

**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 [X] Choice

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

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

School Mailing Address 3891 Lake Street  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Bridgman State MI Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 49106-8708

County Berrien County

Telephone (269) 466-0241 Fax (269) 466-0221

Web site/URL http://www.bridgmanschools.com E-mail lgraves@bridgmanschools.com

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\* Mr. Shane Peters E-mail speters@bridgmanschools.com  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Bridgman Public Schools Tel. (269) 466-0271

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. Eric Ramso  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

## **PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

---

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

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2020 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2014 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, or 2019.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

---

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2019-2020) unless otherwise stated.

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

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 3 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	51	49	100
1	30	40	70
2	33	33	66
3	28	34	62
4	31	36	67
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
<b>Total Students</b>	173	192	365

\*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):
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 1 % Asian
  - 4 % Black or African American
  - 5 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 85 % White
  - 4 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2018 - 2019 school year: 12%

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	12
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	31
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	43
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	354
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.12
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	12

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

Spanish

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

3 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 52 %

Total number students who qualify: 190

8. Students receiving special education services: 7 %

27 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>1</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>6</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>6</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>7</u> Speech or Language Impairment         |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 11

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.	17
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	8
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	10
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 21:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	96%	95%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2019.

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

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

Yes  No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2004

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

We provide resources to inspire resilient and collaborative critical thinkers.

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

School of Choice openings for the following year are released in April and approved by the Bridgman Board of Education. Parents/guardians may apply through the end of May. Based on opening, the superintendent grants acceptance to the applicants. If there are more applicants than openings, the superintendent randomly selects students based on a public lottery system. The only exclusionary factors taken into school of choice applicants are previous discipline records and/or truancy issues.

## **PART III - SUMMARY**

---

Bridgman Elementary School is located in Southwest Michigan in the City of Bridgman just twenty miles north of the Indiana border. Situated on the beautiful shores of Lake Michigan, Bridgman is known as a tourist destination with its beautiful sand beaches, wooded dune trails and local shops. The community is rich in agriculture and farming and local produce is abundant. Bridgman is home to the Donald C. Cook Nuclear Plant, which provides classroom visits, educational contests and grant opportunities.

Bridgman Elementary was originally constructed in 1954 as the Bridgman High School. Today, this building houses grades Progressive 5 through 4th grade. All incoming kindergarten students are assessed using the Dial-3 norm referenced screening instrument. This assessment consists of measures in motor, language and concept skills. Students who score below the seventy-fifth percentile in language and/or concepts are recommended for Progressive 5 program. Other factors for student placement into Progressive 5 or kindergarten include age, parent input and pre-school recommendation. Our Progressive 5 program focuses on letter names and sounds, numerical recognition and social skills.

The building has gone through many renovations to provide the best learning environment possible, and in 2010 the cafeteria and media centers were updated. Additional changes were made to lighting, carpeting, technology and sound systems.

Bridgman Elementary's student population is approximately 365. Twenty-five percent of our students come as school of choice students from neighboring districts. We have found that students coming from neighboring districts are often not on par with the high social and academic expectations of Bridgman Elementary School. Fifty-two percent of our students receive free or reduced breakfast and lunch. Twenty percent receive Title I services in reading and/or math.

Bridgman Elementary School prides itself on educating the whole child. Academic, social emotional and behavioral supports are implemented at every grade level. Academic achievement is an integral part of Bridgman Elementary's growth and success. Our mission is "to provide resources to inspire resilient and collaborative critical thinkers". Students are provided sixty minutes of "What I Need" (WIN) time daily in math and language arts. Academic data is analyzed on an ongoing basis in order to provide research based intervention and enrichment time in a small group provided by all instructional staff.

A summer reading program is offered to struggling readers in grades kindergarten through second grade. Students are eligible if they are below grade level in reading and/or writing. The program is run by certified teachers and Title I instructional staff. Students are placed in small groups and receive targeted interventions based on their scores on the Universal Screener, AimsWeb Plus. Data analysis has shown that this summer intervention assists in preventing a backward summer slide in phonics, oral reading fluency and writing.

Bridgman Elementary hosts Holiday Programs and Community Art and Variety Shows. Elementary students also participate in the high school musical productions. Bridgman Elementary offers Reading Bee-liers, Lego Robotics Club, Garden Club and Science Olympiad as after school programs.

Bridgman Elementary has implemented a Positive Behavior Intervention Support program where students follow the district Guidelines for Success: Safety, Responsibility, Respect and Honesty. All staff regularly recognizes students for possessing these characteristics, and students are rewarded with a "Caught Bee-ing Good" coupon. Students are celebrated throughout the school year by being recognized with small prizes and their name being called over the public address system.

Bridgman Elementary has a very active Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). Over the last three years, the PTO has sponsored a Fun Run with our students which has raised over nineteen thousand dollars each year. This money is spent directly on student and teacher support. The PTO pays for classroom field trips, Scholastic Magazine and Time for Kids for all grade levels. The PTO also provides volunteer support for our Mileage club, Garden Club, Family Academic Network Nights, Fall and Spring book fairs, the yearbook and grade level celebrations. Individual staff members can also make monetary requests for needed

classroom supplies and incentives.

The student population has changed at Bridgman Elementary School over the past ten years with an increase in both parents working outside of the home, increase in families who qualify for free and reduced breakfast/lunches, and an increase in single parent households. Being recognized as a National Blue Ribbon nominee solidifies the hard work that the entire staff has done in making sure we address each student's needs so that they may reach their full potential.

Bridgman Elementary was a Blue Ribbon recipient in 2004. After this recognition, Bridgman became a destination school with an influx of school of choice applications. We quickly reached our capacity of school of choice students. Because of the family and community that exists at Bridgman Elementary School, we have had the ability to attract top notch teachers and substitutes. As a result, there has been very little staff turnover.

The students and staff at Bridgman Elementary have continued the tradition of excellence in education that was started long before 2004. Many families who have made our school part of their home have remained here because they feel that their children are loved, cared, and supported educationally, socially and emotionally. The corporate support both provided and received by students, staff, and community is what makes Bridgman Elementary a great place to learn.

## **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

Bridgman Elementary School believes in a learner-centered teaching approach. All curriculum decisions are made with this philosophy in mind. Our district has a six year curriculum cycle for each instructional area. During this process, a curriculum adoption committee of teachers is formed to review potential new curriculums. This committee works together to pilot new content, determine strengths and weaknesses of each curriculum, and confirm the alignment to standards and best practices.

This adoption committee includes a special education teacher in order to assure that decisions are made to support all student learning needs. The committee will determine if additional tiered materials are needed to ensure that the curriculum is engaging and provides hands-on learning for all students.

Furthermore, the curriculum committee analyzes the assessment components of the new curriculum. It is important that assessments align to the content standards, provide rigorous practice for students, and provide the teacher with reports and data that will allow them to effectively respond to each students' individual needs.

This aligned curriculum allows Bridgman Elementary to use weekly and unit assessments in language arts and math, and other formative and summative assessments available through our science and social studies curriculum to determine grades on the standards based report card. Teachers also use a standard-aligned assessment for writing in both the fall and spring. In addition to the AimsWeb Benchmark Assessments given three times a year, teachers use AimsWeb for progress monitoring on a weekly or biweekly basis to determine whether our response to intervention during WIN time is achieving the desired results. These results are discussed both in grade level meetings and in bimonthly team meetings. Instruction and intervention are then differentiated to meet students' needs.

Bridgman Elementary School students, in grades second through fourth, have 1:1 Chromebooks and our first grade students have 1:1 iPads. The Progressive 5 and Kindergarten students have access to a set of Chromebooks in their classrooms. All classrooms are provided interactive whiteboards and document cameras, which allow the teachers to keep their instruction interactive and engaging for their students.

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

Bridgman Elementary School recognizes that no one program alone fits the diverse needs of our entire learning community. To meet our students' learning goals, we implement current research-based interventions to support what is taught within our building-wide reading program. These interventions can range from developing basic phonological awareness to immersing students in novel studies. Every student, Progressive Five through fourth grade, has a planned intervention or enrichment plan. These plans are fluid as students often close learning gaps and are ready for the next learning target.

In 2017, Bridgman Elementary undertook an extensive adoption process to update the building reading program. An English Language Arts (ELA) team, representing teachers from all grade-levels, evaluated various products in terms of what was imperative to meet the needs of our student body in the present and future. After site-visits and analyzing programs using qualitative and quantitative methods, the team decided on Wonders by McGraw-Hill Education. This series is utilized throughout the building from kindergarten through fourth grades. The team felt it was vital during the adoption process to get a resource that incorporated blended learning for all students in terms of digital and print resources.

Students are engaged with explicit phonemic awareness exercises as well as reading comprehension and writing activities across the genres. Reading and writing instruction can take the form of many different formats depending on teacher determination of student needs. Tier 2 instruction is embedded within

Wonders, which allows for purposeful and intentional differentiated instruction to occur.

Weekly assessments are built within the Wonders program. Many of these assessments have immediate online feedback that teachers can utilize to close learning gaps with Tier 2 instructional resources. Assessments can take the form of multiple choice questions to educational games that report back quantitative data with specific standards attached. Immediate interventions can then be initiated based on these results. The formative weekly assessments in the Wonders program have a similar format to the state standards assessment which allows our students to be familiarized with the content of the state assessment well in advance.

### **1c. Mathematics**

Bridgman Elementary School chose to implement the Everyday Mathematics curriculum in grades Progressive Five (Pro5) through fourth grade. Everyday Mathematics is developed by the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project and published by McGraw-Hill Education. Our decision to use Everyday Mathematics was based primarily on previous mathematics successes demonstrated on both local and state assessments. Bridgman Elementary School has consistently scored in the top of the county on the Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress (M-STEP) in mathematics.

Some benefits of using the Everyday Mathematics curriculum includes the use of concrete, real-world examples in it's questioning, the repeated scaffolding of concepts and skills throughout the school year, continued practice of basic facts through lessons and games to build on the fluency of computations, and the teaching of multiple methods of problem-solving which allow the students to explore their own minds and ways of thinking. Everyday Mathematics also includes an online platform for students to play games related to lesson concepts. An online learning community for teachers, the Everyday Mathematics Virtual Learning Community, is also available to view videos of lessons, gather additional resources, and chat with other teachers.

Small group differentiated instruction is provided during math What I Need (WIN) time for fifteen minutes daily. Students are assessed using curriculum-based measures and AimsWeb Plus. Data is analyzed by grade level teams and students are placed into groups based on individual skill needs.

Our Special Education department uses parts of Everyday Mathematics for its instruction as well as the intervention program, Number Worlds, also from McGraw-Hill Education. Number Worlds is a highly-engaging, research-proven, teacher-led math intervention program that was built on rigorous state standards to bring math-challenged Pro5 through fourth grade students up to grade level with Real World Applications. Number Worlds also has many additional resources available for students and teachers alike, including: online activities for students, a virtual learning community and online course learning for teachers, and progress monitoring tools. Number Worlds helps struggling learners in our Multi-tiered System of Support tiers 2 and 3 achieve math success and quickly brings them up to grade level by intensively targeting the most important standards.

### **1d. Science**

Bridgman Elementary uses the Cereal City Science curriculum, which is a phenomenon-based curriculum designed for the Next Generation Science Standards and the Common Core State Standards. This program was recently recognized as an Accomplished STEM Curriculum. Our school chose Cereal City because it integrates science, mathematics, and literacy using STEM materials. Furthermore, because they are a Michigan-based educational institution, our staff can readily obtain professional development from the very people who helped to design the curriculum.

Cereal City curriculum follows the National Research Council's vision of three-dimensional learning including science and engineering practices, cross-cutting concepts, and disciplinary core ideas. This three-dimensional learning framework is clearly outlined in each teacher guide so staff can engage students in science instruction to help them develop science proficiency across the four domains of physical, earth, and life science, as well as engineering.

Student scientists are led through the engineering design process with each investigation using the 5E Learning Cycle. We chose this curriculum because of the science journals that students use to provide their claim, evidence, and reasoning in regard to the phenomenon they are researching. These student journals also provide literacy integration as students are required to use evidence from the texts provided, as well as prove their scientific findings by using specific academic language. Moreover, staff can use these journals as a means of formative assessment.

Over the last nine years of using the program, we have seen an increase in our students' abilities to work collaboratively in small groups while they do their research. Supplementary materials were recently purchased to further enhance the curriculum. Student engagement is evident in the quality of the work they display as student scientists and engineers, and in their level of excitement as they discover patterns, make connections, and construct scientific explanations of their surrounding world.

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

Bridgman Elementary School implements the social studies curriculum by the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA). The main objective of the curriculum is for students to apply historical, economic, geographic, and civic concepts to real life situations. MAISA starts student's social explorations of the world in Progressive Five and Kindergarten by learning about themselves and gradually building on their knowledge each year. First through fourth grade continues to build on these ideals by learning about families, the state of Michigan, the United States, and the world around them. The curriculum provides continuity amongst the grade levels, is rich in trade books and literature, features pre and post tests, highlights important vocabulary terms within each lesson, and provides hands-on projects and discussions for students to engage in. Our social studies curriculum is implemented into other subjects throughout the day, especially in reading and writing.

As social studies enrichment, our elementary students participate in Scholastic News and Time for Kids every week which highlights important themed topics and events happening in our country that directly coincide with holidays, presidential elections, weather, and other current events. This activity can be projected digitally, and students are provided a magazine of their own to write in. The issues also come with a set of vocabulary words and interactive reading comprehension games.

Many classrooms in our school participate in the Junior Achievement program as a social studies enhancement. Each classroom selects a local volunteer to share in the experience and teaches students about work responsibility and being productive citizens. Students learn about the importance of volunteering, choosing a future career, needs versus wants, and how a community operates together.

Bridgman Elementary School's social studies curriculum is progressive, gives students the chance to understand the social world around them, enhances developing vocabulary and experiences, and sets students up to be successful in their civic life.

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

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

#### **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

Bridgman Elementary students have outstanding opportunities to develop both body and mind. Bridgman Elementary School's other curricular areas include: visual art, music, physical education, library and counseling. As a part of each program, we strive to develop the whole child, encouraging each student to appreciate the visual and performing arts, become life-long readers, foster students' love for physical activity and healthy choices, and help students with their mental health and relationships.

Kindergarten through fourth grade students participate in visual arts, music, or physical education each day. Students attend a rotation of specials on a daily basis during a 55 minute block. Progressive Fives (Pro5) has

a special's class every day for 40 minutes, seeing each special 1-2 times per week.

Bridgman Elementary School's visual arts program encompasses the national and state standards. Students experience the visual arts through different media such as graphic design, painting, drawing, fiber arts, and ceramics. Students are taught skills on how to use tools, as well as, given opportunities to creatively express one's ideas and constructively give and receive feedback. At the end of the school year, students engage in a portfolio review - presenting and sharing their work and learning. To further support skills and knowledge in the arts, different strategies are woven into the curriculum such as Arts Integration and the 8 Studio Habits of Thinking. In addition, students participate in local and regional art shows and are members of Artsonia, an online art gallery.

Bridgman Elementary School students enjoy singing folk songs, game songs, rounds, and canons as they learn to read rhythm and tonal patterns in music class. Students listen to, perform, improvise and compose rhythms, melodies, and accompaniments for unpitched world percussion instruments, body percussion, boomwhackers, recorders, and Orff instruments. Third and fourth grade students play soprano recorders and have access to garklein, sopranino, alto, and tenor recorders for playing in ensembles. Students perform concerts for the community and evaluate peer performances. Our program has received multiple innovation grants and meets the Michigan music standards.

Bridgman Elementary School students have the opportunity to participate in a quality Physical Education program. The facilities Bridgman Elementary has to offer are top notch and include a full size gymnasium, sport and fitness equipment, rock wall. Our students are able to use the community swimming pool which is housed at Bridgman High School. The Physical Education program is designed to provide physical activities particularly needed in a day and age when many lead a sedentary lifestyle. Every student will experience and develop an understanding for overall lifetime fitness/wellness by participating in units/lessons based on Michigan's standards.

In the library, student learning is supported in a variety of ways. Pro5 through fourth grade have a library class for a half hour once a week. The library is also open every day for open checkout for a half hour each morning for any student to check out a book. A wide variety of books from non-fiction to chapter books to picture books to biographies are provided. Books are chosen at each reading level in these interest areas by the students. Weekly class visits promote the joy of reading as students are exposed to books and authors they may not otherwise have known about through library read-alouds. Furthermore, the librarian uses her personal skills as a published author to promote student writing and teach about the writing process. The librarian shares her writing experiences and encourages students to share their writings with her. There is a student writing corner in the library for students to display their work. Library materials are made available to classroom teachers to complement and enrich their units.

The counseling department at Bridgman Elementary School runs psycho social groups, which successfully address student social skills, self esteem, kindness, friendship building, bullying and family transitions. Monthly grief groups for students are hosted by our community partner, Lory's Place. We host a peer mentor program designed to assist students in lower grades with social and life skills.

Our counseling curriculum sponsored by Second Step, details strategies for academic success and emotion management. Personal safety lessons are presented annually by the Southwest Michigan Children's Advocacy Center, while online safety education has been tailored by NetSmartz.

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

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

Bridgman Elementary School (BES) works diligently to offer every child daily instruction in all content areas. Furthermore, all students receive daily enrichment in music, physical education, or art. We understand the importance of teaching the whole child and strive to utilize both summative and formative data to provide targeted interventions for our lowest learners.

Bridgman Elementary School uses benchmark data to determine the What I Need (WIN) student groups in reading. WIN time is offered 30 minutes a day, four days a week, for every BES student. Title I services are embedded in WIN intervention groups. During this time students receive intensive reading intervention or enrichment depending on their academic needs. Students who are performing below the 50th percentile are progress monitored bi-weekly. Furthermore, these students are placed on an Individual Reading Improvement Plan (IRIP).

Parents with a child on an IRIP are provided three trainings throughout the school year at Family Academic Network Nights (FANN). During these events, we focus on how to understand their child's data. We guide parents through setting a SMART goal for their child and how they can help their child reach that goal. At the subsequent training sessions, parents receive updated data and are reflective on what went well and what they still need to work on. These training events provide a strong bond between our school and families. This system provides the opportunity for parents to ask questions, receive support, and a chance to advocate for their child.

During monthly team meetings, the grade level teachers, Literacy Specialist, principal and counselor discuss the students who have not made sufficient progress in the core academic areas. We make instructional adjustments as needed and offer additional interventions during paraprofessional push-in/pull-out time throughout the day. Lastly, teachers are continuously collecting formative data to adjust instruction to meet student needs. These modifications can be an adjusted spelling list, extra time to complete an assignment, adjusting the length of assignments, individual instruction by the teacher, restating directions, preferential seating or reading the assignments to the student.

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

As stated above, we offer a What I Need (WIN) time to provide individualized reading instruction for our students at each grade level. Math WIN is provided in grades two through four. This provides a wonderful opportunity to enrich the learning of our highest performing students. At the third and fourth grade levels we offer reading and writing enrichment. Both of these groups allow students to deepen their understanding beyond the work they are doing in their classrooms. For example, students have had the opportunity to help a local author edit a chapter in her most recent novel, provide creative alternative endings, and discuss strengths and focus areas for the piece.

In the classroom, teachers provide enrichment opportunities both academically and socially. Through Kagan Cooperative Learning activities students are encouraged to act as student leaders and peer coaches. For example, in the activity Rally Coach, students who are performing above grade level are paired with students who are on or below grade level. The high performing students are taught to discuss a question, to guide, give tips and assist in re-teaching following the example of the classroom teacher. This activity provides a deeper understanding for all the students involved. Kagan activities allow for students to build relationships, strengthen communication skills and effectively work together to answer and solve problems. Student coaches are taught to give praise frequently and celebrate their shared success. Moreover, we have seen that student coaches develop empathy and an encouraging demeanor when working with the students who struggle.

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

Bridgman Elementary School uses a comprehensive framework, which provides support for all learners. This Multi-Tiered System of Support is based on the concept of supporting the whole child. Evidence based interventions and assessments are regularly implemented to provide the data necessary in determining whether a child needs more intensive support. An example would be utilizing AIMSweb Benchmark testing in the fall, winter, and spring to assess students' reading and math progress. This is followed up with Data Days where every grade level meets with the literacy coach and building principal to evaluate our students for risk in all academic areas. Students who are consistently falling below the fifteenth percentile are evaluated for more intensive instruction.

When a student continues to score below grade level, they are evaluated for special education support. If that

student qualifies for services, they will receive support in various ways, which can include individualized or small group instruction based on their needs. This instruction is intentional and explicit. For example, the Wilson Reading Program, which is based on phonological-coding research and Orton-Gillingham principles, is used to support struggling readers.

Students are also progress monitored regularly and the Individual Education Plan goals are written specifically for that student's needs. We are dedicated to closing the achievement gap with regular progress monitoring, examining data, and making adjustments to individualized instruction. Additionally, special education works in tandem with our general education teachers. We often provide information about specific disabilities and work together in determining interventions that will provide maximum success in every classroom.

Special Education is not just about academics. It is about the whole child including their social, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral needs. This can include a plethora of disabilities. We work with our parents and any outside services to provide the best fit in instruction and behavioral support. For example, we often work with outside agencies such as Logan Center in supporting our students with autism. Additionally, we are always fine-tuning ways to help students learn. This includes a positive rewards plan, various tools or strategies to help with attention issues, para support, and a calming room. Bridgman is truly a destination school that is highly recommended by parents of students with special needs. We continue to strive to meet the needs of all our learners every day.

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

Bridgman Elementary has a small population of students who speak fluent English, but are considered English Language Learners because Spanish is spoken predominantly in the home. For these students, supplemental instruction is provided using the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) methods which allows students to learn content through targeted instruction. Instructional techniques include building background knowledge of words, comprehension, interaction and practice. Using the SIOP method, teachers are able to design and deliver lessons that address the academic and linguistic needs of English learners within the general education setting.

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

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

---

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

Students at Bridgman Elementary are given numerous opportunities for engagement and motivation. Our school works to produce a positive and respectful environment through our “Caught Being Good” coupons, which focus on the district’s guidelines for success: honesty, respect, responsibility and safety. Our school counselor also encourages student leaders to make appropriate social choices through our “Kindness Club”, various peer groups that share similar life challenges, peer mentors and through monthly guidance lessons in social emotional learning at every grade level.

In 2017, Bridgman Public Schools provided thirty hours of Kagan Cooperative Learning professional development to all teaching staff and administrators. This training provided the teachers with over 150 repeatable, step-by-step, content-free ways to structure the interaction of students with each other, the curriculum and the teachers. Kagan activities also include class and team building strategies which help promote social interaction among all peers. Bridgman Elementary has two Kagan Coaches on staff who continue to provide training throughout the year. The coaches provide weekly ideas for implementation into all subject areas, individual classroom coaching, and building level professional development sessions. Since implementation began, student engagement has risen from approximately seventy percent to one hundred percent as witnessed through classroom observation and coaching.

Bridgman Elementary also focuses on growth mindset practices to assist students in intrinsic motivational techniques. Growth mindset is the belief that with dedication and effort students are able to achieve more. We believe that students who possess a growth mindset persist in the face of setbacks. Our students are resilient and as a result we see higher achievement, greater optimism and greater success outside of school. All instructional staff will be attending Kagan Growth Mindset training in the fall of 2020 in order to strengthen their knowledge and usage of Kagan structures.

Bridgman third and fourth graders have the opportunity to serve on the student council. This group plans school-wide activities throughout the year such as dress up days and charitable drives which promote camaraderie, community, and school spirit. Students in the lower grade level classrooms are paired with students in the upper grade level classrooms as Reading Buddies. The upper elementary students serve as reading mentors to the lower elementary students. These students also assist lower elementary students with science activities and art projects. Teachers and parents often comment on the positive benefits that are received by both the student mentors and mentees.

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

Bridgman Elementary has established a welcoming environment that encourages the participation of families and the community. Parents are truly a partner in their child’s education. The year begins with our Back-to-School night and continuing through spring concerts and awards and over 95% of our families are in attendance.

Teachers are in constant contact with parents on social, academic and behavioral progress. Parents are informed of their child’s progress and achievements in multiple ways. The use of technology has allowed teachers and parents to communicate on a frequent basis. These means include email, texts and Remind which allows two way communication that is immediate. Additionally, parent teacher conferences are held once a year for in-depth face to face discussion about curriculum based assessments and standards based report cards. The school hosts Family Academic Network Nights for each grade level three times a year. These meetings further promote the bond between school and home as parents analyze their student’s data with their classroom teacher and set SMART goals for their child.

Community support is strong at Bridgman Elementary School. Our vision as a community is “to prepare and support all students for lifelong learning”. The Blessings in a Backpack Program provides free weekend meals for over forty students. It also provides over forty-five holiday meals. Bridgman Cares is another

organization that provides swimsuits, winter clothing, snacks and gym shoes to students in need. The Bridgman Foundation for Educational Excellence is dedicated to providing enhanced learning opportunities for our students, staff and community. Other community support includes Toys for Tots, Harbor Country Missions, Junior Achievement, Lory's Place and local church food pantries.

The Bridgman Public Library hosts our Reading Bee-Lievers after school program. This program targets struggling readers and pairs them up with library volunteers and teachers to do after school reading assistance once a week. Library volunteers also come to Bridgman Elementary School on a weekly basis to read to individual classrooms.

Another community partnership is the Mighty Acorns Program which teaches students to be good stewards of natural open spaces in their community. Third and fourth grade students go on educational field trips two times a year to learn and assist in the care of forest trails. Members of the Mighty Acorns program lead the groups and educate the students in this endeavor. The curriculum for Might Acorns relates directly to the Cereal City science curriculum.

Every grade level has multiple parent volunteers to assist in learning groups, read with students, help with our school composting programs, mileage club. Parents also chaperone field trips, run the book fairs, sit on advisory committees and organize the fourth grade graduation picnic. Parent volunteers and community members act as lunch buddies for students who struggle socially.

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

As Bridgman Elementary seeks to create a love of learning for our students, we also nurture the love of learning in our staff. Teachers and instructional support staff are encouraged to seek and attend workshops of interest.

Beyond optional professional development (PD), the BES staff has been provided with two years of Kagan student engagement training. This PD has allowed engagement to reach 100% in the majority of our lessons. Teaching staff is also required to attend training in our science curriculum, Cereal City, whenever a new unit is released. These opportunities have allowed alignment in expectations as well as curriculum focus. The district also provides thirty hours of professional development each year to the teachers. During the current year, the principal selected video workshops through Solution Tree. These videos were focused on professional learning communities, instruction, assessment and supporting students.

Three times a year the grade level teams have a day of data analysis. The staff looks at curriculum data for each student and places students in intervention or enrichment groups. Research-based classroom lessons are discussed and demonstrated.

In addition to the required PD, staff has attended workshops in Orton-Gillingham, AimsWeb Plus, classroom management, STEM, technology, growth mindset, diversity, and special needs, including poverty, trauma, and mental health.

The principal promotes and encourages a positive environment and solidarity. Teacher expertise is highlighted and demonstrated through instructional rounds where teachers can observe and learn from their colleagues master teaching. After the teachers' observations, they reflect on the expertise that was shown and leave positive feedback for the teachers who were providing the instruction.

Furthermore, the principal works closely with the Parent Teacher Organization to provide support and appreciation for all staff through the purchase of enriching academic tools and staff appreciation days. Evidence of the positive environment that exists is the frequent laughter that is heard throughout the building by students, staff, and parents. Teachers feel supported by administrators and parents alike and all stakeholders frequently collaborate to make lasting investments in both the students and community.

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

The Principal at Bridgman Elementary takes full responsibility for both the successes and weaknesses of the school. She recognizes and embraces the expertise, and talents of the valued staff. The Principal understands that success only takes place when the right people have been put into place. One of the most important traits of the Principal is to possess good character judgment and exercise it when hiring the best people possible. Positive attitude and climate is a priority. All members must be like-minded and share the school vision: "As a community, we prepare and support all students for lifelong learning". As a result, Bridgman Elementary is a team of positive people who are dedicated to excellence and student success.

The Principal believes in bringing the school community together to share leadership in many different avenues. This begins by working with others to develop their leadership in every position and level of the school. By focusing on an individual's strengths, the principal demonstrates that they value the team's expertise first, before looking to help them develop in other areas. This strength-based focus helps to build a relationship with each individual, pushing them to get better every day. Sharing leadership impacts how teachers interact with one another. They possess relationships where they reinforce one another's strengths.

The core of the decisions are made by the Building Leadership Team (BLT). This ten member team consists of master teachers representing every grade level and curricular area. Members also include the building principal, Literacy Specialist, school counselor, and representatives from special education, art and physical education. The BLT follows the mission of Bridgman Public Schools: "We provide resources to inspire resilient and collaborative critical thinkers". All decisions are based on this mission with the individual student's needs in mind. Keeping student needs in the forefront allows for decisions to be student driven and has allowed for greater focus and increased student success.

The Building Leadership Team meets once a month to discuss topics based on a collaborative agenda. These topics may include: student success/struggles, curriculum initiatives, schedules, grade level updates and upcoming events. At Bridgman Elementary School, we realize that every decision we make impacts student learning, school culture, and community perceptions. Therefore, our leadership team is strategic with each change we make. We focus our changes on educational best practices, all while understanding our student demographics in order to make decisions that will have the strongest impact on our learner outcomes. We are able to do this because the building Principal has created a collaborative learning and work environment, which encourages staff to make changes and to grow professionally, providing the best learning experience for all students. This demonstrates how Bridgman Elementary School uses the insight of our leadership in conjunction with research to influence student performance.

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

---

Bridgman Elementary school began the shift from a teacher-driven curriculum to learner-centered instruction during the 2016-2017 school year. Learner-centered instruction places the student at the center of every decision, and instructional supports are built around them. Learner-centered instruction involves collaboration from all stakeholders and teamwork by the faculty.

Bridgman Elementary calls this learner-centered instruction “What I Need” (WIN) time. Students are provided what they need during the day without being pulled from instructional time and falling behind. WIN time includes two 30-minute periods which allow students to be served in both reading and math. WIN is a school-wide system, so every student goes to WIN groups for intervention, remediation, or enrichment.

Each student is thoughtfully placed in flexible groupings as determined by their data checkpoints on the universal screener, AimsWeb Plus. Three times a year grade level teachers, the building principal, Literacy Specialist, Title I staff and the school counselor meet to analyze student scores. Additionally, twice a month the same group of people meet to discuss student progress based on benchmark testing and curriculum based assessments. Using each student’s unique performance, they are thoughtfully placed in the flexible grouping as determined by their data checkpoints. The instructional staff makes it a point to move students; this is not based on a calendar or timeline. Students are moved based on their performance.

The content of WIN time is not the same for every group or every day of the week. Instead, students are provided with a rich curriculum that engages them. Students are in small groups working with teachers and Title I staff. This time is allowed to provide intensive assistance in which the teacher provides a lesson targeting the group's needs that will help them to continue to progress. WIN time is a priority and instructional time is protected.

With the implementation of What I Need (WIN) time, other social and emotional benefits have started to emerge for the students at Bridgman Elementary. WIN goes beyond instructional impact, we also began to notice a decrease in discipline and counseling referrals and an increase in social emotional rewards. We attribute this change to the WIN structure. This time allows our students to interact with students from other classrooms along with building relationships with other adults in the building which in turn creates a more caring and supportive school culture.