

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 3571 Northfield Parkway
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Troy State MI Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 48084-1459

County Oakland County

Telephone (248) 823-4120 Fax _____

Web site/URL https://bemis.troy.k12.mi.us/ E-mail jwhan@troy.k12.mi.us

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Dr. Richard Machesky E-mail RMachesky@troy.k12.mi.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Troy School District Tel. (248) 823-4003

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 Karl Schmidt
(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):
- 12 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 4 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 3 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 19 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)
 Suburban
 Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2019 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	47	43	90
1	39	33	72
2	52	41	93
3	42	42	84
4	50	44	94
5	51	45	96
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	281	248	529

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 64 % Asian
 - 2 % Black or African American
 - 3 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 29 % 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: 4%

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	10
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	13
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	23
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	537
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.04
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	4

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

Bengali, Chinese, Japanese, German, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Konkani, Korean, Lao, Malayalam, Marathi, Nepali, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Romanian, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Sinhalese, Slovak, Spanish, Tamil, Telegu, Thai, Ukranian, Urdu

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 29 %
155 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 4 %

Total number students who qualify: 22

8. Students receiving special education services: 6 %

33 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>5</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>5</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>2</u> Developmental Delay | <u>4</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>4</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>11</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>1</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 10

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.	22
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	9
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	4
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 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	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
High school graduation rate	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%

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. 2014

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

"All students will learn in a motivating and nurturing school community..."

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

Bemis Elementary is in the heart of Troy, Michigan surrounded by a diverse community that strongly values education. The Bemis community is committed to providing the best resources available to prepare students for their future. The quality of the Troy School District is complemented by a vibrant business community and is in close proximity to recreational and cultural opportunities, which attract a rich multicultural population of families who seek to find a public school with a strong commitment to superb student achievement and excellence in academics. Built in 1978, Bemis has a unique namesake.

Walter Reid Bemis was a beloved school custodian and later became a crossing guard for over 40 years. In those early days, Mr. Bemis provided a listening ear, and a hot cup of soup for many students who needed extra love and attention. Many years later, the students and their families wished to honor their beloved custodian by naming the new school in his honor. Bemis has a proud history of innovation. Bemis was the first school to be heated and cooled by solar panels, which was innovative in 1980. At that time, reflecting this innovation, the mascot was the satellite. Later, it was changed to the current child- friendly mascot, the Bemis Bear. This rich history is revealed in a keystone which hangs proudly in the front hallway. The beautiful keystone reflects more than our rich history. It also reflects our strong commitment to good citizenship through teaching positive character qualities and demonstrates a strong commitment to good citizenship as well as high academic standards. This keystone reflects the good character expected and accepted by all Bemis students. Bemis students are not only critical thinkers, and capable readers and writers, but also learn to become ethical, respectful citizens who learn kindness, honesty, respect and responsibility for themselves and for others. The keystone honors Bemis' rich history and highlights the present metaphorically creating an image of looking into the future in a child friendly way.

At Bemis, the mission states that all students will learn in a motivating and nurturing school community. To that end, Bemis participates with the Harvard Project Zero Research Department to create a Culture of Thinking within our school that is inclusive to all learners, including students, staff, parents, and the entire school community. The Bemis staff is committed to developing critical thinking in our classrooms as well as among our parent community. Evidence of this thinking is visible every day from the moment anyone walks into the building, meanders through the hallways, or engages our students in conversation. This Culture of Thinking is visible throughout the building and offers all students the ability to reflect upon their work, reason with evidence, make connections between the world we live in and the curriculum that we teach, using a very unique educational approach. Daily our students and teachers seek true understanding through our commitment to creating a culture of thinking. At Bemis, our mission and vision statements are embodied in everything we do. Like our mission, our vision states that we will establish a collaborative culture, implement a relevant and rigorous curriculum, use best practice and research based instructional strategies to ensure learning for all students. We utilize a variety of ongoing assessments in order to design and adapt our instruction to ensure quality learning. This mission and vision are especially important because our school population is quite diverse; yet, united through our commitment to learning.

Thank you for recognizing our school In 2014 for the National Blue Ribbon. The recognition caused our community to celebrate our school's performance, our amazing students, and our dedicated staff. We believe the NBR elevated our focus as we have continued to show growth the past six years to help our students receive an outstanding public education.

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

Our curriculum is based on the Common Core Standards. The ELA standards ask us to consider both narrative and informational reading. These standards begin with foundation skills that address reading and language acquisition in the early grades. In addition to reading and writing the ELA standards promote listening, speaking, and viewing. Units of study encompass grades k-5 and are consistent across all grade levels forming a continuum of learning.

Using Houghton Mifflin Harcourt’s Math Expressions, an inquiry-based curriculum, our focus is weaving the Common Core Standards into mathematical practice. These practices are not simply related to computation and the use of algorithms. Rather, we ask students to problem solve, reason, communicate and make representations to show their thinking. Likewise, we attempt to connect these strategies with our formative assessments and visible thinking routines. Students are asked to make sense of problems, persevere, reason abstractly; as well as, critique the reasoning of others. Students create models that represent what they are learning in mathematics and connect them to the real world.

At Bemis, our Science curriculum is based on Battle Creek Science Inquiry process. We use Inquiry based science kits at each grade level. We engage students to deeply understand the content and processes of science. Additionally, our teachers have enhanced each science unit to integrate many of the Visible Thinking routines. In addition to the science kits, we have had a significant focus on teaching our students how to make claims, provide evidence and reason logically.

The Common Core Expectations form the basis of our Social Studies instruction. Beginning close to home and expanding into the United States and its history, the Bemis curriculum provides students with a challenging approach and asks students to make connections between concepts. Visible Thinking strategies are consistently integrated within all our curriculum areas.

1b. Reading/English language arts

We use the Lucy Calkins Units of Study. The Reading and Writing Workshop format creates the instructional model used daily at Bemis. It challenges students to develop their skills in Language Arts. This result shows that our readers, writers and thinkers can effectively comprehend and communicate. Workshop empowers students in comprehension and skill acquisition by providing a structured environment that fosters a love of reading and writing. Workshop empowers teachers to differentiate instruction in order to accommodate the learning needs of all students. Students experience a variety of genres and authors as literacy competencies are developed through narrative and informational units of study to provide a progression of learning that aligns to the CCSS.

This model is implemented in every classroom. Staff provides direct instruction to the class with small group learning opportunities based on needs to extend and expand learning for students needing additional support. Teachers are focused on teaching phonics, comprehension, accuracy, fluency and expanding vocabulary daily. This system engages students in daily literary assessment and instruction. Likewise, this system guides the teacher and student to create individual reading goals and monitor progress. We also immerse our students in both nonfiction and fiction read-aloud books to teach comprehension strategies. It’s academic and social focus encourages collaboration, divergent ideas, and taking responsibility for individual learning.

We use Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System to learn about students as readers. Assessment provides important information about every child’s reading comprehension, accuracy, and fluency. Teachers create individualized reading goals and strategies to help each student. The F&P System links one-to-one assessment to reliably and systematically identify students’ instructional and independent reading abilities. The assessment gives important information to guide the teacher’s instructional decisions in

reading. This tool documents student progress throughout the school year and vertically across grade levels. Reading Recovery enables initially at-risk students to make accelerated progress in 12-20 weeks. Our success rate is well documented. A follow up study indicated that most Reading Recovery students performed well on standardized tests and maintained their gains in subsequent years. In the past decade, 140 of the lowest achieving students at Bemis have been served in Reading Recovery and discontinued within the average range of their peers.

Students performing below the average of their classroom and not among the population served by Reading Recovery, are selected to work daily in Leveled Literacy Intervention sessions and/or attend literacy groups. Literacy groups meet daily, to instruct and support students having struggles with comprehension and word recognition. Using a combination of strategies and a balance of fiction and informational books, under the guidance of the reading specialist, this intervention helps to close the achievement gap.

1c. Mathematics

We have created our own Bemis Elementary Math Intervention System B.E.M.I.S. The plan was developed using John Hattie's Visible Learning research which is a synthesis of meta-analysis relating to achievement. These interventions and extensions have been created and adopted by staff. Our collective efficacy around Mathematics has helped us to see multiple years of growth as reported by the Mackinac Center for Public Policy. Daily, our commitments to each other ensure that students are immersed in a growth mindset environment that begins with students using data to set up their goals for each unit. Throughout the unit the students are encouraged to monitor their growth and track their success. Likewise, our commitments ensure that each day Math standards are taught with fidelity and provide an equitable opportunity for access to one-on-one support with the teacher or in guided Math groups following the lesson. We strive to include similarities and differences in each lesson to connect our students to the work and to help them see the scope and sequence, so they make deeper connections to their learning.

Our district curriculum is Houghton Mifflin Harcourt's Math Expressions Common Core. Math Expressions supports teachers as they create an inquiry environment to encourage constructive discussion. Students invent, question, model and explore mathematics while learning and practicing important math strategies. Through daily Math Talk, students explain their thinking. This allows students to become more fluent in applying their strategies. Mathematics content and models connect and build across the grade levels to provide a progression of teaching and learning that aligns precisely with the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics.

Math Expressions provides differentiated pathways to mathematical tasks. Teachers carefully choose appropriate tasks to continually elicit student thinking, while building students' procedural fluency and conceptual understanding. Our teachers provide effective math instruction that is differentiated for all. Instruction is often delivered in small groups and/or in the workshop model to meet the variety of needs in the classroom. Throughout the units, formative assessments are administered and analyzed to guide instructional decisions to ensure student success. We believe when the curriculum, instruction, and assessments are tightly aligned, students will increase achievement.

Consistently, the daily math lessons at Bemis Elementary expect students to explain their thinking with evidence during mathematical conversations. Students are also asked to create math drawings to help visualize the mathematics and deepen the learning. Another integral part of the math lessons is giving students opportunities to be math leaders in the classroom to help their classmates understand the concepts. Lastly, technology is used as a tool to communicate and offer additional support for students to learn and reinforce the concepts being taught in the classroom. Bemis teachers have crafted SMART board lessons to further reinforce the concepts taught. Opportunities are provided for students to partner with peers to explain mathematical concepts, problem solve, and explain their thinking.

1d. Science

Throughout our district we use the Next Generation Science Standards combined with the Battle Creek Cereal City Science kits. Our approach is to help students learn how to think and to construct their designs

using a variety of methods. We have observed our students being challenged daily to seek out cause and effect situations throughout multiple hands-on experiences. Students have multiple opportunities to use evidence to support their thinking as they construct scientific explanations. Their evidence helps them to construct arguments to support their findings and to share them not only in their classroom, but also across multiple digital platforms.

The bulk of our program creates enriching collaborative learning opportunities for teams to discover new information. We focus on teaching them how to be critical thinkers who are engaged scientists seeking solutions. Throughout our units of study our children are challenged to observe phenomena as it exists in our world. Our program also helps our students learn how to use their data and evidence to help them determine the merit of a conclusion of how and why certain phenomena occurs in the world of science. This helps them create scientifically based arguments from the evidence they learn about over their entire K-5 experience.

Our scope and sequence have a progression to help students critique their scientific explanations or solutions proposed by peers by citing relevant evidence about the natural and designed worlds. Throughout the K-5 experience we also attempt to help our student's create models and revise simple explanations to represent events and design solutions. Overall, our students can construct, design solutions, compare variables and they can predict next steps to solve problems. Our Science curriculum encourages students to take risks throughout the scientific process and we create performance expectations that engages them in their world. Grade level examples include each grade level creating habitats for living creatures to 4th grade engineers applying their learning of engineering principles to create simple machines to solve real life problems.

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

Bemis Elementary offers meaningful and challenging academic learning opportunities in Social Studies for K-5 students. We focus on helping them to seek understanding around historical and current events. We believe that we are responsible to respect how all children learn and to figure out how to meet them where they are. Students are part of a learning culture that respects all student thinking. We value all voices and we provide multiple, daily opportunities for students to spend time thinking, reflecting, setting goals and taking perspective. These thinking routines provide opportunities for students to make their thinking visible through verbal debate, mental tug-a-wars and to respectfully disagree with each other.

We partner with Michael Fullan's International Research through his Deep Learning Model which emphasizes engaging students in their world...so that they can change their world. These Social Studies explorations provide opportunities for our students to extend the curriculum through their own personal inquiries that challenges them to solve real-world issues. Student service projects, student leadership opportunities, and student led demonstrations are the hallmark of our Social Studies and Character Education programs. Our students don't just speak it, they live it by locking arms together, loving others and living out the belief that they can make a difference in the world.

Likewise, we monitor their abilities to be responsible for their own learning, by creating solutions to make a difference in their life, community and their world. Through our building wide Engaged Citizen Explorations, students are challenged to set goals and to seek solutions to the inquiries they create. Our parents also support this work as we have them participate in perception data about their children before and after each exploration. We ask them to measure the effectiveness of our instruction in the areas of Character, Citizenship, Collaboration, Communication, Creativity and Critical Thinking. One example would be our 5th graders were challenged to connect history of colonial times to present day America by digging deep around the question of Is America Still the Land of Opportunity? The students interviewed parents who immigrated to America to find out current day perspective. Their conclusion led them to realize that America is still the land of opportunity compared to other countries.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

All students participate in our Media curriculum one time per week. It is based on State Standards and was written by Troy teachers. Both teachers and students use technology in lessons and learn to use online resources and research technology in a variety of contexts. The Bemis media center has an award-winning collection of 20,000 books and circulates 30,000 items including print, electronic and other resources to students and staff throughout the school year- unprecedented in an elementary school.

Bemis offers many opportunities for students to explore the 5th Core of learning through the performing arts, visual arts, and world languages. The Music department received national recognition, from NAMM, as the Best Community for Music Education. Our students learn how to play instruments, compose their own original music and perform live for our community. Our visual arts program fills our gallery walls daily with student artwork. We hold an annual Art competition and display work within our business community. All 5th graders learn to play an instrument and take class two times per week for thirty minutes per class. Plus they perform three times throughout the year at concerts. All grade levels including Kindergarten participate in vocal music class one time per week for 45 minutes. First, Third and Fifth graders learn how to perform on stage through district wide concerts. Finally, our 5th graders participate in a Musical Theater production of American History at the end of the year. They take this class daily during the last six weeks of the year. They perform the play in front of the student body and for their parents.

Spanish is taught at Bemis one time per week providing all students in Kindergarten through Fifth grade with a foundation in a world language. The curriculum is designed to promote global awareness and cross-cultural understanding. Each year of study advances the child's language skills leading to the year-long Spanish class in our Troy Middle Schools.

Physical education classes are taught one time per week to all students in Kindergarten through Fifth grade. Our program encourages healthy living by teaching fitness and setting individual goals. Teachers have Fitness Folders to record and monitor student progress. Awards are presented to high achieving students. This curriculum was written by Troy teachers and is based on the CCSS. In the fall, a school sponsored jog-a-thon encourages students to maintain their fitness, and students participate in a Fitness Run in the spring.

We offer a One-2-World technology program where all Third through Fifth grade students are provided an iPad. The program focuses on connecting students to learning beyond the walls of the classroom and to connect our parents to their learning. All Kindergarten through Second grade students share an iPad. All students use this technology to create their own production of video, creating a calendar and to provide a window into their learning with their parents through a two way communication platform called See Saw. Likewise, all Bemis staff are provided an iPad. They use it in a variety of instructional methods to differentiate instruction for our diverse student population. The Bemis staff strives to be inspiring, creative, and enthusiastic facilitators of learning and thinking. In order to differentiate and motivate our students, we have created a learning environment that integrates technology. Technology has allowed our staff to enhance the curriculum and provide students with greater access to information and creation through discovery, research, and problem solving. Across the curriculum, teachers believe that feedback to students is essential whether through student self-assessment using rubrics or through teacher monitoring of student learning. Whether using Twitter, See Saw or Socratic, teachers integrate interactive response to assess learning on the student iPads. Teachers integrate technology to engage learners and provide explicit acknowledgement of student learning. Our One-2-World program challenges our staff to understand its role in implementing technology practices as our students continue to grow and develop in a 21st Century World.

Our One-2-World program creates transparency and frequent communication via social media. Assignments, links, tutorials, and class projects are available for at home learning. Students are consistently making claims and supporting their claims with evidence on classroom blogs. Twitter has also become more prevalent within the building to allow teachers to explore professional dialog and hone new instructional strategies and techniques. Teachers are collaborating with other teachers through this networking forum. #BemisThinkers and #TSDThinkers are used frequently to network around our educational community.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

Bemis offers a Reading Recovery early intervention program designed for students experiencing difficulties with reading and writing. Our program is constantly being refined based on over 30 years of ongoing research. Our Reading Recovery teacher is an experienced classroom teacher who participate in rigorous training. This ongoing professional learning occurs each month to update and refine her skills. Students are evaluated and the children with the highest needs are chosen to participate in our program. Each child has individual lessons for half an hour each day which builds confidence and resiliency. Most students remain in Reading Recovery for ten to twenty weeks, according to individual needs. At Bemis, we service the bottom twenty percent of our first-grade students. This year, all students will be discontinued, meaning that they will be among the average to above average readers and writers in their classroom after discontinuing from Reading Recovery.

We also offer a Kinder through Fifth Grade Leveled Literacy Intervention program. It is a powerful short term intervention designed for children who find reading and writing difficult. The goal of the intervention is to bring the children to grade level achievement through intensive, small group instruction which supplements classroom literacy.

Through systematically designed lessons, teachers support learning in reading and in writing via small group teaching to no more than five students. Students expand their knowledge of words and how they work. Over a span of two lessons, the child reads several books, writes about reading, and receives explicit teaching in phonics. Additionally, students work on improving their decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension skills. The lessons are fast-paced, and the books are high interest to ensure student engagement. Typically, our most at-risk students participate in LLI for 12 to 20 weeks, but teachers are skilled in shortening or lengthening the time depending upon the needs of the students.

3b. Students performing above grade level

We have created an MTSS process in both Mathematics and Literacy titled the Bemis 10. The Bemis 10 was created by looking at John Hattie's research on high leverage moves that can be measured via an effect size. This data shows the impact the instructional strategies have on student learning. Our plan begins with teachers using pre-assessments of each unit in Math and Literacy. Students are asked to examine their pre-test results and to set personal goals that they monitor throughout the unit. Students who self-report growth have been found to be more engaged and successful. Students who master the results on the pre-test are provided extension opportunities that are challenging and collaborative. These students are expected to still participate in the daily lessons to ensure understanding, but after the lesson they engage with other children who mastered the instruction to extend their learning.

This group is fluid as we typically have different students who join the extension group throughout the year. PLC's use the student data to determine if a student should be advanced one year. If a child is to be considered for advancement, they must participate in two district assessments, the Cognitive Abilities Test (COGAT) and grade level end of year assessment and they must score in the 95th percentile in order to be considered to move up one grade level during the Math and Literacy blocks of their day. We have found that we are able to meet the needs of our advanced students through these approaches. Overall, we have very few students who move one year ahead, but we have many who are able to be advanced within their classroom daily. Our state level assessment data supports this strategy as our student's score in the highest levels on state exams compared to the rest of our state. From 2015 to present approximately 90% of our students pass the state assessment. Likewise, over half of the students passing the state exam score in the advanced level.

3c. Special education

Our district mission statement states that the Troy School District Special Education Department is committed to continuous improvement through collaboration. We are focused on utilizing data to develop

and implement student assistance processes, assessment practices, instructional strategies, programs, and services to ensure learning for students with special needs. We offer a broad continuum of programs and services that are available for students age 0-26 in the Troy School District. We emphasize educating all students in their neighborhood schools; however, all decisions about programs and services for students are based on each student's individual needs and made by our MTSS Planning Team. We pride ourselves on parental involvement in the development, as well as, the implementation of the individualized program.

At Bemis we create a culture that is focused on the statement that All means All. Every one of our most needy students are coupled together with interventionists and highly specialized teachers to meet the needs of our students. Our Special Education staff works closely to create a common schedule to ensure that students who are in need receive a double-dip approach to literacy. The student participates with their peers during the literacy block and then receives additional support in the Resource Room. The same approach happens in Math. Overall, we have observed growth among all our neediest students with data suggesting that our gap is closing. Our MTSS program has shown a decrease in students being referred to Special Education and our state exam scores have shown that our most needy students are either passing the exam or showing growth suggesting that our gap is closing per the Mackinac Report and Michigan M-STEP report.

We also house a novel Category IV early intervention transition program for age 5 and 6-year-old students who might otherwise be identified as children with autism. Our goal is to provide early intervention, extra time to gain understanding of behavioral and cognitive strategies; as well as, socialization with peers without placing these students into a categorical program. Our staff works tirelessly to provide the children in this program the best opportunity for equity, access and inclusion.

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

The English Language Development ELD program at Bemis consists of various levels of support. This is an integral program to our school as 30 percent of our students are actively receiving support and another 25 percent have exited the program. We have been able to support this large population by focusing on small group instruction, push-in support, and instructional support with classroom teachers.

The ELD team consists of a lead teacher that is certified and endorsed, and a para-educator that works closely with the teacher. As a team, they have communicated frequently about the changing needs of our students to ensure that they are receiving optimal support. In addition, they communicate frequently with the classroom teachers to find opportunities to scaffold instruction for our students.

Students are placed into flexible groups based on their state language assessment scores, using the WIDA Screener or WIDA Access. These groups are flexible as language development is dynamic. Small group instruction is utilized for the students that have low levels of English acquisition.

These students are generally new to the country and need intense instruction. We use grade level small groups of students that consist of one to five students to build community. In these groups we utilized a literacy program called the National Geographic REACH which is a high interest reading support program. During push-in support, our goal is to give students scaffolds to access the grade level content via small group or one-on-one conferring. Because writing is one of the most challenging areas of content for our EL students, our support usually occurs during this time to support the Lucy Calkins Units of Study. This also provides opportunities for collaboration and building capacity with the classroom teachers. Our lead teacher has a MA in Reading which helps her to understand the levels of text complexity that impacts an ELL student.

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

We provide students the opportunity to engage in exciting Explorations of personal inquiry to interact with their world to help them change their world in the following 6 areas: Character, Citizenship, Collaboration, Communication, Collaboration and Critical Thinking. What is Kindergarten? We engaged our Kinder students through an exploration that focused on building character traits, literacy skills and public speaking. What makes a good citizen? Our 1st graders engaged in learning about what makes a good citizen in our school community. How does an engaged citizen build a better future? Our 2nd graders explored what an engaged citizen, within their community, looks like, and how they can get involved to effectively lead change to make their world better. How do we drive Michigan's economy into the future? Our 3rd graders shifted into high gear to learn about economics in the metro Detroit area as they compared the region's economic past to the present. If we don't protect our Great Lakes...what will happen? 4th graders engaged with the idea of how human influence on the Great Lakes has potentially negatively impacted the economics of our region. Is the US still the land of opportunity? Our 5th grade researchers engaged in a deep dive into the colonization settlement of the US that occurred between 1585 and 1763. These explorations inspired our students to make changes in their world.

Likewise, we also engage our students in our Character Education Program to lead service-oriented projects. Each grade elected to forego one Holiday party to focus on others vs. themselves. Our youngest Bemis Bears believe in being a great citizen and a patriot for our country. All Kinder students spent time during their holiday party to create care packages for our U.S soldiers that are overseas. The 1st and 3rd Grade Buddy teams collaborated at their holiday party to design gift bags and they placed needed purchased merchandise inside to support homeless shelters. Our 2nd graders gave from their hearts as they chose to design, write and create beautiful Valentine cards for senior citizens. Our 4th graders took caring for our Great Lakes environment to a new level by putting together care packages for communities in need of clean water. Finally, our 5th graders packed lunches for the homeless and visited senior citizen homes to deliver cards, share stories and to sing songs.

Finally, our work with Project Zero on Making Thinking Visible and John Hattie's research on the 6 Cs creates engaging learning environments for all on a daily basis.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

In order to increase achievement, we know that parents must participate in the learning process. With our changing demographics, we felt the need to reach out to our entire community. A significant proportion of our English Language Learners families reside in apartments. We discovered that this community did not feel part of our Bemis family and so we decided to host meetings within their complex. These meetings were facilitated by administration and staff. At the meeting, families learned about the volunteer opportunities at school and how to be an actively involved parent. These meetings increased involvement significantly.

In addition, Bemis Elementary has strong parent support through a variety of annual PTO based school wide events. PTO was honored with a national leadership award for outstanding performance with parents. Our PTO has a strong history of successful fundraising which has helped improve student achievement. Their investments in technology, extra curriculum and support programs has helped teachers improve the delivery of instruction and engagement for students. These fundraising efforts have helped us purchase SMART boards, iPads and Apple TVs for all classrooms. In addition, PTO funds have adorned our hallways with new bulletin boards where Visible Thinking routines can be displayed and shared by students, teachers and families. PTO has also invested in our fine arts programs purchasing new sound equipment so we can conduct our own musical programs.

Finally, we have created 11 after school clubs which range from Robotics, to Girls on the Run, to Science Olympiad, to Battle of the Books. All these clubs are led by volunteer parents. Each club is free of charge

if parents volunteer on the night of the meeting. The goal is to connect parents with their children and parents to parents. These interactions help to forge relationships among our international families who come to America without many supports. These clubs host nearly 80 percent of our population throughout the school year. Many clubs have supported our academic goals in the areas of Mathematics as over 250 students learn strategies through our National Champion Math Pentathlon club. We have also observed our Robotics teams earn National level status as our students have learned to code at the highest levels. Our strategy to forge partnerships with our parent's expertise has helped us to see academic growth while also building a strong culture of parent support.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

We have created a Culture of Collective Efficacy and Professionalism through our belief that if it is good for one, it is good for all. We accomplish this via Professional Development that is ongoing and embedded within the classroom. We use a teacher to teacher coaching method in the classroom by using a protocol called Snapshot. This allows all staff to observe a class live with a focus on teaching moves and cultural forces in action. This helps to create systemic instructional practices, conversations around best practice and specific feedback to grow our practice. We have also improved instruction through PD on Visible Thinking strategies. They have positively impacted student achievement. Based upon research from the work of Dr. Ron Ritchhart, and visits to schools already using thinking skills, data proved that critical thinking better prepared students for 21st century learning. Our staff has embraced this philosophy to help students achieve, improve critical thinking, and become ready for future challenges. Consequently, visible thinking strategies are woven throughout all curricular subjects. Professional development opportunities at Bemis align with this philosophy, so the focus in this area is essential.

We also work collaboratively to align assessments school wide. We have created student assessments, both formative and summative and have been focused on professional development for all members. Procedures and reported data are standardized across grade levels. Through collaboration, teachers have engaged in focused professional development opportunities, built a culture of thinking and positively affected student achievement.

Finally, we have used the Danielson Framework for Teaching to improve instruction. Our staff has worked collectively; as well as, individually to promote a culture of thinking within each classroom and throughout the building. We are focused on triangulating data in the field of informational reading, writing and critical thinking.

Professional learning communities collaborate bimonthly to share the responsibility for improving student achievement in the areas of informational reading, cross-curricular writing and critical thinking. Collaboration and professional development opportunities have been a key component for the strides Bemis has made in building a culture of thinking. Teachers collaborate daily within grade level teams and vertically to refine and share instructional strategies.

4. School Leadership:

Bemis is an organization that believes in leadership for all and collective efficacy is our greatest asset. Our leadership philosophy is based on if it is good for one, it is good for all. We challenge our decision making to continuous judgment by results. The guiding principles we live by are interrelated and overlapping. They are designed to reinforce each other and result in multiple payoffs. Our structure to leading change is based on using data to guide our plans. We begin by valuing vision in balance with creating a compelling reason why we should change. Clarity of purpose is essential as it guides us to simplify the complexity of the issue into a single organizing idea. In order for our mantra of, if it is good for one, it is good for all to occur, we must rally around a higher purpose that has meaning for individuals; as well as, the collectivity of the group. Bemis teachers are transformational leaders who contribute through shared responsibilities. We connect people to the work, collaborate and commit to what is best for our school. We have observed increased achievement because we simultaneously keep our focus on our school. Likewise, we continually build capacity of understanding for each team member. We collectively study research and best practice. We are laser focused on learning through our building wide growth goals and job embedded PD which ensures that

our system can deliver the best possible instruction for every child. Some use data as a hammer, we use it as a flashlight to guide us. Our teacher's excitement surrounding their student's successes and their personal successes is the glue of focus and cohesion in our building.

Leadership is about getting results in a way that inspires trust. All are inspired to fail forward in a culture that is non-judgmental for the attempt to do what is best for our students. This trust permeates throughout all decisions. Each teacher is invited to be part of our Vision 2020 leadership team. This optional event occurs monthly to provide guidance in making building decisions. Currently, our team is invested in designing a Maker Center Learning Program. They have collaborated around research, curriculum, redesign of our Media Center, presented to our PTO and have connected all staff to this change initiative. Our shared leadership approach has created the design of our MTSS program in both Literacy and Math. Their collective commitment to meeting the needs of all students has boosted the academic success for all students based on state exams and local common assessments created by our team. Our leadership continues at the grade level as each team meets a minimum of two times per week to talk about their students, plan instruction and to use data to drive their decisions. We also work collaboratively to share our thinking with other educators around the state of Michigan. Our collective efficacy and our shared leadership helps all of our students learn.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

At the district, county and state level, Bemis Elementary is a host school for training educators on creating a Culture of Thinking. Seminars teach our colleagues how we created a culture of thinking in all classrooms. These seminars include student, parent and teacher reflections about the impact of Visible Thinking on our community. Dr. Ron Ritchhart, author and Harvard's lead Project Zero Researcher of Making Thinking Visible, visits our school yearly and conducts qualitative research by observing classrooms and providing us feedback about our growth.

Our strategy improves our teachers instruction and helps visitors that are welcomed into our classrooms. They participate in a pre-observation lesson, observe the lesson and then participate in a post-observation conference. These discussions lead to deep understanding about the responsibility of the teacher to create an engaging learning atmosphere promoting high expectations for all learners. We also present methods to effectively facilitate conversations that promote learning, including how to ask high level probing questions such as, but not limited to, What makes you say that? and how to engage students in a cognitively vibrant atmosphere. Likewise, we share thinking protocols and routines to formatively assess the learning of all students. These observations from schools within Oakland County and throughout Michigan leave our visitors excited, motivated and wanting to build their own cultures of learning classrooms. Ultimately, visitors walk through any classroom and could record digital images about how the 8 cultural forces of time, opportunities, routines and structures, language, modeling interactions and relationships, physical environment and expectations around thinking happen in our building.

Observations from visitors hold us accountable for our actions, provide us with motivation to continue the work and allow us the opportunity to share our thinking with colleagues from around our district, county and state. Each participant has been taught how to use a protocol titled Snapshot. The visitors learning helps them to go back to their buildings to help them facilitate walk-through observations in their own schools. The feedback we receive is this protocol helps them to grow conversations around instruction which helps them to improve how to reach their students.

Overall, the impact on our students is that our culture now believes that all student voices need to be valued and that all students, when provided thinking routines on a daily basis, become more engaged and learn at deeper levels. Our state level and district level data shows this, but more importantly the feedback we receive from our students is they don't want to miss school. We have observed behavior trends drop because we believe students are more engaged. Suspension rates are near zero and bullying has dropped each successive year since the implementation of the Cultures of Thinking philosophy in our building. Our students feel safe, that their voices are heard and that they are encouraged to help us solve real world problems. Ultimately, our Culture of Thinking has challenged students to have voice and agency. Together we have built a school that is designed on equity, opportunity and excellence for all.