

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 12291 Lubke Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City New Buffalo State MI Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 49117-8873

County Berrien

Telephone (269) 469-6060 Fax (269) 469-1870

Web site/URL https://www.nbas.org/Domain/8 E-mail abowen@nbas.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* Dr. Jeff Leslie E-mail jleslie@nbas.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name New Buffalo Area Schools Tel. (269) 469-6010

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. Charles Heit
(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	10	9	19
K	27	24	51
1	23	23	46
2	19	11	30
3	19	19	38
4	23	17	40
5	27	22	49
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	148	125	273

*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
 - 3 % Asian
 - 5 % Black or African American
 - 11 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 81 % White
 - 0 % 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: 5%

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	9
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	5
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	14
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	258
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.05
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5

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

Spanish

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 7 %
18 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 45 %

Total number students who qualify: 122

8. Students receiving special education services: 18 %

49 Total number of students served

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

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>0</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>3</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>6</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>43</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: 3

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

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	13
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	7
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	8
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.

Required Information	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	95%	93%	93%	94%	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.

New Buffalo Elementary provides a well-balanced instructional program that encourages all students to strive for excellence. Administrators, staff members, and parents work together to create a friendly and nurturing learning environment in which all students can succeed.

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

Located less than one mile from the shores of Lake Michigan, and part of a school district that backs up to neighboring Indiana, New Buffalo Elementary School (NBES) serves students and families from a uniquely limited geographical area. With 45% of our students benefiting from the National School Lunch Program, the families we serve are small-town, rural, and lakefront residents in an area where the population triples during the annual summer tourist season.

NBES offers preschool through fifth-grade students unique and varied opportunities. Our students benefit from weekly Spanish, P.E., art, library/technology, music, and guidance/social skills classes, each taught by certified and accredited instructors. As one walks our hallways, students may be found learning social skills in a small-group setting or learning about coping skills with our full-time, accredited guidance counselor. Under the tutelage of our full-time, certified librarian, one may observe students conducting independent research on their assigned Chromebooks as our building has established a 1:1 availability of devices. Students may be enjoying a celebration of Cinco de Mayo with the Spanish instructor or may at the time be practicing for an upcoming musical with our music teacher. Outdoors, our students can also be found exploring the on-site nature trails, complete with educational kiosks and outdoor amphitheatre.

NBES has long maintained a focus on academic growth and data-driven differentiated instruction. Our PreK focus on phoneme segmentation and letter/sound correspondence provides an early foundation for literacy, which propels our kindergartners into readers. Our intentional and direct focus on reading fluency in the early grades is made possible by “Unlocking the Code,” a four-year program of instruction for teachers and paraprofessionals, which makes our staff uniquely able to teach decoding, spelling, and grammar using proven, research-based methods. This early and intense focus on fluency positions our second- through fifth-graders ready to learn comprehension strategies and to practice more in-depth exploration of text.

Using on-going and frequent assessments of reading and math skills allows our instructors to be alert to changes regarding the success of our instruction in real time. Small, fluid reading groups are based on this data. This allows for instruction to be tailored to individual student needs. Interventions for both math and reading occur throughout the day, with students traveling to meet with instructors that are equipped with the data-driven knowledge and expertise to teach with intent and precision. Students needing additional help attend regular, small, after-school sessions targeted to specific skills and taught by certified teachers. Alternatively, students may attend an after-school “Homework Club” that provides a studious environment staffed by paraprofessionals trained in our building-wide reading program. NBES is able to create these intense and fluid intervention groupings, track and interpret data, keep our paraprofessionals up-to-date with professional training, and communicate our findings and student progress with parents in part through the efforts of our full-time Title I coordinator.

For students that may not be responding to given academic or behavioral interventions, our school has developed a system to assess individual student needs and determine alternative approaches to help each child succeed. Such students are recommended to our Child Study Team made up of the student’s parents, teachers, and administrators. During the CST meeting data is examined, the student’s strengths and challenges are discussed, and previous interventions and their outcomes are examined. A plan is made to address the student’s needs from that point forward. After the plan has been implemented, the student’s progress is periodically assessed and adjustments are made as needed. In this way, interventions can be tailored to the individual, and success can be systematically measured.

NBES also believes in offering opportunities that facilitate growth beyond academics. Our award-winning Bison After-School Enrichment (BASE) program allows busy families to extend their child’s school experience and offers a choice of extra-curricular activities. Such activities include art, music, drama, and physical fitness, all under the supervision of our full-time BASE coordinator.

Still, we at NBES are continually looking for ways to improve the learning experiences of our students. Understanding that students are more likely to succeed when schools address behavior and learning together, we established ourselves as one of Michigan’s first Integrated Behavior and Learning Support Initiative

(MIBLSI) schools. We are currently in year one of an overhaul of school-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports to better establish a social culture and the behavior supports needed to improve social, emotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes for our students. Another way in which we are working to improve the learning experience of our students is through Better Lessons, which gives our teachers multiple resources and one-on-one coaching to fulfill their goals of making instruction more impactful. We are proud of our community, our school, and our students, as we continuously strive to make what we are doing well even better.

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

New Buffalo Elementary’s philosophy across subject areas is to provide a high-quality level of instruction to each individual student. Students are assessed frequently through formative and summative assessments. This information is used to determine groupings, one-on-one instruction, Tier II and III instruction, as well as provide challenging content to those who are meeting or exceeding grade-level expectations. The goal is to focus on each student’s needs academically and socially.

In order to meet academic goals, the focus for the past few years has been to increase family engagement. By engaging families, we positively impact student growth and achievement. Positive relationships with families and students are the key to success. Informational nights are provided throughout the school year to build relationships with families and allocate resources to build a successful bond between school and home.

There has been a focus on student engagement. Through instructional rounds, with experienced leaders around the county, student engagement was identified as an area of need. With the use of Kagan strategies, student-led discussion is taking a precedent over teacher-led instruction.

NBES preschool through second-grade classes focus on reading instruction that will produce fluent readers. As the students increase fluency, we shift to provide reading comprehension instruction that allows for more student interaction with text. This is accompanied by grade-level appropriate vocabulary instruction. All students have opportunities to access grade-level text, as well as their independent-level text when practicing skills independently.

The math instructional model at NBES is to provide a solid foundation of math skills where students excel in basic number sense and fact fluency. Having strong foundational math skills leads to more complex real-world application. The expectation is that students will demonstrate mastery on essential Common Core Standards identified in each grade level. This instruction can take place in Tier I and Tier II math time.

In each core area, assessments are administered and instruction is delivered based on the data collected. New Buffalo Elementary emphasizes and gives immediate feedback by responding with instruction based on the assessment results across all subject areas.

1b. Reading/English language arts

Kindergarten through 5th-grade students are benchmark assessed three times a year for reading using the NWEA MAP assessment and DIBELS 8th edition. A pre- and post-writing assessment for writing is administered at the beginning and end of each school year. Using rubrics, grade-level teachers collaborate and grade writing assessments together. NBES staff have become extremely knowledgeable in using both formative and summative data information. This allows staff to be intentional in providing differentiated instruction to students in order to achieve academic proficiency and growth.

Through collaboration with the local Regional Education Service Agency (RESA), all grade levels have identified their essential Common Core Standards and have aligned reading and writing standards to provide core instruction, intervention, and enrichment opportunities for students. Using common grade-level assessments for the essential standards, teachers are able to identify which students need support or enrichment opportunities. A protocol has been developed around data discussions when essential standard performance results are available. These discussions help inform instruction.

For preschool through 2nd-grade students, the reading curriculum focuses on developing foundational reading skills and fluency. The NBES curriculum provides intense instruction on the 44 sounds in the English language, syllable types, and spelling conventions. Teachers have a dedicated 90 minutes of

uninterrupted instructional time for English Language Arts daily. This includes whole group, small group, and 1:1 instruction. Title I mirrors the classroom when delivering instruction to students that need intervention. Students are identified through benchmark-assessment data while an intense scope and sequence of foundational skills is monitored monthly to provide individualized instruction. With consistent use of data, paraprofessionals are utilized to provide additional intervention and enrichment opportunities in the classroom as directed by the teacher on a daily basis.

Preschool students are taught the same foundational reading program. Students are responsible for learning all vowel sounds, the majority of the consonant sounds, and can identify the vowel sound within a word when the year is complete. These skills are necessary for students to be successful readers in kindergarten.

In 3rd through 5th grade, the curriculum changes focus to reading comprehension. Teachers identify the standard and determine what resources will be used to meet the demand of the standard. After students are explicitly taught, they are assessed using a common, grade-level assessment. These assessment results determine whether or not students need intervention or enrichment opportunities with paraprofessionals across the building.

All students are provided explicit, whole-group writing lessons daily using the Writing City curriculum, which includes writing across the genres. Reading and writing standards are aligned so that teachers are efficient in the delivery of the standards. The writing block is a minimum of 30 minutes per day and can include whole group, small group, independent practice, conferencing, and assessing student writing. Writing exemplars are displayed and rubrics are given to students at the beginning of a writing assignment. This allows students to have a clear understanding of the expectations prior to writing assignments.

Many technology programs are implemented across the building to provide students with foundational reading skills, reading comprehension exposure, student practice on targeted grade-level standards that align with the Common Core, and specific individualized learning paths based on frequent formative assessment.

Overall, maintaining a balanced approach with teaching English Language Arts is the key to success!

1c. Mathematics

Kindergarten through 5th-grade students are benchmark assessed three times a year for math using the NWEA MAP and Delta Math assessments. Essential standards, with common assessments, have been developed for preschool through fifth grade. Beginning in preschool, power standards are identified, taught, and assessed based on building a strong foundation for students to be successful in kindergarten.

Delta Math provides useful data to determine Tier II and Tier III math instruction. Each grade level has an emphasis on priority/essential Common Core Math Standards. Students must demonstrate mastery around these specific standards which then results in students being proficient in their current grade level math content. Each day, every classroom has a dedicated time to provide students with math enrichment or intervention. Special area teachers push into classrooms daily for 20 to 30 minutes. This allows the classroom teacher to deliver interventions while the special area teachers provide enrichment opportunities. Based on the explicit instruction, and daily student performance feedback, teachers can quickly determine the specific needs of all students. NBES has been using the Delta Math program and providing math intervention time into the daily schedule for the past five years. It has been valuable to help boost students' understanding of math concepts.

As students show mastery on Delta Math standards, the focus shifts toward individual NWEA assessment results. NWEA is an additional assessment tool that provides teachers with information on how to individualize instruction to students by looking at the Learning Continuum. This valuable assessment data allows teachers to maximize individual student growth in math and ranks their growth among their peers nationally.

NBES uses enVision Math as the core instructional program. This is the seventh year of implementation. Teachers teach a specific skill/standard in their core math for a minimum of 60 minutes per day. Each lesson

starts out with an inquiry-based question where students have the opportunity to collaborate and solve the problem. Then a focused video introduces the learning target whereupon students discuss the video's contents and the learning target. After the teacher guides students through sample problems, independent practice is used as an assessment tool for both students' success criteria and teachers' formative assessment. After each lesson, teachers formatively assess the skill/standard. From that formative assessment, students are grouped into reteaching or enrichment instructional groups during the core block. Teachers use multiple data points when determining which students need to receive intervention or enrichment lessons: enVision Math, Delta Math, and NWEA RIT bands. Students are given multiple opportunities to practice math standards using technology programs such as Xtramath, ST Math, Study Island, Exact Path, and IXL to demonstrate proficiency.

Providing students with explicit math instruction and the use of real-time data are instrumental in creating fluent math students with successful problem-solving skills.

1d. Science

New Buffalo Elementary uses a performance-task based curriculum for science instruction. The instruction includes three/four science kits: Physical Science, Earth Science, and Life Science which meet the cross-disciplinary Next Generation Science Standards. Each kit includes lessons incorporating reading, writing, problem-solving skills, and hands-on investigations. To supplement this curriculum, an online science curriculum is used that provides an engaging phenomenon to help build background knowledge and thinking skills. Science assessment includes written pre- and post-tests as well as performance tasks to demonstrate deeper understanding of science concepts. One unique aspect of the science curriculum is the local Mighty Acorns environmental education program that is sponsored by the local Rotary club. All classes in grades three through five participate in field studies three times each year. These outdoor experiences, combined with lessons, help foster lifetime connections with nature and a desire to preserve and protect natural areas in our local ecosystems. Another tool that makes the science curriculum exceptional is an online problem-based learning program emphasizing situations in STEM careers. Not only is this program used during school hours, but also as a component of our after school program. NBES also participates in a county-wide Science Olympiad event each year. Students in grades three through five are offered the opportunity to explore various science and engineering topics through tasks and investigations. Once a year, NBES hosts a Family Engineering Night which provides students and families engaging challenges to foster out-of-the-box thinking. Stations are set up for students to explore engineering concepts, then break into grade-level groups to participate in challenges geared more toward each developmental level. Students encounter hands on and inquiry based experiences to develop an appreciation for science.

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

NBES utilizes an online-based Social Studies curriculum that is supplemented with state-specific programs and mentor texts. The instruction covers all five domains: History, Geography, Civics/Government, Economics, and Citizenship which meet the Michigan K-5 standards. All classes use English Language Arts time to promote Social Studies instruction at applicable times. NBES has purchased mentor texts for each classroom to use for all units taught. These mentor texts are used in tandem with the core curriculum. Achieve 3000 is used to differentiate Social Studies content throughout the year. Students are challenged with comprehension/word work through the use of relevant Social Studies content for each grade level. This Social Studies content is individually leveled through the student's lexile score. With the new Michigan Social Studies Standards coming out, some staff are being trained on the College, Career, and Civic Life Framework for inquiry-based lessons to help strengthen student engagement within content. These inquiry-based lessons allow for interesting and real-world content exposure within all domains of Social Studies. Each inquiry allows for formative and formal assessments to occur over larger topics. Study Island is utilized to generate assessments for individual standards to whole units. Two years ago, our district provided collaboration time for Social Studies teachers from grades 3-12 to work together on previously released MSTEP scores. As a team, we identified domains of strengths and weaknesses for each grade level, which helped make a plan for the upcoming years on what content needed to be boosted and what we needed to keep doing. Within the elementary, K-5 teachers were able to use this information to help choose the current

online-based program that we are using. Many mechanisms are used to expose students to an engaging social studies experience.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

New Buffalo Elementary offers a free pre-kindergarten experience to our community. It is a three-hour program that runs five days a week. Families choose a morning or afternoon session. Students enrolled in the program must be 4-years-old by September 1 of the current school year.

We go beyond the minimum staffing requirements for the state. Our lead teacher must hold a Michigan teaching certificate. The current teacher has a masters degree in early childhood education. The adult/student ratio is currently 1:5, well below the mandated 1:12 ratio for this age group.

The goal of our pre-kindergarten program is to help each child become an enthusiastic and inquisitive learner. We want the students to become independent and self-confident in their learning. They are able to learn at their own pace in an active, multi-sensory learning environment. We believe young children learn best by doing, exploring, experimenting, making choices, interacting socially, and moving around using all of their senses. The main goal is to create students that are kindergarten-ready.

Our program takes into consideration many principles. We consider that growth continues, but goes on at varying times. Growth follows an orderly sequence, each step being built upon the previous step. Growth is influenced by maturation, environment, social interaction, and experience. We believe that every child needs love, security, belonging, acceptance, and recognition in an unpressured environment for optimal learning to take place. We are dedicated to providing a learning environment that acknowledges each child's unique developmental pattern, personality, and learning style. The pre-kindergarten program at NBES is unique and develops characteristics necessary for the success of a student's transition to kindergarten.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

New Buffalo Elementary offers the following specials for students pre-kindergarten to 5th grade: Art, Computers, Gym, Library, Music, and Spanish. The upper grades (3-5) have a 75-minute block and the lower grades have a 35-minute block twice a week.

The visual art experience at New Buffalo centers around exposure to and experience with a variety of mediums and techniques that enhance a student's understanding of the Elements of Art. Students learn and understand complex artist techniques as they focus on artists and periods of art history that provide a strong example of the concepts being learned. Students scaffold their skills from one year to the next, building on prior knowledge of techniques and the artistic theory behind them. Through the arts students also use cross-curricular skills in reading, math, and science. Students build literacy skills through storytelling and illustration. Patterns, fractions, measuring, and perspective provide a strong immersion in the world of mathematics and how these concepts play a vital role in the world of art. Also, there is a focus on S.T.E.A.M. as different subjects are discussed such as architecture from around the world. Through art, students gain confidence and learn to problem solve in a variety of creative ways. Art at NBES is focused on giving students a life-long love, understanding, and appreciation of the world of art.

Music instruction includes music theory in which students learn to read, write, and perform music. Learning to read and write music enforces reading fluency, writing, and math skills as they learn to decode symbols within a certain duration of time depending on the speed of the beat. Every student has the opportunity to display these musical skills in a large performance at least one time per year. These skills provide a strong base and help prepare students for music in the secondary grades. In addition to supporting the classroom, the general music class at NBES also supports essential skills in team building, confidence, and personal development, among other essential life skills. By providing rigor in the music classroom, students discover their unknown abilities and apply them to performance through singing, playing recorder, xylophones, and many other instruments. Developing listening skills by differentiating between pitches of high or low,

rhythm transcription, and the structure of music supports their ability to think critically about the music they are producing or listening to.

NBES offers a full-service library. Every grade from preschool to fifth has a library/technology block one day per week. During this time, students have access to a diverse collection of materials to utilize. Lessons taught during library time tie directly into library skills; support the classroom curriculum, such as reading comprehension, genre choices, and reading strategies; as well as encourage students to read and grow an enjoyment of reading. During the technology block, computer skills, Google tools, safe internet usage, and research skills are developed. Students produce projects based on new skills and technology found at NBES.

Spanish class at NBES is an introduction to the language and culture for students. The main focus for students is to learn the language in a way that is useful to them. Students learn phrases and expressions they can use daily, instead of just long lists of words. Spanish class incorporates a variety of methods for students to learn and internalize the language. Students learn through songs, plays, posters, puppet shows, cultural events, and creating presentations. Students are encouraged to be world citizens, as they focus on polite phrases and cultural conduct that can be used in social situations. NBES Spanish is inclusive and welcoming to all students, as it provides a glimpse into a larger world of culture.

The core belief in physical education for students is to make sure that they enjoy and learn the skills necessary to be successful in lifelong activities. Physical education benefits in students are far-reaching, including both increased physical health, better nutrition, and better academic performance. The positive effects upon learning include increased concentration, increased attentiveness in class, better grades, and better behavior. Students are challenged in the gym so that they can be more successful in the classroom.

Students in kindergarten through grade five receive weekly class lessons with the school counselor that focus on mindfulness, feelings, coping strategies, conflict management, monthly character traits, academic achievement, career development, and growth mindset. The counselor meets the needs of all students by using a variety of Social Emotional Learning curricula, conducting small groups throughout the year, individually meeting with students, facilitating behavioral plan meetings, and providing resources for families by means of community outreach, presentations, conferences, and outside counseling referrals. The counselor uses nationally recognized, age-appropriate, mental health themes throughout the year to promote a positive school environment for all staff and students including Bully Prevention month in October, Kindness month in February, and Career Exploration month in May.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

Students are closely monitored using DIBELS 8th edition benchmark and progress monitoring assessments, NWEA Map Reading, and Achieve 3000/Smarty Ants. Each month, teachers analyze the data after progress monitoring assessments are administered and auto adjustments in the program are made to determine if the interventions being implemented are effective.

Low-performing students are eligible for Title I services in reading for 30 minutes a day, five days per week. Teachers find additional time throughout the day to pull Title I students into reading groups to ensure the foundational reading skills are moving towards mastery. If intensive intervention is needed, support is provided for 18 minutes per day to students in kindergarten through 2nd grade to support our foundational reading program called Unlocking the Reading Code. In grades two through five, students are exposed to text at their individual level to practice reading skills and build reading knowledge. Students are then assessed using grade-level materials. Child Study Team Meetings are created for students that do not make progress with interventions in place based on summative and formative data. The Child Study Team consists of the classroom teacher, family members, Title I Coordinator, Guidance Counselor, and principal. The team meets on a six-week cycle to review student progress and interventions. Adjustments are made as needed.

For math instruction teachers use NWEA, Delta Math, and enVision math assessments to analyze math

performance. Special area teachers provide additional intervention and enrichment activities as designated by the classroom teacher for 20-30 minutes per day. Based on assessment data, specific daily lessons are provided to students. To meet the needs of our most struggling Tier III students, paraprofessionals deliver explicit instruction using the Delta Math program.

Using all summative and formative assessment data, teachers use online programs to assign additional practice on specific skills. Lower-performing students are exposed to a plethora of supports to help them progress towards mastery. Additionally, students in grades 3 through 5 are offered after school support with a certified teacher. This time is utilized to give students intense instruction at their independent level. Closing the gap with lower performing students is of utmost importance at New Buffalo Elementary.

3b. Students performing above grade level

New Buffalo Elementary is intentional about delivering differentiated instruction across all subjects and grade levels. Achieve 3000 is used to allow students to read text based on their independent reading level. Through the program's level set, and import of NWEA MAP reading data, students are exposed to rigorous content. High performing students are identified for paraprofessional enrichment using DIBELS, NWEA, Lexile reports, and classroom formative data. Teachers plan and provide enriching materials to enhance reading knowledge and skills above grade level; many times students are exposed to content and skills above several grade levels. Typically this occurs during Title I time when leveled groups rotate between the teacher and paraprofessional(s) and is always based on teacher discretion. Parent volunteers also work with students who are performing above grade level to support higher reading levels and skills.

During collaborative math time, special area teachers push into the classroom to support differentiation of math instruction. Enrichment is offered to high-achieving students based on NWEA Map Math, Delta Math, and enVision math data reports. Aligning higher level concepts with the Tier I content is done on a daily basis for the higher performing students. In conjunction, teachers use individual NWEA RIT Band data to expose higher performing students to skills and concepts above grade level, and, at times, above many grade levels. During core math time, those who are excelling are assigned higher grade-level skills using online platforms such as IXL, Study Island, and ST Math. Students collaborate with those who are working on similar skills and topics. Exposing distinguished students to more rigorous content is paramount in their educational experiences.

3c. Special education

Students at New Buffalo Elementary that qualify for special education service receive individualized instruction to meet their academic, social, and emotional needs based upon their present level of performance and individualized education plans. Regardless of how students qualify, it is determined where students are currently performing academically, socially, and emotionally by using formative assessments, summative assessments, and rubrics. By doing so, this ensures student's needs are being met to help them be successful in all areas of the school setting. The classroom teacher and special education teacher work in close relation to meet the demands of individual student needs.

School-wide formal assessments in reading, math, and writing three times a year provide an accurate depiction of what special education students need. Students are progress-monitored monthly in some areas while weekly in others. Students who qualify for special education have data folders that they use to chart their progress and set goals. Special education students feel empowered and use their scores from the formal and informal assessments to chart their progress. They regularly conference with their teachers on what they can do to reach their goals and, as a result, celebrate their growth.

Special education students have a high need for phonics-based instruction. These students learn the rules of the English language, how to code, and break words apart into their syllables. In unison to the reading skills being taught, students learn how to spell. A direct instruction writing program is used to teach students how to identify the different parts of speech in a given sentence and label those parts of speech. Songs are taught that help students remember the parts of speech to incorporate it in their sentences and later in paragraphs. Everything is broken down into the meaning-making stage, so students truly understand the foundation

needed to be successful readers. This same principle is applied to math instruction. A strong foundation is laid by using formative assessment to drive instruction and students are constantly asked to formulate questions to show their understanding and explain what they are learning to another student. Accommodating, providing specific modifications, and implementing a distinct plan to the special education students at NBES is critical in meeting Tier III needs.

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

New Buffalo Elementary is unique in that all students preschool through fifth grade receive Spanish instruction twice a week with a certified teacher. This teacher also works one-on-one with students as needed for intense intervention when acquiring English skills. Additionally, we have a parent volunteer who works with students in small groups or one-on-one that is well-versed in the Spanish language, and is a former teacher and administrator. English Language Learners at NBES engage with an adaptive online program that is rich in language development and provides individuals with additional support for their second language. The program blends reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. Classroom teachers use this program as needed for intervention. Several elementary teachers attended professional development where they were given training on research-based best practices that address the academic needs of the ELL population at NBES. Additional training will be offered to all staff members this summer to gain better knowledge on the best practices for ELL learners. Strategies used in classrooms include strategic partnering of students, building background knowledge in content areas, supplying vocabulary instruction, and providing all students with sentence frames to discuss and respond to reading. Several of the core programs are available in Spanish. Learning Walks, instructional rounds, based on culturally-responsive teaching and learning were conducted to determine where NBES is at when it comes to providing instruction that is culturally responsive. An action plan has been created and is in the implementation process to deliver more effective instruction to the ELL students at NBES. Using resources and personnel is significant to the academic success of ELL students.

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

New Buffalo Elementary recognizes the importance of engaging students. This is done in a variety of ways to provide a positive environment that supports student's academic, social, and emotional growth. NBES is a Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) school, which means behavioral expectations during academic and social settings are explicitly taught and rewarded. Bison Tickets are used to reward individual students for positive behavior while Class Compliments are distributed to whole groups to educate, recognize, and celebrate good citizenship traits all year long. Monthly raffles are conducted from student deposits of Bison Tickets. These students are recognized on social media outlets and announced over the PA system. Each month, assemblies are held to recognize those who display on a consistent basis positive character traits. Students are chosen by peers or their teacher. A special breakfast is provided and students are recognized in front of the student body. Attendance data points are used every 40 days to reward students who maintain regular attendance or who have made improvements of attending school by moving out of an attendance category such as severe chronic, chronic, or at-risk. Added this year, our local State Senator Kim Lasta is featuring a student of the month in each classroom; students are recognized during monthly ceremonies. The school counselor teaches all kindergartners through 5th-grade students mindfulness practices, conflict resolution strategies, coping skills, and the importance of having a growth mindset to enhance and support their emotional development. Through Learning Walks (instructional rounds) conducted by leaders in the county, it was realized New Buffalo Elementary needed to increase the amount of student talk and reduce the amount of teacher talk. To increase student engagement, all staff members use Kagan Cooperative Learning Structures within their classrooms to improve class and team relationships and ensure each student is actively participating in learning specific content skills. The use of technology to assign independent reading tasks at a student's personal reading level, math practice at independent levels, word processing, and SEL check-ins help keep students motivated and engaged on a daily basis. At the end-of-the-year awards assembly, a raffle drawing is conducted. One boy and one girl from kindergarten to second grade and one boy and one girl in grades third to fifth grade have the opportunity to win a bicycle donated by a local business. Students earn raffle tickets all year by meeting personal goals, grade-level goals, and performing above grade level on the online reading program called Smarty Ants and Achieve 3000. This ensures students are being intentional while reading and responding in the program and encourages students to do their best. By providing these kinds of opportunities, in addition to a social-emotional education for our students, NBES is fully committed to helping students be engaged in their learning and be successful in all future areas of life.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Having a collaborative relationship with families and community is a necessity for student success. New Buffalo Elementary recognizes this important connection between school and home and uses different ways to engage families in their child's education. NBES News is emailed each Sunday to inform families of weekly events and other topics on the horizon. Social media is used frequently to tell the story of NBES and share the successes on a daily basis. Families are encouraged to attend conferences three times a year and also data nights three times a year where they can learn about the many different types of assessments we use to measure student growth and how we intervene to meet the needs of all students. The school counselor works with community stakeholders to present information on various social-emotional topics to help inform families about mental health education. We have a wonderful PTO that provides fun, free, and engaging events throughout the school year including Family Fit Night, Family Engineering Night, and the Chili Cook-Off. We welcome local community members to present to students about their interesting jobs during career exploration month in May. Our local police and fire precincts provide a Family Safety Day in the summer and also give out free school supplies during this event. Our art teacher displays student artwork in local restaurants and the public library. In December, all students help to decorate the township hall for the holiday season. During kindness month in February, fourth and fifth grade students make kindness cards for customers at the local sandwich shop. During March Reading Month, local businesses are contacted to help promote reading and offer rewards and incentives to the student body. Our summer reading program works in correlation with a local Italian restaurant in promoting reading and students that successfully

complete the summer reading program make their own pizza and eat it at the restaurant. The Rotary Club purchases books for each student for their birthday, provides birthday cake, and reads to students each month to celebrate birthdays. Rotary Club, Dollar General, and families provide generous donations of winter gear each year for our Giving Tree. Parents are given surveys to voice input in school policies and decisions. Parent presence is also included in School Improvement Team meetings and in PBIS initiatives. Teachers communicate regularly with parents through technology, newsletters, and conferences to create a thorough understanding of all areas of their child's education and events within the school. Engaging families and the community plays a vital role in the success at New Buffalo Elementary School.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

New Buffalo Elementary does an excellent job developing a school improvement plan that supports and includes all staff. Our school improvement team is intentional in using data to plan for goals and the allocation of funds. Professional development is indispensable in giving staff the knowledge needed to be successful, so input from all stakeholders is valued. A survey is put out annually to see what teachers and other staff members feel are most important for the upcoming school year. This information is taken into consideration when planning for professional development. All professional development is put into the annual school improvement plan. There is also a clear expectation from administration that the professional development and programs implemented be done so with effectiveness and consistency. Constant conversations and supports are in place to give staff all opportunities to be successful.

Collaboration amongst staff members is emphasized in our building. All grade levels have common planning time each day. This allows for effective planning of instruction. We also have 40 minutes twice a week to collaborate amongst our building and the middle/high school building as well. This time to develop district-wide curriculum, goals, and events has been a crucial piece to our success. Many teachers in the building have also had the opportunity to have personalized coaching through an online program called BetterLesson. This has helped blossom our educators. This personalized professional development has empowered staff members to grow in specific areas that are most beneficial for both teachers and their students. The overall morale and culture in the building is positive due to leadership and staff working collaboratively to do what is best for students. Staff are consistently recognized by leadership for their efforts and success! A Staff Shout-Out Board suspends in the teacher's lounge where staff members are recognized by others as they go above and beyond for others. Each month the PTO and the principal collaborate to offer staff members treats and notes of appreciation, and staff members are spotlighted on our school Facebook page. Overall, there is a mutual trust and respect between staff and administration. The culture in our building has created an environment that is most conducive to learning for staff and students.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership philosophy at New Buffalo Elementary is a shared approach. The sagacity of the professional teaching staff in the building can lead others in a positive direction. This has a direct impact on students. Teachers are encouraged to seek out input from colleagues in the building on specific areas they would like to grow in. They choose two teachers per trimester to observe. During these peer observations, teachers come up with takeaways they can put into action in their own classrooms. Areas of growth focus include student engagement structures, student talk, communication of learning targets and success criteria for students, differentiation of instruction, ELA instruction, math strategies, technology implementation, interventions, enrichment opportunities, classroom management, and implementation of procedures and routines.

Two technology coaches aid teachers as needed. Technology coaches attend professional development opportunities throughout the year and are encouraged to share their knowledge with associates in order to enhance technology instruction among students during the school day.

Collaboration time is offered each Tuesday and Thursday for 40 minutes before school begins. Collaboration time is teacher-driven. This collaboration time is deployed without administration directing the subject matter discussed or the amount of time/days used to cover the topic. Using a calendar, teachers can request a collaboration time on a specific theme. Others in the district may attend sessions to deepen

their knowledge on concepts presented.

School Improvement (SIP) and Building Council Committees play an imperative role in the school's leadership and the direction the building takes with initiatives. The SIP Team reviews perceptual data from parents, students, and staff members. From these surveys, specific goals are established and monitored throughout the year. The team also analyzes academic data that generates specific academic goals. Additional behavioral, social emotional, and career goals are embedded into the plan. These teams meet once a month or more when working on specific items.

PTO members roll out new initiatives, provide feedback on PBIS initiatives, organize, and run many family engagement events throughout the school year. Families seek out PTO members to communicate concerns, provide feedback, or share ideas to improve the school.

Students are able to lead through the Student Council and Safety Patrol. Student Council members have bi-weekly meetings and lead initiatives such as school-wide recycling, preparing for the city's annual Halloween parade, reviewing and providing input on PBIS common area expectations, annual baking goods for staff members before winter break, bringing student concerns to the attention of the Student Council Chair, and meeting with the superintendent. Safety Patrol monitors students before and after school as students travel from one destination to another. Members encourage students to act safely and help provide a positive and safe culture during unstructured times.

All committees serve in conjunction with the building principal. Each committee has a chair counseled by the building principal. Through these leadership committees, NBES is able to move forward in a positive direction by hearing the people's voices.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Using data at NBES to provide differentiated instruction to all students has been most instrumental to our school's success. We highly emphasize analyzing student growth data through standardized assessments: NWEA, M-STEP, Delta Math, and DIBELS. Grade-level teams analyze data frequently after benchmark assessments and progress monitoring assessments are administered. Teachers use data walls for formative assessments. The data walls offer teachers a visual opportunity to focus on their work and track the achievement and progress of every student. As assignments are created for specific standards using online programs (IXL, Study Island, Exact Path, Achieve 3000, and USATestPrep), teachers analyze data and make adjustments to instruction (whole group, small group, and one-on-one opportunities). Those students who are performing below the 50% percentile on standardized assessments on ELA and Math are able to attend after school support, Title I, and qualify for summer school. For the past few school years, the bottom 30% of students performing on standardized assessments have been a high priority. Targeted instruction is provided to these students. Students are grouped based on similar needs using NWEA RIT bands. Students are closely monitored by our Title I Coordinator, Guidance Counselor, support staff, administration, and teachers. Paraprofessionals push into classrooms to free up and allow classroom teachers to deliver intensive interventions to students that are not performing at grade-level expectations. For the past four years, county-level teacher consultants have worked closely with staff members in the areas of language arts and math. Creating common assessments, defining protocols for analyzing student data, and adjusting teaching to meet individual student needs have been the area of focus. Students that have received abundant interventions and are not making adequate progress are put into the Child Study Process. This team is composed of the parents, classroom teacher, Title I Coordinator, Guidance Counselor, and principal. Every six weeks the team meets. During the meetings, all interventions are determined, goals are set, and data is defined to indicate progress. As students continue to make progress, they are placed into a watch list. Those who do not make sufficient progress are then referred to the special education process. The accurate use of assessment data to inform instruction has been instrumental in improving student growth and achievement for all students at New Buffalo Elementary.