

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2020 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 6201 Morikami Park Road  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Delray Beach State FL Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 33484-6999

County Palm Beach

Telephone (561) 894-7300 Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Web site/URL <https://mpess.palmbeachschools.org/> E-mail Stacey.Quinones@palmbeachschools.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. Donald Fennoy II E-mail superintendent@palmbeachschools.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Palm Beach Tel. (561) 434-8000

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. Frank Barbieri Jr  
(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**

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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 2020 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 2014 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: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, or 2019.
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 (2019-2020) unless otherwise stated.

**DISTRICT** (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 108 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 32 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 24 High schools
  - 3 K-12 schools
- 167 TOTAL

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)  
 Suburban  
 Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2019 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	59	81	140
1	89	48	137
2	75	64	139
3	78	59	137
4	69	59	128
5	60	70	130
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
<b>Total Students</b>	430	381	811

\*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
  - 7.5 % Asian
  - 7.5 % Black or African American
  - 22.3 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0.4 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 58 % White
  - 4.3 % 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 2018 - 2019 school year: ≤1%

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, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	8
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	8
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	811
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	<.01
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	<1

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

Spanish, Creole, Portuguese, Mandarin, Chinese, Bengali, Urdu, Portuguese

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 2 %  
19 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 21 %

Total number students who qualify: 169

8. Students receiving special education services: 14 %

111 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>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>6</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>2</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>60</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>37</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 9

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the 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.	44
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	17
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	1
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

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 18:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	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 2019.

<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. 2014

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

Our mission focuses on the development of the whole child as a life-long learner and inquirer, both inside and outside of the classroom. Working together with open and inquiring minds to develop Responsible and respectful citizens who are lifelong learners, dedicated to success within a global society.

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

Students entering grades kindergarten through fifth grade wishing to attend Morikami Park must submit an application during the application period of November through January. The parent and students must be a full-time Palm Beach County resident at the time of application submission. There are no elementary choice program eligibility criteria. The lottery selection is a completely "blind" process, there is no weight on gender, race, or ethnicity.

## **PART III - SUMMARY**

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Morikami Park is an International Baccalaureate (IB) school located in Delray Beach, Florida. We implement IB Primary Years Programme (PYP). In addition to the broad demographic area our school covers, our student population represents many diverse ethnicities including African American, Hispanic, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and Asian. Our students come to us with a variety of educational needs; among the students supported are those with learning disabilities and those in need of behavior modifications. We have many students who are eligible for full time gifted programs, but opt out of attending gifted centers. All families know we will challenge their children with a rigorous, comprehensive program.

Morikami Park Elementary offers inquiry-based instruction and focuses on the development of the whole child. The social and emotional development of each child are also important components. Our school strives to develop internationally minded students by weaving the attributes of the IB Learner Profile into daily school life. These attributes include being inquirers, knowledgeable, communicators, thinkers, risk-takers, principled, open-minded, reflective, balanced and caring. We recognize that educating students through isolated subject areas and content is no longer sufficient. Therefore, we have created a transdisciplinary curriculum that is engaging, relevant, significant and challenging. Students are able to make conceptual connections across the disciplines and throughout the school year. For example, if students are currently learning about the concepts of patterns during a unit of study in weather patterns, they might also be learning about writing patterns and patterns in text, different patterns in mathematics, and melodic patterns in music class. Another example of a transdisciplinary approach, our art teacher infuses what students learned about force, motion, and gravity. Students create a "pour paint" project similar to the artist Holton Rower. This project allows the student a real life application of how forces, motion and gravity can effect art and our everyday lives. At the heart of our curriculum lies the constructivist approach of "learners constructing meaning." Therefore, structured and guided inquiry is the primary pedagogy used with our students. Students learn through collaboration, exploration, questioning, researching and by solving problems in a multitude of ways. They are given an opportunity to show what they have come to know and understand by applying and transferring what they have learned through authentic tasks. Once the students come to know and understand a body of knowledge through the inquiry process, students are inspired to take some kind of action either inside or outside the school community. This action can be big or small. For example, our students have brought in resources to share, or have done something at home based on a current unit of study. We recognize that teaching science and social studies, as a subject is not sufficient. We believe it is important to learn science and social studies in context and to explore content that is relevant to students. We teach science and social studies in the form of units of inquiry. We understand that mathematics is a way of thinking, communicating, and learning about the world. We model mathematical thinking and reasoning as well as support and promote creative thinking and risk-taking in finding and explaining solutions. Problem solving is not only a goal of our mathematical curriculum but an integral part of our program. Students participate in frequent opportunities to formulate, grapple with, and solve complex problems that involve a significant amount of effort. Reading plays a significant role in our everyday curriculum. Students participate in an uninterrupted literacy block daily, focusing on a balanced literacy program. Students explore texts and write about their understanding. Students take part in literature groups and reciprocal teaching.

We implement Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and our students take part in daily classroom meetings. We encourage a climate of building relationships and encouraging the best in each other. We celebrate diversity by sharing our heritage through rich conversations, displays, assemblies and presentations as well as honoring each staff members and students' individuality. These attributes contribute to our students' personal, social and physical well-being and with that bring about effective life-long learners. Authentic student action is a unique element of our program. We encourage students to take action and forge authentic connections with their community and the world around them. Students continuously raise funds for our local and global charities and organizations. Most recently, our students collected pajamas for children in foster care, shoes for the needy, and sent notes of friendship to our local senior center. It is imperative that we help our students understand that taking action is not for the short-term but a life-long goal in order to affect change in our world.

As a previous recipient of the National Blue Ribbon School award, we have been invited to share our strategies of success with our local schools and community. Our school culture has been one of high achievement, and after our recognition, our school pride has increased one hundred fold. We have little teacher turnover and the dedication of the staff sets us apart from other schools. Our students and parents choose our school because of our national recognition and our commitment to student growth. The sense of pride at Morikami Park with all stakeholder is palpable.

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

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### **1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.**

**1a.** Overall approach, which may include overarching philosophy or approaches common across subject areas

Since Morikami Park is an IB PYP school, our philosophy is teaching content through inquiry-based instruction. However, we must meet state mandates and our core curriculum is aligned to Florida State Standards, which represent a coherent progression of learning expectations in English language arts and math designed to prepare K-12 students for college and career success. The standards define the knowledge and skills students should have in their education with an emphasis on learning goals, and clear end-of-the-year expectations with a strong focus on results.

Using the state standards our units of inquiry are infused across all content areas. If students are learning about force and motion during English language arts, teachers immerse students in informational text about force and motion while students write about it during their writing block. In math, teachers immerse students in problem solving around the theme of force and motion, while of course focusing on the state standards. Additionally, this immersion occurs in the fine arts classrooms as well. While teaching the core curriculum, teachers take on the role of facilitator, not an authority on the subject.

Each content area has a written set of objectives of what students should learn, how best they will learn the material, understanding that learners in the same age group have different needs and demonstrate performance on different levels, find how students and teachers will know that the material has been learned (formative and summative assessments). These three elements are essential to our core curriculum.

It is our philosophy that student learning is best done when it is authentic and relevant to the students and the world around them. Learning is transdisciplinary, not confined within traditional subject areas but rather supported and enriched by them. Students engage with developmentally appropriate content; intended to enrich their critical thinking skills and help each student grow academically.

#### **1b.** Reading/English language arts

English Language Arts standards in K-2 emphasize explicit and systematic phonics instruction as the foundation of literacy for grades 3-5. In both primary and intermediate grades, English Language Arts is divided into four strands: foundations, reading, communication, and vocabulary and represent a coherent progression of learning expectation designed to prepare K-12 students for college and career success. The Standards set requirements not only for English language arts (ELA) but also for literacy in history/social studies, and science. Just as students must learn to read, write, speak, listen, and use language effectively in a variety of content areas, the standards must also specify the literacy skills and understandings required in multiple disciplines. The reading standards require deep comprehension and high-level thinking. Close, analytical reading is what is required of students. Rigor is a natural part of the standards and students are required to read increasingly complex texts for longer periods of time. The standards unify reading so that readers bring the same skills to various texts.

At Morikami we strive to meet the demands of the standards by requiring teachers to follow the mandated 90-minute literacy block and conduct small group instruction daily. The teacher begins with a read aloud or shared reading and then provides a minilesson to the whole group to expose them to the skill through a demonstration while he/she is there to provide support as the students try out the skill. Students are expected to use turn and talk, stop and jot, and reader's response log/reflections to demonstrate a deeper understanding of the learning goal. During independent time, students are taught to choose authentic literature at just the right reading level for their ability. Time is provided daily for students to independently read and build stamina as they delve into increasingly complex texts. Instruction is differentiated based on student need with striving readers given more direct instruction, using a tiered approach. Students receiving tier 2 or tier 3 intervention, participate in small group intense instruction outside of their 90-minute literacy block.

We recognize that foundational skills are the building blocks of reading. We utilize assessments to determine student needs as well as the Continuum of Literacy to ensure that students are acquiring the necessary reading behaviors, concepts of print, the alphabetic principle, phonics and basic conventions of the English writing system through word work.

We offer many adaptive technology programs such as iReady, IXL, EPIC, and Reading A-Z. Students are required to complete 45 minutes weekly of iReady and pass each lesson with at least an 80% pass rate. As part of the literacy block, students are given time to access these programs. Teachers pull weekly reports on each student's progress; using the data, teachers make necessary program adjustments.

Formative and summative assessments are used to drive instruction. During a unit of study teachers, teachers administer mid unit assessments. This leading data is used to make immediate curriculum adjustments be it in the way of small group or whole group instruction. The summative assessment provides the teacher will overall unit data and the standards not mastered become secondary benchmarks.

### **1c. Mathematics**

The standards for mathematics are also grade-specific standards. What students can learn at any particular grade level depends upon what they have learned before. Each skill builds upon another. The mathematical standards follow several mathematical practices with a focus on students making sense of problems and persevering in solving them, model with math, and attend to precision. At the same time, all students must have the opportunity to learn and meet the same high standards if they are to access the knowledge and skills necessary in their post-school lives. The Standards for Mathematical Content are a balanced combination of procedure and conceptual understanding. At Morikami, structured, purposeful inquiry is the main approach for teaching and learning mathematics. We have implemented a 60-minute math block that encompasses a whole group lesson followed by small group instruction in order to meet the demands of the Florida State Standards.

At Morikami Park, we understand that mathematics is a way of thinking, communicating, and learning about the world. Our mission is to ensure that each student is challenged to achieve growth and success in his or her mathematic development. Our mathematics curriculum involves the integrated, connected study of the mathematics content as well as developed proficiency in understanding concepts, computing fluently, applying concepts, reasoning logically, and engaging with mathematics. Our instructional methods begin with teachers understanding what students know and need to learn and then challenging and supporting them to learn it well. As facilitators of learning, we model mathematical thinking and reasoning as well as support and promote creative thinking and risk taking in finding and explaining solutions.

We use a range of assessments and analyze outcomes to map students' progress and plan appropriate future learning experiences. Students take mid unit assessments and summative assessments. Teachers use mid unit formative assessments to make immediate adjustments to the math curriculum, as summative assessments provide data on standards not mastered. Teachers use that data to develop secondary benchmarks, which are taught in small group. In an effort to improve the mathematical skills of our striving math students, strategic interventions and appropriate assistance is provided. We chose to utilize small group instruction to provide an environment that maximizes learning opportunities.

We recognize that numbers are the foundation of mathematics and students must learn and acquire instant recall of the single digit number facts for addition and multiplication and the related facts for subtraction and division. Our students have access to many adaptive technology programs, such as SuccessMaker, IXL, and Kahn Academy that assist not only with that but offering students individualized instructional tracks for their mathematical development. For our students above grade level, math skills are enhanced through available technologies and the opportunity to explore and apply mathematics across key learning areas and beyond the school setting.

## **1d. Science**

In science, our teachers utilize the Florida State Standards to write units of inquiry. These units of inquiry are framed around two of the PYP transdisciplinary themes, how the world works and sharing the planet. Units range from six to eight weeks; teacher and student questions about the topic drive the structured inquiry during that time. Teachers develop units through collaborative planning and reflection, addressing horizontal and vertical articulation.

The instructional approach used is structured inquiry, led by the teacher. The units describe what the students will be inquiring into under the chosen theme (standard). Each unit has a driving central idea, which is written in one sentence that allows for in-depth inquiries, is concept driven, and promotes the ability to think critically. Using student agency, teachers develop activities that are meaningful based around what is relevant to students and what they want students to learn, and then deciding with students how best might they learn the content. This allows students to have voice and choice in how they learn.

Assessments are used various ways, including accessing prior knowledge and skills of students so that teachers know how to drive the inquiry. First, students must understand the criteria in the form of a rubric used to assess performance. During the unit, students receive timely feedback on their progress, identifying areas of growth and strength. Teachers collect student evidence and provide the opportunity for students to present it in a way that allows each student to reflect on their learning and describe their progress to others. Assessments are in the form of tasks and summative projects. For example, in 4th grade students learn about landforms and for their summative project, each student creates a landform and presents it to the class.

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

Since Morikami Park is an IB PYP school, social studies follows the same format as science, taught through units of inquiry. The transdisciplinary themes for social studies include, who we are (nature of self, beliefs and values, human relationships, families, friends, communities, and cultures; rights and responsibilities), where we are in place and time (personal histories, homes, journeys, discoveries, explorations and migrations of humankind, interconnectedness of individuals and civilization, from a local and global perspective), how we express ourselves (express ideas, feelings, nature, culture, beliefs and values), how we organize ourselves (structure and function of organizations, societal decision making, economic activities, and their impact on humankind and the environment).

Again the instructional approach is structured inquiry and student agency. Each unit flows around a central idea, designed to promote conceptual understanding. Each unit has several lines of inquiry written in a way to promote opportunities for students to develop their understanding through numerous perspectives. An example of a central idea for 3rd grade, Earth's physical geography contributes to human settlements. Through this central idea, students will develop questions to explore and research during the unit.

Teachers explore various ways to assess students' knowledge during the unit and finally at the end of the unit. Some formative assessments used, stop and jot, think, pair, share, exit tickets, and self-evaluation. At the end of each unit, students complete a summative assessment either individually or as a group, usually in the form of a problematic scenario. For example, during a 3rd grade unit on where we are in place and time involved a problematic scenario of just moving to the United States from another country. Students choose a region they would want to settle in and had choice as to how they demonstrate their understanding of the region; for example create a poster, brochure, Google slide, or any other form of media. Teachers provide a rubric that includes the criteria and expectations for the project.

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

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

## 2. Other Curriculum Areas:

At Morikami Park, we strive to meet the mission of infusing our students with essential skills and knowledge, with a holistic cooperative approach, integrating homeroom classes and the fine arts. We strongly believe that “essential skills and knowledge” includes reading, writing, and math as well as physical and social sciences being critical to understanding the world around us.

Our fine arts teachers, see themselves primarily as “PYP teachers” who happen to teach non-core subjects, and in so doing contribute to the overall outcomes of our transdisciplinary program. There are constant opportunities for collaboration between the fine arts teachers and their homeroom counterparts. The fine arts and world language teachers use collaborative planning, amongst themselves and with homeroom teachers, to develop and support units within our program of inquiry.

The fine arts are integral to the Morikami Way. Our school has an eight-day cycle with every grade level having a different fine arts period each day. Every student, in every grade level, completes the cycle before repeating the pattern and continues this process throughout the year. That however, is not the end of “fine arts class”. It is the beginning and continuation of an integrated unit of inquiry. Throughout the unit cycle, the fine arts teachers give students homework, class work, and ongoing projects to reinforce the lessons between each scheduled class, and to incorporate inside their homeroom learning. Therefore, fine arts support the homeroom teacher and the unit of inquiry, while the homeroom teacher and the unit of inquiry, in turn, and support the fine arts.

Our media center is the hub of our school, the place where students conduct research, explore available resources, and collaborate with peers. Our media specialist is instrumental in teaching our students internet safety, covering topics such as stranger danger on the internet, keeping information private, determining the appropriateness of a website, and how to be a responsible digital citizen. These lessons are crucial to our program as conducting research is a critical element and students must understand internet responsibilities.

Specific examples of fine arts supporting student acquisition of essential skills and knowledge include our students learning vocabulary, relevant to the unit of inquiry, in their Spanish and Mandarin classes, which they then integrate into their homeroom studies, projects, and final presentations. Our world language teachers often integrate introductory or follow-up learning experiences, which help students, make connections between the different aspects of the curriculum. Students commonly demonstrate their understanding of acquired skills and knowledge through an arts context: giving a science presentation partially or completely in Spanish or Mandarin, for example, or creating a song, picture, or play to display their knowledge of an historical event. All of our teachers regularly incorporate “arts” activities into the summative assessments of our units of inquiry, when applicable.

Other examples include the music teacher teaching students songs of the Civil War, which the students learn to sing, as well as analyze for content, which inspires genuine questions about “who wrote it?”, “where?”, “when?”, “what does it mean?”, and most importantly, “why?” Our music teacher uses songs to help students memorize everything from vocabulary to multiplication tables, uses rhythm to teach mathematical concepts and patterns, and piques interest in every subject from wars to whales with a variety of musical instruments.

Physical education is more than just participation in sports and games. It is an opportunity for students to learn about wellness, cooperation, emotional and social development, to assist students in making healthy choices that contribute to long-term healthy living. One way our PE teacher supports students in wellness is through a unit of inquiry around the transdisciplinary theme of who we are. Students gain health and fitness awareness through physical exercise and by monitoring their progress with a workout journal.

The fine arts at Morikami Park promote attitudes such as empathy and appreciation and skills such as listening and critical analysis. They provide stimulating introductions to new cultures, new stories, and new information. They support consistent continuing efforts to learn, memorize, explain, and explore. By participating in fine arts classes, students use skills acquired to demonstrate genuine mastery of essential skills, display their depth of understanding of the curriculum, and apply the new knowledge to their learning.

### **3. Academic Supports:**

#### **3a. Students performing below grade level**

At Morikami Park Elementary, we promote students' learning and skill acquisition through research-supported techniques and explicit strategies. We provide the appropriate level of instruction and intervention for each student. Students who are performing below grade level are identified by the teacher using performance data and monitoring. Intervention groups are formed with a grade-level perspective, each teacher on the grade level having a concurrent intervention time daily. Areas of expertise across the grade level determine who will implement specific intervention groups. Students attend the intervention group most suited to their needs. Interventions provided are research or evidence based and delivered with fidelity and student performance is monitored weekly. Students receive intervention for an appropriate period of time prior to referral to the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) team. Our MTSS is an active part of our school. Practitioners representing multiple disciplines and families work together as a team to plan and implement supports and services to meet the unique needs of each child, to jointly solve problems, plan and implement interventions. Teachers submit preselected data to the team each week. The team meets weekly to monitor the progress of these students and make recommendations to maximize student learning.

Additionally, we operate before, during and after school tutorial groups, as well as Saturday tutorial, in kindergarten, third, fourth and fifth grades. These are often staffed voluntarily by classroom teachers, fine arts and world language teachers and intervention/ESE support teachers. We have developed mentoring relationships for many of our striving learners, so that they have an invested adult to meet with them during the school day. These strategies, combined with our successful implementation of interventions, lead to strong academic performance of our below level learners.

#### **3b. Students performing above grade level**

At Morikami Park Elementary, we address the needs of above grade level learners in several ways. Teachers at our school persistently teach to the depth and rigor of the standards. Standards-based tasks that allow students to show exemplary learning are developed by each grade level for applicable standards. These tasks allow students who have demonstrated mastery of the grade level standard to take the standard to a higher level or a deeper level. Other practices that promote above grade level thinking include cooperative learning, extended dialogues to develop language and thinking skills, and the use of technology to enhance instruction.

Our social studies and science units provide opportunity for self-selected learning within the scope of the standards. We also incorporate performance assessments, which allow for a personalized opportunity to build on individual students' strengths and foster equitable learning outcomes. Students are encouraged to create artifacts or performances of their choosing to show understanding and mastery of content. This work can be done individually and in mixed-ability cooperative groups.

Our math program allows third, fourth and fifth graders to advance through the next year's math curriculum. Students' math performance is carefully monitored during second grade and the beginning of third grade. Students who have shown readiness for more advanced math are accelerated through the curriculum, finishing sixth grade math by the end of fifth grade. This acceleration can continue after the student graduates from our school and throughout the student's math education.

Lastly, our fine arts and world language teams provide enrichment groups for our students during the school day that include coding, STEAM, and science. Our fifth-grade students are provided an opportunity to participate in above grade level book clubs when other students are receiving intervention services.

#### **3c. Special education**

Our special education program at Morikami Park Elementary includes three special education teachers, a speech-language pathologist, a half-day special education coordinator, and itinerant hearing, vision and occupational therapy providers. Working together with teachers, parents, and administrators, this team

supports an array of diverse learners. A specific strength of this teaching team is how well they communicate with parents and invite them into their children's learning process. Parents readily respond to opportunities to be involved in their child's education, making high parent involvement an embedded part of our culture. Practitioners representing multiple disciplines and families work together to plan and implement supports and services to meet the unique needs of each child. We regularly exchange expertise, knowledge and information to jointly solve problems as well as plan and implement interventions.

For our diverse learners, accommodations are made to the learning environment to promote access and participation for all. Students with diverse learning needs are provided with organizational tools such as graphic organizers, guided notes, and visual schedules/prompts. Alternative seating is provided in the general classroom for students who benefit from movement (wobble chairs, desk cycles and standing desks). The classroom environment is considered in order to meet the needs of students, including noise level, visual input, physical arrangement of the room and accessibility of materials. Students' schedules are monitored to minimize the need for transitions and to ensure adequate time/breaks.

Social interactions form the basis for children's learning and children with differing learning needs are fully provided with the opportunity to learn in a social context to the extent possible. Providing additional support in an inclusive, natural environment and planning social experiences are ways we promote this disposition.

Finally, we provide explicit, systematic instruction to close the achievement gap between our general education and special education students.

**3d.** ELLs, if a special program or intervention is offered

**3e.** Other populations (e.g., migrant), if a special program or intervention is offered

## **PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE**

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### **1. Engaging Students:**

Morikami Park Elementary provides a school environment that accomplishes in making the students feel safe, understood, and supported. The culture at Morikami Park allows the students to flourish academically, socially, and emotionally.

Building strong relationships is also prioritized at Morikami Park to ensure students reach full potential. The foundation of these relationships are built through SEL (social and emotional learning) meetings, golden globes, positive open-communication, and restorative discipline. The students are given the opportunity to discuss their personal life during SEL meetings to create stronger bonds with the staff and other students. These meetings allow the students to feel connected on a personal level. Teachers recognize students with daily Golden Globes. Student earn a Golden Globe by displaying one of the attributes of the IB Learner Profile. The teachers and staff at Morikami engage in positive open-communication to ensure the students have at least one safe adult they feel comfortable talking to at school. These adults can be teachers, administrators, or counselors. Creating open-communication with students is a vital part of forming a strong relationship because students are more willing to approach adults with problems and concerns when they need guidance. Morikami Park uses restorative discipline in conjunction with open-communication to assist with mending relationships between students. The students have the opportunity to take responsibility for their actions and use problem-solving skills to come up with a solution. This allows children to gain healthy problem-solving skills and coping mechanisms to use in their futures.

Building a safe environment and strong relationships helps students with their academic, social, and emotional needs. Morikami Park is aware of how emotional distress can affect how students and staff members perform. To mitigate emotional distress, Morikami provides onsite counseling with the use of a school counselor and a behavioral health professional. These staff members contribute to a constructive school environment by having individual counseling sessions, mentoring students and staff, communicating with parents, and providing outside resources if needed. These relationships go beyond just teachers and students but include parents, guardians, and other caretakers.

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

Partnerships are key to the success of Morikami. While our school works diligently to provide all students with exceptional quality of instruction in a safe and stimulating environment, we cannot do it alone. It is believed that family and community engagement can be a strategy for getting our students reading at grade level, closing achievement gaps, and motivating our students for long term educational success. We regard family and community involvement as a vital strategy for achieving productive learning outcomes.

Morikami Park Elementary understands the importance of integrating families into students' academic careers. Our behavioral health professional presents workshops to parents in order to provide psychoeducation on child development and current struggles they might be enduring. Families are also encouraged to attend IEP meetings, 504 meetings, conferences, and school activities to form relationships with staff and actively engage in the students' academics. Teachers inform parents about students' progress through mid-trimester progress reports and weekly data updates each Friday.

Involvement from the community is a key component in our school events, such as Literacy Night, Family Math Night, Barnes & Noble Night, an expanded Business Partnership program and our Parent Teacher Association. These programs are designed to bring classroom concepts to life and develop effective, lasting relationships with families to support their children's learning. Partnerships with community leaders and business owners are employed to execute events that strengthen learning objectives; examples of these include active and rotating reading rooms featuring "celebrity" readers, a partnership with Fresh Market to host a math scavenger hunt, and guest scientists that deliver exciting demonstrations building on previous taught concepts. The Morikami Park Museum visited our campus to teach our students many different Japanese customs. This gave an international experience to our students. Each year we invite the district

attorney to present a cyber-safety workshop to our fourth and fifth graders as well as to parents. In an effort to keep our students safe on the internet, he presents timely topics to students and parents, explaining the ramifications of inappropriate technology use. These events are just a few examples of how we engage families and communities to enhance student-learning opportunities. Additionally, Morikami strengthened the Business Partnership program, which now offers even more student learning opportunities by linking communities and families together.

### **3. Creating Professional Culture:**

Morikami Park enjoys a positive school culture that brings about high student achievement and high job satisfaction for our staff member. We embrace a culture of collaboration among staff members. Attending teacher chosen professional development with colleagues allows for authentic collaboration and sharing of ideas. One goal we had at our school, how to get students to think critically and then making their thinking visible to others. A professional development teachers chose to participate in came from Project Zero out of Harvard University called "Visible Thinking Routines." This professional development provided a direct correlation to our goal of structured student inquiry and extending student critical thinking. Teachers participated in this training via distance learning, each teacher chose a group to join and together learned the visible thinking routines, collaborated to infuse the thinking routines into the classroom, and then individually taught the routines to students. Sharing the successes and challenges of each routine at faculty meetings, allowed for teacher discussion and changes, allowing us to follow a growth mindset, something we expect from our students. Morikami Park Elementary provides the framework for teacher leadership and autonomy, to encourage teachers to explore instructional practices and attend professional development that will help them with their professional growth.

Teachers new to Morikami Park are provided a mentor and grade level buddy. On boarding is started at the time of hire, new members of the Morikami Park family are invited to a breakfast to meet with our magnet coordinator so that they understand our school and IB program. A support system for new and veteran teachers that we call "Moon bear Huddle," meets monthly to discuss and provide support on instructional initiatives, preparing for observations, and the sharing of best practices.

Camaraderie is also an important aspect of our school culture. Twice monthly, school administration hosts a bagel breakfast for teachers. It is just a small way to show appreciation for their hard work and it provides an opportunity for teachers to chat and catch up with one another, something that is important to our staff members' well-being.

Fostering a positive culture of empowering teachers to do their best work, gives you their best and provides students with the best education a school has to give, in the end leading to high student achievement.

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

Our school leadership team is comprised of the principal, assistant principal, guidance counselor (assists with the emotional needs of our students), ESE contact (provides input on the needs our ESE students), and magnet coordinator (ensures that we are meeting the demands of the PYP). As a leadership team, we strive to lead by inspiration and example, rather than authority. We are visionary, and collaborative, and foster growth in our staff. Our responsibility as leaders is to paint a clear picture of the vision required for the organization and to work collaboratively with the staff towards developing a shared vision. We perceive change as an opportunity to grow and necessary to improve instructional quality and student achievement.

Our mission as principal and assistant principal is to make sure that every student at Morikami Park has access to and receives a quality education. To keep our school moving forward we must be instructional leaders. Our job is to provide resources and support to teachers and students. We mentor teachers as they embark on new instructional practices and curriculum. Staff members find that we are very approachable and informal in many respects, but that we hold high expectations for the work that we do. We feel people perform at their best if they know that we believe in them and care about them. As school leaders, we strive to be objective and reflective observers. Some of our time is spent resolving conflict and enforcing rules. We lead by example to provide structure and still promote creativity and imagination. We encourage our

teachers not to simply accept what has always been done, but to question what is best for our students and school. We strive to be a positive influence on the Morikami Park community by demonstrating integrity, fairness, flexibility and professionalism.

Day to day, we affect students in a positive manner. We are a visible presence in the hallways and classrooms, making ourselves available to students. They are very comfortable approaching us to discuss their concerns. We offer the best resources we know, human resources. We support our struggling learners by personally providing small group instruction. This personal connection between administrators and kids makes a huge difference in student achievement.

## **PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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There are many strategies that we use at Morikami Park that lead to our success but the one practice that sets us apart from other schools, meeting the social emotional needs of our students by building relationships with each student and their families. Building a relationship with students is the most powerful tool in our teaching toolkit, not the material teaching resources but the human connection.

At Morikami Park, we understand that students cannot do their best learning if their emotional needs are not being met. We make it our number one priority to develop an emotional connection with each student. This starts during the summer when teachers receive the list of students who will be in their class; teachers personally call each household to introduce themselves and invite parents to our Meet the Teacher event.

Of the utmost importance, our students must feel personally connected to at least one adult on our campus, a trusted individual who the student can turn to at any point in the day. Our students live stressful lives outside of school as well as deal with daily stressors inside of school. It is imperative that students feel emotionally supported, heard, and understood. Once we meet the emotional needs of our students, we can work on the academics needs of our students. We tell our parents that first, we work on students' emotional needs and then we meet their academic needs, but before student achievement happens, there must be a relationship of trust between student and teacher.

One way we have made building relationships a priority at Morikami Park is through a mentoring program. A student struggling to build a relationship with their teacher is assigned a mentor at school; this person can be any adult on campus, not necessarily a classroom teacher. The mentor checks in with the student daily and spends time listening to the student and lending a shoulder to lean on. It is not unusual, to see a staff member having lunch with a student, sitting outside in our Zen area talking, or a student and staff member taking a calming walk around campus. You can find many of our teachers in the evening at the local parks watching students play soccer, football, or baseball. These are just a few of the ways we strive to build relationships with our students.

In the end, it is not the textbook or workbook used that made a difference in student achievement, but the strong relationships developed that made all the difference.