

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

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

School Mailing Address 2386 N 500 W #95  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Ireland State IN Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 47545-0095

County Dubois County

Telephone (812) 482-7751 Fax (812) 482-7765

Web site/URL https://www.gjcs.k12.in.us/3/home E-mail sbauer@gjcs.k12.in.us

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\* Mrs. Tracy Lorey E-mail tlorey@gjcs.k12.in.us  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Greater Jasper Consolidated Schools Tel. (812) 482-1801

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. Bernie Vogler  
(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):
- 3 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 5 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	55	44	99
1	51	47	98
2	48	36	84
3	46	36	82
4	42	63	105
5	39	39	78
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>	281	265	546

\*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
  - 1.7 % Asian
  - 0.6 % Black or African American
  - 2.8 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 93.9 % White
  - 1 % 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: 3%

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	5
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	10
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	15
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	537
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.03
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):  
Gujarati, Haitian Creole, Hindi, Spanish, Tamil, Vietnamese

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 3 %  
16 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 14 %  
 Total number students who qualify: 74

8. Students receiving special education services: 15 %

80 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>0</u> Autism                  | <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>5</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>3</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>13</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>64</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>1</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 1

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	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	23
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.	7
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 23:1

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	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%
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. 2009

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

We believe that all children can learn. Through the cooperative efforts of all, we provide learning environments in which all children can succeed and thrive.

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

## **PART III - SUMMARY**

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Ireland Elementary is nestled in Southwest Indiana in Dubois County. Ireland, Indiana is a subcommunity of Jasper, Indiana. Ireland Elementary educates students from the small community of Ireland and the much larger neighboring community, Jasper. The current population of the two communities is 15,500. There is a strong community feeling among the residents of the town and the surrounding sub-divisions. It is a peaceful town and area, a great place for families.

Historically, the Ireland community has provided for students in need through family, church, school, and community resources. While our community's strong German heritage and traditions continue, economics and an ever-changing population present us with an increasing number of students who need more assistance in a variety of areas. Our population is becoming more culturally diverse, as well. In 2014-2015, 3% of our population was culturally diverse. There has been an increase to 7%. Free and reduced lunch has increased from 8% in 2014-2015 to 14.8% in 2019-2020. This increase prompted our school to start a breakfast program in the fall of 2019. Socio-economic and cultural differences can and have impacted our educational progress.

Ireland Elementary school is one of three elementary schools in the Greater Jasper Consolidated School Corporation. We serve kindergarten through fifth grades and a multi-categorical resource room. In addition, itinerant teachers provide art and music classes for all students. Social workers provide student assistance. ENL instruction is provided as needed, primarily through curricular accommodations. Speech, OT, PT, and sensory-related disability services are provided through a special education cooperative. Eligibility assessments are provided by the DSPP Exceptional Children's Co-op.

We believe in developing the whole child. At Ireland Elementary, we have 30 minutes of mindfulness instruction in our weekly schedule. Students are well versed in the terminology of the brain. They have been educated with strategies to self-regulate. Classrooms have sensory stations and our school has a sensory room that can be used for self-regulation. Additionally, students engage in routine character education lessons, in which traits are focused upon throughout the school year. Students are encouraged to participate in weekly kindness challenges, which are shared with our school and local community. Our primary grades and recommended students use Minds in Motion, a program that promotes brain and body connections by strengthening balance and the vestibular system. The whole child is also developed by building and nurturing relationships. At Ireland Elementary, each child is partnered with a staff mentor. The mentor's role is to be another caring person to support the child. A partnership with a local organization, Southwest Indiana Educational Center, provides support and professional development in whole child education.

Ireland Elementary is a family-friendly environment. Parents want to be connected to their school. Implementing quarterly "Family Fun Nights" has improved our relationships with parents and students. For elementary students, seeing their teacher after hours and in a different setting than the classroom is just exciting. Family Fun Nights provide an opportunity to make personal connections to the school and staff. One theme was backyard fun. Families played backyard games, participated in relays, danced, and enjoyed a student-managed lemonade stand. Activities have been centered around a winter theme and Irish celebrations. No matter the theme, families love coming together as a school community to have fun and conversation. This allows staff to see the whole child. Families also see staff as regular people and not just an educator.

The Parent Teacher Organization is very active, both with fundraising to support student initiatives and providing volunteers. Our PTO provides all school supplies for every student. This gives every student the tools to start a successful school year. Parents are encouraged to volunteer at our school. Our volunteers help by chaperoning field trips, working the book fair and other school events, helping with remediation of students, assisting teachers with small groups in classrooms, and completing clerical tasks. The PTO has organized our annual Soup and Sandwich Fundraiser for over 25 years. Approximately 2,000 gallons of soup are made and sold during this weekend event where families come together, work, and socialize while participating in this fundraiser.

Partnerships with the Kennedy Arts Center, the City of Jasper, and the Jasper Community Arts Commission provide opportunities to enhance vocabulary development through fine arts programs. Our students attend one program a year at the Jasper Community Arts Center. This gives students an opportunity to experience a performance connected to science, literature, character education, or social studies. Classroom resources are provided to build connections into the classroom setting.

As a recipient of the 2009 Blue Ribbon School of Excellence Award, Ireland Elementary was honored for its academic success. Our local community celebrated this achievement with recognition signs in our community to announce our designation as a Blue Ribbon School. Our community celebrated our success with newspaper articles, a schoolwide celebration, and a formal presentation conducted at our local school board meeting. We were asked to present our strategies for success at a variety of professional conferences and meetings. Our Blue Ribbon status was frequently noted by local businesses when recruiting prospective employees from areas outside of southern Indiana. Since receiving this award in 2009, our school climate and culture has grown with pride in both our achievements and abilities. Our curriculum and instruction have grown and changed with the demands of our student population, along with the professional development of our staff. The students know “When you work hard, good things happen!”

## **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

Ireland Elementary School, in collaboration with all teachers across the GJCS District, has created a core curriculum that all elementary schools follow. This allows for collaboration among all teachers of a specific grade level. Grade level teachers worked together to create a common curriculum based upon the Indiana State Standards. Teachers are evolving in the integration of Project-Based Learning into the common curriculum. Teachers developed a standards-based grading program, including common assessment pieces and curriculum calendars, that allow us to best meet the needs of our student population. Each grade level continues to meet periodically to address grade-level curriculum concerns and to make improvements to the grade level's curriculum materials. Vertical alignment helps with the continuity of quality instruction to ensure student success. In addition, all teachers have been involved in the adoption of materials throughout all curriculum areas.

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

At Ireland Elementary School, our English Language Arts curriculum is comprised of an uninterrupted ninety-minute block of instruction. We use a balanced approach, focusing on fluency, phonemic awareness, literacy, comprehension, writing, and grammar skills. Our curriculum is based upon the basal series and supplemented with a variety of literature, including trade books, novels, newspapers, poetry, magazines, and other supplemental reading materials. The curriculum is enhanced by the use of various instruction methods, including whole group instruction, small group instruction, literacy stations, and one-on-one remediation.

The small group instruction and literacy stations allow us to differentiate instruction based upon the needs of the students. Mini-lessons on targeted comprehension skills, phonics, and fluency are done within the literacy station time. Students requiring more instruction receive an additional 30 minutes of instruction in our Learning Lab each day. The Learning Lab is designed to intervene with students that need more support before they have a chance to fall behind. The curriculum correlates with classroom instruction allowing students more practice and time to master standards. An integral part of the design of our Learning Lab philosophy is that students are pre-taught concepts so that when they are in a whole group setting, they have been exposed to the skills previously with the support of Learning Lab staff.

Our writing instruction, which is enhanced by the use of Kristina Smekens's 6 Traits of Writing initiative and 4 Square Writing organization, focuses on narrative, expository, and persuasive writing. Students learn how to plan a writing piece, develop a draft, edit, and revise their writing. Mini-lessons are provided to explicitly teach strategies within each process of writing for the 6 Traits. Writing is published in print, digital formats, or displayed to give the students the feeling of being an author. Teachers use mentor texts and mentor sentences to guide students to craft quality writing. The integration of grammar skills and conventions promotes authentic language instruction. We also focus instruction on structured responses to reading.

Bi-weekly progress monitoring and quarterly benchmark assessments are used to guide our instruction. Standards are tracked with each assessment to guide instruction, reteaching or interventions, and enrichment. The data from our assessments also allow us to determine which students may benefit from working with our assistants in the Learning Lab.

#### **1c.** Mathematics

Ireland Elementary School utilizes the iReady Math curriculum from Curriculum Associates. This mathematics curriculum follows a discourse-driven curriculum that focuses on building academic language and metacognition skills, as well as addressing the Indiana Academic Standards for grades K-5 during their 60-minute math block.

Teachers use a mix of whole group, small group, and stations to meet the needs of all learners. Lessons are modeled, students have guided practice with the skill, and then time to show what they know. The online portion of iReady is utilized for benchmark testing and to provide additional differentiation of concepts. A diagnostic test is administered three times a year to track student progress and to provide data to determine student growth. Individualized instruction is created based on the diagnostic results. Students view tutorials, practice skills, and access lessons that address gaps. Forty-five minutes a week of online practice for students is suggested.

Just as with ELA, we have instituted a Math Learning Lab that is designed to support students before they have a chance to fall behind. The curriculum correlates with classroom instruction allowing students more practice and time to master standards. Again, an integral part of the design of our Learning Lab philosophy is that students are pre-taught concepts, so in return when they are in a whole group setting, they have been exposed to the skills previously with the support of Learning Lab staff. Students who might otherwise have struggled with new concepts are now given the chance to be leaders in the math classroom.

Grades 3-5 use flexible grouping to enrich and remediate daily, allowing each child to work on the level best suited for them. Simple Solutions is used to review and remediate students on previously taught standards, introduce new standards, and provide spiral review throughout the year. Our math curriculum is enhanced by enrichment activities and competitions within classrooms. Focus is placed on the learning and memorization of basic facts throughout the year.

#### **1d. Science**

Our science curriculum focuses on physical science, life science, and earth science for grades K-5. Teachers incorporate a hands-on approach to many concepts in an effort to engage and challenge students and to address the Indiana Academic Standards for science. Indiana also outlines standards for computer science and technology. Students have weekly keyboarding time, and Ireland teachers incorporate coding and digital citizenship into the science curriculum.

Ireland Elementary has a dedicated STEAM classroom. The room has an abundance of tools and materials for learning and exploring. Students visit the STEAM classroom 30-minute each week. Teachers use VR goggles, Microbits, Legos, Code-a-pillars, mini robots, and other tools for coding. The room is also filled with everyday materials for creating and designing. All materials are organized and easily accessible to engage students in many exciting science lessons.

Field trips offer another support for our science curriculum, including trips to CRANE, Toyota, Marengo Cave, the Evansville Zoo, Patoka Nature Center, and a kindergarten trip to a working farm. Each grade level selects field trips that correlate with their science standards.

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

Ireland Elementary School utilizes a variety of nonfiction texts and resources to address the Indiana Academic Standards. We supplement our curriculum with Indiana Studies Weekly, Newsela, Scholastic News, Scholastic StoryWorks, as well as other online resources.

Each grade level enriches their social studies instruction with a variety of field trips, including trips to Spring Mill State Park, Lincoln National Boyhood Memorial, Ag Day in conjunction with the Purdue Outreach Program, and Dubois County Museum's Heritage Days.

Each classroom also incorporates a 5-week Junior Achievement Program, a curriculum that helps students better understand business, economics, and entrepreneurship. It is taught by local business professionals in our community. Career exploration is important as we address Indiana's Career Pathways standards. One grade level holds Career Days each spring in order to introduce students to a variety of professions that current and past students' parents have held in our community.

We also use social studies time to focus on citizenship and civic learning. Community resource personnel are brought in to help students connect their learning to their local community. Ways in which we tap into our community include inviting REC linemen, school resource officers, and police officers for D.A.R.E. instruction into our classrooms to support learning. Ireland Elementary has conducted its own month-long food drive for the past 15 years, donating all proceeds to our local Food Bank before the holidays. Our students also donate personal care items for an annual Build-a-Basket drive. These baskets are then given to Generations, an organization that delivers these baskets to homebound elderly and disabled people within our community.

**1f. For secondary schools:**

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

**2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

Ireland Elementary provides thirty minutes of non-core instruction weekly, including art education, music education, STEAM, Mindfulness, computer science, and reading buddies. Students also receive sixty minutes of library/media instruction week

We align our visual arts curriculum with the Indiana Academic Standards for Fine Arts. Kindergarteners learn to experience various art materials and processes. The elements of line, shape, color value, form, space, and texture are introduced and repeated. Famous artists and art vocabulary are introduced at the first-grade level. Second grade focuses on color theory and develops their own ideas. Third graders practice the design skills of balance and pattern by weaving and developing their concentration skills during a unit on architecture. Fourth graders travel back in time to study the art of early Egyptians and Roman civilizations. In addition, each fourth grader learns basic needle skills by embroidering a pillowcase. Fifth graders are introduced to perspective techniques, tessellations, and optical illusions.

The music curriculum allows all students to attend music class 30 minutes once a week. Quaver Music, an online curriculum focusing on general music education using digital resources is used in all grade levels. Students also have access to Quaver Music assignments on their Chrome books. In grades K-2, students learn musical concepts through singing, playing musical instruments, movement, and directive listening. In grades 3-5, students are introduced to melody, rhythm, harmony, and form. They learn various families of instruments, experience many cultural songs, play musical instruments, and learn how to read music. All students participate in one school program each school year.

All students at Ireland Elementary School visit the library for one hour each week. A significant amount of this time is spent working on making connections to skills being taught in their classroom, focusing on developing various comprehension skills. Activities have been implemented to foster a love of reading, including participation in the Young Hoosier Book Award program, author studies, special Newbery Medal book studies, Caldecott Medal winner studies, biography studies, poetry studies, book tasting events, and writing/illustrating their own books. During Library time we use Common Sense Media in all grade levels to teach Digital Citizenship. This was also the inaugural year for our annual “One Book/One School” event. This was a hit with all of our students and families, culminating with our first annual “Family Fun Night.”

All students in Grades 1-5 have their own chrome books. Kindergarten students have individual ipads for instruction. Students receive 30 minutes of computer science instruction for thirty minutes one time per week. The instruction focuses mostly on keyboarding and coding. In response to ILEARN becoming a computer-adaptive assessment, we felt it imperative that students be able to type all written responses, including constructed response answers and writing prompt essays. In order to prepare for this, students practice keyboarding skills utilizing Typing.com and Typetastic. The computer science instruction also includes the basics of writing computer code at all grade levels using a game format on Code.org.

All students enjoy a 30-minute block of time in our STEAM Lab each week. We encourage our students to develop creative thinking skills, to reflect, pretend, and problem solve. We ask open-ended questions in an effort to guide the children’s exploration. Our STEAM Lab revolves around problem-solving and the

scientific method: observing, asking questions, making predictions, experimenting, and discussing. Our teaching staff models this process so that children become familiar with the steps involved in solving problems. This includes thinking out loud and using STEAM language, such as observe, explore, predict, experiment, etc.

Physical Education is taught by classroom teachers one time per week for 30 minutes. We focus on balance, strength, agility, and endurance. Exercises focus on both gross and fine motor skills. Activities focus on playing fairly, working together, and supporting each other. Some of the activities done throughout the year include parachute games, hurdles, relays, team sports, hula hoops, scooters, and jump ropes.

Our students receive instruction in Character Education throughout the year in our classrooms. Each month focuses on a specific character strength through the use of picture books, articles, videos, and activities. At the end of each month, students who emulate the character trait focused on that month are recognized at a school-wide assembly. Some of these character traits include friendship, responsibility, organization, loyalty, and honesty. In addition, school-wide “Shout-Outs” are used to recognize students “caught” helping others in the school environment.

This is Ireland Elementary School’s first year integrating 30 minutes a week of Social/Emotional Awareness in the classroom and school environment. Our emphasis has been on developing each student’s ability to control impulses and focus their awareness. We believe each student can learn to notice distractions, self-regulate, and determine their individual needs. Sensory bins are available in each classroom. There is also a Sensory Room available for student use as needed.

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

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

We have begun utilizing a Learning Lab this year that is an integral piece to our intervention program. Our Learning Lab staff works with a reading group and a math group from each grade level each day for thirty minutes. Groups are comprised of approximately 12-15 students. Groups are then broken down into smaller groups within the Learning Lab, to ensure focused attention on each student. Students who do not qualify for Special Education, but need extra instruction and attention attend the Learning Lab, based upon standardized test data, benchmark test data, and teacher input. Instruction in the Reading Learning Lab is based on the McGraw Hill Wonders Curriculum and provides focused work in phonics, word work, and comprehension skills. Instruction in the Math Learning Lab correlates to the iReady Curriculum, focusing on problem-solving, fact fluency, and grade-level specific skills. Entrance into and out of the Learning Lab is fluid and is reevaluated monthly when Learning Lab instructors meet with classroom teachers to discuss individual student progress.

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

High Ability (HA) students are challenged within the regular classroom setting with differentiated reading and writing assignments. Students are identified by state guidelines then strategically placed into classrooms. Cluster grouping occurs for general-intellectual students. They are also pulled out once a week to work on our school newspaper, which includes conducting interviews, writing articles, and creating supplemental newspaper sections. Small groups and station time allow for teachers to service our high ability students at their own individual levels.

In grades 3-5 we implement ability grouping in our Math program. Each high ability Math group has an enriched curriculum, guaranteeing challenging work for those students. High ability students are also encouraged to participate in our Spell Bowl, Math Bowl, and Destination Imagination Teams.

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

Response to Intervention (RTI) is part of the requirements to deem if special education qualification is appropriate for individual students. General education teachers bring students of concern to the attention of

our SIT (Student Intervention Team). Our SIT includes the classroom teacher, special education teachers, building principal, and school psychologist. Based on the concern of the student being discussed, the school social workers, behavior consultant, occupational therapist, physical therapist, instructional assistants, or additional general education teachers may also attend. The classroom teacher submits paperwork for team members to review prior to the scheduled meeting date providing baseline data and evidence of the skill deficit. Skill deficits could be social, emotional, or academic in nature. The committee collaborates to create a specific intervention plan of support to work towards improvement and hopefully mastery of the targeted skill. They also determine how progress will be measured to show if the intervention is working. A follow-up meeting is set for 4 to 8 weeks from the original meeting. At that time, progress monitoring data is reviewed, and the team determines if the intervention is working, needs to be changed, or if a referral for special education is appropriate.

The staff of Ireland Elementary provides special education services based on each student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) and 504 Plan as mandated by IDEA, and Article 7. Special education teachers work together with general education teachers and instructional assistants to plan and differentiate lessons, implement interventions & provide accommodations to meet the learning needs of all special education students. Striving for an inclusive environment is important to us, so services are provided within the general education classroom when appropriate and possible. When necessary, students are pulled out for specific small group or individual instruction and practice. Progress monitoring data is collected to track the progress and growth of IEP goals. Annually, the case conference committee meets to discuss the student's present levels of academic and functional skills. Individual goals for the new year ahead are agreed upon, and a provision of services to be provided are outlined to help the student meet their targeted growth.

**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:**

At Ireland Elementary, teachers, support staff, parents, and students all work together to create relationships in a warm, welcoming climate where everyone feels safe, loved, and valued. This is done through clear communication and collaboration. We believe our number one job is to keep students safe. If students feel safe and secure, they can focus on learning, which is our ultimate goal. Weekly parent newsletters from the principal are emailed to all parents, communicating all achievements, activities, and expectations.

Each morning begins with all students reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by Ireland Elementary School's character education pledge, which promotes acceptance of everyone and responsibility for one's self. We have a weekly act of kindness that all students are encouraged to do (i.e., calling a grandparent, writing a thank you letter to a policeman or fireman, sweeping a neighbor's driveway). Each Friday, students that completed the task get to "throw kindness like confetti" by placing a confetti dot on a large bulletin board display in our main hallway. New character traits are introduced to students and discussed on a monthly or quarterly basis. At the end of the month or quarter, two students in each classroom who exemplified those particular traits are recognized in a schoolwide assembly in the gymnasium. Parents/grandparents are invited to attend and get to help honor those students at a celebratory breakfast following the assembly. Schoolwide "kindness shout-outs" are announced over the loudspeaker at the end of each day, when students are seen being extra kind to others.

Students strive to achieve and are recognized for their academic and extracurricular accomplishments in several categories, including Bi-Weekly Top Ten Accelerated Readers, Semesterly Top Ten Accelerated Readers, and Principal's Awards awarded for all A's every quarter. Third, fourth, and fifth graders who compete on Destination Imagination Teams are honored by the entire student body. Fourth and fifth graders try out for positions on the Spell Bowl and Math Bowl teams. Ireland Elementary has consistently performed well at these competitions and is recognized for these achievements in front of the entire student body as well. Fourth and fifth graders also compete in our annual schoolwide Spelling Bee, with the participants, runner-up, and winner being recognized. Students maintaining perfect attendance throughout the school year are recognized for this achievement at Awards Day. Fifth graders take on leadership roles within the school, including making announcements, recycling, bus leaders, and flag raisers. One fifth grade girl and boy are recognized as our Irish Lad and Lassie, hosting our Irish Musical Program and participating in our community's Irish Parade.

One of our newest initiatives at Ireland Elementary is to "Surprise and Delight" our students on a daily basis. The students look forward to coming to school each day, anticipating how the principal, teachers, and support staff will surprise and delight them.

Our school administrator ensures all teachers and support staff feel valued and supported through daily communication and unwavering support. Every meeting begins with celebrating our successes. Our Parent-Teacher Organization supports all teachers through monetary donations for classroom materials and a Staff Appreciation Meal during Teacher Appreciation Week. The teachers are also supported by our community with monetary donations from the Rudolph Foundation. Instructional assistants and support staff play an integral part in supporting our students' academics, social needs, and emotional growth through continued mentoring, and working with individuals and small student groups.

Ireland Elementary has a well-known reputation for having high expectations for their students – academically, socially, and behaviorally. Our goal is to create and support well-adjusted children who will go on to be successful outside of our school community. The positive environment within our school is created by all stakeholders taking an active part in our school's success – students, teachers, staff, parents, and community.

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

Families are an integral part of who we are at Ireland Elementary School. Engaging our families and community is vital to our success. We are blessed with an active and strong PTO that provides support in many ways. PTO members are involved in everything from volunteering in the classroom to providing school supplies for all families, running school-wide fundraisers, and helping with many social and academic initiatives. Our PTO was instrumental last year in initiating Family Fun Nights, one in the fall and another in the winter. Families and community members enjoyed coming together to play, read, learn, build, and explore at many different stations.

Our family and community involvement cover both social and academic endeavors. Community and family members are invited to visit classrooms for Career Days, the annual Hoosier Wax Museum, Junior Achievement, Project Lead the Way activities, Veteran's Day celebrations, character education breakfasts, ancestor, and county presentations, art exhibits, publishing parties, and more. After school hours, our school hosts many community groups and organizations, such as scouts, Destination Imagination, and Girls on the Run. Students represent Ireland Elementary out in the community at our annual Community Art Show and at sporting events, such as Ireland Night at local high school baseball games.

Our entire community came together in support of our month-long One School, One Book project last fall. Businesses, community leaders, bus drivers, parents, and even grandparents read Charlotte's Web along with us and had a calendar to use to ask students questions or to engage students in a discussion about what was happening in our book. A community member brought in a piglet as a culminating Kiss-a-Pig activity in a corresponding fundraiser where students did chores to raise money that was donated to the Humane Society and to help provide services for a local K-9 dog. Our efforts in this project were acknowledged with the Kimball Electronics Gives "Making a Difference Award."

Communication is essential in order to reach our families and beyond. Our superintendent, principal, and teachers send weekly newsletters comprised of pertinent information and activities. We also use School Reach, Facebook, and Remind, in addition to email to connect with our larger school community. In response, community stakeholders also reach out to us to help provide support for any initiatives we are involved in, such as purchasing library books, classroom technology, and supplies for our STEAM lab.

Part of being a strong presence in our community involves offering assistance when needed. Our students bring in canned goods for a fall food drive to support our local food bank and help with a build-a-basket project for seniors and others who have limited economic resources. We participate annually in Riley Hospital's Kids Caring and Sharing fundraiser and Mentors for Youth. Helping our community is important to empower our students to contribute to and feel connected to our greater community.

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

Continuing education and professional development have always been strongly encouraged at Ireland Elementary. All staff members have the ability to attend professional development connected to topics of need and school-wide focus. Our current and past principals often empower staff members by selecting them to attend professional development opportunities. We also have a system in place for staff members to request their own professional development. This allows staff to seek opportunities that interest them and request an experience that meets their desire for growth. This system for open requests has allowed teachers to visit schools to see in person instructional practices, PLCs, and unique experiences for an educator to be a lifelong learner.

WISE (Weekly Ireland Staff Engagement) meetings are held once a month at a minimum. A WISE meeting is a platform created for teachers to share what they have learned at professional development conferences with colleagues. This gives the role of "resident expert" to different faculty members throughout the school year. Learning from each other creates an ongoing discourse, where staff members can share resources, model instruction, and support each other. WISE meetings are also held to discuss topics of improvement, logistics, and operations in our school building. Gathering minds for open discussion provides a forum for staff members to be heard and valued.

Our school district is staffed with a full-time elementary eLearning Coach. She divides her time between three elementary schools. Her role is to provide on-going support and professional development for teachers in the area of technology and tech integration. She provides school-wide professional development and meets teachers' individual tech integration needs. As an eLearning coach, she is available to model lessons in the classroom, coteach lessons, and provide support. She is an asset to Ireland Elementary. She meets teachers where they are, yet provides the encouragement to push staff members out of their comfort zones to learn ways to enhance instruction with technology.

For the past three years, our school corporation has partnered with the other three school corporations in our county to hold a county-wide professional development day. A keynote speaker, breakout sessions, and a round table discussion with our grade level counterparts are offered on this day. This time to network with our local peers has been beneficial for our staff. The day provides a unique opportunity to collaborate with teachers outside our district and gain new perspectives on instruction in our Southern Indiana schools. Staff members connect with fellow teachers and often have ongoing dialogue throughout the school year. It creates a sense of unity within our county schools. We are not alone. We are a community committed to educate Dubois County.

Creating a positive professional culture goes beyond traditional professional development. Ireland Elementary has many sub-committees that meet formally to support the building blocks of our school. Grade level team leaders, school safety, resilience, student assistance, and social committees are just a few groups that create the foundation of our school. In these small groups, teachers can be heard and have an impact on our day to day operations. All staff meetings start with celebrations, which is a moment to brag or share a positive situation. Staff may share news about an addition to their family, a student meeting a goal, or brag on a staff member for helping meet a student's needs. This is a simple way to connect staff and build community. Having fun with staff scavenger hunts, bingo, dress-up days, after school snacks, and anything to surprise and delight creates a school climate and culture where staff members feel valued. It is common for our principal to write a note, send an email, or mail a gift card to school staff as a thank you for working hard with students. Her goal is for staff to engage students by surprising and delighting them, and she models that by showering staff with surprise and delights big and small.

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

Effective leadership is epitomized by our principal. Our principal has continually encouraged the staff and faculty to set high expectations for the students of Ireland Elementary. The philosophy of our school leadership is trifold: doing the right thing is often the hard thing; when you work hard, good things happen; and our number one job is to keep students and staff safe.

In order to challenge the students to succeed and be proud of their accomplishments, the principal supports and endorses various strategies, interventions, and programs in place to attain this goal. High expectations are not only applicable for students, but also for staff members as well. In selecting staff members, the focus is always on envisioning a person who is a team player, is knowledgeable of current best practices, and is compassionate toward all children. In conjunction with having delegated team leaders, our principal believes all staff members are leaders, and all should use their strengths to make our school thrive. Surveys collecting individual interest levels regarding academic (reading, writing, math, social/emotional health STEAM, etc.) and social (character education, family fun nights, schoolwide literacy, holiday celebrations, fundraising, etc.) goals are provided each year. This information collected is used to provide all staff leadership roles on committees in which they will excel. Our principal places invaluable confidence in the staff and entrusts them with the success of students.

Ireland Elementary School serves as the epicenter of this community. It is believed and known that all stakeholders are an important part of our success. Our small rural community strongly endorses our principal's leadership. Stakeholders are empowered to use their strengths and resources to make our school the best it can possibly be. The community focuses on obtaining the best education possible for the children. Community members show their support in a variety of ways, both monetarily and through volunteering their time and talents. Our principal places a high value on parent-teacher collaboration and communication,

resulting in over 95% attendance rate for parent-teacher conferences year after year. While these conferences allow teachers to communicate academic and social concerns to parents, it also establishes rapport with parents acknowledging we are a team with a common goal of ensuring student success.

The guidance of our principal to continuously review programs, curriculum, and data collection of individual student progress impacts our students' achievement. One instance of this would be establishing the learning lab where students receive more focused attention on closing the gap in language arts and math. This allows all students to achieve at their own individual levels. With suggestions from the faculty, she reassigned support staff to better accommodate the framework for this instruction.

Our principal strictly adheres to corporation policies on punctuality, attendance, safety, maintenance of the school building, and transportation. For example, the principal monitors students each morning when they arrive to maintain discipline and ensure that they are ready for a positive start to the day. Daily contact is made with parents of absentees to inquire about the students' health, and arrangements are made for classroom work that is missed. To assure a secure and safe environment, our principal arranges monthly fire and tornado drills, immediately communicating the result of their performance to the students letting them know how they can improve and reminding them of the importance of the drills. The principal places upon students the responsibility for keeping their school neat, clean, and orderly, whether it be classrooms, hallways, restrooms, the cafeteria, or the playground. This instills in students a feeling of ownership and pride, which makes for a better learning environment. Furthermore, our principal expects students to be responsible not only inside our school building but also on buses and during after-school functions held on school property. The impeccable organizational skills and priority of focusing on the child keep everyone on track to accept the challenge of successfully educating the whole student.

The true message of our leadership is doing what is best for students.

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

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Ireland Elementary focuses on the well-being of the whole child. We believe the first step in ensuring academic success is to build strong relationships. Kids will learn if they like coming to school, feel comfortable, and know they are valued. Strong ties allow children to take risks, try new things, and not be afraid of failure.

A mentoring program pairing staff with students has been established to allow each individual student to develop a rapport with an adult they can rely on throughout their six years at Ireland Elementary. The program provides 45-minute blocks of time for mentors to engage with mentees in activities that are not related to academics. Creating time for students to just be themselves and let their personalities shine without any stress or pressure of academics allows staff and students the ability to truly connect with one another beyond the pages of a book.

Teachers build strong relationships with their students and insist they strive to be the best all-around person they can be. Frequent check-ins with students who have struggles at home consistently remind children that they always have someone they can confide in and trust. Teachers meet regularly with students to review scores collected in student data folders to encourage them to set personal goals and help build their confidence in achieving them. We are always thinking creatively to implement new “surprise and delight” strategies into our weeks to keep students’ interest levels high.

Our efforts to build connections go beyond the student, reaching out to our entire community. We believe this instills a sense of pride within our students and shows students they are a part of something more than just their individual family or classroom family. The recent addition of quarterly family fun nights provides a time for our Ireland families to spend an evening getting to know one another in a lighthearted environment without the pressures of academics. We also implemented a school-wide literacy event in which all families received a copy of Charlotte’s Web to read together. Involvement even extended into the community by sharing the book with bus drivers so they could read it, and by providing questions to local businesses so they could quiz students when they were out and about. We tied life lessons learned within the story to real-life by encouraging children to lend a hand at home and within the community to raise money for a local charity voted on by the student body. The students were motivated to contribute the money they raised by using it to cast a vote for which staff members they wanted to see kiss a live pig. Most recently our staff has gone above and beyond to be sure our students and families feel supported. With the unfortunate circumstances COVID-19 brought upon us, new avenues of connecting with students and families were implemented. Whether it be answering late-night phone calls, zoom meetings to see a face you’re missing, or sitting ten feet away on a struggling student’s front porch, we are proud of the way our Ireland family has come together to make the best of a tough situation.

These programs and events bring us all together for a common cause. When our staff, students, families, and community all value the investment of the process, they all take ownership of the progress made.