

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Mary Lee Burbank Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 266 School Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Belmont State MA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 02478-3518

County Middlesex

Telephone (617) 993-5500 Fax (617) 484-2050

Web site/URL https://www.belmont.k12.ma.us/burbank/ E-mail sokie@belmont.k12.ma.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.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent* Mr. John Phelan E-mail jphelanblog@belmont.k12.ma.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Belmont Public Schools Tel. (617) 993-5400

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.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Andrea Prestwich
(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.

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

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)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 6 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	40	44	84
1	43	43	86
2	46	40	86
3	49	41	90
4	43	45	88
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	221	213	434

*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
 - 23.5 % Asian
 - 5.3 % Black or African American
 - 1.7 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0.2 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 58.3 % White
 - 11 % 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: 9%

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	23
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	15
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	38
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	429
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.09
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	9

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

Mandarin Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Turkish, Farsi, French, German, Haitian Creole, Hindi, Italian, Kashmiri, Nepali, Polish, Croatian, Spanish, Swedish, Tamil, Telugu, Albanian, Arabic, Bulgarian

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 15 %
66 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 9 %

Total number students who qualify: 41

8. Students receiving special education services: 10 %

42 Total number of students served

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

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>11</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>2</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>10</u> Developmental Delay | <u>9</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>9</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

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

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	20
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	10
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	14
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	6

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

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

Required Information	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	95%	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.

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.

At the Burbank School we strive to engender a love of learning, respect for all, and well-being for ourselves and others.

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

The Burbank School is located in the town of Belmont, Massachusetts. Belmont is a suburban community only minutes away from Boston. Belmont's proximity to Boston make it an attractive choice for families who come to the area to work at the universities, medical facilities, biotech firms, and technology industries that fill the area. These professional opportunities bring Burbank families from all over the world, though many parents who were raised in Belmont return to raise their own children. Burbank has a wide diversity of races, languages, and beliefs. A shared value among all Burbank families is a dedication to excellence in education. Burbank is also a member of the METCO collaborative. This year 30 students from Boston enrolled at Burbank through the program.

Until the fall of 2018, Burbank was a relatively small school. Built in 1933 the original building and later additions held just sections per grade level, and often only two. Most Burbank students walked to school, and the community enjoyed a close knit community feel. As the population of the greater Boston area, and Belmont in particular grew over the 2010's, Belmont's enrollment expanded dramatically. Adjusting to new demographics created a need for expansion at Burbank and four modular classrooms were added to the school to meet demand. Now with 4 sections per grade, Burbank has become a large school. However, we strive to maintain the relationships and connections that have made Burbank a special place to learn and grow.

Burbank's success relies on our teacher leadership, attention to student progress, and emphasis on community and social/emotional well-being. Burbank's teachers are dedicated to their craft. They seek the best for their students and recognize that student success is incumbent upon teacher growth. As a result, Burbank's faculty seek opportunities to improve their practice from multiple sources. Professional development opportunities offered by the district, grade level team meetings, school based training, and district wide committees are all utilized by our teachers to advance our work. The district Teaching and Learning committee has four elementary members, three of those teacher work at Burbank. Burbank's staff are also supported in their work by two extraordinary Curriculum Specialists. The Math/Science and ELA/Social Studies specialist support curricular and pedagogic improvement in their areas of expertise. Their guidance and advice help Burbank teachers take risks on new practices and help hone and perfect tried and true methods. The growth mindset is also supported by Burbank's administration who recognizes that excellent teaching is always a work in progress.

In the past five years, Burbank has developed a robust system for collecting, recording, and tracking data on student achievement. Over time Burbank identified appropriate assessments, set rigorous benchmarks, and housed data in a centralized location. As a result of that incremental progress, bi-annual data meetings are an intense dive into the skills and abilities of every student in the school. Classroom teachers and support staff use assessment and informal observational data to drive the conversation about which students are meeting our standards and who is falling behind and why. When it is determined that students are struggling, or continuing to struggle, interventions are identified. These typically take the form of small group work with our reading or math interventionist. Groups are formed to address specific skills, concepts, or content. On occasion, these academic groups are formed in conjunction with other services, such as counseling or social groups, but in all cases interventions are reassessed periodically to determine if they are having the intended effect.

Social and emotional interventions are sometimes needed for acute cases, but Burbank deliberately integrates social/emotional learning throughout our curriculum. We utilize the Open Circle curriculum and the vast majority of our teachers have been trained in its use. Our intention is that students build competencies in self-management and regulation, pro-social interactions and problem solving in the social sphere. We emphasize the importance of our community, both small and large, and how students can become and remain positive members. Under the guidance of our teachers and support staff, Burbank's classrooms become learning communities in which students work together, learn together and grow together.

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

The Burbank School strives to know our students. Our philosophy begins with knowing where students are so we can meet them there, and guide them to where they need to go. Knowing our students means understanding their social and emotional strengths and challenges as well as academic abilities. Our teachers engage with our students as people, learning what makes them tick. Burbank teachers spend a great deal of time developing deep and trusting relationships with their students knowing that that investment will pay off in time. A child who knows that their teachers are their most enthusiastic supporter (after parents and families, of course) will be able and willing to take the risks needed for true learning to take place. Burbank helps students develop their social competencies so that they can be used to collaborate and learn together with their classmates in a supportive learning environment.

Along with our work to know our students through relationship building, we endeavor to truly understand our students skills and abilities through careful assessment and tracking of their academic abilities. Our teacher’s conduct regular formal and informal assessments and students are assessed using several district wide measures to record progress over time. The collected data serves as a resource as we gauge the effectiveness of our teaching, gauge pacing, and plan whole or small group interventions to augment our instruction. Using the data system that has been developed over the course of several years, our teachers have become adept at both the collection and interpretation of student achievement data. Conversations on student progress are therefore rich and specific.

Knowing who are students are and where they stand allows the teachers of Burbank to meet each child where they are so we can help them get where they need to go.

1b. Reading/English language arts

English Language Arts (ELA) instruction at Burbank is built on 3 basic tenets: skill based instruction, student autonomy, and targeted intervention. The Burbank school uses the Lucy Calkins Units of Study for Reading and Writing in Grades 1-4. Kindergarten is in the process of transitioning to this curriculum. In addition, Kindergarten through 2nd grade utilize Foundations phonics program to support early literacy skills. Both programs support Burbank’s choice to implement instruction that introduces isolated skills with clarity and focus. From distinct letter sounds in Kindergarten, to developing characters in narratives over the course of a story arc in 4th grade, skills are taught in brief, engaging, targeted mini-lessons. Student are then given ample opportunities to make use of skills across the ELA curriculum, and beyond, when reading and writing are integrated into every other subject. Across Burbank’s grade levels skills based lessons invite children to the world of reading and writing. At a developmentally appropriate pace, students are introduced to the practices that will improve their reading fluency, comprehension, metacognition, and critical thinking skills . In conjunction, they compose their own writing across genres, creating narratives, persuasive essays, and nonfiction texts.

After mini-lessons are conducted, students have the opportunity to work independently on tasks that relate to the current unit of study. Though they have general assignments, students are given a great deal of autonomy to decide their path within the framework of the unit. When reading by themselves or with others students “bookshop” on a regular basis to choose the texts that interest and engage them. The ability to choose empowers students to discover a love for literature and informational text on their own terms. Likewise, when writing students are assigned a genre to pursue, but are free to choose their topic and pace. The power that choice gives them to craft their own path provides a great deal of motivation and desire to write. Student autonomy and encouragement to pursue books and topics of interest is one of the many ways Burbank engenders students with a love of reading and writing.

Though student choice is a great motivator, it does not by itself ensure that students independently practice

the skills they have been taught. Teacher conferencing and guidance is needed to hold students accountable for practicing and improving taught skills. Small group work and individual check-ins allow teachers to monitor progress in between school wide assessments. Because students are often reading and writing independently, Burbank's teachers keep careful track of the strengths and challenges the class is demonstrating. Guided reading groups are then composed of children who are working on similar skills such as developing fluency or making inferences, and writing groups may be formed to address adding capitals and periods, choosing juicy words, or crafting powerful hooks to pull the reader in.

ELA instruction at Burbank aims to build a love of the written word, and give students the skills to share their ideas with power and confidence.

1c. Mathematics

Burbank's Math program is based on four pillars of practice: conceptual understanding, computational fluency, problem solving, communicating about math. Taken individually, each of these components are vitally important to learning math, but together they support the development of rigorous and deep mathematical knowledge and practice.

Conceptual understanding at Burbank is developed through concrete examples and extensive use of models. Typically, a hands on approach begins the approach to a new math concept. Students are able to hold and manipulate a variety of tools and tokens to see and feel math in action. The use of manipulatives allows children to build concrete understanding of concepts such as place value, addition and subtraction, fractions and many more. The use of real life objects is vital in the beginning stages of conceptual skill development because it allows students to interact with objects in a way that is realistic. In mental calculation or on paper, it is relatively simple for numbers to simply disappear. This is not true when using counters, blocks or other manipulatives. Concrete tools continue to provide support of understanding even as students progress to using both pictorial models, which often represent concrete objects, or further still into abstraction.

At the same time that concepts are being introduced and mastered, students at Burbank are also working on developing number sense and fluency with computation. Repeated practice of skills in warm-ups, games, and paper and pencil work help students increase their familiarity with math facts and fluency in manipulating numbers without the use of either manipulatives or pictures, though both are useful especially in the earlier years. Students are encouraged as they progress through the grades to develop methods of calculation that are not just fast, but efficient. When developing fluency in multiplication, for instance an excellent strategy for students to use is to remember that the four times facts are merely the two times facts doubled. Younger students utilize strategies such as doubles plus or minus one when adding numbers such as $6+7$. The development and use of strategies throughout the scope and sequence of mathematics to help practice and master computational skills helps Burbank students to become nimble mathematicians who are readily able to tackle more complex problems.

Students from the youngest to the oldest at Burbank are provided ample opportunity to engage in higher order problem-solving skills. Teachers present real world application problems that require logical reasoning to solve rather than simple calculation. Problem solving strategies are specifically taught and utilized on a regular basis so that students begin to develop higher level reasoning skills from the first days in kindergarten. We firmly believe at Burbank, that such higher order thinking skills are within the grasp of all students and do not require basic math facts to be memorized before they are engaged.

Finally the last pillar of mathematical instruction at the Burbank school is communication about mathematical ideas. Communicating ideas takes place in conjunction with each of the other pillars. Students are encouraged to share the process through which they solved a problem, offer strategies that help them calculate quickly, and share their questions and confusions with their peers. Burbank teachers also specifically instruct students on how to talk to each other about math, prompting the use of mathematically precise language, and nurturing a growth mindset about math. Sharing their thinking with their classmates gives students opportunities to engage more fully in math instruction, allows students to hear a variety of solutions and ideas for how to solve math problems, and helps them recognize the challenges in math are shared and able to be overcome.

1d. Science

Science at Burbank is based on building a base of scientific knowledge and a familiarity of the scientific process that helps us discover new knowledge. In the past several years, science standards have shifted, redefining the scope of scientific “facts” that are presented in the elementary curriculum. Our school, like many others, is still in the process of adapting and remaking our science curriculum to adjust to these changes, but though we are in transition basic truths remain. The elementary curriculum covers a broad base of knowledge across the life, earth, and physical sciences. Kindergartners plant and observe seeds, and 4th graders examine and classify minerals, and while those subjects may change the process of scientific learning will remain.

In the early grades especially, students begin their experiences with science by building their skills of observation. When planting a seed, striking a tuning fork, or examining the effects of flowing water on soil students are asked to use their senses to observe the world around them. Recording and sharing their observations of static objects or phenomena forms a base of knowledge from which to build. Burbank teachers create opportunities for students to use observed knowledge to explain unknowns.

Though hands-on experiences with the natural world remain a mainstay of science instruction throughout, as student gain proficiency with reading and writing they begin to derive and increasing amount of knowledge from nonfiction texts. These secondary sources supplement activities and experiments to help students build their understanding and learn from fellow scientists and experts. And though younger students create drawings and pictures to share what they have learned starting in Kindergarten, Burbank’s older students are expected to consolidate and present their discoveries in more elaborate displays as they advance. As with so many areas of study, scientific knowledge is most valuable when it is shared clearly and effectively.

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

Social studies at Burbank encompasses learning both close to home and across the world. The common themes in social studies across grade levels and units is the examination of the lives of people, how they form communities, how their culture defines their lives, and how they are the same or different from the people of modern day Belmont. Almost every grade level spends some of their year examining our own community. The lives we live, our common understandings, our expectations for our neighbors, and our shared experiences all combine to create our community. Whether this is a short examination of our school and class culture, an in depth study of the history and institutions of our town, or a broad look at the colonization of the America’s in our area and beyond, social studies grounds our students by having them examine themselves. From this base of understanding, students are able to make comparisons between their lives and those of people around the world and throughout history.

Social studies at Burbank is predicated on understanding that the lives of other people in different times and places may be very different from our own, but in truth the things we have in common are far more important and are the source of a wealth of knowledge about ourselves. The essential question that Burbank teachers pose to their students is, “What can the experience of these people tell me about my own life?” When our 2nd grade students study the disparate experiences of people who live in Belmont, Alaska, and Kenya, they easily spot the wide variation in types of food, shelter, and recreation enjoyed in those places. In studying these differences students learn that the choices communities make are based on the resources that are available and the conditions that must be responded to. The people of Alaska need shelters that protect them from harsh winters, which would not be appropriate in Kenya.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

At the Burbank School students from kindergarten through 4th grade take part in specialist classes including art, music, and physical education. Students in Kindergarten and first grade also participate in a formal

Library class.

Each child at Burbank engages in art class once a week for a 45 minute session. The Arts at Burbank encourage creativity, problem solving, and expression. The Art curriculum itself seeks to develop in students both familiarity with a variety of different media, expressive techniques, an appreciation of artwork and art history, and develop student voices for both appreciating and critiquing artistic work. Assignments take into account the developmental needs of students who range in age from 5 to 10 years old, but many threads are consistent across all grade levels. In preparation for bigger projects or for incidental exploration, sketching is a mainstay of the art classroom. All students are encouraged to remember the 4 L's of sketching: Lots of Little, Light, Lines. A growth mindset is also encouraged in the Art Room where it is regularly repeated that being proud of one's effort is as, if not more, important than the final result. This theme is also important in the problem solving nature of work in Art. A recent 4th grade assignment asked students to express themselves in any media or style they wished, but to constrain their work to the size of a 3"x3" Sticky Note. The limits of the project inspired amazing creativity! Students bring the lessons they learn in the Art room back to their more academically minded studies, whether they are sketching before they write, remembering that effort is vital to success, or creatively tackling problem solving across the curricula.

Music class at Burbank is also available for all children from Kindergarten through 4, and each class session is 30 minutes long. Kindergarten and first grade students engage in one session per week while children in second through fourth grade have two 30-minute sessions each week. Music helps our students develop an appreciation for the beauty of musical expression, find their own voice literally and figuratively through singing, and collaborate with peers on both projects and performance pieces. Music curriculum engages students in the cultures of the world and how communities are formed through and with music and musical expression. In preparation for participation in performances both big and small, Burbank's students learn and practice musical concepts including rhythm, pattern, pitch and volume. These technical aspects of performance are complimented by attention to listening skills, partner and group work, and consideration for the audience and circumstances when choosing songs to perform. The work all students engage in during music directly impacts their classroom work on public speaking and even written composition. The confidence and pride in performance gained in the Music Room benefits students far beyond its doors.

Physical Education at Burbank is available to all students twice a week for 30 minutes. PE at Burbank is designed to teach children a love of physical activity and establish healthy habits for a lifetime. Learning new sports, games, stretches, and challenges all help drive the daily activities, but help develop strength, flexibility, and coordination at the same time. PE class is fun, but informative as it is also where the importance of exercise, proper nutrition, and general safety are introduced. PE is also a place to recognize that physical differences exist, but don't define who a person is or what they are capable of. Students are encouraged to reflect on their current level of fitness or ability and to set short and long term goals for the future. Jumping farther and running faster are some immediate goals, but through PE instruction Burbank students learn through experience that setting goals and working towards them incrementally is the path to success. These lessons are applicable in the rest of the school day and throughout our lives.

Library is a scheduled special for Kindergarten and first grade students. Each class has a 30 minute library session that includes a read aloud and time to check out books. Students in 2nd through 4th grades still visit the library regularly, but do so with their classroom teacher and do not receive any instruction during that time. Burbank's younger students, however, enjoy hearing a new story each week and are also able to learn about library organization. Our Library Professional Aide, chooses a book each week and engages students in an active read aloud with questions, connections, and thinking aloud. New genres and authors are regularly introduced to students and read aloud books are some of the most popular for checking out. Library also ensures that students are able to take books home to continue their engagement with the printed word even after school is finished for the day.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

To support students who are performing below grade level Burbank utilizes a robust Response to Intervention (RTI) model predicated on relevant and timely student data. Our RTI model begins with high quality core instruction that is designed to meet the needs of students through its clarity and focus on meaningful and measurable learning targets. Burbank teacher begin planning with an understanding of what a child will be able to do or to know by the end of each lesson and work backwards to ensure that each lesson activity helps serve that goal. Students are informally assessed on whether they meet the learning target and those that do not receive further practice or re-teaching in a smaller group. Teachers at Burbank also track performance over time, acknowledging that not every lesson will instantly click with every student. Students who continue to struggle with concepts or skills receive on-going intervention from their teachers in those targeted areas.

When additional attention is inadequate to meet the needs of each learner classroom teachers have two paths to follow that are not mutually exclusive. The first is available to all students and begins with Burbank's biannual Data Meetings. These meetings bring grade level classroom teachers together with our curriculum specialists and support staff to examine formative assessment data from every student. Children who are not meeting benchmarks for reading and math are discussed and further interventions are determined. Often our reading or math specialist will meet with small groups of students to further reinforce skills or concepts in addition to the work being done by classroom teachers. This "double dip" method of intervention provides more support to students who need it most. In some cases, interventions may be increased to a "triple dip" if previous support has not resulted in sustained progress.

Many students who continue to have difficulty over time, or are experiencing acute distress academically or socially, are also supported by Burbank's Child Study team. Teachers bring individual students who are not performing well in a variety of areas to the team for advice and increased support. This often takes the form of intervention by our school counselor or psychologist for social/emotional work, or screening from our Speech & Language Pathologist or Occupational Therapist. The purpose of the child study team is to support teachers and students when difficulties arise for reasons that are not readily apparent or need the attention of more than one educator. The Child Study Team creates a plan for intervention for each student and revisits the case in the future to determine if it was effective.

3b. Students performing above grade level

Burbank does not have a specific program for students who perform above grade level. Our curriculum is designed to meet students where they are and for students who are quickly able to meet grade level standards that means providing them opportunities to deepen and enrich their understanding or skills. Students are challenged with extensions of activities that allow them to engage more deeply with concepts. In ELA, our curriculum naturally lends itself to supporting students who are performing at grade level. Students who are reading at advanced levels are provided with texts that continue to challenge them, while remaining developmentally appropriate in subject matter. Small group and individual check ins allow teachers to monitor and support advanced readers at their own pace and help them deepen grade level skills with appropriate texts. Similarly, in writing, self-directed assignments allow students to be challenged while still working on the same genre as their peers. Again, teachers are able to hold students accountable for honing their skills and delivering more complex work.

In math, students often understand ideas or can use computational skills taught in class. This comes from a combination of learning done with math minded parents, older siblings, or even outside tutoring programs. At Burbank we endeavor to ensure that students are equally adept in all of the areas of mathematical practice that we value, conceptual understanding, computational fluency, problem solving, communicating about math. It is common for students to be exceptionally fluent in computation because they have mastered the standard algorithm for a particular operation, but to lack a deep conceptual understanding and be unable to describe their thinking about why and how the algorithm works or apply it to novel situations. In these cases the Burbank teachers provide opportunities for enrichment in those areas to build a more complete mastery of standards. Challenging problem solving activities, long term projects or performance tasks, and tasks that ask students to critique and explain mathematical reasoning all offer students opportunities to stretch their mathematical minds.

3c. Special education

Like many other areas at Burbank, Special Education programming at our school is successful because of our dedication to learning about who our students are. Long before children are found eligible for Special Education services through the evaluation process Burbank's teachers have been hard at work trying to discover how they learn best and what supports will allow them to succeed. Sometimes despite our hopes and best efforts, students continue to struggle with instruction in the regular education classroom. Burbank teachers leave no stone unturned to provide support for their students, so they often turn to our Child Study Team in such cases. The Child Study Team offers suggestions, interventions, and strategies, but may also determine that a possible explanation for student struggle is a disability. When deemed necessary, students are evaluated by our team of special educators to find if there are particular obstacles to effective learning.

When evaluations are complete our educators gather to share their findings and gather further information from one of the most important members of the Team, the parents and/or guardians. Burbank's educators use their gathered information and the input of those who know their child best, to craft an Individualized Education Plan that will best meet the needs of that child. Our mission is to provide appropriate supports including, specialized instruction, social/emotional groups, professional aide support, and accommodations in the regular education classroom that will lead to progress. The importance of the relationship forged between the school and family during this process cannot be understated. Families bring a wealth of information about their students that is invaluable to the team. Ongoing and open communication between our liaisons and families about both the progress and challenges help our team continue to fine tune our services to ensure each student is making effective progress.

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

Burbank's ELL program is based on the Massachusetts model of Sheltered English Immersion (SEI). ELL's are placed alongside native speakers throughout Burbank's classrooms. Each teacher is required to hold an SEI Endorsement to their licensure. The endorsement is earned by completing training and/or demonstrating mastery of specific techniques and strategies to support English language acquisition. Areas in which ELL's require support include language use across the domains of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Carefully considering the language and language use that is most vital to the lesson, teachers provide support during their presentation of material by using simple, straightforward language in manageable chunks giving audio and visual support whenever possible. As students begin the work of their assignments they are offered graphic organizers, sentence frames, and vocabulary word banks to assist in the proper use of language. Lessons also contain ample opportunities for students to speak and listen to their native English peers to both hear multiple models of language use and provide opportunities to practice using language in a supportive environment.

Burbank's teachers also work closely with two ELL teachers. Our ELL teachers meet with small groups of ELL's regularly to teach specific academic language needed to engage in classroom work. The primary purpose of time spent outside of the classroom is English Language acquisition and development. Burbank uses the WIDA ACCESS test to make decisions about student proficiency levels. ELL students who are entirely new to English spend substantially more time with ELL instruction than those who are gaining proficiency. ELL teachers provide a safe and supportive environment for students to practice their language skills across domains with their peers.

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

At the Burbank School, as has been stated previously, we pride ourselves on knowing our students. We build this knowledge deliberately and over time by tending first and foremost to the social and emotional needs of our students. Current research has come to support our long held belief that attending to the wellbeing of children is the best way to ensure they are ready to learn. We support our students in this regard through community building, direct instruction in social/emotional learning (SEL), and a shared belief in the power of a growth mindset.

Community building starts from the first day of school at Burbank. Teachers put extra effort into welcoming students new and old to their classrooms and establishing rituals and routines to support student success. Primary among these are class meetings through which the classroom community will learn and grow together throughout the year. Teachers help their students invest in the relationships within the classroom and recognize that their peers are both a source of friendship and learning support. At a school level, Burbank holds monthly community meetings at which we come together as a school and celebrate our common bonds. We always review our core values of love of learning, respect, and well-being, before sharing a lesson about how communities work together to support each other.

We use Open Circle as our SEL curriculum. OC supports our development of class room communities, helps students learn how to manage their feelings and relationships, and teaches children to be creative social problem solvers who can act independently. Open Circle also provides a social framework that allows students to learn from their mistakes when their actions aren't ideal.

Finally, at Burbank we believe that learning is a habit for a lifetime. We make sure our students know that we expect them to learn and grow every day, and that means that they will and should face challenges. Not understanding is merely a beginning at Burbank, a challenge that is to be faced and overcome. We encourage our students to develop a growth mindset that helps them see every mistake, miscalculation, or draft as an opportunity.

Burbank students know that people, both adults and children, care about them. They know that they are capable of facing challenges, and that even failure is a step in the right direction. With this knowledge in hand, every day at Burbank is good day to learn.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Burbank has a very active and involved parent/family community. Owing to its small size and the tendency for most children to walk to school, Burbank's families are very connected to the school and each other. Though the school has grown in recent years, the structure and institutions that evolved have remained and strengthened as new families join our community.

Burbank's School Advisory Council, made up of teachers, parents, and community members, works with the Principal to guide the leadership of the school. The council meets monthly to discuss areas such as communication, engaging families, and school policy. The Burbank PTA is another robust institution that provides support and enrichment to teachers and students throughout the school year. Through the PTA, parents and families lead enrichment lessons in Burbank's Garden Classroom (a school garden created with PTA support), run the school-wide Geography Challenge (now in its 25th year!), and organizes Burbank's STEM Night at which parents, families, and community organizations present fascinating demonstrations and hands on activities highlighting science, technology, engineering, and math. The PTA also supports smaller, but no less important initiatives such as author visits, building classroom libraries, and community gatherings.

Parents and families are also able to become involved in a variety of other ways. Parents are welcomed by teachers to volunteer in their child's classroom for a variety of activities throughout the year, helping to

support hands on projects, special events, or act as a Mystery Reader. Families are also invited to each of our monthly Community Meetings. To learn more about the curriculum, their child's work, and/or academic performance, parents are encouraged to attend a variety of events. Burbank's annual Back to School Night serves as an opportunity for our teachers to greet parents and guardians and share the overview of the school year. Multiple class or grade based open houses are scheduled throughout the year for students to share their work and progress with families. These often take place at the end of a Unit of Study when writing pieces and long term projects are ready to be shared. And finally Burbank offers two opportunities for each family to meet individually with their child's classroom teacher to discuss their academic and social challenges and progress.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Teachers are the backbone of the Burbank School. Their dedication to their students and their craft is extraordinary. They are able to maintain high standards for their students primarily because they hold even higher standards for themselves. Burbank teachers are highly skilled and as such they are trusted to do what is best for children. This trust in their professionalism, attention to detail, and hard work, cannot be understated as a reason for the success of students. When Burbank teachers seek assistance for a student, it is understood that they have made every effort to support that child. As a result, teachers who ask for support receive it from a team of fellow educators whose specializations, experiences, and perspectives allow them to identify and remove obstacles to learning.

Trust in the teachers of Burbank also allows our faculty to take risks in their practice. Curriculum, lessons, and projects are launched with enthusiasm at Burbank, because teachers know they are viewed as experts who will grapple with new material and make it work. They live with the growth mindset that they teach to their students, knowing that missteps and mistakes will happen and will help them improve their practice. They know their administrator supports their efforts to learn and grow, and this helps them push themselves with confidence that they will be supported when they do.

Professional Development at Burbank takes three distinct, but complimentary paths. The first is self-directed learning through Professional Learning Teams (PLTs). PLTs are formed at the start of each year, though some extend multiple years, by groups of educators who are interested in furthering their understanding or growing their practice in a common area. Examples of areas of focus include mastery of a newly adopted writing curriculum, the development of improved interventions for struggling math students, or collaborative planning for school-wide social emotional learning initiatives. Teachers create their plans with autonomy, though their efforts are often aligned with school and district priorities.

PD also takes place regularly at the building level. Staff meetings are regularly dedicated to advancing work on initiatives outlined in the School Improvement Plan or promoted by the district. These opportunities typically address broadly applicable strategies to support students across the grade levels and meet the needs of a variety of educators in many different roles.

Lastly, Burbank's teachers are encouraged to participate in outside professional development that also aligns with our priorities and initiatives. All but our most recently hired teachers have participated in Open Circle training supported by the school. The district also recommends courses to support excellence in classroom instruction and the development of inclusive practices.

4. School Leadership:

Leadership at the Burbank School is a collaborative effort. Burbank has only one administrator, the principal, who is ultimately responsible for the majority of decisions made within the school building, but none of those decisions are made in a vacuum. Mirroring the practice that makes the teachers of Burbank so effective, the principal seeks input from the many stakeholders in the building to best understand the strengths, needs, and challenges of the community.

Armed with that knowledge the principal works with individuals and teams within the building to distribute decision making throughout the school. Burbank teachers are trusted to do what is best for their students in

the day to day work of their classrooms, while grade level teams work collaboratively to plan and implement curriculum. They are advised in this work by the district Elementary Curriculum Specialists who act as experts in their areas and guide teachers in the use of best practices and appropriate resources. When students require support beyond what is available in the classroom, our support team brings their expertise and experience to assist. The practitioners of Burbank are empowered to act in their students' best interest and are supported by their principal through consultation and guidance. When difficult choices are required, the principal is responsible for the final decision, but stakeholders recognize that their perspectives have been considered and help inform the end result.

Parents and families play a vital role in the leadership of Burbank as well. Their participation is a constant through regular communication with classroom teachers. They offer invaluable insight into their children's strengths and challenges, and team with teachers to create goals and plans for success. At times, it is inevitable that teachers and parents find themselves in disagreement about the best course forward. It is the role of the principal to bring both sides together with the reminder that everyone at Burbank is dedicated to what is best for each child. Finding common ground for a path forward becomes easier when the parent/teacher relationship is built on this premise.

The allocation of resources is also based in students' best interest. The community of Burbank recognized the importance and value of social and emotional well-being, and focused teacher training and parent education toward that area. The result is that our SEL work now supports and maintains a solid foundation for student success across disciplines.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

It is exceptionally difficult to pull apart the fabric of Burbank's ongoing success to determine a single practice that above all others impacts our students' achievement, but if there is one thread that runs throughout all of our work (as well as throughout this application) it would be our attendance to our students' social and emotional well-being. Burbank as a whole recognizes what research on learning increasingly supports that social and emotional health are not only essential to learning, but also the platform through which effective and long lasting learning takes place. As a result, teachers are keenly aware of the social/emotional state of their students. It is the first topic addressed when we ask, "Is this child ready to learn?" When the answer is no, we know that no amount of accommodations or supports will be effective.

Our practice of monitoring and maintaining the social/emotional well-being of our students is apparent in our culture, our response to challenges, and our academic instruction and achievement. As mentioned above, teachers work very hard to establish classroom environments that support social/emotional well-being. We work to ensure that every student feels a sense of belonging at Burbank, feels known and supported, and therefore feels able to take the risks they need to learn and grow. Parents and families naturally play a large part in this work as social/emotional health is of great importance to caregivers and is often the first marker that something is wrong. When students experience difficulty in academics it is often correlated with social/emotional distress. Sometimes the distress creates challenges to learning, and sometimes the opposite is true, but in either case our teachers and support staff know that if social/emotional well-being is not attended to that school work won't be a priority for children. Even when conditions are ideal for students, engaging their social/emotional interest is of paramount importance to providing meaningful and lasting educational experiences. Burbank's teachers plan with this in mind and craft lessons, projects, and units that engage and excite their students. Whether this means an emotional hook when starting a new social studies unit, or an opportunity to socially engage when discussing solutions to math problems learning sticks with Burbank students, because our work keeps social/emotional learning at its core.