

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 Ms. Helina Dlugon

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

Official School Name Brown Avenue Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 14 Brown Avenue

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

Johnston RI 02919-1213
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Providence County

Telephone (401) 934-0270

Fax (401) 934-2115

Web site/URL https://prek-5.johnstonschools.org/select_school_here/brown_avenue_elementary_school

E-mail hdlugon@johnstonschools.org

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Dr. Bernard DiLullo

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

District Name Johnston School District Tel. (401) 233-1900

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mr. Robert LaFazia

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

Date _____

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

Part I – Eligibility Certification

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2019 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2013 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, or 2018.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2018-2019) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 5 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 7 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban
 - Rural or small city/town
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2018 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	30	13	43
2	27	17	44
3	22	15	37
4	25	26	51
5	25	18	43
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	129	89	218

*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):
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 2 % Asian
 - 2 % Black or African American
 - 9 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 83 % White
 - 3 % Two or more races
- 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2017 – 2018 school year: 7%

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	10
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	5
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	15
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	223
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.07
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	7

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 2%
5 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 28%
Total number students who qualify: 60

8. Students receiving special education services: 20 %
44 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>4</u> Autism | <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>5</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>7</u> Developmental Delay | <u>17</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>7</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>2</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: 17
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.	12
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	9
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	12
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 22:1

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

Required Information	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	93%	94%	95%	95%	95%
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.

Brown Avenue Elementary School's mission is to develop global citizens by offering rigorous and dynamic academics, challenging students to be their best selves physically, academically, socially, and emotionally.

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

A 1895 atlas indicates that the school existed at Reservoir Avenue (Oak Swamp Reservoir) in Johnston, Rhode Island. The school was situated near the water dam of this reservoir, therefore it was named the “Dam School.” In 1932 the wooden structure was moved to its present location (Brown Avenue) and the name changed to Brown Avenue Elementary School (BAES). The building was described as a one-room wooden building heated by a wood burning stove. Most of the students walked to school from nearby farmlands. A new two room brick school was completed in January 1943 replacing the wooden structure. This two-room school held seventy students. The area was changing: farmlands were sold, homes were being built, and families were moving in, causing overcrowding at the school. Additions to the school were made in 1962, 1979, and 1987. This past November a classroom trailer was added.

Historically, our school community encompassed two-parent households with one parent at home. Parents volunteered in classrooms helping supplement instruction. The student population was not diverse. Traditionally, families were not transient, but were multi-generation attendees at our school. Today, our school serves approximately 220 students in grades one through five including two life skills classrooms. In the past 15 years, the school has seen a more economically diverse school population with added academic, behavioral, social, and emotional demands. BAES is considered an urban ring school. Approximately 2% of our students are English language learners, 25% of our students receive special education services, and 35% of our students are eligible for free/reduced meals, and 11% of our students are dual language families. With these added demands, staff has doubled in size, creating a full capacity building with challenges of space and limited resources, including specialized personnel and materials. Despite these demands, our school community continues to excel, teach, and learn with new and innovative strategies, and refine our best practices.

Key strategies that have inspired, encouraged and challenged all students across all curricula include the following: blended and personalized learning, student math coaches, flipped classrooms, targeted Common Core State Standards (CCSS) teaching, student-created authentic tasks, differentiated student assessments, voice and choice, and consistent review of student data.

Blended and personalized learning encourages students and teachers to have conversations about their learning. Teachers utilize the blended models of station rotation and flex classroom where the delivery of instruction shifts. No longer are students in “sit and get” mode, but are now more actively engaged in their learning through differentiated playlists and small group instruction that directly extends the strengths and provides for the needs of the students in smaller groupings. This learner-centered model encourages students to control their own learning, assess their progress, and reflect on next steps. Students have voice and choice by setting, working toward, and revising specific learning goals. Voice and choice also allows students flexibility in the path and pace of learning their core endeavors, to determine what resources maximize their learning, and what creation tools can allow them to fully demonstrate their learning. They are able to personalize their learning, both face-to-face (with teachers and peers) and virtually. The face-to-face interaction is through the facilitation of collaborative, project-based approaches and small group direct targeted instruction. The digital approach is through self-paced playlists that include adaptive sites, informative videos, and interactive tasks that target set learning goals. Students are taught to monitor their own progress which stimulates their metacognition.

The principal sets clear expectations and high standards. Teachers take their cue and target their instruction through differentiation, personalization, and blended learning. Data collection is instrumental to classroom instruction. Key assessments such as DRA, PALS, and RIGBY for reading, STAR (screening and progress monitoring), and performance based assessments for ELA and math allow for the identification of problematic areas of learning at both the classroom and school level. Built in reinforcement through the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) provides the foundation and scaffolding necessary for student success.

Brown Avenue Elementary students will tell you that they feel respected and cared for by the faculty and staff. To promote kindness and understanding our school has adopted the Bucket Filling Program. “Bucket

Fillers” are students who help without being asked, speak kindly, include classmates, spread positive vibes, and generally uplift others. Students identified as bucket fillers earn “pom poms.” Each grade level is assigned a specific pom pom color. Grade level totals are announced monthly during lunches. Earning the most pom poms is a challenge and reward for students. Bucket Filler students are identified by faculty and staff. Students receive recognition through grade level assemblies.

Another way that students are recognized is through our Student(s) of the Month program. Students can achieve this status by meeting the following criteria: classwork and homework completion, appropriate behavior, class participation, and overall effort in combination with exceptional school citizenship.

The Brown Avenue Elementary School mascot is a koala. Our students are referred to as “Koala Kids.” Our Koala Kids developed a recipe for friendship. As a school community we strive to emulate the prescribed recipe which includes: “respect, kindness, honesty, laughter, with a good measurement of helpful sugar. We mix all the ingredients with a handful of trust until well blended. We add a generous amount of support, sprinkle with forgiveness, top with patience and serve with a sunny smile.”

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) provide the basis for our curriculum. Our major focus is on grade level CCSS (or ELA and math with connections to social studies, science/STEM/computer science) and how to effectively instruct the students using engaging pedagogy. Grade level teachers make decisions based on evidence provided through assessments, targeted strategies, lessons and resources in all subject areas.

The English language arts and reading curriculum is delivered through our Units of Study and Foundations (a researched based program that provides strategies to support reading comprehension). The curriculum addresses listening, speaking, reading, writing and thinking. The Units are scaffolded to meet the needs of English learners, special education and gifted students. Our Character Analysis Unit teaches students to ask questions, make inferences, and apply prior knowledge while reading literature. These skills guide students to decipher various character personalities and nuances. Students examine setting, plot, and theme that authors use to create characters. Students focus on emotions, point of view, and inferring based on evidence from the text. Formative assessment tools are used to examine student work.

Foundations is our core general education (Grades 1-3) multi-sensory, structured language program. Teachers in these grades provide precise foundational skills emphasizing: phonemic awareness, phonics/word study, fluency, vocabulary, spelling, and handwriting. Foundations is utilized in our Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) providing research-based instruction for students at risk for reading difficulties, specifically students in Tier 2 (targeted instruction). Reading is taught through small, flexible grouping that is strategy-based. Our Reading Specialist provides Tier 3 (intensive intervention) instruction which is research based, direct, explicit, multi-sensory, structured, sequential and diagnostic. Reading screenings (STAR screening and progress monitoring) are administered three times a year: Beginning of the year (BOY), middle of the year (MOY), and end of the year (EOY). Progress monitoring is used to check student progress every six to eight weeks. Student work is examined three times a year for Performance Based Assessment (PBA) and district benchmarks. Built in data days provide teachers with multiple opportunities to assess student work, target instructional approaches, and plan for assessment. Brown Avenue Elementary School (BAES) chose to use the RICAS benchmark for STAR Reading. This benchmark is higher than the district's benchmark. We chose this setting because it provides a more succinct picture of student knowledge and comprehension.

1b. Mathematics:

BAES's mathematics curriculum addresses the CCSS and is supplemented by the district's resources. Instruction is data driven, student-centered learning with self-paced activities that provide opportunities for remediation and enrichment. Foundational math skills, fluency, reasoning, conceptual understanding and application are at the core of instruction. Our math curriculum provides students with real world applications, connections to other subjects, hands-on learning, interactive multi-sensory instruction that is scaffolded, engaging problem-solving thinking, and opportunities for personalized learning paths. Teachers employ whole group, small group, station rotation, teacher as facilitator and peer coaching strategies. Differentiated approaches to teaching math allows each student to grow at their own pace. Students learn to construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others. Instruction is driven by: Daily assessments, Think Central, Personal Math Trainer, STAR Math, Math PBAs. BAES teachers implemented the CUBES method (Circle key numbers and units, Underline the question, Box math action words, Evaluate and eliminate, and Solving by showing work and checking) to problem solving. CUBES is method used to help students focus on the process needed to solve word problems. Students also have opportunities to challenge themselves through various educational math websites.

1c. Science:

BAES's science curriculum is based on the Next Generation Science Standards. (NGSS). Teachers target the physical, Earth/space, life, and technology domains. This is done through frequent use of the scientific method, research tasks, inquiry tasks, real world investigations, understanding of claims/evidence/reasoning, blended learning, integration of interactive digital notebooks, and STEM connections. Students are encouraged to ask questions, develop models, plan and carry out investigations, analyze and interpret data, and provide evidence. Students generate and compare multiple solutions to problems and carry out tests and experiments to investigate variables and draw conclusions based on predictions and inferences. Students are engaged in cross-grade level blended science experiences, peer collaboration, and experimentation. Students have opportunities to engage the sciences through authentic experiences. BAES students create, manage, and tend a school garden, participate in field trips that provide opportunities for exploration, create and erupt volcanoes, interact with various ecosystems, and learn recycling methods. Online resources provide students with virtual reality labs, videos that explain scientific concepts, and formative assessments to check understanding.

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

BAES's social studies curriculum is taught through grade level thematic units. The curriculum encompasses community helpers, holiday celebrations, Rhode Island history and geography, inventors, United States regions, United States History from the Early Settlers through the Industrial Revolution. Students then apply their knowledge through oral, written or technology presentations. These presentations must demonstrate a thorough understanding of the topic while showcasing the students interests through personalized style and choice of presentation technique. Exploration of various educational technology tools as well as traditional arts integration styles is encouraged. The classroom teacher, media specialist, and music teacher integrate biographies, websites, current events, non-fiction books, historical fiction, and other resources to make learning pertinent, relatable, and authentic. Each year our students learn about legislation and what it takes to make a law. During a follow up visit to the state capital in Providence, they meet the governor and local legislators where they discuss local politics, engage in a debate on the floor of the State Senate and cast individual votes. Other classes visit a local mill where students learn about Pawtucket's role in the Industrial Revolution, exploring the history and geography of Rhode Island. Younger students meet and greet local civic leaders and community helpers that include firefighters, police officers, medics, and local business owners. This solidifies what and who the components are that make up a community.

Brown Avenue Elementary School is committed to the academic, social, and emotional growth of all students. BAES has found success because we believe our students can learn through hard work, high expectations, and perseverance. Student success is achieved through collaboration and communication between school and home.

1e. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

At BAES fine arts are essential and follow National Core Arts Standards exposing students to artistic processes, cultural contexts, communication, and aesthetic judgement of music and visual arts. Once a week, for forty-five minutes each, students engage in experiences using their imaginations to create and design with media, techniques, and processes that express thoughts, feelings, and ideas while applying basic concepts in a multi-sensory approach. A mural of Angel Wings was created by the art teacher connecting art and SEL (social-emotional learning) curriculum. Students set an intention or state a positive affirmation each day.

BAES's physical education and health curriculum addresses personal and mental-emotional health,

nutrition, injury, substance abuse and prevention, disease prevention, sexuality and family life for all students. This curriculum follows the Rhode Island Health Education Standards and the RI Physical Education Framework. Students engage in one (55 minute) health and one (45 minute) physical education class weekly. Students are exposed to student-centered activities, sports, team-building and problem-solving challenges. Through physical education classes, students learn communication, cooperation, and positive social skills to develop confidence and motivation. Our health program focuses on teaching how to read labels, make healthy choices, and partake in daily exercise to properly maintain a healthy lifestyle. Our annual Healthy Kids' Day promotes healthy exercise and proper nutrition. Local businesses, health professionals, culinary chefs, RI Recycling Plant, firefighters and police officers, and State Police provide educational demonstrations and activities. Students learn how to keep safe, maintain a healthy lifestyle, and keep Earth clean. This event is coordinated by our physical education teacher, nurse- teacher, and principal.

BAES teachers have embraced technology through blended-personalized learning. Technology standards are targeted not only through the library/media specialist but also through teachers with the support of our instructional technology coordinator through embedded supports, model lessons, and professional learning opportunities including monthly "appy hours" and annual technology showcase. Technology enhances student learning and teaching while preparing students for the 21st century and beyond, strengthening student skills and aptitudes for careers that have yet to be named. Computer science endorsements are currently being created in RI and members of our BAES community are part of the state planning initiative.

The International Society for Technology in Education standards for students are the primary focus, engaging students to become "empowered learners, digital citizens, knowledge constructors, innovative designers, computational thinkers, creative communicators, and global collaborators" occurs daily in classrooms. Through blended-personalized strategies, students learn through station rotation and flex models where interactive tasks and playlists guide students through self-paced explorations with targeted direct instruction by teachers and support staff, independent learning time and collaborative student interactions. Students are actively engaged in digital citizenship modules and computer science (through Code.org and Scratch) that develop computational thinking, communication, and design, in addition to perseverance and grit, which connect to our SEL focus of growth mindset.

BAES has fully implemented Second Step (SS), a SEL program in grades 1-5, on a bi-weekly basis for all students. SS enables BAES to become a more supportive and successful learning environment. Students thrive in our accepting and empathetic community through the support of teachers and support staff, families, and the larger community who take a more active role in the social-emotional development of our children.

SS helps to increase academic success and decrease problem behaviors by promoting SEL competencies of self-awareness and self-management, social awareness and relationship skills, and responsible decision making. Developing these competencies enables students to self regulate confidently so they can better manage emotions, solve problems, develop empathy and take charge of learning. As we develop these competencies, students become more capable and successful learners, able to more completely attend through active listening and effective communication, manage self doubt in times of academic or social challenges, and gain assertiveness to achieve goals.

3. Special Populations:

BAES staff believe all students can learn. Our school growth mindset motto is: "You may not know it YET!" and is the foundation where students can build upon their skills through support and hard work. Teachers administer baseline test, collaborate to dissect the data, and plan instruction. Should students need support immediately, classroom teachers begin Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Tier 1 support that may be academic, social, emotional, or behavioral. Instruction is differentiated, specific, and delivered in a multi-modal approach which leverages technology when appropriate. Classroom teachers or teacher aides provide support three times a week for fifteen to thirty minutes in small group or one-on-one. Classroom Tier 1 support and progress monitoring continue for six weeks. Standardized progress monitoring tools are used according to our district protocol to check student growth. Should more support be necessary, established MTSS protocols provide support (Tier 2 and 3) through our MTSS Team. Ongoing data

collection and analysis to close learning gaps is fully supported and done through a multitude of avenues with a variety of stakeholders including MTSS Team members (Classroom teacher, special educators, reading specialist, student support coordinator, speech/language teacher, guidance counselor, social worker, psychologist, and EL teacher) and often our Registered Behavior Technician (RBT). Supports are established and delivered with fidelity. Students are expected to work hard alongside classroom teachers and special educators to assess, plan, practice, apply, reassess, reflect, and revise in order to achieve goals. Students have access to data regarding their progress and work on specific goals that target the gap. Collaboration is key to student success and each child's plan is individualized. Our inclusion model supports students with disabilities to have access to the curriculum. Student work is differentiated, personalized, and is scaffolded to provide multiple entry points for all students.

Delivery of instruction includes, but is not limited to, station rotation and flex models of blended learning, small group targeted direct instruction, one-to-one conferencing, partner support, peer coaching, and guided groupings (based on competencies in reading, writing and math). Assessment review is critical to planning and instructing our students. Teachers consistently use formative assessments including review of daily work, small group interactions, and class discussions, as well as summative assessments including end of unit assessments, PBAs, district benchmarks, and progress monitoring data. Standardized scores, such as those from recent RICAS sets, help to plan instruction across multiple content areas that focus directly on student challenges. BAES has set a higher benchmark for our STAR Reading and Math. Our school is using the RICAS benchmark (70%) as opposed to the district benchmark set at 40%. Teachers also use Lexia, Wilson and Orton-Gillingham programs to target specific reading deficiencies. We have implemented six-week, before school, Ramp-Up programs for Math, Reading and ELL students. A variety of challenging educational ramp-up websites are also used to target students with needs. Brown Avenue Elementary School was the only school in the district that has consistently closed its special education gap.

1. School Climate/Culture:

Brown Avenue Elementary School is a safe, nurturing, and positive environment. Students, faculty, and parents work together to teach students to become productive members of society. There is a culture of mutual respect. The principal works collaboratively with all stakeholders to create and sustain a healthy learning environment. High expectations, concern, and empathy for students, staff, parents, and the community are valued and nurtured. People thrive in environments where they know they are supported and respected, and where expectations for behavior are clearly communicated and enforced. This is our intention here at BAES.

The Brown Avenue Elementary School family supports community and national agendas. The students provide aid to local charities throughout the year. We collect food several times a year to support the local food pantry, which helps our families who are struggling and need support. Thanksgiving baskets are given to school families that need assistance. New socks, gloves, mittens, scarves, and hats are collected to help students in state custody. Toys are collected during Christmas. Letters are written to our soldiers. Money is collected for national charity campaigns such as: Autism Project, Red Nose Day, Pennies for Patients, American Heart Association, and the Tomorrow Fund.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Communication and collaboration between school and home is the cornerstone of student success at BAES. Open two-way communication from the principal that extends through each teacher and from our school office to families and the community at large provides the model and sets the tone for the school. The stability of our school secretary and educational staff has ensured that families are known and feel comfortable in our learning community. They are valued as active members and engage amongst each other, with leadership, and with teachers and support staff in ways that promote respect and provide support for all stakeholders. Teachers continue that philosophy through communications such as emails, newsletters, and online platforms such as Class Dojo and Remind, as well as Google Classroom. Prior to the opening of school, parents are invited to meet their child's teacher and experience time in their child's learning environment which includes flexible learning spaces, collaboration areas, and virtual learning platforms such as Google Classroom. Communication (and the supportive relationships that ultimately develop) is established at open house, where families and teachers learn from each other and share information to begin the partnership of each child's academic journey.

Parents are informed of their child's academic or social successes and struggles through progress reports, report cards, progress notes/check-ins, data from STAR screenings and progress monitoring, phone calls and/or notes from teacher or principal. Parents are equal partners and have a shared responsibility for their child's education.

State testing report night is led by school leadership and attended by teachers, support staff, and families. Parents are informed of our school's progress based on RICAS data. Past results show a closing of the gap (for both ELA and Math) amongst our special needs population. This success is possible through engagement between families and the school in the decision-making process.

Our parent organization is actively involved in a multitude of educational and social activities. Parents provide students with experiences that expand their knowledge base through hands-on opportunities. Students participate in real-life experiences supported by our parent organization. The school/parent organization hold social events that instill a sense of community. Students engage in our ramp-up programs, experience academic field trips, and plan and deliver fundraising events that support our community at large. All of these moments provide opportunities for connections where new relationships can blossom and flourish.

3. Professional Development:

Professional development is an integral component of our school's success. Teachers and staff attend district sponsored seminars and workshops and have opportunities to attend professional learning opportunities outside the district. Our teachers participate in webinars and conferences within and outside of the school day.

District-wide support staff that benefit teaching and learning at Brown Avenue Elementary School include a math coach, an instructional technology coordinator, and a curriculum advisor. Professional learning opportunities, embedded supports, academic coaching, and analyzing student work occur consistently with these individuals through district-wide and school-based initiatives. The "thought partnerships" that develop through these interactions guide conversations that might otherwise become stifled. Teachers are able to openly discuss and debate new practices and strategies, question and challenge the thinking of colleagues in a productive and respectful manner, and engage in the sharing of ideas and experiences that maximizes the learning opportunities for our entire community. When our educators are looking to delve into new and innovative approaches, it is our group of teacher-leaders who consistently provide support and help to establish and build networks across our school, between elementary buildings, and among all district educators. Teachers at BAES have fully embraced this collaboration and often serve as models for other educators in our district. For example, several classrooms at BAES are acknowledged as "Lighthouse Classrooms" where blended and personalized learning strategies are engaged to promote student voice and choice and student-led learning experiences. Additionally, many of our teachers serve as liaisons for both the district math and ELA curriculum teams, helping to develop curriculum tools and materials that promote differentiated instruction, student engagement, and academic and applied learning skills for our students.

In addition, our district EL coach and special education director help to coordinate district efforts, secure resources for students with special considerations, and provide supports and tools for educators.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership at Brown Avenue Elementary School is one of mutual respect, collaboration, and shared decision making. It is a team effort. With these attributes a positive working environment is created where the climate is welcoming, people are supported, and everyone is encouraged and empowered to learn and grow. The principal is supported by the Student Data Learning Team (SDLT). The SDLT collaborate with the principal regarding curricula, data, and the overall mission of the school.

The principal, along with the BAES staff, share a common mission and core beliefs that support and promote academic success and the social and emotional well-being of every student. Leadership continually advocates for the implementation of student centered learning, promoting a caring environment, maintaining open communication, and inspiring continuous improvement.

The principal establishes relationships amongst all stakeholders promoting integrity, collaboration, trust, and lifelong learning. She also employs critical interpersonal and communication skills to build school-wide teamwork. Social-emotional understanding and insight to students' and staffs' cultural backgrounds is an additional component to her leadership style.

The leadership teams' focus is on curriculum, instruction, and assessment. They ensure that best instructional practices, assessments, progress monitoring, and data are used to improve instruction. Continuous inquiry, planning, monitoring, evaluating and providing feedback for student's academic and social-emotional success and well-being is of utmost importance.

The principal develops leadership capacity, opportunities, and support for other professionals within the district. Teachers are encouraged to become leaders and are constantly given opportunities to share their learning and expertise with BAES colleagues and across the district. Staff meetings are collaboratively run by the principal and various teachers to ensure equity of voice, shared problem-solving, and collective experiences which enhance the overall school atmosphere. Teachers are comfortable collaborating with

grade level colleagues, among grade levels and across disciplines. In addition to focusing on the school environment, time is always provided to make connections and share in order to provide and promote not only healthy professional growth, but a safe and supportive network to reinforce personal health for all staff members.

Leadership engages families and the community through positive, collaborative, and beneficial relationships with families. An open door policy is established. Open communication is understood, valued, and promoted. Building and sustaining these relationships is paramount to our school's success and is bolstered by newsletters, digital connections such as Class Dojo, and family events.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Brown Avenue Elementary School's success is not one of an academic or assessment practice. Our success stems from creating an environment that is safe and nurturing, socially and emotionally, not only for our students but also for our staff and families. Our entire staff believes and behaves in a way that demonstrates our strong commitment to the health and happiness of our community. As a community, we care for, respect, encourage, support and nurture our students and their families. The genuine interest for our families is expressed in our day-to-day interactions, frequent communications, and special moments to engage in ways that are particular to individual families, such as delivering Thanksgiving baskets and sending home hats and gloves for winter months.

Our interactions with students are thoughtful and intentional, in order to set the tone, provide clear expectations, and support all of our learners. Our day begins with all students being greeted at the door by the school principal. This greeting gives the principal an indication of how each student is presenting: emotional concerns are noticed and immediately addressed by the principal or another staff member in order to insure that students begin their day on a positive note. The school climate allows students to be open about issues, express their feelings honestly, and be receptive toward advice, feedback, and support that may assist them in moving forward in a positive manner. Each member of our faculty and staff want our children to be ready to learn.

Being a New England school, we understand "Do your job." The principal sets the tone for the students in a firm yet loving and caring manner with clear expectations: we are all here to learn and grow. We believe all faculty and staff strive for high achievement through a team effort. We consistently work to improve school climate through our communication with and commitment to families. While we have an "open door" policy to promote a positive home-school connection, we lock our doors to provide for the safety of our entire community. When our students feel welcomed and safe and their social-emotional needs are met, then we can all work to achieve the highest level of academic success.