

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):
- 7 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 10 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	18	28	46
1	41	28	69
2	18	30	48
3	26	24	50
4	17	27	44
5	32	13	45
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	152	150	302

*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
 - 24 % Asian
 - 5 % Black or African American
 - 12 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 55 % White
 - 4 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

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

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

Our mobility rate could be above 15% due do to families workplace changes and the variance of financial costs related to living options in our area. A population of our students travels to and from other countries based on the families employment status or family illness.

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	29
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	24
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	53
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	318
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.17
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	17

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 21 %
64 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Albanian, Arabic, Greek, Chinese, Hindi, Gujarati, Kannada, Lao, Malayam, Maranathi, Dutch, Panjabi, Spanish, Serbian, Tamil, Urdu, Vietnamese

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 33 %
Total number students who qualify: 99

8. Students receiving special education services: 14 %
42 Total number of students served

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

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>6</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>5</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>6</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>5</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>19</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 3
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	14
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	9
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	4
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

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	96%	95%	95%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

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

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

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

Yes No

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

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

Cedar Hills is a community that inspires lifelong learners by supporting all social, emotional, academic, and creative needs so that every student will lead a successful life.

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

As stated in our mission, Cedar Hills is a community that inspires lifelong learners by supporting all social, emotional, academic, and creative needs so that every student will lead a successful life. Daily morning announcements end with our vision statement of “You belong here!” This statement can be seen and felt throughout Cedar Hills. Students know they belong as they are greeted by staff members every morning and when they see their artwork lighting up the hallways. Our fine arts department promotes diversity through multilingual music in order for students and families to see that their various cultures are respected and celebrated. Staff members feel they belong through a shared community of trust. We support each other as we work together to engage, challenge, and inspire every student, every day. With help from our surrounding community, we continually seek out ways to help families feel welcome and involved.

Cedar Hills is one of seven elementary schools within the suburb of Oak Creek, Wisconsin. We are a Title I Targeted Assistance school with 31% of students that are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Twenty-one percent of our population are English Learners. There are about 20 different languages spoken by Cedar Hills families. The most common languages at Cedar Hills (after English) are Arabic, Hindi, Punjabi, and Spanish. Approximately 16% of our student population are students with disabilities. Our total population is about 300 students. Of those 300 students, 55% are White, 24% are Asian, 12% are Hispanic or Latino, 5% are Black or African American, and 4% are two or more races.

There is so much diversity within our school community. We are a community of learners. Our families come from all over the world, speak different languages, celebrate different holidays, eat different foods, but when we are here, we are one community. Along with linguistic diversity, we have a great deal of cultural diversity. Within our school community, we work alongside students, staff, and parents who have been born in countries from all around the world. We have a great deal of linguistic, cultural, and religious diversity. That diversity is continually acknowledged and celebrated.

Throughout the past few years, we have used goal setting as a strategy at Cedar Hills in order to promote self-advocacy. Our staff started this process by doing a book study around a growth mindset in order to learn how to help students reach their full potential. Our staff uses the idea of a growth mindset to encourage students in all areas of learning. The concept of a student not having not gotten there “yet” is strongly embraced in our school. Students discover that they can achieve anything if they put forth the effort and use mistakes as opportunities to improve. In the classroom, students discuss their individual goals regularly, as well as their goals as a larger classroom community. Through cycles of Plan, Do, Study, and Act (PDSA), students and teachers modify learning plans and discover strategies that lead to success in the areas of literacy and mathematics. This systems approach is referred to as CLS or Classroom Learning Systems in our district. Teachers help guide students to see themselves as co-producers of learning and continually study their learning results in order to increase their metacognition. This systems approach is visible in regular education classes, as well as our physical education, art, world language, and music classes.

In order to help inform goal setting, our students take a universal screening assessment three times per year in the areas of literacy and math. As a school, we involve staff members in conversations around this data. Specifically, we analyze the data of students whose scores are below the twenty-fifth percentile. Through support from pupil services, our English Learner (EL) specialist, and our learning coach, we review universal screening data and determine which students need additional interventions. As a team, we help provide materials for Scientifically Research-Based Interventions (SRBIs), determine who will deliver the intervention, and set up a plan for progress monitoring.

At Cedar Hills, we understand the importance of teaching the whole child. We use a restorative approach to resolve conflict and prevent further harm. Listening to students talk about what happened, who was affected, and how they can make it right helps make their voice heard and helps build conflict resolution skills for the future. Implementing a schoolwide mindfulness curriculum has also supported this approach. Classrooms promote mindfulness daily and explicitly teach students how to focus, manage emotions, handle stress, and resolve conflicts.

As you will see throughout our application, there is a culture of shared leadership at Cedar Hills. Our Building Leadership Team (BLT) is a group of various teachers, administration, pupil services, and instructional aides. This team meets monthly to study schoolwide data, write our annual school improvement plan, and help keep our goals rigorous, yet focused. Members of the BLT help lead our goal teams as well. Every staff member at Cedar Hills is part of a goal team--literacy, math, or student engagement. Feedback from staff members is regularly requested and valued in regards to school goals or new initiatives.

At Cedar Hills, we are guided by our school's mission and vision to help all students grow and succeed. Our stakeholders often refer to Cedar Hills as a family. This can be felt throughout our building and even in our daily announcements as we are reminded, you belong here!

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

Part of what makes Cedar Hills an incredible learning community for all students is the curricula, resources, and interventions that are utilized for the growth of our readers and writers. Our district’s Essential Learning Requirements were developed by educators and are based on the Common Core State Standards. These learning targets provide a road map to guide our teaching and learning. In addition, they also create pathways to meet the needs of struggling, as well as advanced readers, to help them continue to grow based on their individual strengths and areas of improvement.

Literacy instruction is presented through whole group mini-lessons, small group work, and individualized conferences. These individual conferences with students are focused on their reading goals. Many of these goals are developed through running records, which are formally assessed three times a year. Our school also uses close reading to help students gain a deeper understanding of the texts they are reading. Students exhibit their understanding by answering text-dependent questions and citing evidence. Word work is differentiated to support students with understanding various spelling patterns. For writing, Units of Study by Lucy Calkins is utilized, in which students learn about and create different kinds of writing. Teachers support their writers through conferences and let students peer revise each other’s work. Our growing writers also get opportunities to publish and celebrate their work.

All grade levels have a designated intervention time during their literacy block. Teachers and support staff use tiered approaches to help close gaps. The staff works together to place students in appropriate interventions and groups based off of data. The scientific research-based interventions used include Road to Reading, Elkonin Boxes, Repeated Reading, and Question-Answer Relationships (QAR). These interventions are monitored biweekly. Different websites and applications are also utilized to help differentiate literacy instructions.

1b. Mathematics:

At Cedar Hills, every student is a mathematician. We believe every mathematician needs the skills to prosper in the math classroom as well as in the mathematical world around them. Our year begins with establishing a growth mindset, in which students are immersed in an environment where mistakes are celebrated. Classes dive into mathematical content using our district’s Essential Learning Requirements, which are based on the Common Core State Standards. These standards address the following domains of mathematics: Counting and Cardinality, Operations and Algebraic Thinking, Number and Operations in Base Ten, Number and Operations-Fractions, Geometry, and Measurement and Data. This core curriculum was established by educators who evaluated and organized the learning objectives. Prior to Essential Learning Requirements, our teachers taught using the Math Expressions curriculum, which is used as a resource today. Teachers guide students in establishing a disposition to adapt and persevere in solving unexpected problems within their math classroom and in their lives through the use of the Common Core Mathematical Practice Standards.

Every day at every grade level, there is “intervention time” in which teachers provide tiered instruction. Teachers collaborate to place students into appropriate intervention groups. These scientific research-based interventions are data-driven, progress monitored and conducted with fidelity, validity, and reliability. All classrooms utilize technology to differentiate through a variety of online programs.

Math assessment data is analyzed regularly. As a team, we use data from our universal screener to inform interventions, monitor progress, set goals, and communicate achievement with stakeholders. This data is analyzed at the end of the year to formulate new school-wide improvement goals. Every math block is organized into a 90-minute Math Workshop structure. We believe that whoever is doing the majority of the speaking, solving, justifying, and explaining is doing the learning. Math workshop launches with a mini-

lesson. Then students can work independently, with their peers, or receive re-teaching. A “check for proficiency” occurs within this structure, in which students are informally assessed on the content that day. This allows teachers to guide their instruction and make learning more personal.

1c. Science:

Over the past three years, our science curriculum has undergone a major overhaul. We have moved to a curriculum that is fully aligned with the Wisconsin Standards for Science which are based on the Next Generation Science Standards. This new curriculum ensures that a cohesive understanding of the cross-cutting concepts, disciplinary core skills, and science and engineering practices exists across grade levels. As part of the national standards, our curriculum ties directly to literacy, math, problem-solving, and engineering skills. We strive to engage all students by utilizing technology, hands-on activities, phenomena-based learning, and student exploration. Through inquiry-based instruction, our students have developed a passion for science that promotes their higher-level thinking skills and curiosities, and most importantly, keeps them wanting more. Throughout the year, bugs, snails, caterpillars, and tadpoles have been regular residents in our school, as students tend to these organisms while studying their life cycles. The gymnasium has been transformed into a racetrack, as students learn the fate of their self-designed race cars during their study of aerodynamics. Mini-ecosystems have been created and polluted to demonstrate their interdependence on one another. Students have worked collaboratively to make paper, build simple machines with Legos, and grow flowers from seed to plant. Our students are also fortunate enough to be able to participate in hands-on, interactive field trips to ecology centers, farms, museums, the zoo, and musical productions that support our science standards, and give every child equal opportunities to learn and explore through science.

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

A variety of topics and areas are discussed in our social studies instruction throughout our school. In kindergarten students learn about similarities and differences, which helps build community in their classroom. They share “All About Me” posters that highlight their family’s culture and their individuality. Students in first grade continue this theme by learning about community helpers, as well as the difference between a want and a need. They also study biographies of historical figures, while emphasizing people that have overcome adversity. Students in second grade learn about communities as well, with a focus on the various types of communities, i.e. urban, rural, and suburban. Second-grade students also participate in a service learning opportunity by creating signs to display around the community of Oak Creek. These signs show gratitude towards the different community helpers and volunteers in the community.

As students transition to the upper elementary grades, social studies topics shift towards history. Students in third grade study the history of Wisconsin and how some of the landforms of our state have affected the settlement of early pioneers. In fourth grade, students expand their learning of Wisconsin to learn about all 50 states in the U.S. They research the various regions of the country and begin learning about our country’s three branches of government. During fifth grade, students focus on significant historical moments in United States history. They learn about the causes and historical impact of the Civil War and the Revolutionary War. This learning culminates with a Civil War reenactment at the Oak Creek American Legion Post.

1e. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

All Cedar Hills students receive both visual art and music education for an hour per week. These classes provide opportunities to further develop the whole child and meet their creative needs as well as their

academic and social/emotional needs. Students gain additional opportunities for success and confidence building as well as build mental capacity for design thinking, questioning, reflection, and developing a growth mindset. Both art and music are committed to our National Core Arts Standards, and the necessary 21st Century skills of creativity, communication, collaboration, and critical thinking. Through these classes, students engage with past, present, and future cultural experiences. Additionally, these educational experiences help us further cast our mission and vision for our school and engage our learners, families, and community in it as well through their performances. Our arts program is a strong tie within our Cedar Hills community and culture.

The music classes that are taught in our school bring the students on a journey through multiple languages, multiple instruments, and songs that inspire students to feel, think, and move. Using Orff instruments in conjunction with harmonizing leads to a well-rounded musician in all grade levels. The music teachers encourage the students to feel compassion, hope, and gain strength from the music they participate in. The concerts they put together are tied to books that they analyze in class, promoting reading across the curriculum. It is not uncommon during performances for there to be strong emotional responses from all families as they see their culture represented.

Physical Education at Cedar Hills is more than just learning different sports to play. Students in grades K-5 participate in physical education three times a week for 30 minutes. We use the words physical education (or PE) instead of gym class because we strive for a standards-based, individually focused, and inclusive environment. Here at Cedar Hills, we make sure students are able to participate in class activities by making them developmentally appropriate. We work on the ability to move with competence and confidence in our activities, which allows students of all differentiated needs to be successful in class. We try to get students in class and moving as quickly as we can in order to increase their overall health and wellness. Our sports and activities can be competitive, but we stay focused on keeping the right mindset by using good sportsmanship along with team building and cooperation. A final focus point in physical education at Cedar Hills is for students to have a positive mindset on anything we do in class and to always be trying their best, no matter the outcome.

At Cedar Hills, Spanish is offered in 1st grade through 5th grade. Our 1st and 2nd graders enter Spanish acquisition with class one time a week for 30 minutes. In 3rd through 5th grade, our intermediate students experience class two times a week for a total of 60 minutes. In every class, students speak, read, and write the language. Technology supports this learning in many ways through the use of a variety of media and websites that students can access in and out of school.

Our Cedar Hills Library and Media Center is truly the center of our school. Our librarian meets with every class once a week for 30 minutes. During this time, students are able to listen, read, and check out books. They are able to check out two books per week and are provided the time to evaluate books for their interests and purpose. Also during this time, students are introduced to new authors and new series. Our librarian shares new books, awarded titles, and popular reads with students to broaden their scope of selection. Classes can earn rewards involving time in the library like comfortable read in time, peer reading time, and extra book check out. This positive reward builds the love for reading within our students. Technology is a prevalent tool in our school for learning and developing. Across the grades, students have access to many online resources like a typing program, research engines, and multimedia sites.

Students at Cedar Hills have numerous opportunities to participate in programs that build character. All students in the building are part of community building circles in their classrooms daily. These circles help build a sense of belonging, increase trust, and foster positivity. In addition, students can also be nominated to be a part of circles that have a smaller number of students who meet weekly. Girl's group, Boy's group, and Beat for Peace are three examples of groups of students that utilize a restorative framework to work on skills such as friendship, conflict resolution, and communication. Fourth and fifth-grade girls are nominated each year to participate in a physical activity-based positive youth development program called Girls on the Run, which is led by two certified teachers in our building. Meetings are held after school and involve running while the lessons strive to develop confidence, leadership, and teamwork.

3. Special Populations:

Cedar Hills Elementary has a diverse population of learners ranging from varying ability levels to cultural diversity and economic diversity. The strength of our school can be found in the ability of the staff to respond to the needs of all learners, especially those students who have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), low socioeconomic status, and English learners. Our teams of teachers meet regularly to evaluate the instruction, assessments, and interventions used within our school community.

Students who have been identified in a subgroup remain active participants in the general education classroom. Our special education and English learner teachers utilize a push in model and work with the students in the classroom whenever possible. All students are treated as regular education students first. Our school's special education teachers, occupational therapist, speech pathologist, physical therapist, and English learner support staff collaborate with the general classroom teachers to provide support for the unique needs of each student. Our special population of learners has also benefited from specialists co-teaching alongside the classroom teacher. This model also allows students to stay in the classroom with their peers while receiving additional help for their success.

All students who fall below the benchmark using our universal screening process receive an intervention. The specialized instruction for our students with IEPs and language plans is also delivered during the intervention blocks for any student who has been identified through our universal screening process and as determined by IEP teams to address disability-related needs. Specialized instruction focuses on closing achievement gaps as directly related to each student's IEP goals. Each grade level has two daily intervention blocks set aside for literacy and math. Scientifically research-based interventions are used and progress is monitored on a consistent basis to measure the students' success. Teams of teachers, school psychologist, school counselor, social worker, and principal gather after eight weeks of the intervention at our Student Intervention Team (SIT) meetings. At the SIT meetings, student progress and next steps are discussed.

Staff use various methods and strategies to help meet our school's diverse needs. For example, some students utilize assistive technology to assist with communication needs, reading, and writing. The use of visuals throughout the school such as visual schedules, First/Then boards, and visual cues has helped make the school environment accessible for all learners. Every classroom in our school helps to meet the sensory needs of each student through flexible seating and individualized sensory supports. Our students can use fidgets, weighted blankets, putty, wiggle seats, resistance bands, and swings to help them focus and regulate in the school environment.

Along with our focus on student's academic achievement, our Cedar Hills community has put a great emphasis on our student's social-emotional learning. Responding to the needs of our students, we have made a commitment to teaching social-emotional strategies that facilitate emotional regulation, establishing and maintaining positive relationships, making responsible decisions, and having a growth mindset. In addition to this, students engage in learning mindfulness strategies as well as strategies that help increase their ability to identify emotions and tools they can use to regulate themselves. Teaching students these skills has helped meet the needs of our special education and English learner students.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Our school's positive climate and culture is the first thing many notice when walking into Cedar Hills. Whether you are a veteran teacher of 20 years or a guest teacher visiting for the day, you truly feel like you belong at Cedar Hills. Teachers at our school build a sense of community in their classrooms through daily community circles, where students get the chance to share what's going on in their lives. Our school's use of a Restorative Practices framework has shifted the mindset of the entire building to "working with" students instead of "doing to" students. Just like circles are used in the classroom, every staff meeting begins by "circling up." This has helped to create a culture of staff who have gotten to know each other and who support each other.

Our staff also motivates students through our Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework. Students are taught what it means to be safe, respectful, and responsible. Posters throughout our school remind students of these expectations, and classroom matrixes are created by each class at the beginning of the year outlining these expectations. Our staff also plans quarterly PBIS celebrations. Our students look forward to coming together as a community to celebrate. Awards are also given out monthly to students with perfect attendance to further encourage students getting to school every day and on time.

We also have fourth- and fifth-grade student ambassadors who are leaders in our building. They help to promote a positive environment in our school by taking on roles like hall monitors, tutoring younger students, and helping with schoolwide activities. We also have buddy classes, where younger grades are paired up with older grades. Buddy classes meet periodically for various activities.

The social and emotional needs of students are also met through classroom lessons, such as our district's anti-bullying curriculum, ActNow. Students are taught conflict resolutions skills, the difference between tattling and telling, and how to advocate for themselves and others. Students in need of further support are identified and often become part of a small social skills group or may receive one on one counseling with a pupil services member.

Teachers also have coaching time with the principal where they can bring up any topic to talk about. Having individual time with the principal helps staff feel that their supervisor cares about them and values their opinion. Staff also participate in our district's employee engagement process, which allows staff a voice in changes and improvements for our school.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

At Cedar Hills, we engage families and communities in many ways. One thing that teachers use for daily communication is Class Dojo. Class Dojo allows staff to send and receive pictures, messages, and school information. Students also earn points for making positive choices. The school also sends out a monthly newsletter to inform parents of events and share reminders. Additionally, some students have daily communication sheets (called Check-in/Check-out) sent to parents to further strengthen the communication between school and family.

Another way we engage the community and families is through developing strong community partnerships. Last year, we worked with various community partners to do our 'Spruce Up Cedar Hills' project. A local nursery, Bluemel's, helped us beautify our front garden. Parents and students volunteered throughout the day to help plant various flowers and bushes. Everyone had a hand in improving Cedar Hills. The Ridge Community Church also helped us with the funding for this project. They also helped us fund projects for school, such as a new staff lounge (where staff can relax and eat lunch) and items for our classroom mindfulness/reset spots that benefit all students by allowing them to refocus without leaving the classroom.

We have many events that celebrate our success and hard work. We have concerts for each grade level during the day and in the evening, student teams compete in Challenge of the Books and Battle of the

Books to demonstrate their reading knowledge, we have a 5th-grade spelling bee and graduation ceremony. Kindergarten had a Seussical celebration with families. First grade hosts Jammin' with Books where they teach the families about different reading strategies and then they read together. We also have conferences twice a year to inform parents of successes and challenges, share resources, and talk together to support each student.

Parents can also be involved in our Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). They hold events at school like the fall festival, school dance, and Scholastic book fairs. The PTO also sets up fundraisers at local businesses such as Culver's, Cousin's Sub, and Buffalo Wild Wings. Proceeds from sales at these restaurants benefit Cedar Hills. These events help make connections and build positive relationships.

Cedar Hills also partners with universities. Several teachers have had field study students and student teachers. Cedar Hills students benefit from having extra teachers in the room to learn from. This benefits the community as well by sharing our expertise and experiences with up-and-coming teachers.

3. Professional Development:

Our school district's professional development model provides a balance of district- and building-level professional development. District-level professional development focuses on grade-level or department curricula expectations and practices. The building-level professional development focuses on the specific needs of the building and staff. A few district-level programs in place are Professional Development by Design (PDbD) and Educator Effectiveness (EE). PDbD is a personalized approach to professional development that allows staff to choose an area of focus for their learning. EE is our teacher evaluation tool that focuses on growth within our six learning standards. Each teacher completes a self-assessment of their strengths and areas of growth, determines Student Learning Objectives (SLO) along with instructional strategies for students meet their learning objectives, and a Professional Practice Goal (PPG) to build their capacity in an area of focus.

At the building level, staff has participated in a variety of professional development. Educators have studied various books over the past few years. We have participated in a book study around the text *The Growth Mindset Coach*. This allowed staff to learn about strategies and structures to implement a growth mindset in their learning communities. Another book study focused on text *The CAFE Book: Engaging All Students in Daily Literacy Assessment and Instruction*. The book study focused on best practices in reading instruction, goal setting, and assessment to allow students to move forward in their reading abilities.

Our weekly Student Learning Team (SLT) meetings also provide opportunities for professional development that can be tailored to a particular grade level team or teacher.

Staff participated in the Children of Trauma training for professional development on how to help understand ways to meet student's social and emotional needs. This was a five-hour course that helped build our staff's capacity with strategies and mindset to work with students who have experienced adverse childhood experiences.

At the district level, all staff has participated in professional development on effectively managing Classroom Learning Systems (CLS) in their classrooms. Staff consistently plans and delivers cycles of instruction and assessment to follow the CLS model. Through this professional development, staff has become familiar with the districtwide grade-level Essential Learning Requirements to guide their instruction.

New teachers to the district are part of the Partners for Success program where they participate in monthly professional development meetings and a mentoring program with building and district staff. The monthly professional development training topics span from Educator Effectiveness planning, parent-teacher conference preparation, to school safety training. This ongoing professional development program provides support and training to both first-year teachers and new teachers to the district.

and filters down to the building level to align all goals and initiatives so that “all arrows are pointing in the same direction.” At Cedar Hills, we have truly focused our efforts on building staff capacity around our areas of focus which in turn will drive student achievement.

4. School Leadership:

Our district has a shared leadership model. We have a building leadership team which consists of our principal, school psychologist, learning coach, five classroom teachers, and one instructional aide. Each member of the building leadership team leads a larger team of teachers and other staff members to work on one of our school goals. We have school goals which focus on success in literacy, math, student engagement, and continuous improvement. The building leadership team meets monthly, and the goal teams meet twice monthly. Teachers on the goal teams are responsible for sharing the information and expectations with the members of their grade level teams. Our leadership structure provides opportunities for a variety of staff to be leaders to move our school forward. Our principal allows for the autonomy for the various goals teams and leaders to make decisions based on their professional judgment about what is a manageable task for that team.

In addition to the building leadership and goal teams, we also have student learning teams. Student learning teams consist of grade level teachers, our learning coach, special education teachers, English learner teacher, and principal. The student learning team meets weekly to discuss curriculum instruction, individual student needs, and items for continuous classroom improvement. This time is also valuable to provide grade level-specific professional development.

Cedar Hills sets itself apart from other schools because the principal has created a culture of shared voice. Classroom teachers, specialists, instructional aides, and other staff feel comfortable advocating for the needs of our students because our voices are heard from the administration. There is a strong emphasis on our community, and we take a team approach to solving problems. Our principal also shares a “family first” mantra at Cedar Hills. This encourages staff to put their own families first, so in turn, they can give their best to students each and every day.

Engagement surveys are sent out multiple times a year requesting feedback from various stakeholders. These surveys target parent satisfaction, student satisfaction, and employee satisfaction. The survey results are evaluated by a variety of leadership teams. Action plans are created and followed through to maintain the satisfaction of our stakeholders.

Our principal invests time and fiscal resources to focus on building the capacity of our teaching and support staff. An example of this would be our three-year plan for implementing a literacy system. During the summer prior to the new school year, teachers were paid for professional development hours to come to school to make conferring binders and literacy boards in their classrooms. The principal also budgeted for a book study and online subscriptions to the literacy resource for all teachers to have access for ongoing professional development. In the end, all students at Cedar Hills had individual reading goals that they focused on throughout the year.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The one strategy that has been the most instrumental in our success at Cedar Hills is our school's sense of community. Through collaboration and teamwork, our staff strives to support one another so that every staff member feels a sense of belonging and respect. This sentiment is felt regardless of your title in the building, as everyone's role is equally valued. Countless substitute teachers over the years have commented that compared to other buildings they've been in, things at Cedar Hills just feel different, in a positive way.

This sense of community is evident not only among staff but among students as well. Our staff understands that in order for students to learn, they first need to feel that their teachers care about them. Ask any teacher in our building, and their number one priority is creating a relationship with their students. Community circles are a daily practice for every student, and for many students, this is their favorite part of their day. During community circle time, students get a chance to share a different side of themselves and to express feelings that may otherwise go unvoiced. Many students also participate in circles to repair harm, which helps students to gain empathy towards others after an issue has occurred. This restorative practice allows students to solve conflicts in a way that continues to promote belonging.

Our staff recognizes that respecting and understanding the point of view of students can go a long way in their learning. When students feel that they belong at their school, they are more likely to come in ready and excited to learn. Staff model these values in their teaching and through how they interact with students. Students learn that it's okay to make a mistake and know that there are always people to turn to for help. Staff share responsibility for all students, caring for not only the students in their classrooms but for every student that comes into the building. Students who get to school early often stop in to see their previous teachers because they know that those teachers care deeply about them, even if they are not in their class anymore. Our staff works diligently every day to ensure that every person who walks through the doors at Cedar Hills feels like they belong to our community.