair People, representation from every grade level, and a parent liaison. The team is at the heart of all building and curriculum decisions. While the principal facilitates the team, it is led and run by teachers, as they are on the front lines of what is happening in classrooms every day. The School Improvement Team also works collaboratively with the school's Parent Teacher Organization to share information as needed and work on school-wide projects. The collaboration between these two groups ensures parents are informed about what is happening at both the classroom and building levels.

The school PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention Support) Team drives the decisions at the building that specifically address student behavior. Also facilitated by staff, these team members analyze behavior data, make recommendations, and implement plans for students who need extra support. While the larger team meets monthly to review data, team members meet frequently with individual classroom teachers to create and implement plans to help classrooms function in a way that meets the needs of all learners.

Students not only take on leadership roles in the classrooms, but also within the school as a whole. Third through fifth graders have the opportunity to participate in Student Council. With two elected officials per classroom, these representatives meet and plan both a service project and a dress-up day per month. Working with their teacher advisors, they look for ways to promote fun and enhance student leadership at Lakewood.

The principal is always visible in classrooms, spending time in each classroom multiple times per day. He greets students and staff as they enter the building, spends time in the lunchroom building relationships with students, and is always available for staff. The principal is constantly seeking feedback from the School Improvement Chairpersons as well as the rest of the staff through face-to-face conversations and anonymous surveys so that he can best keep his finger on the pulse of what is happening in the building. Every teacher feels like a valued member of the team and that their voice can always be heard. Most importantly, the principal supports the teachers in the building and does everything possible to make sure they are empowered to do their jobs to the best of their abilities.

The evidence is clear. At Lakewood, the common thread is to promote leadership and positive change at the grassroots level. With the guidance of a supportive principal, the potential of a gifted staff is being unleashed. The same can be said of our student body. Students feel empowered to discover and display their gifts and talents in a multitude of ways. Encouragement is abundant, as all students find something upon which to hang their hat. Nurturing leadership always has and always will be the fabric of Lakewood.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

While there are many strategies that contribute to the success of Lakewood Elementary, one thing stands out above all: relationships. Relationships are at the heart of everything that we do. We work together as a staff to do all we can to ensure the needs of our students are met. At times, this means providing Christmas gifts for our at-risk families. At times, this looks like a student walking down to another teacher's classroom to check in and get some extra love and attention. At times, this looks like children going up to staff members who are not their current teachers to give a hug. At times, this looks like a team of teachers meeting together to brainstorm what more can be done to reach a child who is struggling.

As a building, we have made being intentional about building relationships with students a priority. Connection Circles have been implemented in every classroom and occur frequently throughout the week. Classes circle up and check in. Discussion topics range from what is happening in the lives of our students outside of school to teaching strategies for handling different issues going on at school. Smaller Restorative Circles are also used with small groups of students when relationships need mending. In addition, mentor relationships have also been established with several students per class. Adults from a nearby church come once a week to meet with their mentee to work on classwork, play games, and talk about life.

As teachers, we care about each other in a way that goes beyond the communication and collaboration within our grade level teams. We support each other outside of the school walls and care about what is happening in each other's families. The relationships that the teachers have with each other creates a more cohesive team for our Lakewood students and families.

The relationships formed with the families and students at Lakewood extend beyond the six years they spend within our walls. Teachers form lifelong friendships with the parents of our students and stay in contact with the students who have graced their classrooms. Families trust their children to the care of Lakewood teachers because they know that these teachers will love and care for their son or daughter as if they were their own. Many teachers and schools will make this statement, but at Lakewood, when guests walk in our doors they feel this difference.