

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

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

School Mailing Address 2461 60th Street SE
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Grand Rapids State MI Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 49508-6626

County Kent County

Telephone (616) 871-1080 Fax (616) 871-1081

Web site/URL
<https://www.kentwoodps.org/ourschools/elementary-schools/discoveryelementary/> E-mail cassandra.colegrove@kentwoodps.org

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Mr. Michael Zoerhoff E-mail michael.zoerhoff@kentwoodps.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Kentwood Public Schools Tel. (616) 455-4400

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 Mrs. Mimi Madden
(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):
- 10 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 3 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 3 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 16 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	17	12	29
K	53	53	106
1	46	52	98
2	43	43	86
3	51	47	98
4	64	63	127
5	60	40	100
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	334	310	644

*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
 - 14 % Asian
 - 26 % Black or African American
 - 13 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 38 % White
 - 9 % 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: 11%

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	29
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	42
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	71
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	645
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.11
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	11

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

Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Burmese, Burmese - Matu, Bosnian, Chiminee, Chin, Chinese, Creole, Croatian, Dinka, Falam, French, Hakha, Hindi, Japanese, Kachin, Karen, Kinyarwanda, Malayalam, Mandingo, Matu, Nepali, Serbian, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, Tamil, Tedim, Telugu, Vietnamese, Yoruba, Zomi

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 26 %
165 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 59 %

Total number students who qualify: 381

8. Students receiving special education services: 9 %

60 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>9</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>4</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>10</u> Developmental Delay | <u>3</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>25</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>6</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: 14

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	27
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	13
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	9
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 24:1

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	94%	95%	95%	96%	95%
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.

Discovery staff have high expectations for all. Our school is a place where children take their jobs as learners seriously, staff are professionals who go the extra mile to support children in this journey of learning, parents feel welcome and are given opportunities to be involved in their child's education, and there is an academic environment that teaches the whole child and treats children with dignity. We all get better each day.

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

Students at Discovery Elementary School learn not only from rigorous academic curricula and teaching methods, but also from a richly diverse student body. Our students reflect the many different religions, ethnicities, races, languages, incomes, and cultures that comprise, on the macro scale, our world and, on a micro scale, the community of Kentwood. Discovery is a place where a child can wear a hijab without fear of comment and where we annually celebrate our differences and similarities in a school-wide parade of nations.

We house the district's only gifted and talented program, which is available for students in grades 3 through 5, and we have the third largest elementary English Language Learner population in the district. All of these factors create an environment of "Discovery," in which children play and learn with and from peers of vastly different backgrounds and cultures.

Discovery has had the same principal, a professional with more than 34 years in the district, since opening 13 years ago. The teachers who first came to Discovery were trail blazers who were willing to take risks and to accept challenges. They are trained to use Capturing Kids Hearts (CKH), Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), and Trauma-informed instruction to engage students and teach expectations for behavior and interaction. They have grown with the introduction of tiered instruction, data-rich assessment, and unique initiatives like trauma-informed instruction.

Despite the challenges, the red tape and the demands, Discovery teachers, every day, love what they do and who they do it for. They also love to dress up and play; they get excited about friendly competitions, and they are even willing to act a little goofy, if it's called for, in all-school assemblies. One teacher said, after a recent assembly, that teaching here, "helps us remember why we went into education in the first place."

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

Discovery Elementary School has shown significant progress towards proficiency over the past three years because of a true focus on an aligned core curriculum. All curricula at Discovery are aligned to standards and include tiered instruction to ensure that all children have every opportunity to achieve the standard. All students, including English Language Learners (ELL) and those receiving special education, participate in tier one instruction until they achieve “understanding to mastery.” Approximately forty percent of students require tier two instruction to attain that level of understanding, and approximately ten percent of those students (often ELL and special ed students) go on to participate in tier three supported instruction provided by an on-site resource instructor. Instruction moves forward even when all students have not achieved understanding to mastery and students who are in tier two or tier three instruction on one lesson participate with their classmates in the next lesson.

We constantly review data from various district and classroom level assessments to determine our collective and individual student’s strengths and weaknesses. We use information from iReady quarterly diagnostics, Reading Inventory (RI), iReady Standards Mastery assessments, DIBELS, Michigan State Assessment (M-STEP), and classroom diagnostics to inform our daily instruction. We meet monthly as grade-level teams and rotate between math and reading in “Data Dialogues,” around our strategies for Tier I instruction. Using multi-source data, we look at individual gaps and student proficiency. Based on our findings, teachers may choose to go deeper with a standard in a unit of instruction for math or reading; they may look at how to use ancillary online materials, such as Toolbox from our iReady online supports, or decide to create small targeted groups in the classroom. All Discovery teachers have been trained to use Standards Mastery assessments to evaluate students' achievement following a completed unit. During these monthly meetings we may explore future planning for a grade level. At each meeting, a district Academic Support Coach for math or reading is in attendance and co-leads the meeting with the building principal. The data dialogue meetings help teachers work together to close achievement gaps in student subgroups. At the opening of each meeting, staff review minutes from the previous meeting and discuss initiatives taken in the interim.

This combination of teacher support, adherence to standards, wealth of data, and staff accountability forms the foundation for our Tier I instruction, which is key to addressing gaps in student achievement.

1b. Reading/English language arts

Discovery’s literacy instruction is grounded in the Michigan K-12 English Language Arts Standards. We organize our literacy instruction using a Balanced Literacy Framework. This systematic framework provides students and teachers with a rich and multileveled platform for effective standards-based literacy instruction. Our daily 90-minute literacy instruction is organized by blocks. In 1st - 5th grades, the blocks include Working with Words, Guided Reading/Comprehension, Self-Selected Reading and Writing. Our kindergarten literacy instruction blocks include Interactive Read-Aloud, Guided/Shared Reading, Self-Selected Reading, Words and Writing.

All reading and writing units include standards-based outcomes and learning goals. Teachers design instruction that leads students to develop literacy skills at the depth required by the standards. This adapted framework allows teachers to avoid scripted lessons and instead, enables them to evolve their lessons based on their students’ current needs. Using formative and summative assessments from RAZ kids, i-Ready, and classroom rubrics, teachers at Discovery are able to tailor the instruction to each individual student’s needs.

Since 2016, the District has used McGraw Hill's Wonders curriculum materials for Kindergarten - 5th-grade instruction. This program provides teachers with a rich resource of common authentic text. Teachers use the Wonders materials with other instructional sources, such as classroom magazines, authentic trade books, informational articles, etc., to achieve the intent and purpose of the lesson.

We base our early Tier 1 teaching time on teaching phonics. In 2017, Discovery introduced Lindamood Bell (LMB) phonics instruction to the Tier I teaching block of Working with Words. All K-2 teachers are trained in the LMB phonics program, “Seeing Stars.” A district LMB coach visits classrooms weekly to support teachers in the implementation of this program. The emphasis and methodology since 2017 have enabled the following outcomes:

There has been a consistent decrease in the number of students judged “at-risk” in reading on the iReady diagnostic proficiency test. A demographically similar school building in the District, which has not had the LMB emphasis, has had an increase in the number of students judged “at risk” in the same period.

2016-17 Kindergarteners showed a 49% increase in phonemic awareness when entering first grade in 2017/18, while those in the comparison school showed only a 26% increase.

From 2016-17 to 2017-18, Discovery students showed a 26% increase in phonetic rules and how and when to use them in reading. The comparison school showed a 1% decrease in the same skills as measured by the district assessment.

Students’ knowledge of high frequency words in text increased 12% from 2016-17 to 2017-18 at Discovery, but only 7% at the comparison school.

A two-year longitudinal study found that kindergarteners from 2016-17, measured as second graders in 2018-19, increased their phonemic awareness by 68%, whereas students in the comparison school increased theirs by 54%.

1c. Mathematics

Discovery uses the Math in Focus program, modeled after Michigan’s common core state standards for mathematics. Students in every grade have 90 minutes each day of mathematics instruction. Although we use the Math in Focus lesson guides and pacing, we are not rigid in our adherence to the resource. Rather, our own pacing and instruction, while aligned with standards, is flexible so that we are always able to respond to our students’ needs. Teachers use several supplemental resources, such as iReady Teacher Toolbox and Number Talks to ensure a strong alignment to standards. We also use the optional Math in Focus Calendar (Everyday Counts) to front-load mathematical concepts and to fully support visual/spatial learners. Every lesson and every unit begins with the teacher questioning how he or she can help students make real-world mathematical connections to what they are learning.

At Discovery we are mindful of the rigor necessary to math instruction and assessment. Students work daily with grade-level standards during Tier I instruction. Teachers follow the Gradual Release of Responsibility Instructional Model, which keeps direct instruction focused and concise, while allowing more time for students to study mathematics individually or in groups.

Teachers use summative and formative assessments to guide instruction and to provide maps of the children’s growth and proficiency. Teachers of all grades use the i-Ready Diagnostic summative assessment to determine students’ proficiency levels. The initial diagnostic, administered in August, helps teachers differentiate their lessons toward those who need extra support and those who need an extra challenge. Teachers in grades 2 through 5 use the iReady Standards Mastery assessments for formative data. As the name suggests, these assessments are aligned to the standards so that teachers can collect student proficiency data by standard. The assessment items not only measure content standards, but also the standards for math practice, as students are expected to critique the reasoning of others and to recognize and apply multiple representations, such as graphs and charts, of mathematical ideas.

1d. Science

Discovery teachers use a recently adopted district-wide science curriculum: the inquiry-based “Mastery Science.” This curriculum is a video-based, storytelling program with built-in discussion questions and

hands-on activities for all students. The lessons are designed using the state's Next Generation science standards. Its online lessons and videos provide opportunities to enhance students' understanding of science standards and concepts. Students discover the questions they should ask when investigating a topic. Teachers follow up these lessons with hands-on investigations in the classrooms using the video as the launching board for inquiry instruction. This bridge from traditional science instruction to hands-on investigation increases engagement. Teachers encourage students to think critically, take risks, and discuss their findings, while creating a relationship and understanding of the world around them. All of this combines to give students a heightened sense of self efficacy, a sure path to motivation and learning.

Two examples of lessons that exemplify our hands-on approach to science are those in kindergarten and fourth grade. Both are supported with Mystery Science videos.

Kindergarten students address standards K-PS2-2 and 2-2, "Motion and stability: Forces and interactions." The essential question of the lesson is, "What is the Biggest Excavator?" During inquiry, they discover there are pushes and pulls involved in all kinds of work, including the work done by machines. Kindergartners learn the academic vocabulary that is necessary to succeed in this lesson -- shove, push, lift, pull, move, dump. Students then learn that machines make it easier for people to do work, and they turn and talk with each other about how and why the machines help humans. Students are then tasked with the job of digging a hole for a swimming pool. Through collaboration, they pretend to use different machines to dig a hole for a swimming pool and construct explanations about why it is easier to dig a hole with an excavator than with a shovel or with their hands. As an extension activity, students independently draw a picture of a machine that does work in order to help humans.

In fourth grade, standards 4-LS1-1 call for the students to construct an argument that plants and animals have internal and external structures that function to support survival, growth, behavior, and reproduction. The lesson uses the "Salmon in the Classroom" program sponsored through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Children collect data on salmon, beginning in November as eggs, through their release in a local tributary in May. Children reenact the takeover of sea lamprey in Lake Michigan, graphing the numbers of native fish as they play a tag-like game. They pretend they are salmon in all stages of life as they encounter difficult and harmful environmental factors. This culminates in students' musings and questions. As partners, students research their questions, create a presentation, and share their findings with the class. The day the eggs are released, the class takes a trip to the Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery in Mattawan, Michigan to learn about ways that the hatchery works to keep our lakes healthy and balanced.

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

Social Studies education is an essential core at Discovery Elementary School. The curriculum is an integrated core in grades K-2. The teacher uses the community curriculum, integrated into the ELA, math and science curricula. In grades 3-5, the social studies curriculum focuses on the State of Michigan, geography, and U.S. history. Field trips are an essential part of the curriculum in all grades. Each field of study is based on the Michigan standards and incorporated into our technology curriculum with the use of virtual tours. The upper elementary teachers are led by a teacher leader who is very knowledgeable in the curriculum and continues to push staff to higher rigor and relevance in social studies.

Social studies lessons are embedded in engagement at Discovery. For example, in third grade, a social studies lesson is based on Michigan Standards3 – C1.0.1, which requires that students give an example of how Michigan state government fulfills one of the purposes of government (e.g., protecting individual rights, promoting the common good, ensuring equal treatment under the law), and 3 – P4.2.2, which requires students to participate in projects to help or inform others. The teacher planned the lesson around the essential question of why we should promote the common good. The teacher introduced vocabulary specific to the lesson and small groups of children brainstormed on chart paper using classroom protocols. Groups rotated to meet with others and share ideas. Children partner-read a non-fiction reading selection, annotating with sticky notes passages that spoke to the essential question. As a group, the class created an Anchor Chart of their findings on citizens promoting the common good, using their sticky notes to demonstrate individual thinking and commonality of thinking. The extension to this lesson asked student groups to create and share a presentation to peers on the "common good" at Discovery, and how it fits into

the larger concept of government. Students used our PBIS matrix as reference material for the project. The teacher set perimeters about what was expected for each group and students had a variety of options for delivering their findings, including a video presentation.

Another example is that of a fifth grade lesson built on State standard 5 – U3.1.3, which asks students to use an event from the Revolutionary era (e.g., Boston Tea Party, quartering of soldiers, writs of assistance, closing of colonial legislatures), to explain how British and colonial views on using power with authority and using power without authority differed (views on representative government). To engage ten year olds in this important moment in Revolutionary history, teachers studied the work of author Ellin Oliver to formulate best practice. The lesson took what children might interpret as people sitting around drinking tea to an understanding of the struggle of people to reconcile beliefs, earn a living, and map their own destiny during a governmental tempest that shifted every aspect of their lives. The lesson was planned around the four pillars of engagement outlined by Oliver (intellectual urgency, emotional resonance, perspective bending, and sense of aesthetic). The lesson opened with a picture of the Boston Tea party. Without knowing the content, students explored the possible perspectives of the painting and hypothesized what the picture might depict. Once they learned the content of the picture, they moved into groups and discussed the conflict from both the British and colonial perspectives. From there, they were given the opportunity to “change sides” based on their discussions and their new perspectives. The lesson ended with a writing assignment reflecting, based on the discussion, which perspective resonated with each student.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Discovery teaches the whole child. Art helps children connect to the beauty in our world, past and present. Music helps them understand that we are a part of a community that moves together, and together we can calm our fears, regulate our brains, and be present in the moment. Movement activates the brain in children, helping them reduce stress and improve attention. Traditional media center materials and non-traditional experiences in our media center give children opportunities to grow life skills, develop problem-solving capabilities and create teamwork. At Discovery, children experience the essential elements for growth and learning in all of our classrooms and on our playground. All students, grades K-5, including all special education students, participate weekly for 45 minutes each in gym, art, and music.

Discovery’s art program focuses on the elements of art and principles of design, while allowing for creativity and personal expression. Students experiment with art techniques and tools. Cross curricular integration embeds other content elements such as symmetry, color theory (math), art masters, culture, geography (history), authors and illustrators (ELA). Our hallways are filled with children’s art. Other opportunities, such as our district-wide Black History Month Celebration at the high school, give our students a wider, more diverse audience for their artwork.

The music program at Discovery also makes connections to curricular areas. Upper elementary students use songs like “The Erie Canal” and “The Edmond Fitzgerald” to make strong connections to the past, and our program takes exploration even further to include the origins of instruments like the ukulele. In lower elementary, we coach children to move as we sing; sometimes, we move like different animals and talk about their characteristics. Lessons in music, such as sound and pitch, link to science concepts: Small/short has a high pitch, and large instruments make low-pitch sounds. Discovery kids are involved in music outside of school through special opportunities such as singing the National Anthem at a semi-professional basketball game, our annual music program, and Ukulele Club.

Discovery’s physical education program helps mold our students into good citizens. We emphasize sportsmanship skills and team building while introducing students to physical fitness activities that can become lifetime habits. Students learn about why it’s important to raise and measure their heart rates while engaging in fun physical activities. We intentionally have students cross their midlines and participate in activities designed to help them focus and improve memory retention for the classroom. We teach them that

sportsmanship and cooperation with others is more than just giving a high five during or after game play. It's about supporting each other's strengths and weaknesses and helping each other improve. Special activities include The Mileage Club, Kids Heart Challenge, The Kids' Program, Lightning Challenge, All-School Field Day, 5th Grade Field Day, and Girls on the Run.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

Students working below grade level receive support through our Tier II Enrichment Groupings. These groups are put together based on students' strengths and weaknesses and are kept small in order to target specific individual student's needs. All students Kindergarten through third grade participate in these Tier II Enrichment Groups.

Teachers, interventionists, para-pros, the principal, an Academic Support Coach, special education specialist, and the EL teacher review data from DIBELS, iReady, and Reading Inventory (RI) to form each intervention group. They discuss every child in grades K-2 and place the child

in a group suitable for his or her individual needs. Groups using Level Literacy kits, and Lindamood Bell (LMB) techniques usually include six or fewer students. The children with the greatest academic need are taught by the classroom teachers; interventionists take the higher functioning groups. These groups meet Monday through Friday for grades 1 and 2 in 30-minute blocks scheduled around Core Content.

Kindergarten groups have more push-in support for identified students. Push-in support begins with the individual child, who works on letters and sounds, moves to blends, and, ultimately, participates in a leveled reading group in the classroom. Third-grade groups meet for one-hour blocks and change over the course of the year, moving from LMB phonics groups if necessary, to targeted pull-out instruction and finally to push-in with classroom teachers. Staff meets five times a year to look at new data and make adjustments to groups and instruction groupings as indicated.

Before school begins, the principal and select staff develop a building schedule, which allows us to pull students, including special education and ELL students, without them missing core instruction time. All groups are pulled during these specified Intervention times: K-2 intervention groups in the morning and third-grade groups in the afternoon.

We narrow academic gaps by addressing individual needs and working to ensure that all students read at grade level by the time they exit second grade. Despite our efforts, we do have some gaps for our African American and Hispanic students, which we are addressing by consulting with another Kentwood Principal who is currently in national Leading Educators training. This principal has already provided two training sessions for staff on implicit bias and will continue staff training next school year.

3b. Students performing above grade level

We regularly challenge students who excel by placing them in special learning groups and/or selected special project groups. The school also has two premier programs for students performing above grade level: IMPACT and PEAKS.

Our pull-out program, I.M.P.A.C.T. (Instructing Motivated Pupils to Achieve, Create, and Think) offers students in grades 3-5 monthly meetings with a certified teacher in which they explore extended curricular topics. IMPACT students are those who are mature, motivated, and willing to work in a group setting or independently. They are able to adapt to new learning environments, contribute to discussions, and demonstrate leadership abilities. These students excel academically and enjoy going above and beyond the grade level curriculum.

This school year, IMPACT students learned about the body systems and how those systems play a part in athletics. Discussions focused on the upcoming 2020 Tokyo Olympics, the paralympics, and Special

Olympics. The students took a keen interest in Special Olympics and created a service project to raise money for the cause. This project resulted in more than \$400, which was donated to the local chapter of Special Olympics.

Discovery's P.E.A.K.S. (Parents, Educators, and Kids = Success) Program is a full-time, self-contained, gifted and talented program for students in third through fifth grades. This program offers unique learning opportunities for highly capable students. With rigorous academic instruction, and independent student learning, the P.E.A.K.S. Program is tailored for students who are gifted in multiple areas. Enrolled students focus on science, technology, engineering and math skills, 21st Century Skills, and service learning.

We offer differentiation through enrichment and acceleration, which encourages students to think about complex subjects and ideas. We compact the core curricula to allow for projects such as the Design Thinking Process, and long-term projects on innovation. Our latest initiative in the Design Thinking Process helped students build empathy for others, develop an awareness of individual social responsibilities, and see teamwork as a necessary component of innovation and design prototype development. Our third-grade PEAKS students have teamed with local Steelcase engineers to create innovative product designs. Currently, Steelcase is manufacturing a prototype of furniture designed by our third graders.

3c. Special education

Discovery has three special-education resource rooms, in which we support students by giving them additional instruction and supplemental time and materials to ensure their success with identified core content. The teachers follow student IEP goals and create instruction designed for each student. They use district-approved digital resources when appropriate.

Teachers use differentiated methods of instruction to help students become proficient in grade level material. Students also participate in half-hour and hour-long Lindamood-Bell groups that focus on phonics (Seeing Stars) or vocabulary and comprehension (Visualizing and Verbalizing). Students' progress is charted, and students are tested twice a year with the program's assessment tools. Teachers collect formative assessment during each and every group. This level of intensity and tracking is reserved for our Tier III students, most of whom are special education. What makes Discovery unique is the inclusion of general education students as members of some of these Tier III groups when necessary. This flexible placement is possible because the school is designated a school-wide Title I building.

Resource teachers are the "ground zero" of our Trauma Informed Strategies initiative. Daily, they pull groups of students for social skill lessons, which include self-reflection on their emotions and experiences, and practice on skills that others might take for granted such as how to "line up". When children learn to use their words, recognize when they are dysregulated, and learn substitute behaviors, they are better able to access the emotional state necessary for learning. These special efforts have resulted in Discovery having a lesser number of special- education students than other same-sized, and even smaller, elementary buildings in the district. We believe this success is a result of our Resource Room teachers launching learning from the solid foundation of the affective domain.

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

Discovery has 165 students who are English Language (EL) Learners; among them, they speak 30 different languages. Our EL students are taught in small groups by an EL teacher who is elementary certified with endorsements in ESL and Language Arts and a certified EL Interventionist.

The teacher works with students classified by WIDA (World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment) testing as "Entering" and "Beginning" English language development. These students are often newcomers to the United States (immigrant/refugee status) and students who were born in the US, but whose families do not speak English at home. The EL Interventionist works with students with home languages other than English who are at later stages in their English language development; i.e., those identified by WIDA testing as "Developing," "Expanding," and "Bridging." These students may also be immigrant/refugees but have likely lived in the US for a longer time or have received English instruction in their native country. KPS

uses a computerized program called “Imagine Learning” for EL students at the Entering and Beginning levels of English language development. The program allows many students’ home languages to be incorporated into the program, which greatly assists newcomers.

Our EL teacher conducts small group instruction using Lindamood-Bell’s Seeing Stars reading and the Visualizing and Verbalizing vocabulary and comprehension program. The EL interventionist conducts small group instruction using the Wonders reading curriculum specifically created for English learners and approved and endorsed by the State of Michigan. The groupings of students are based on specific student needs, WIDA test results, and consultations between the EL teacher and classroom teachers. All of our EL instruction focuses on listening skills, speaking skills, decoding/reading strategies, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing, and uses multi-sensory input and regalia as much as possible.

After a student exits EL services, he or she is monitored for four years to ensure there is no need for additional language intervention. What separates Discovery, and indeed Kentwood Public schools, is that our classroom teachers see our EL students as a part of their classroom, and themselves as the teacher primarily responsible for assisting them with English acquisition. Our EL supports are seen as just that – supports. In the last school year (2018-19), Discovery exited more students from EL support than any other building (including secondary) in the KPS district. In addition, the gap for our EL students as measured by WIDA is -1.02%, which equates to one student. This speaks to the effectiveness of Discovery’s EL academic supports.

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

Discovery uses the Reading Corps of America Program (Reading Corps) with select second- and third-grade students to close the gap in their reading proficiency. Students are referred to the program by their teachers according to criteria that helps determine which students qualify for services. Once students are chosen to be in the program, they meet individually with the tutor five times a week for approximately 20 minutes per session. A trained Reading Corps teacher works with the student on specific reading weaknesses. Each student has a reading folder, which is sent home so that parents can support their student’s growth. Students are monitored for progress at prescribed intervals throughout the school year, and results are shared with teachers and parents. Students exit the program when they reach proficiency in grade-level reading. They are monitored for the next academic year to make sure they maintain their level of proficiency. Those who don’t reach proficiency in one school year participate again in the next school year.

In February 2020, Discovery implemented Michigan Education Math Corps, a tutoring program endorsed by the State, with our fourth-grade students. The program focuses on ensuring that students in grades 4-8 are algebra ready by the end of 8th grade. Students are referred by their teachers and determined to qualify for services according to criteria developed by Math Corps. Once students are chosen to be in the program, a Math Corps trained interventionist meets with groups of two-three students for a total of 90 minutes each week. These sessions can consist of two 45-minute sessions or three 30-minute sessions in which the interventionist uses research-based instruction to help students overcome math weaknesses. Student progress is monitored at various times throughout the school year and progress reports are shared with the classroom teacher and the parents. Students will exit the program when they reach proficiency in grade-level math equivalents, as measured by the program.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

A statement by Flip Flippen, “If you have a child’s heart, you have their mind,” guides the climate and culture priorities at Discovery. Flippen’s national program, “Capturing Kids Hearts” (CKH) has been implemented throughout the Kentwood Public Schools District for more than a decade. Our staff are fully enculturated in CKH, which holds that connecting happens in relationships and that relationships are the foundation for learning.

Our teachers are, therefore, equipped to address every students’ need to belong. They create bonds with students and recognize their emotional needs. They come to know what each student is “saying” with his or her behavior. Each day, teachers greet students individually, and at the end of the day, share with them an inspirational phrase or statement that connects them with the community of their classroom. Every day, they create a positive emotional connection between the student and school, classroom, peers, and teachers. While this work is not easy and requires grit and consistency, we are committed. In fact, we are proud to say that, after an on-site visit, Discovery was designated a 2018-19 National Showcase school by the Capturing Kids Hearts organization—a status granted to only a few more than 200 schools in the nation.

We also use a second effective program, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to engage students at Discovery. PBIS, a state approved program, provides students clear and consistent expectations free of judgement. As such, it provides the supportive and positive environment in which children can learn and thrive. Expectation matrices are posted throughout the building to remind everyone of our consistent behavioral community: Students practice Responsibility, Owning Their Actions, Always being Safe and Respect or “ROAR.” When students exhibit positive behaviors or contributions they are acknowledged, with specific feedback, and a ROAR ticket. We have monthly assemblies for all students and quarterly school-wide activities for those students who have had no behavioral infractions for the quarter. Our PBIS assemblies are loud and raucous—as they should be. If anyone wants to see a room full of kids and adults truly enjoying each other’s company, then look no further than a Discovery PBIS assembly. Consistent celebration of our students’ success energizes everyone in the building. Our common language and practice demonstrating behavioral and social expectations has resulted, over time, in a calm building, where a visitor can see young children in a hallway, often holding up their hands in a motion for “zero voices”. Before they leave the school building for middle school, Discovery students are fully empowered to use their words and direct their own behavior.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Discovery is a neighborhood school where families and community come together with staff and students to create the “heartbeat” of the school. Staff know that parents and community members are important to the success of our school and our students, so we strive to engage them. We provide numerous opportunities for family engagement, including STEM Night, Literacy Night, classroom volunteer recognition, schoolwide field day, schoolwide picnic, talent show and grade-level projects. Our active PTC (Parent-Teacher Committee) meets monthly with teacher representatives and organizes many of our events, including fundraisers, carnival, Holiday Shop, Daddy/Daughter Dance, Mother/Son night, popcorn days, and classroom parties.

We also work to develop partnerships with various businesses and agencies in the Kentwood community. Each Friday, twelve adults from a small local manufacturing company meet one-on-one with their “Friday Friend” student to connect through games and activities. A local church offers free tutoring to our students who have a need. A partnership with AmeriCorps offers many of our students additional support in reading and math during the school day. Each year, Junior Achievement does a “Blitz Day,” in which presenters describe economic concepts in ways that are understandable for all our students. A local YMCA provides nutrition lessons to second- and third-grade classrooms.

As we do with students, staff concentrate on building relationships with parents. At the beginning of the

school year, we invite families to Open House night. Teachers use this night to meet students and their families and set the tone for partnership in the coming school year. Teachers use email, classroom newsletters, classroom websites, individual phone calls, “Happy Notes,” progress reports, and conferences twice a year to communicate how students are doing both academically and emotionally. Our school newsletter, “Dragon Tales,” is one of our most effective means of communication. Every other week, parents receive information on news and upcoming events, as well as topics of concern and causes for celebration.

Collectively, students at Discovery speak more than 30 different languages. We use Interpreters for conferences or phone calls, as needed, to help teachers and families keep communication open and to help all families support their students and engage with the educational process and its people.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

The staff at Discovery are encouraging to and supportive of each other. We’ve created a staff social contract (mirroring the classroom social contracts), to which we refer at every staff meeting. At the meeting, we hold each other accountable for meeting our contractual aims of support, risk, respect, fun, and affirmation. When staff meet, the principal greets them individually as they arrive. For several minutes, we have a round-table sharing of good news before the formal meeting begins. Each week staff members write short affirmations to other staff members. These notes are placed in their mailboxes and some are put in each week’s staff bulletin written by the principal. Each month the teacher- and support-staff-led social committee creates a month-long game or activity such as “guess the number of hearts hidden in the main hallway,” or “March Yourself into a Bikini Madness Step Challenge.”

Discovery Elementary teachers have both district-level and building-level professional development opportunities. At a building level, staff define their areas of greatest need. We combine district and building initiatives and the District supports our efforts to do what makes sense for kids and their learning. Staff regularly review and discuss data during staff meetings, Tier II Enrichment meetings, and Data Dialogues around what we need to do to continue to see growth in the proficiency levels of our students. We focus on growth and proficiency in all of our professional learning and development. Staff come prepared to these meetings with their individual student data and feel free to share their insights, learnings, and opinions about data, implications for students, individual and group plans, and ideas about future professional development. We do an exemplary job of implementing strategies and/or programs to fidelity, as evidenced by a visit by another district to examine our iReady practices. This visiting team of educators spent a morning asking questions and observing students in teacher-led iReady reteaching groups. Select staff and the principal led the group by sharing insights and materials. Staff members are trained in research-based practices and supplied the necessary materials to implement the programs they use. Support is readily available, and staff can get help making adjustments they may need to make the program successful.

4. School Leadership:

Engaged students require engaged teachers; students who learn require teachers who are always learning. The school principal intentionally models life-long learning by attending trainings and taking online classes on various topics including trauma-informed instruction, implicit bias, and effective researched-based classroom strategies.

Engaging teachers requires sharing ideas and opinions, reviewing data and connecting everything to school-improvement goals. Teachers share in the creation of goals and in carrying the plans into the classroom. These practices model sustaining programs and strategies rather than merely chasing this year’s “new thing.”

The principal has created a safe environment not only for students, but also for staff members to take risks, to resist an impulse to just sit back and watch. Staff are expected to be active participants in professional development and leadership and have numerous opportunities to work on committees and initiatives in the building and in the district. Committees that have shared leadership or are teacher-led include: School Improvement Committee, PBIS Team, Process Champions, Trauma Informed Instruction Team, Data

Dialogues, Tier II Enrichment Meetings, and PTC teacher representatives. Staff members are on the district science committee, and our two Process Companions are part of a greater district team. The Discovery Trauma-Informed team has presented to other Kentwood staff three times this past year. Last year, one staff member presented our LMB data at a national conference; another presented our iReady practices at a state conference. This past year, two Discovery staff members and the principal, along with two staff and the principal from another district elementary building attended a day-long training, then planned and created a three-hour professional development session on Student Engagement to share with staff of both buildings.

In addition to the principal, Discovery added a Dean of Students to the administration in 2018. The Dean leads the Positive Behavior Intervention and Support program (PBIS) staff committee, manages the State's Retention Law requirements for teachers, works with the principal to provide behavioral support and discipline of children, and evaluates district elementary physical education teachers.

The principal creates coverage for classrooms on select Fridays, making it possible for teachers to work collaboratively by grade level or with Academic Support Coaches to improve student achievement. When staff were asked about leadership in our school building, they responded with comments that included: "We have an environment where students and staff feel valued and respected;" "She listens to students who may feel marginalized by others and collaborates with them to design a plan for success;" "Staff have the freedom to try new ideas to improve achievement," and "...a place where your voice matters and students are put first."

Leaders have to "drive the ship." A good leader takes charge, while still allowing others to shine. More importantly, at Discovery, we think of ourselves as a family in which everyone--from the office staff to the playground supervisor, the kitchen worker to the bus drivers, and the teachers and para-pros-- plays an important role in the lives and learning of our children.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

While there are many initiatives, beliefs, and processes that need to coalesce to create a school worthy of being named a Blue Ribbon School, and while we are quite proud of the data regarding our students' academic achievement, perhaps the most unique and compelling factor to Discovery students' success has been our initiative for trauma-informed instruction.

Over the past three years, Discovery teachers and staff have studied the work of Nadine Harris with ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences), a book by Kristen Souers and Pete Hall on trauma-sensitive strategies, and coursework on trauma through Starr Commonwealth.

Trauma-informed instruction holds that trauma is an experience(s) in which powerful and dangerous events overwhelm a person's capacity to cope, and that changes the brain. Our understanding of how trauma affects a child helps us interpret his or her behavior and ability to learn and to develop strategies to help the child find his or her own route to academic success.

In the past, we interpreted children's behavior based on adult experiences; for instance, saying "he/she is defiant," rather than seeing things from the child's experience and understanding that, instead, he or she is trying to create a relationship but just doesn't know how right now.

This new "lens" on learning has helped all teachers come to a greater understanding of behavior as an expression of need. Those needs can be emotional, relational, physical, or control. Yes, children need boundaries, but they also need to know the teacher/staff member is strong enough and caring enough to set boundaries while still acknowledging and tending to those needs.

For the past two years, a core trauma team of six, including the principal, have presented learnings on trauma-informed instruction once a month during professional development afternoons. Topics have included how to create a supportive evacuation plan for classrooms, how to conduct Restorative Circles to enhance classroom culture, self-care for staff, personal mission statements, buddy systems for teachers and students, establishing plans for children when there is a guest teacher in the classroom, Tier III teaching of social skills, and the role of "grace" with each other and our students. Next year, staff will work on Zones of Regulation and learn more about how a student's recognition of his/her emotional state can create control and empowerment.

Changes in behavioral data over the past two years lead us to believe that trauma-informed instruction is contributing greatly to our students' success. From the 2018-19 to the 2019-20 school year there has been:

An 8% decrease in the number of students referred to the office for discipline and a 16% decrease in the number of students referred to the office for discipline ten or more times.

A decrease of 74 days' suspension for disciplinary issues (from 123 days in 2018-19 to 49 this school year).

A 19% decrease in the number of students of color who have been referred for discipline.

Other schools, both inside and outside our district, are interested in replicating our trauma-informed instruction model and success. As Flip Flippen said, "You can't teach a kid if you don't have his heart," and we have found that this methodology provides new insights into the hearts of our students. We acknowledge that the journey from the heart to the prefrontal cortex--where the child learns--may be the longest journey some children ever take. We are committed to ensuring that every child leaves our school with a backpack filled with tools to help him or her continue to make this journey successfully.