



## **Part I – Eligibility Certification**

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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

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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):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 2 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	20	19	39
K	44	46	90
1	36	25	61
2	29	30	59
3	38	26	64
4	20	31	51
5	38	32	70
6	22	34	56
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
<b>Total Students</b>	247	243	490

\*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
  - 0 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 98 % White
  - 2 % Two or more races
- 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2017 – 2018 school year: 11%

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

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	30
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	20
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	50
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	473
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.11
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	11

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 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: 52%  
 Total number students who qualify: 256

8. Students receiving special education services: 11 %  
54 Total number of students served

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

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>2</u> Autism                  | <u>12</u> Multiple Disabilities                |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>6</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>6</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>15</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>7</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>3</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 5
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	30
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	6
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	6
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 16:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

<b>Required Information</b>	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	96%	95%	95%	95%	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.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
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 student learning environment is in a safe, happy, and caring culture. Decisions are based on doing what is best for kids.

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**

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Bloom-Vernon Elementary, the only elementary school in the Bloom-Vernon Local School District, is a rural district where buses travel approximately 1,100 miles per day to transport students in grades preschool through 12, covering 84 square miles. We are located in Scioto County, Ohio. Many of our students live in poverty, in foster homes, with grandparents, or with great grandparents because of the opioid crisis. Our county is designated as a distressed county by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). The ARC uses an index-based classification system to compare each county in the nation with national averages based on economic indicators. Appalachian counties are classified within one of five economic status designations: distressed, at-risk, transitional, competitive, or attainment. Distressed counties are those that rank in the lowest 1 percent of the nation's counties. The U.S. Census Bureau also classifies Scioto County as an Economically Disadvantaged Area. In 2017 the median household income in the Bloom-Vernon Local School District was \$36,500, Scioto County was \$43,367, Ohio was \$54,021, and the United States median household income was \$60,336.

In 2010 a total of 9.3 million doses of powerful opioid pain pills were distributed in Scioto County- enough for each resident to have gotten 123 pain pills each. The role our area played as the nation's original epicenter for pharmaceutical abuse and diversion is the subject of the landmark and award-winning best selling nonfiction book, "Dreamland-the True Tale of America's Opiate Epidemic" by Sam Quinones, which was released in 2015.

Bloom-Vernon Local School District prides itself on making decisions centered on "doing what's best for kids." Our discussions and decisions are based on this statement. When we disagree, it is because one person thinks one thing is better for kids, and another person thinks something else is better for kids.

Our staff has high expectations for themselves, their students, our parents, and the community. We value data, have a no excuse culture, and believe that if kids fail, we all fail. If our students succeed we all succeed. We focus much of what we do around providing hope for our students, providing opportunities for them to be successful, and celebrating when students reach milestones. The school culture plays a large role in the greater community as most community members are alumni. Bloom-Vernon Elementary shares the Jeep mascot with South Webster Jr./Sr. High School and receives a unique amount of community-based school pride. Local catch phrases spoken regularly by members of the school community include: 'doing what's best for kids', 'Bloom-Vernon (South Webster) is a special place', and 'once a Jeep, always a Jeep.' This is just one example of how the core beliefs of our staff have been embedded into the entire surrounding community.

It is a shared belief among stakeholders that we provide students with hope for a bright future. State assessments over the past number of years indicate that great things happen for kids in our district. We score above state averages in nearly every tested area and are near the top in all areas locally. Our percentages of economically disadvantaged students and our scores are not aligned. We are difference makers.

We are often asked, "What is it that you are doing that's different than other schools?" Lots of pondering occurs around this question. While the question is difficult to answer, the answer appears to be an embedded, shared, aligned philosophy involving a collaborative culture that believes in 'doing what's best for kids.' Doing what's best for kids comes naturally for us. It isn't something we have to purposefully do anymore; it is what we do and who we are.

Some of the key strategies used within our school are based on Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. More students than we like to admit come to school without having their basic needs met at home. Focusing on meeting those needs and actually embedding practices and strategies that automatically focus on meeting the basic needs, has proven to provide students with a place they enjoy attending. Our school has become a place where children build relationships with trusted adults and are often upset when we have longer than normal breaks from school such as during the holidays and summer. Opportunities exist for students to reach their full potential-or work toward becoming self-fulfilled, as Maslow called it. Systems are in place to meet the basic needs: food, water, warmth, rest, safety, and security. Our community recently passed a levy to

allow our district to hire a school resource officer.

Psychological needs are met in a variety of ways. We partner with an outside mental health agency to provide counseling to our students who face personal struggles. Staff members pride themselves in building relationships with students and families. Our staff models quality professional and personal relationships with each other, and students emulate these.

Rewards are often used as motivators for student achievement. Much of the reward money comes from teachers personally. Students feel accomplished when milestones are met. Teachers go above and beyond to help students reach those milestones. Many teachers give their planning time to help students who are struggling with a standard or concept. Many students feel they are achieving their full potential and meeting goals they may have thought impossible. The support needed for students and staff to become successful is always available.

Our staff has worked to find resources to supplement student needs. Bloom-Vernon Elementary received a 21st Century Community Learning Center grant that will provide before and after school care for a 5 year period. We also received a grant through Cardinal Health for the current school year. A number of stakeholders invested time in writing the grants and delivering what we said we would do. Some of the benefit the grants will provide is related to addressing the opioid crisis in our community, helping students break the cycle of generational familial addiction, and ensuring students learn the safe and proper uses of medication.

This is the first time our school has been nominated to apply to be a National Blue Ribbon School.

## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Core Curriculum:**

#### **1a. Reading/English language arts:**

The Ohio Learning Standards are used to align core curriculum, instruction, and assessments for Reading/English Language Arts, both vertically and horizontally, at all grade levels. Teachers have created formative and summative assessments as well as a scope and sequence.

Each grade level has an additional intervention staff to provide supports for students who need tiered interventions or accelerations based on data. Supports include small group instruction/ pull outs for intervention, one-on-one conferencing or instruction, differentiated reading instruction, use of Accelerated Reading (AR) to provide remedial and accelerated practice, before and after school tutoring, AIMS WEB, STEEP, Orton Gillingham (OG) approach to reading lessons, STAR Reading, STAR Early Literacy, modeling, hands-on, project based, whole group, interactive notebooks, reteaching/reassessing, peer tutoring, modified assignments, differentiation, and tiered instruction. Students are assessed quarterly and then grouped based on the 3 tiers of instruction.

Students use a variety of technology-based supports including technology-based activity classes, class computers, chromebooks, smart boards, google classroom, and document cameras.

Kindergarten teachers post standards/benchmarks weekly with targets from their scope and sequence. Reading and spelling “celebrations” are given to help determine the following week’s targets for reading and spelling. For example, if focusing on letter “e,” the students are asked to read/ write words with that sound. If students show mastery, they continue to spiral that skill and build on it for future lessons.

First grade uses a basal skill pad. All other materials are teacher created.

Second grade uses Journeys curriculum. The curriculum includes leveled instruction and resources that encompass both accelerated and remedial instructional materials.

Grades 3 through 6 are flexibly grouped based on students’ specific learning needs. State assessment results are also used to identify students needing acceleration/intervention. Grades 3-6 integrate science and social studies into ELA and math. Instructional approaches vary from teacher to teacher and group to group and are based on current student needs/learning styles and teachers’ preferred teaching styles.

Fifth grade uses a multiple intelligence approach, using visual, audible, and hands on learning for each lesson. Gifted students are challenged with "Challenge Activities" that go beyond the typical classroom settings. After school book clubs are also used to accelerate learning with the higher achieving groups.

The 6th grade team uses a common rubric for language arts which incorporates a 5 paragraph essay across all subject areas.

Instruction, curricula, and support materials vary from grade level to grade level as each team is responsible for choosing the path they feel will best benefit each particular group of students. Each grade level team collaborates to assess formative data and identify specific learning needs. Support materials and other resources are selected, instructional goals are set, and lessons are planned based on the most current data. Each teacher creates lessons based on student need and learning styles as well as the individual teacher’s preferred style of teaching. Materials are often teacher-created and shared.

#### **1b. Mathematics:**

The Ohio Learning Standards are used to align core curriculum, instruction, and assessments for math, vertically and horizontally, at all grade levels. Teachers have created formative and summative assessments

as well as a scope and sequence. Learning targets are posted in all classrooms in student friendly language. Students are able to tell you what they are learning today.

Support materials vary from grade level to grade level as each team is responsible for choosing the path they feel will best benefit each particular group of students. Each grade level team collaborates to assess formative data and identify specific learning needs. Support materials and resources are selected, instructional goals are set, and lessons are planned based on the most current data. Each teacher creates lessons based on student need and learning styles as well as the individual teacher's preferred style of teaching. Materials are often teacher-created and shared.

Each grade level has an additional intervention staff to provide supports for students who need tiered interventions or accelerations based on data. Supports include small group instruction/ pull outs for intervention, one-on-one instruction, differentiated math instruction, use of Accelerated Math (AM) to provide remedial and accelerated practice, before and after school tutoring, STAR Math, Go Math, modeling, hands-on, project based, whole group, reteaching/reassessing, peer tutoring, math labs, modified assignments, differentiation, and tiered instruction. Students are assessed quarterly and then grouped based on the 3 tiers of instruction.

Students use a variety of technology-based supports including technology-based activity classes, class computers, chrome books, smart boards, and document cameras. Technology is implemented throughout class time and math labs using Accelerated Math, Prodigy, Kahoot and Quizlet to enrich activities.

Instructional guides including Ohio state assessment released items and practice tests are used to prepare students for state testing. Assessments mimic the types of questions and tasks that students will be asked to complete on the state assessment to provide cohesion.

Teacher created Daily Math Practice (DMPs) sheets are generated daily based on formative assessments. Multiple skills are taught and reinforced daily. Classroom observations and data indicate it is nearly impossible for students to fail to show growth and learn skills taught because of the continual opportunities students have to demonstrate mastery before being summatively assessed.

### **1c. Science:**

The Ohio Learning Standards are used to align core curriculum, instruction, and assessments for science, integrated into teaching and learning through English language arts themes and math in the primary grades. Resources such as Storyworks and National Geographic are often used, in a self-contained setting. Grades 4-6 are departmentalized. Science instruction and assessments are teacher-created and designed to address and assess the Ohio Science learning standards, Model Curriculum.

Instructional approaches that are used include tiered instruction where students are asked to perform different tasks or answer different questions based on their needs and abilities, differentiated instruction where assignments are flexible to meet individual student needs and abilities, formative instructional practices, inquiry-based instruction, cooperative learning, and hands-on experiments. Bloom's taxonomy is considered when science lessons are being planned to help layer the lessons in manageable chunks of learning for students. Lessons are designed so that different learning modalities are addressed: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. The addition of enough Chromebooks for each student to have access to one during a lesson has been a huge help when planning instructional activities for students. The added technology adds many learning opportunities for the students including technology-based learning games, sites to aid in studying such as Quizlet and Kahoot, and many other benefits.

Formative assessments are varied and inform and drive instruction while the summative assessments provide information about how well a student has mastered a learning target. Summative assessments are varied and may include a traditional paper/pencil test, a project, or a performance-based assessment that is graded with a rubric. Summative assessments are designed to assess at all levels of Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK) levels. Lessons are taught by models, virtual labs on the computer, classroom labs, examples, videos, a research essay based on three sources and a variety of formative and summative assessments.

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

The Ohio Learning Standards are used to align core curriculum, instruction, and assessments for social studies, integrated into teaching and learning through English language arts themes in the primary grades, in a self-contained setting. Primary grades integrate social studies into reading and math with interactive activities to foster performance-based learning. Grades 4-6 are departmentalized. Social studies instruction and assessments, as well as the scope and sequence are teacher-created and designed to address and assess the Ohio Learning Standards.

There is vertical alignment with other Social Studies teachers above and below each grade level. For example, the 5th grade teacher will go back and review some of the 4th grade content of the Revolutionary War and 13 colonies as a lead in to government standards. Likewise, time will be spent on working on some world geography to get students ready for 6th grade standards. The 5th grade teacher has given the 4th grade teacher her economics and government vocabulary words so that teachers and students are utilizing the same terminology.

There is horizontal alignment with other subjects within grade levels. One example would be both the social studies and ELA teachers using the same writing rubrics to assess student constructed responses and reports. The social studies teacher will collaborate with the English language arts teacher to assure that they are following a similar format and cohesive expectations.

One resource that is frequently used for social studies is Scholastic News, which has built-in standards with each lesson and aligned to the Ohio learning standards. These are usually based on current events and/or history lessons that include weekly assessments and lessons.

Instructional strategies vary according to the different multiple intelligence areas. For example, teachers may employ a variety of strategies such as reading together (verbal), having a prezi that goes along with it (visual), and note taking on graphic organizers (logical). Interventions for IEP students follow their outlined goals. They receive the same instruction and do the same work, but are allowed their accommodations. For the 5th grade as a whole, the teacher pre-reads assessment questions, gives extended time as needed, and pulls students in at recess for extra instruction if necessary.

Data is used for development of tiers to target specific needs and individual instruction. Formative assessments are employed to the point of mastery, then students take a summative assessment. Pre/post tests drive instruction and determine growth.

Chromebooks are used for research projects. Smart boards, document cameras, Prezis, et al, are used to deliver lessons. The school website is used to post information and provide copies of study guides.

### **1e. For secondary schools:**

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

Bloom-Vernon Elementary offers preschool services and uses Creative Curriculum. We have developed a list of skills and concepts that students should be able to perform before entering kindergarten. Language arts skills include letter identification, name writing, and rhyming words. Math skills include identifying numbers and shapes, counting, and building from these foundational skill sets. Preschool teachers met with the kindergarten team to compile the list of important skills and concepts to ensure alignment of preschool curriculum so that students will be prepared for kindergarten. Orton Gillingham approach to reading has also been incorporated in the classroom at a very basic level for alignment with the K-3 grade level strategies.

During kindergarten registration and screening, data typically indicates which students have had preschool, and which students have not. The benefits of the preschool program are evident.

## 2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Bloom-Vernon Elementary offers physical education, music, art, library, and computer lab as other curriculum areas (activity classes). All students, kindergarten through 6th grade participate. Students attend each of the activity classes one time per week, for 40 minutes.

The activity teachers communicate with the regular ed teachers throughout the school year to help support maximum student growth across the disciplines. In pre-K and kindergarten, students create artwork that explores a central theme across disciplines, which is stated in the visual art standards. The pre-K and kindergarten teachers provide the activity teachers with a yearly planner at the start of the school year. This allows for development of lesson plans to reinforce standards being taught in the regular classroom. Some concepts include color words, shapes, verbs, nouns, adjectives, synonyms, antonyms and completing multi-step instructions.

In first grade the art teacher incorporates 3-dimensional shapes and continues working on multi-step instructions. The first grade teachers have also asked that the activity teachers include odd and even numbers when possible.

Activity teachers have included transition words (first, next, then, after, last) in the 2nd grade lessons. They also collaborate with 2nd grade teachers on the Living Museum and Christmas Around the World units of study.

The 3rd grade teachers have asked that activity teachers incorporate main idea, supportive idea, theme, and math skills such as shapes, multiplication, division, area, and perimeter throughout the year.

In 4th Grade fractions and angles are used to reiterate what they are learning in math. They are also comparing and contrasting different pieces of artwork to reinforce what they are learning in language arts.

In 5th grade activity teachers incorporate light, color, and soil and water conservation, which is studied in science class.

In 6th grade students compare and contrast visual forms of expression found throughout local regions and in different cultures of the world. Specific skills are taught in each of the activity classes that are aligned with similar standards.

The essential skills and knowledge for each grade level are easily connected to the library and computer lab. Skills are taught to help students become proficient learners across multiple disciplines, specifically targeted through multiple resources.

Activity teachers collaborate with the guidance counselor to create lessons with a focus on "Self-Esteem" as an art therapy tool to create self-respect, in physical education, and through music.

All elementary students are encouraged to “#representbve”. This catch-phrase encompasses the four character words on which we focus: respectful, responsible, resourceful, resilient. These character traits are explicitly taught, then positively reinforced when students demonstrate them.

Our elementary school has implemented the use of a student store. The purpose of this store is four-fold. The initial purpose of the store was to be used as a positive behavioral intervention strategy. Students earn “good kid bucks” for behaviors we want to encourage. The second purpose of the store is to help meet students’ needs. We keep the store stocked with items such as toothpaste, soap, gloves, hats, pencils, paper, backpacks, etc. We believe that students learn best when their needs are met. A third purpose of the store is to help kids develop life-skills relating to needs versus wants and that there is a payoff and reward for hard work. While the store is stocked full of items students may need, it is also stocked with toys and treats that are pleasures and not merely needs. Having both items that are wants and needs in the student store allows the opportunity for conversations to occur about being sure one’s needs are met before spending money on what may be a splurge. The fourth and final purpose of the store is to help to develop a growth mindset

rather than a fixed mindset. Research suggests that often generational poverty comes not from lack of resources, but rather from the mindset of how to use the resources they have. The store teaches students things such as saving money for larger more expensive items and that money isn't necessarily a scarce commodity. With hard work, they can earn more money to spend.

Since our school is located in southern Ohio, at the epicenter of the opioid epidemic, it was important to us to choose a curriculum to help combat this issue that is plaguing our families and communities. One of the research-based curricula we found was LifeSkills Training by Gilbert J. Botvin, Ph.D. We currently use this curriculum with our sixth grade students but hope to expand it to more grade levels.

### **3. Special Populations:**

Closing achievement gaps for all students is high priority. Each student is provided with the supports and resources needed to learn to the highest level possible.

Kindergarten through 6th grade are provided with an additional staff member to help provide supports for students who are not yet at a proficient level in math or reading. Identified to receive special education services or not, students receive a plethora of supports. Each grade level has an intervention classroom to provide additional resources and supports in an inclusion setting. There is a regular classroom teacher and either an intervention specialist or aide in each of these rooms. These supports are systematic, fluid, often changing, and based on formative assessments. Retired teachers often provide these supports.

In addition to K-6, our building also houses both a preschool and a pre-K or primary kindergarten. Preschool staff work diligently to seek 4 year old students, especially those with socioeconomic struggles, who live in the district to register for preschool. Board policy states that registering kindergarten students who have an August or September birthday register for pre-kindergarten, yet most summer birthdays typically enter pre-K as well to address socio-emotional and school readiness. Readiness for these students to learn when entering kindergarten appears to be a gap closer. A shared belief within the district is that the earlier we intervene, the more likely we are to close gaps.

Retention is typically done in first grade. Our shared belief is that 3rd grade is too late to retain students who are not on track. Years of Bloom-Vernon data prove that students who come to our school, stay, and receive the supports offered to close gaps typically do well. Students who enter first grade in an intervention classroom, and have not been previously retained, often are retained. Age, past school experience and exposure, multiple data points, parental input, and intervention assistance team decisions are all considered in making a determination regarding retention.

Tiered intervention strategies are incorporated into teaching and learning so that gaps can be closed using differentiation. State, quarterly, formative, and summative assessment results are used to identify students needing acceleration or intervention. Tiered 1, 2, and 3 students are flexibly grouped based on their specific learning needs and are provided small group instruction or pull outs for reading and math intervention. Accelerated Math and Accelerated Reader are used to provide remedial and accelerated practice. Students who are not yet proficient are expected to attend before or after school tutoring. Flashcards are used for vocabulary and definitions with frequent quizzing. Teachers may opt to provide any number of intervention strategies at their discretion. Students receive a great deal of feedback and reinforcement. Tiered 3 students receive one on one instruction. These students require intense intervention. Students may receive shortened assignments or given extended time. Assignments may be read aloud if the student struggles with fluent reading. Scribes may be used for students who struggle getting thoughts on paper, or whose penmanship is less developed. Chromebooks may be used to complete an essay instead of paper/pencil. Multiple choice tests (a,b,c,d) may be used as opposed to matching, because multiple selections can be overwhelming. Word banks may be used on tests that aren't graded for spelling. Math papers are adapted so multiplication columns are straight, so students can better add multi-row digits. Students may receive instruction at a slower pace or direct instruction with the intervention specialist.

All children on an I.E.P. receive accommodations specified in their I.E.P. The accommodations used for students who are on an I.E.P. are in place so that these students are successful.



## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

Likely the greatest strength of Bloom-Vernon Elementary is the climate/culture that has evolved for generations. Embedded practices provide opportunities for nurturing growth mindsets among all stakeholders. Outsiders, including state evaluators, often come to our school and leave commenting, “There is something different about your school. It ‘feels’ different. I noticed it when I walked through the doors.”

Meeting students' basic needs is priority. Abraham Maslow said it best, and Bloom-Vernon has created a culture/climate that seeks to understand ALL needs of students. By meeting basic needs, building rapport, and setting high expectations, our students are provided with a positive family type environment that supports growth mindsets. Students feel safe, supported, encouraged, and challenged to reach their full potential.

Our school engages and motivates students by building relationships, enhancing students’ self-belief, helping students find intrinsic motivation, and providing accountability to students through meaningful and timely feedback.

Students are not allowed to fail. If they fail, we fail. Students are provided the tools they need to succeed. These tools include, but are not limited to, access to counseling, extended time, access to intervention teachers for reteaching, interventions or accelerations, competitions with rewards, positive feedback, retakes on quizzes and tests, before school and after school tutoring, and small group or one on one learning opportunities.

We nurture a climate/culture that encourages students to take ownership of their own learning. Students are given a safe place to make mistakes and learn from them. Students are encouraged to set goals and develop reasonable plans for achieving them.

It is viewed, according to our teachers, that our school climate/culture has a top-down model of trust and respect. Teachers state that administration trusts them to be professionals, values their ideas, and affords them liberty to do what is needed in their classrooms to meet the academic needs, social needs, and emotional growth of their students.

Teachers refer to their colleagues as their teammates. Teacher teams meet continually to discuss student needs, strengths and weaknesses. Decisions are based on a holistic approach, for each child, on an individual basis.

There is a sense of shared leadership among our staff. There is willingness to hear and share concerns and work toward finding a solution to any problem that arises. Teams are often asked for input when spending money, hiring staff, and the like, which also lends itself to a sense of teamwork or shared leadership.

Our attendance rates are almost always the highest in the area, test scores are soaring, and kids come to school happy to be here and excited to learn.

A former principal once said, “I didn’t create the culture here, this culture created me.”

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

No one cares how much you know until they know how much you care. Building relationships by meeting needs serves as a catalyst to close achievement gaps.

Each school year about 25% of our students receive weekend meals. Additionally, for 10 weeks during summers, qualifying families are provided fresh produce. Each child in families receiving free or reduced lunches also receives a box of food containing enough food for 9 meals. This grant funded program has

been a game changer for our community. Many community members volunteer during food giveaways, including church and business leaders. This event inspired community leaders to reach out even further resulting in more programs providing backpacks, school supplies, hair cuts, shoes, clothing, and coats to our disadvantaged students.

Bloom-Vernon Elementary has a strong Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO), committed to fundraising for field trips, student awards, supplies and more. A board oversees the organization and entreats parents and community members to participate. Some of the activities led by our PTO include book fairs, Secret Santa, school carnivals, as well as providing food for family engagement activities and Teacher Appreciation Week.

Other family and community engagement pieces include specifically targeted audiences, based on need. Our third grade teaching team, for example, started having Parent Night for their families at the beginning of each year, to help parents understand the Ohio Learning Standards, standards based grading, and the 3rd Grade Reading Guarantee. Our team wanted to ensure that our families understood each of the aspects of 3rd grade, so they created an insightful presentation for all third grade parents. Most parents attend.

Another example of engaging families and communities is what we call Family Fun Night. Based on current needs that are identified by a group of parents and teachers, mini sessions are provided to families that have timely information including issues with which students are faced, strategies to help a child with homework, websites for resources available to families, cyber safety, mental health, building family communication, and financial budgeting for families. Presenters include staff from Juvenile Court, The Ohio State University Extension Office, local law enforcement, local hospitals, Educational Service Center staff, and other community members. Our PTO provides family meals during this event.

Other family and community engagement activities include having parent teacher conferences two times per year, an Evening of the Arts, 3 musical programs, science fair, Open House, preschool parent meeting, and kindergarten parent meeting. When parent meetings are held, each is tailored to the unique needs of the audience, specifically designed each year to meet the changing needs of the families in our community.

While the odds are stacked against us, state testing data shows our school continues to improve, achieving to higher levels in most areas and outperforming state averages despite our poor economic status.

Parents and the community are informed of activities, successes, and challenges through multiple sources. These sources include the school calendar and website, district-wide calls, teacher letters, class dojo, Progress book, social media, and agendas.

### **3. Professional Development:**

The broad overview of the school's Professional Development (PD) approach is to provide teachers with tools necessary to prepare students for next steps. We have found the most effective way to improve teaching and learning is to learn from teachers across and down our own hallways. Bloom-Vernon's teachers' personal toolkits include a plethora of ideas concerning teaching strategies specific to certain students, as well as their backgrounds, interventions, resources, data analysis history, vertical and horizontal alignment of standards and assessments, development of academic vocabulary, and alignment of Bloom's Taxonomy with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Alignment and sharing of best practices through collaboration ensures that all kids learn to the highest levels possible. We grow teacher toolkits collaboratively.

Purposefully having difficult conversations has become an embedded PD practice. Based on midyear data, grade levels share strengths and weaknesses identified among groups of students. By creating a culture among staff that expects difficult conversations to occur, centered around best practices, data, and growing students to high levels, high growth and achievement continue. For example, 2nd grade teachers identify 3 standards that 1st grade teachers teach really well, then 3 standards that could be considered areas of weakness. Each grade level has this conversation with the grade level before them and after them. PD time is then provided for staff to realign curriculum and assessments so that we are continually improving

teaching and learning based on information learned during the difficult conversations. If we don't ask, we won't know. We need to know what others know. This collaborative structure has enabled us to create, implement, and sustain an instructional framework that continually improves.

Learning to understand the challenges students face because of the opioid crisis in our community, along with a large amount of disadvantaged students, has lead teachers to seek positive opportunities to make home visits. While many visits lend themselves to heartbreak, because of living conditions, they create a sense of urgency among our staff. The importance of meeting students where they are, building trusted relationships with students and families, then teaching students to the highest levels possible is so clear. We are the only hope many of our students have. Relationships, education, opportunity, and providing hope: these are the keys to breaking generational cycles. If they know better, they can do better.

We hire only quality teachers whose values and beliefs are already aligned to the culture in our school, which positively impacts staff capacity, student achievement, and school improvement. "Although demographic variables influence student achievement, teacher quality trumps them all, and by a decisive margin."---Lezotte and Reeves

#### **4. School Leadership:**

Our shared leadership philosophy is that our decisions are made based on what we believe to be best for kids. This is the driving force behind all we do.

The leadership in our school sets and guides the overall student focus mentality. The administration is well aware of the daily personal and environmental struggles that many of our students face. Decisions are always made by determining what is best for the individual student. The administration establishes and maintains a safe and caring environment for students. Students want to come to school because it is the best place for them. People are treated fairly and a culture of collaboration to do "What is best for kids" is prevalent.

Our teachers are empowered to run their classrooms the best way they see fit. Not every classroom is going to look the same nor should it. As administrators we try to ensure our teachers have every resource they need in order to be successful. Teachers align the resources to state content standards and engage students in meaningful learning. Formative and summative assessments are key to our teachers' success. Teachers spend lots of time using assessment results to align and drive instruction. Teachers also spend a great deal of time getting to know students on an individual basis and work hard to make sure they are getting their emotional and social needs met. As administrators we know the value of hiring new teachers. Instead of simply hiring the most credentialed person, we select the candidate that will be the best fit in our district. Once new people are hired, they quickly see the culture here is about doing what's best for kids and not always doing what's best for the teacher.

When hiring a third grade teacher, the interview team will consist of third grade teachers, building administration, a second grade teacher, and a fourth grade teacher. This creates a sense of ownership and empowerment. Hiring decisions are team determined. Through sharing of leadership, teachers feel valued and appreciated, and it creates an atmosphere where relationship building and sharing of best practices occur.

Our administrators and teachers have created an environment where quality learning takes place. Having high expectations, the school culture nurtures hard work in order to achieve academic success. Our teachers are expected to implement best learning practices. Administrators use collaborative efforts to support shared-decision making. Staff are valued, respected, and given the autonomy to create a curriculum to challenge students and implement strategies and resources to best meet students' academic needs.

## **Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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The one practice most instrumental to the school's success is the shared philosophy of 'doing what's best for kids.' Every decision, after collaboratively meeting as a team with identified stakeholders, involves this question, "What do you think is best for this student?" This is the driving force behind every decision made. These decisions are made based on a holistic view of the individual student.

Things we believe to be best for kids include showing them love, compassion, making sure they feel valued, having high expectations for them, making sure they can read before leaving 1st grade, meeting students' basic needs first, consistent counseling services, providing opportunities and hope, accountability, before and after school care that includes tutoring, promoting and developing positive relationship building skills modeled by staff, providing tough love, and consistency.

The shared philosophy that is embedded in the culture to do what is best for kids starts with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. If basic needs are met, students will learn to high levels, moving upward towards self-actualization.

We are rich in support from churches, community leaders, small businesses and families. Through support from these entities, about 25% of our students receive new shoes 2 times per year, coats, mittens and hats, school supplies, backpacks, and weekend food supplies. It is not uncommon to arrange appointments and/or transportation to meet health care needs.

One example of 'doing what's best for kids' involved staff providing a funeral. A student's mother passed away under undesirable circumstances. The student needed closure, and the family did not have the means to have a service. Staff provided all aspects of the service, including a meal for the family afterwards. Data indicates this directly impacted the student long term.

Another example is when a family took in foster students and needed an additional bedroom. Staff and community leaders came together, building a bedroom, providing all resources to complete the project.

Students respond to high expectations. We foster a safe learning environment that impacts students on a socio-emotional level which boosts academic success and learning to high levels.

One teacher said it best, "We look like a Dr. Seuss vehicle, an amalgamation of very unique and often changing parts that pump out magical musical squadnopingoopers and beezlebunkledabs and allow us to work toward our singular goal in very unsingular ways."

It has been said that, "People who are on the outside looking in want what we have here, but this is a well-oiled machine that has been fine tuned over time."