

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Ted Lenart Regional Gifted Center
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 8101 South La Salle Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Chicago State IL Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 60620-1223

County Cook County

Telephone (773) 535-0040 Fax (773) 535-0048

Web site/URL http://lenart.cps.edu E-mail amsims@cps.edu

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. Janice Jackson E-mail ceo-jackson@cps.edu
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name City Of Chicago Sd 299 Tel. (773) 553-1000

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

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

Date _____

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

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

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

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 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

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)

- Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
 - 477 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 165 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools

642 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

- 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

- 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	17	22	39
K	11	16	27
1	13	16	29
2	6	22	28
3	13	17	30
4	18	13	31
5	12	19	31
6	8	22	30
7	17	13	30
8	8	10	18
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	123	170	293

*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
 - 15 % Asian
 - 62.1 % Black or African American
 - 4.4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 14.3 % White
 - 4.2 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 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.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	1
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	1
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	2
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	266
(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):

Cantonese, Mandarin, Spanish, Korean, Polish, Gujarati, Turkish, Russian

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %
1 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 27 %

Total number students who qualify: 79

8. Students receiving special education services: 8 %

23 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>10</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>2</u> Developmental Delay | <u>0</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>6</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</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: 8

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:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	11
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	5
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	5
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 30:1

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

Required Information	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	97%	97%	97%
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.

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.

Our mission is to foster a diverse community of learners, focusing on holistic development, academic excellence, and innovation; positioned to impact our world.

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

Our school is a Selective Enrollment, magnet gifted school. Kindergarten through 8th grade applicants are selected based on their admission exam score. All applications, testing, and student selection is handled off-site by the Chicago Public School Office of Access and Enrollment department.

Applicants would first submit an online or paper application between the months of October to December, the year prior to entering the grade you are applying for.

Then applicants will take an exam. The exam will measure a student's critical thinking skills, reasoning, problem solving, and mental control. Mental control is the ability to hold information in the short-term memory while performing a mental operation.

Applicants will then be informed in the Spring as to if they are offered a seat in the Fall to their selected school.

PART III - SUMMARY

Ted Lenart Regional Gifted Center is a Pre-K through 8th grade public, selective enrollment elementary school located in the West Chatham neighborhood on the southside of Chicago. With over 600 schools in the Chicago Public School system, Lenart is the only full-site Regional Gifted Center located on the southside of Chicago. Established in 1988, Lenart currently serves 293 students.

Lenart is a small school with one class per grade level. Even though we are small, we serve a diverse population with various racial and ethnic backgrounds: 62.1% African American, 15% Asian, 14.3% White, 4.4% Hispanic or Latino, and 4.2% who identify as two or more races. Lenart is also geographically diverse. Students who live 1.5 miles away from the school are eligible to receive transportation. With over 90% of our school population eligible for transportation services, this diversity makes Lenart unique. We serve a large population of underrepresented gifted students from multiple Chicago neighborhoods.

With our Lenart community being diverse in distinct ways, we strive to build a broader school community by creating opportunities for our families to come together. In order to promote learning and offer social opportunities for our community, we host several annual family events such as Literacy Night, Math, Science, & Technology Night, Fitness Night, Walk-a-Thon, Fall Festival, Snowball Parent and Child Dance, Back-to-School Meet and Greet, End of the Year All-School Picnic, Winter Music Festival, and All-School Talent Show. Additionally, our Lenart Parent Community Group (LPCG) organizes family service projects and events that change yearly based on parent suggestions, such as Feed My Starving Children, Dave & Busters Family Day, and Chicago Cares where families came together to paint school murals, plant flowers in the schoolyard, and build benches with flower boxes. Each of these events serves as an opportunity to strengthen and build our school community through shared experiences.

Lenart has been successful in supporting our students' academic and social emotional needs. In alignment with our school's mission and vision, we focus on the holistic development of our diverse learners. Our goal is preparing critical and innovative thinkers and caring and empathetic individuals, who also perform well academically.

Some of the key strategies used within the school that have encouraged and challenged all students to develop their full potential are as follows:

Academically: For our literacy and math instruction, beginning in Kindergarten, our students are learning at half-a-year to a year accelerated pace. This gradually grows until 4th grade where students are fully accelerated at a two-year accelerated pace. For the past three years, teachers are slowly implementing personalized learning to support the diverse academic needs of our students.

Academic and special interest competitions offer students a chance to gain substantial experience, showcase their skills, analyze and evaluate outcomes, and uncover new interests. Therefore, we provide students competitive opportunities through Spelling Bee, Geography Bee, Math Counts, Chicago Junior Math League, Science and History Fairs, Invention Convention, Band, Choir, and Chess tournaments.

Physically: Students have 20 minutes of recess daily and 120 minutes of physical and health education weekly. Within the classroom, teachers implement multiple movement breaks utilizing GoNoodle and Yoga 4 Classrooms. After school, students can join in CPS league sports such as cross country, track and field, basketball, volleyball, and soccer, which are coached by Lenart staff.

Social & Emotionally: Lenart uses a Responsive Classroom approach, which includes morning meetings, advisory sessions, natural and logical consequences, restorative practices, teaching students expected behaviors, and teaching them to be accountable to themselves, their peers, and adults. Social emotional learning (SEL) must be relatable and part of the daily classroom culture, not just an isolated lesson. For example, 1st grade is currently practicing effective strategies to express their feelings to each other. Utilizing need assessment surveys, our counselor also meets with small groups, including students with changing family dynamics, developing peer relationships, and implementing executive functioning

strategies. We have a team of teachers trained by the Rush University in utilizing an executive functioning program. Our teachers also help contribute by having weekly lunch groups and check-in / check outs with identified students who have specific social and emotional needs.

Culturally: Lenart strives to be an all inclusive and collaborative school involving all stakeholders; teachers, parents, students, and community. For example, our Local School Council (LSC) and LPCG plans and organizes many different school activities and events that take place during the school year. Our students also have an active voice in school activities by writing a proposal and presenting it to the administration and LSC for approval. Students take active roles in establishing their own classroom rules, structures, and expectations. Utilizing different approaches, teachers also encourage all students to set individual goals, explore their own personal traits and interests, and celebrate each other's similarities and differences. We also have an active Student Council and National Junior Honor Society who work together to promote a positive school culture and build school community.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

Ted Lenart Regional Gifted Center utilizes the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) as a basis for all curriculum design and planning. For our literacy and math instruction, beginning in Kindergarten, our students are learning at half-a-year to a year accelerated pace. This gradually grows until 4th grade where students are fully accelerated at a two-year accelerated pace. In order to ensure that our acceleration is seamless, our school works diligently on vertical alignment. Our teachers work together to divide the literacy and math standards to determine which grade level will be responsible for teaching each standard. This work is continuous because it is also necessary to have on-going conversations about the students' progress with the standards. We recognized the diverse academic needs in our students and this is how our work with personalized learning started. One facet of personalized learning that Lenart adopted as part of our overarching philosophy is learner agency. Learner agency as defined by Education Reimagined is "Learning that is characterized by learning agency recognizes learners as active participants in their own learning and engages them in the design of their experiences and the realization of their learning outcomes in ways appropriate for their developmental level. As such, learners have choice and voice in their educational experiences as they progress through competencies. Harnessing his or her own intrinsic motivation to learn, each learner strives to ultimately take full ownership of his or her own learning." This philosophy pushes our teachers' approaches beyond just differentiation. It challenges us to be also life-long learners in developing our own repertoire of project-based learning, workshop models, and inquiry-based learning for our students.

1b. Reading/English language arts

Lenart's literacy instruction is based on the understandings that students need direct, explicit instruction in reading and writing, students need substantial periods of time to read and write daily, students need a print rich environment where they choose high interest, appropriate complex books to practice their learned skills and strategies, and students need opportunities to share and conference with each other and to write responses to their reading. In the primary grades, Kindergarten through 3rd grade, teachers utilize Lucy Calkins's Unit of Study for Teaching Reading and Writing to craft instruction and build a strong literacy foundation. Teachers also adopted Calkins's workshop model that includes the components of whole-class mini lessons, small-group and one-on-one instruction, discussion, and conferencing, and independent practice. In intermediate and upper grades (4th-8th), students participate in novel studies and book clubs. The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for Reading and Writing are divided into two sections K-5 standards and 6-12 standards. The 6-12 standards do not significantly change from K-5 standards but builds in depth. Teachers continue to utilize workshop models to support students in building depth in their understanding of the CCSS and practice using multiple standards together while reading instead of in isolation. This leads to more robust conversations about text. Students also begin to read increasingly more complex texts and expand the variety of text types that they are reading. Teachers at all grades, Kindergarten through 8th grade, use formative assessments to drive instruction and support student needs in small groups. Some of these formative assessments include reading running records, observations, teacher created assessments, self and peer assessments, and performance tasks. In writing, teachers also use student journals and writing prompts as a form of formative assessment.

1c. Mathematics

Mathematics units at Lenart are aligned to the CCSS and grounded in the 8 Common Core Mathematical Practices. Kindergarten through 3rd grade use materials from Pearson Envisions, 4th & 5th grades use materials from the Pearson Connected Mathematics Project, and 6th, 7th, and 8th grades use materials from the Pearson Integrated CME Project. Teachers do not simply follow the pacing of these texts but use them as guides and resources. As part of our vertical alignment process, teachers collaborate across grade levels to determine which CCSS and math topics can be taught together for acceleration and which topics build on

each other to create depth in understanding a specific math concept. By the time students are in 7th grade, they are learning Algebra I and 8th graders are learning Geometry I and Trigonometry. Teachers utilize formative assessment data, including teacher created pre- and post- assessments, standardized unit assessments, and performance based assessments, to determine which mathematical concepts students have mastered, which concepts need to be taught, which students need more scaffolding for specific concepts, and which students are ready for deeper extensions of a specific concept. Other resources to help support more personalized learning and small group learning include online platforms such as Khan Academy, Art of Problem Solving, and ALEKS.

Lenart uses a variety of instructional models to teach mathematics in Kindergarten through 8th grade. Depending on the teacher's objective with the math lesson and the type of math content being taught, the teacher will determine the best instructional model to utilize. Two commonly used math instructional models at Lenart include "Gradual Release of Responsibility" and "Launch, Explore, and Summarize". The "Gradual Release of Responsibility" model is appropriate when providing direct, explicit instruction. The teacher would model a math skill, practice it together with the students, and then have students practice independently. You will see this model being utilized more often in our primary grades. The "Launch, Explore, and Summarize" model is a more inquiry-based and problem-centered type of teaching and is appropriate when mathematical concepts are embedded in problem-based investigations. With this model, the teacher guides, prompts, questions, and facilitates students to do and make sense of the mathematics conceptually and procedurally and challenges students to understand, evaluate, and provide reasoning for different approaches.

1d. Science

Science instruction at Lenart is aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards. All science units are teacher-created utilizing resources from our district, AmplifyScience, and PLTW (Project Lead the Way). Using these resources, teachers strive to engage students in investigation-based learning where students have the chance to explore through hands-on learning, challenge students to use evidence to support their thinking, and integrate literacy, mathematics, and technology to provide meaningful and relatable learning experiences. Students in middle school also take courses in Biology and Physical Science in preparation for high school. As for formative assessments, teachers use rubrics to assess students' participation as well as lab reports which may include student observations, data collected, responses to questions, students' analyzes and so forth.

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

Social Studies / History / Civic instruction at Lenart is aligned to the Illinois Learning Standards which emphasizes the learning about community, neighborhood, the history of the city and state at primary grades and expands into U.S. and World History in the intermediate and upper grades. Lenart's social studies / history / civic instruction is also based on the understanding the social studies / history cannot be taught in isolation. Teachers integrate the uses of historical fiction and nonfiction to build a students' understanding of history and its impact on us today. Students participate in student-led class discussions, critical thinking, debates which require textual evidence and support, and project-based learning activities. Lenart is also a partner school with Facing History, which provides our Kindergarten - 8th grade teachers professional development and teaching strategies on how to integrate the study of history, literature, and human behavior with ethical decision making and social-emotional learning. Students explore the complexities of history, make connections to current events, reflect on the choices they confront today, and consider how they can make a difference. In addition, our middle school students partner with the University of Chicago philosophy department, in a program called Winning Words. Winning Words is a part of the university's Civic Knowledge Project that fosters students' philosophical conversation, ethical reflection, political reflection, meaningful self-expression, and critical thinking through a Socratic Seminar approach. In conjunction with supporting our middle school students' civic learning, Lenart also partners with Mikva Challenge and participates in their Project Soapbox and Issues to Action curriculum. Project Soapbox is a public speaking competition facilitated by Mikva Challenge that calls young people to speak out on issues that affect them and their communities. Issues to Action curriculum provides a six-step process for youth activism that asks students to examine their communities, identify issues of importance to them, conduct

intensive primary research about these issues, analyze power, develop strategies, and take action to impact policy — while reflecting on the process throughout. Through Soapbox and Issues to Actions, students participate and present their speeches and action projects to peers, local community, and civic partners. This empowers our students to be informed and active citizens that will promote a just and equitable society.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

Lenart offers two full day Preschool programs for 3 and 4 years old through the Chicago Public Schools Chicago Early Learning Program. However, the preschool program is separate from our K-8 program and students that attend the preschool program will still need to go through the Selective Enrollment Application process to be selected for our K-8 Gifted Program at Lenart. Our preschool program utilizes the Creative Curriculum by TeachingStrategies to provide students with play-based learning experiences. Our teachers also utilize the district provided GOLD by TeachingStrategies system for observation-based assessments on the 38 research-based objectives for preschoolers' development and learning. While it is difficult for us to track the success of our preschoolers in the primary grades because the majority of the students will attend a different school, our teachers are able to provide a comprehensive GOLD portfolio of a student's work that reflects what the student is able to do and areas of growth in regards to literacy, mathematics, fine motor, and gross motor skills.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

In addition to our core instruction program, Ted Lenart Regional Gifted Center also offers all students, PreK - 8th grade, Music, Art, Physical Education/Health, Spanish, and Technology instruction. These content areas are essential in providing students exposure to a variety of experiences and building interest.

Music: Music has a deeply rooted history at Lenart and continues to be a content area that our students value and enjoy. Students receive between 60 and 120 minutes of music instruction weekly. In PreK and Kindergarten, students start by developing an appreciation for music through listening to various genres of music and learning to sing. In 1st - 4th grade, students learn music theory, how to read music, and play the recorder. In 5th - 8th grade, music instruction transforms into a Band class where every student selects a band instrument to learn to play individually and collaboratively together as a band. Additionally, students in 7th and 8th grade also receive choir instruction and participate in a city choir competition at the end of the year. Students also have opportunities after school to participate in guitar, singing, and piano lessons as well as join Beginning, Advanced, or Jazz Band to participate in city competitions.

Art: Art instruction is provided to students in Kindergarten - 8th grade through a partnership with Hyde Park Art Center. Students receive 60 minutes of art instruction weekly. Our teachers partner with an art resident to collaborate on art projects that are integrated with classroom concepts. Students learn about and create works of art using different styles and mediums. The students' artwork is displayed throughout the school. Both performing and visual art courses contribute to the development of well-rounded and cultured students.

Physical Education / Health (PE): Students in PreK - 8th grade receive 120 minutes of PE instruction per week. Students also participate in 20 minutes of recess daily. PE instruction is based on units of study such as basketball, soccer, badminton, bowling, sexual health, and a fitness unit. More importantly, aside from skill development, a common objective in all these units of study is to teach students teamwork, collaboration, and sportsmanship. PE contributes to the development of important life skills as well as the importance of being physically active.

Spanish: Spanish was the language selected by our parent and student community four years ago. Students in PreK - 8th grade receive between 60 and 120 minutes of Spanish instruction weekly. Our goal is for students to become proficient conversational speakers of Spanish and to have a better appreciation of other cultures where the language is spoken. Our Spanish instructor teaches Spanish utilizing an unconventional and interactive approach. Instead of finding textbooks in her classroom, you will find a print-rich environment filled with pictures, maps, student-created anchor charts, Spanish / English labels, and high-

interest Spanish text. Students learn Spanish by playing games, singing, music, and participating in interactive dialogue activities. Students also gradually acquire reading and writing skills in Spanish, too. Spanish instruction will support students in developing early language and linguistic skills, provide students an advantage in high school Spanish language classes, and allow students to communicate with others that speak Spanish outside of school.

Technology: Technology is integrated into classroom instruction daily. In addition, students also have a 60 minutes weekly designated technology lab time with our K-12 certified technology teacher. Technology instruction is based on the International Society for Technology in Education Standards for Students and the Computer Science Teachers Association K-12 Computer Science Standards. Students complete different units of study in Digital Citizenship using materials by Common Sense Media, learn to type, and different STEM activities. Students in the primary grades also learn computer science using materials from codeSpark Academy. Students in the intermediate grades will build their computer science knowledge by using materials from Scratch Act I and Scratch Encore. In middle school, students continue to expand their technology knowledge with learning to use different Google apps, HTML & CSS website design, physical computing, and robotics.

Other programs and offerings at Lenart include our weekly social-emotional learning (SEL) for all grades based on the Illinois Social Emotional Learning Standards. Our school counselor collaborates and co-teaches with classroom teachers on topics determined by individual classroom needs. Some common topics include peer relationships, our Lenart Lion Values: Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Resilient, bullying, conflict resolutions, self-awareness, and social-awareness.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

Lenart uses a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework to help identify and support struggling students performing below grade level. Our MTSS consist of three tiers: Tier 1, Whole Group; Tier 2, Small Group Interventions; and Tier 3, Intense, Individualized Support. Our teachers use formal assessment data, classroom observations, and NWEA to determine students who need additional support. During weekly grade-level meetings, teachers share student data with our school counselor, special education teacher, and administration. As a team, we determine next steps, which can include additional assessment screeners to narrow the area of focus and small group and/or individual intervention ideas. For example, our 1st grade teacher noticed a student's Fall NWEA reading percentile was at the 61 percentile for attainment but only 21 percentile for growth, and he had a difficult time retaining reading / phonics skills. The teacher referred him to the primary team, and they recommended follow-up phonics screeners to identify his knowledge of specific letter sounds, vowels, and blends. During Tier 2 interventions, as small group instruction is provided, student progress is monitored to determine if students are making sufficient progress to remain in their current tiered instruction or if they need further interventions.

To ensure that our tiered instruction meets our students' needs, we maximize all staff, including our enrichment teachers and special education staff to provide additional pull-out or push-in small-group instruction, which works well due to a high degree of collaboration among our staff. Examples of this collaboration include our music teacher pulling out four students for Fountas and Pinnell's Leveled Literacy Intervention while a paraprofessional pushes in to assist a second-grade small-group at a multiplication center.

We also created after school academic support groups where identified students are strongly encouraged to attend. These after school academic support groups typically last 8 weeks, focused on specific instruction determined by the teacher. Our parents are also actively involved in this process and at times be asked to also work with their child at home on specific provided resources.

3b. Students performing above grade level

As a regionally gifted center, our students received an accelerated curriculum; however, we recognize that we frequently have students who perform beyond our two-year acceleration. In order to support all students, we have begun to implement personalized learning in the primary grades, and we offer learner choice in the middle grades.

Our primary teachers, Kindergarten - 5th grade, have developed differentiated instruction that is paced to the needs and interests of the students. Through individual conferences and creation of learner profiles, teachers and students work together to create a personalized learning contract where students take on an extension activity or project to further develop their knowledge. For example, students may choose to participate in the Invention Convention, thus allowing their imaginations and problem-solving abilities to tackle real-world problems that occur in their everyday lives. Last year, one of our first graders invented a portable sink, and her prototype advanced to the national level. Our students' motivation is enhanced because they have been provided opportunities of autonomy and self-direction.

In middle school, students are provided with significant opportunities of learner choice. For example, students are provided an opportunity to choose their project topic. This choice of topic allows them to connect with their strengths and interests, providing more control over their work, which supports their intrinsic motivation. Our advanced readers are able to select collegiate-level texts to support their history fair research, visit university archives for materials, and design a project that reflects their passion: a documentary, a website, or an exhibit board. Additionally, we offer middle school enrichment classes, where students have taken cooking lessons, psychology classes, participated in the stock market stimulation, and directed and produced a play.

All students also use their NWEA learning continuum to identify their areas of strength and growth and to work on new skills and concepts. Students are well versed in using technology platforms, such as Khan Academy, IXL, and ALEKS, as supplemental resources and tools for independent learning.

3c. Special education

Lenart has a comprehensive special education program concentrated on whole student development to provide instructional access points for all learners. Currently, our diverse learner population is small, consisting of 23 students who receive specialized instruction through an IEP or 504 plan. Our non-categorical program includes students with a range of disabilities from autism, developmental delay, speech and language impairment, visual impairment, to other health impairments. We champion student diversity by embedding social, emotional instruction into our curriculum that instills tolerance, respect, and inclusivity. To this end, our close-knit community recognizes every student's unique attributes, but does not exclude students because of their exceptionality.

We utilize a blended instruction model incorporating inclusive and pull-out supports. Nevertheless, student IEPs guide the nature and scope of services and support a child receives. By offering multiple teaching models, Lenart ensures students receive instruction to meet their needs and capitalize on their propensity to learn. We have one special education teacher who serves as our case manager. Our case manager is knowledgeable about special education policies and also understands developmental milestones and learning trajectories that facilitate collaboration and IEP development. Through our co-teaching model, our general and special education teachers work closely to support all learners. Learning is reinforced by three paraprofessionals who provide small group instruction, intervening lessons, and facilitate peer relationships. Our paraprofessionals are invaluable partners in the education process; thus, their expertise is relied upon to identify students who need differentiated instruction. Although our diverse learner population is modest, we have a multi-disciplinary team of specialists who offer wide-ranging services. Our student support team consists of our special education teacher/case manager, school counselor, and clinicians. Each week our team reviews, discusses, and evaluates diverse learner services and supports. General educators participate in pre-referral meetings to analyze the effectiveness of classroom interventions.

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

While many of our students speak a second language, they have tested out or transitioned out of receiving ELL services. We currently have one student who is receiving English Language Learner support. We have two ELL certified teachers who do check-ins with the student and provide support as needed.

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

To support our positive environment and to encourage academic, social and emotional growth, Lenart offers a variety of in-school and after-school programming to meet the various needs. During school hours, teachers and administration will host student lunches with small groups to foster social-emotional support to struggling students. We also created PreK - 8th buddy classrooms, pairing up an older classroom with a younger classroom. Buddy classrooms act as role models to the younger students while working on academic and social based activities. To support our students after school, we offer a variety of clubs and programs to develop students' interests and leadership. Students have the opportunity to participate in Student Council, Battle of the Books, Yearbook Club, Spanish Dance, Band, counseling small groups, academic tutoring, and sports.

We implement school-wide initiatives based on student voice and needs to promote and encourage social-emotional growth. For example, our National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) creates opportunities for students to participate in service and community-oriented projects such as a holiday food drive to support a neighborhood church's food pantry, warm clothing drive for a local homeless shelter, and donating old eyeglasses to children in need. To continue supporting classroom and school-wide unity, students across grades worked together to create our social contract, a set of school-wide expectations and norms. Additionally, within each classroom, students worked together to create their own classroom rules and expectations. These contracts, rules, and expectations are signed by all the students, giving them true ownership.

To build upon that connection between school and community, our classes participate in multiple field trips providing students with real-world experiences. Our students look forward to field trips that have become traditions. For example, our third graders visit Chicago's Navy Pier Winter Wonderland to help decorate trees for Lurie Children's Hospital.

Within the classrooms, students showcase their work and connect them with an authentic, diverse audience of parents, community members, and fellow students. In first grade, students write, edit, and publish their first stories, showcasing them in a Writer's Museum. Our second graders research, create, and present on a historical figure for a Black History Wax Museum. These are just two events where our students have opportunities to demonstrate their expertise, practice their presentation skills, and highlight their hard work.

Socially and emotionally students are supported through the school's Responsive Classroom approach. One component of Responsive Classroom is to hold morning meetings providing a safe opportunity for students to share their thoughts and feelings. This is a great way for students to make connections with each other and develop friendships and for the teacher to gain a deeper understanding of the students.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Lenart is proud to say that we have a very open door environment in which parents are welcomed and valued as partners. Over the years, Lenart has worked hard, together with all stakeholders, to build in our active engagement opportunities and expand our communication tools.

Currently, parents receive a weekly email newsletter from administration to provide updates on what happened at school during the week, upcoming meetings and events, student recognition of accomplishments, and additional support resources. Our school's website is also frequently updated to provide parents another tool for communication. All teachers have also created their own personal classroom website to provide parents additional and more personal connections with their child's classroom. Administration and teachers communicate with parents through emails and phone calls positive student acknowledgements as well as challenges. Administration hosts monthly "Coffee and Donuts" and quarterly "Dessert Nights" meetings for parents, to create a more relaxed environment for parents to chat with administration. Lenart also offers a plethora of events to families and community members including but

not limited to academic and interest based family nights, student performances, classroom projects and performances, student competitions, family outings, end-of-the year student recognition and celebrations, and a school-wide picnic.

Lenart has developed partnerships with several organizations to bring additional support into our school. We have partnered with Facing History, University of Chicago Winning Words, Debate it Forward, Mikva Challenge, First Move Chess, and other organizations through parent connections. For example, we had a 1st grade parent who works as a research scientist at a university bring in snakes, birds, turtles, and other reptiles to support students learning about animal body part functions and habitats.

The Local School Council (LSC) and Lenart Parent Community Group (LPCG) are also established organizations, within the school, that provide parent and community members opportunities in shared leadership at the school. LSC and LPCG host monthly meetings, open to all Lenart families and the community, to discuss and monitor our continuous improvement work plan and our school's budget, plan for upcoming events and activities, fundraising, and community building.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

We expect our students to be life-long learners. This is the same expectation that we hold for our teachers. We believe that in order to be a successful and effective teacher, we should always strive to learn more, be reflective, and better our practice. Our teachers have made the commitment to meet monthly for whole group professional development. This year's area of study is culturally responsive teaching. Our Lenart team recognizes through our observations and on-going conversations that equity and culturally responsive teaching is very important to us and is an area of growth for Lenart. We decided to read, study, and discuss the book, *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain* by Zaretta Hammond, together as a group. We also utilize our partnership with Facing History and Ourselves to help support us with our work in culturally responsive teaching.

In addition to whole group professional development, administration recognizes that teachers have different areas of interest for professional development. The administration is very supportive in teachers attending professional development workshops outside of school. Teachers just need to speak with administration and administration would cover the cost of the workshop and provide substitute coverage, if needed. The only stipulation is that the teacher returns to school to teach and share with others what they had learned.

Lenart teachers also engage in weekly one-on-one coaching meetings with an administrator. Each teacher's coaching meetings are unique in that the administrator and teacher collaboratively decide on an area of focus based on Charlotte Danielson's framework for professional practice. One-on-one coaching meetings can include unit planning, developing assessments, looking at student work, establishing classroom routines and structures, and so forth.

All these different types of professional development approaches help teachers feel valued and supported. There is a shared understanding that professional development is not meant to be evaluative but a tool to ultimately help improve students' academic performance and support our students' social-emotional learning.

4. School Leadership:

Ted Lenart Regional Gifted Center is a small school, where our staff size consists of 26 members. Our success is contributed to a shared leadership approach. The principal and assistant principal are committed to serving all stakeholders at Lenart even if it means teaching a small group, planning units with teachers, doing check-ins and check-outs with students who have specific social emotional needs, and even lunch supervision and table cleaning duty. The actions of the administration convey the message that we are a team, and every role and responsibility in the school is important.

Everyone staff member is a part of the school leadership team. The school leadership team has two focuses, academics and social-emotional learning. For example, as a team we established our Lenart Lion Values,

visited different schools to help guide us in creating our own Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports system, and researched different social-emotional approaches before adopting Responsive Classroom. The SEL team continues to lead Lenart in implementation and supporting the different SEL components that we have in place. Another example, teachers led each other in learning cycles to allow for teachers to learn from each other and better our school-wide practice. One of our most recent learning cycles included the Kindergarten - 5th grade teachers. They focused on math instruction and practices to identify areas of growth in strengthening students' conceptual understanding with number sense. Teachers had the opportunity to observe each other, meet to discuss their findings, and determine next steps.

Leadership roles also extend to the parents and community members who serve on LSC and LPCG. These stakeholders help to create our Continuous Improvement Work Plan (CIWP) that establishes the school two-year goals and action plans, promote the school's climate and culture through organizing events and activities for students and their families, being the voice of all our parents through on-going parent surveys and communication, and attending monthly meetings to stay updated with what is happening in school. All our parents are valued as collaborative members as their input and work helps to enrich the larger school community.

As for the most important stakeholders in our school, our students are fully supported and encouraged, by all other stakeholders, to be leaders at Lenart. For example, our students in K-8th grade are in charge of providing school tours during Open Houses for prospective families. Our National Junior Honor Society members led the way in improving hallway transitions periods school-wide. Our Kindergartners were in charge of deciding on themes for our next School Spirit Week. These are just a few examples of our student's active participation in school leadership.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Our commitment to culturally responsive teaching, emphasizing our students, sets Ted Lenart Regional Gifted Center apart from other high-performing schools. We recognize and value the importance of racial and cultural diversity in our students. Culturally responsive teaching acknowledges cultural differences as assets, challenges racial and cultural stereotypes, creates caring learning communities, and builds relationships with students. As educators, we are all guilty of wanting to just teach the academics, but sometimes we fail to recognize who our students are and what our students need to grow and to succeed.

However, before we were able to establish these culturally relevant student-centered practices, we had to begin with ourselves. We reflected upon our student data and practices and found that our African-American students were the lowest achieving in attainment and growth compared to our other racial groups. Although our population of gifted students is predominantly African-American, we noticed that national achievement disparities are still prevalent in our school. We conceded the inequities within our school, and we wanted to eliminate barriers to success and to ensure equitable opportunities for all students. We turned to University of Washington Professor of Education, Geneva Gay, and the work on culturally responsive teaching.

Culturally responsive teaching starts with the adults. To initiate changes in our practices, we began with whole staff professional development. Here our teachers were asked to embrace the process and accept the vulnerability and discomfort associated with discussions about race and identity. Teachers were self-reflective about their teaching pedagogy and confronted their privileges and biases. This different way of thinking challenges us to change our instructional approaches and examine the deeply held beliefs of how teachers respond to students.

Academic and socio-emotional learning are inextricable; we believe that culturally relevant teaching will increase students' intrinsic motivation and overall engagement. The focus on holistic development is reflected in our everyday practices that integrate socio-emotional learning into all academic content. While this may seem simple, we start every day greeting students by their first name. This practice acknowledges the individual and makes students feel a part of our learning community. Other culturally relevant and student-centered practices include: morning meetings, personalized instruction, a flexible schedule for intervention and enrichment, responsive classroom, Facing History partnership, and whole-school identity charts. We have created an environment that welcomes students' natural ways of learning and shapes the content so that it connects to their lives and funds of knowledge.