

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

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

School Mailing Address 1273 10th Avenue North P.O. Box 509
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Saint James State MN Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 56081-2029

County Watonwan County

Telephone (507) 375-3325 Fax _____

Web site/URL https://www.stjames.k12.mn.us/ E-mail ldawson@isd840.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. Steven Heil E-mail sheil@isd840.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name St. James Public Schools Tel. (507) 375-5974

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. Richard Spitzner
(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)
 - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 2 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	35	34	69
1	33	40	73
2	41	42	83
3	36	35	71
4	35	48	83
5	34	32	66
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	214	231	445

*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):
- 0.2 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0.2 % Asian
 - 0.1 % Black or African American
 - 44 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0.2 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 55 % White
 - 0.3 % 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: 6%

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	8
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	20
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	28
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	453
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.06
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	6

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

Spanish, K'iche', Mam, Katchiquel, Kichel, Tagalog

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 27 %

121 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 62 %

Total number students who qualify: 274

8. Students receiving special education services: 18 %

81 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>6</u> Autism | <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>10</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>8</u> Developmental Delay | <u>29</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>20</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>2</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>2</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>2</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 1

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

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	22
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	16
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	23
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

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 20:1

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	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

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

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.

Northside Elementary School is a diverse, creative, and inclusive school community committed to change and fostering respect and embracing excellence.

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

St. James Public Schools is proud to serve the students, families, and community of St. James and the surrounding rural farming area located about two hours Southwest of the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area in Watonwan County. A \$24 million dollar building renovation and addition project was completed prior to the 2017-18 school year. Technology upgrades have reinforced our commitment to providing students with an innovative 21st-century education. Small class sizes allow teachers the ability to meet the individual needs of each student.

Northside Elementary is a rural school that serves 445 students in grades K through 5. The school is increasingly growing more diverse and that needs to be celebrated! The student body is 54% Hispanic/Latino, 43% White, and 3% other racial categories. Northside has a 27% EL population where students speak Spanish along with the indigenous languages of Mam and K'iche', along with serving a student body that is 62% Free and Reduced lunch. There are a number of key strategies that have allowed Northside Elementary students to develop their full potential academically, emotionally, physically, socially, and culturally.

One effective strategy in meeting individual student needs is through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Northside teachers meet weekly to collaborate with their colleagues under guidance from school administration. During the PLCs, teams analyze data to make informed instructional decisions to best accommodate for the individualized needs of each student.

Another high-powered practice has been the intervention model utilized at Northside. Northside Elementary implemented RTI (Response to Intervention) during the 2014-2015 school year. Since then, Northside has transitioned to a MTSS (multi-tiered system of support) system in order to better reach the needs of all-learners. Students are assessed three times during the year using the Formative Assessment System for Teachers (FAST) from FastBridge. The data collected from the FAST assessments, MCA results, and formative classroom data is then used to determine which students need further support or enrichment. Differentiated instruction is a part of classroom routines, but more intensive support is offered within two thirty-minute intervention blocks for each grade level. Northside teachers progress monitor weekly for students who are receiving targeted interventions. Every six weeks, teachers participate in team data meetings to review student data and make informed decisions relating to the next phase of the intervention process.

To address the social-emotional needs of students, Northside has implemented Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). PBIS improves social, emotional, and academic outcomes for all students. We strive to have students demonstrate how to follow Saints Power: Be Respectful, Be Responsible, and Be Safe in all locations throughout our school. Our staff leads by example by focusing on the positive choices students make. Along with these key strategies that encourage the growth and development of all students, there are creative and innovative techniques that have also been implemented in the school.

Northside Elementary gained the designation as being a Turnaround Arts School in 2013. Teachers use arts-integrated teaching strategies to support the learning process in addition to traditional teaching techniques. Each year, Northside students have the opportunity to participate in a junior musical that showcases the creative nature of our school and community. Through this partnership with the Kennedy Center, both students and staff at Northside have been able to celebrate through the arts in both curricular and co-curricular activities.

In the fall of 2019, the STEM program was initiated for all students in grades K-5. The focus of our STEM program is to create opportunities where students use 21st Century skills to problem solve and develop critical thinking skills. Students are provided challenges that allow them to be innovative and creative. These hands-on, project-based activities reinforce the importance of science and mathematical concepts and provide students experience using the design process. Our STEM program provides students with career-readiness experiences which builds collaboration skills and confidence. It helps bridge the ethnic and

gender gap that is often present in the fields of science and math.

A Makerspace was implemented in our Media Center at the beginning of the 2019 school year. It is available for all students in grades 2-5. The space is designed for students to create, make, and invent new things. Students are encouraged to collaborate and share ideas using a variety of supplies and resources. The Makerspace was created to enhance our media center program. Students are encouraged to solve challenges using a number of materials, such as, Legos, K'Nex, Brain Flakes, Keva Planks, and other hands-on materials. Through the use of play, our students are growing in their 21st Century skills and developing into well-rounded individuals.

These aspects help the Northside students and staff embody the St. James Public Schools Mission Statement: "Excellence in Education: High Expectations, Real Results."

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

As a Turnaround Arts partner school, we value the creativity and diversity of our student body. Through incorporating the arts across subject areas, both students and staff are able to share their strengths through various mediums. We further believe in a collaborative school structure to best meet the needs of all learners. To fulfill our mission of Excellence in Education: High Expectations, Real Results, we pride ourselves on being student-centered.

We utilize a multifaceted approach to respond to the academic and behavioral needs of each student through a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) framework. Through the MTSS model, teachers are able to identify the root cause of potential learning or behavioral deficits in order to target specific tiered interventions to provide the necessary supports for each student. A key component to this behavior framework is relationships. Teachers meticulously build relationships and create cultures of learning within their classrooms to set all students up for success. This framework is supported through evidence-based instruction and intervention practices that enrich the curricular work, along with providing students the ability to set and track academic goals. Further, both teachers and school administration value collaboration and that is apparent during weekly professional learning communities (PLCs). Each week, teams meet in PLCs to map curriculum, develop assessments, evaluate student data, and to alter instructional practices supported by grade level data.

1b. Reading/English language arts

Northside Elementary adopted the Reading Wonders Curriculum in 2013. This curriculum includes phonemic awareness for our K-2 students, phonics, morphology, and word study for all students K-5, builds fluency and comprehension, and extends thinking and understanding through discussion and writing. Along with the purchase of a new curriculum, the staff has worked to align this curriculum to the MN English Language Arts standards. A coherent scope and sequence has been created as to where standards are taught, how the standards will be assessed and which standards our students need the most support when learning. All students in grade K-5 are taught foundational phonics skills from the curriculum using systematic instruction following the Orton-Gillingham approach. Close reading and metacognitive thinking strategies are incorporated into daily instruction using the gradual release of responsibility framework.

Implementation of instructional strategies such as close reading, using metacognitive thinking strategies, the Orton-Gillingham approach, and incorporating the arts into daily instruction has increased student engagement and success when mastering the standards. Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) was implemented in 2014. Northside Elementary provided two thirty-minute intervention blocks for each grade level. During these blocks, targeted interventions for the lowest 30% of all students are provided by our licensed learning specialists. Enrichment and challenge activities are provided for students who are on-track for meeting grade-level benchmarks. Our dual identified students are also provided extra support during one of these intervention time blocks.

Differentiated instruction using the gradual release of responsibility is provided throughout all tiers of instructional settings. Daily instruction consists of whole-group mini-lessons in the areas of word work, writing, and reading comprehension strategies followed by guided differentiated practice or reteaching along with independent practice. Independent reading, conferencing, and goal setting related to learning targets using data notebooks is part of the instructional routine. Classroom teachers provide both Tier-I and Tier-II differentiated instruction. Support staff including Special Education, ELL teachers, and Title One learning specialists provide both tier two and tier three support depending on each individual student's needs. All staff has been trained in incorporating the Orton-Gillingham approach into their weekly phonics and morphology instruction. Students needing extra support in the area of decoding are provided that support from one of our Title One learning specialists through explicit, direct instruction with the Orton-Gillingham

approach. Students who need support in other areas such as fluency and comprehension are provided that support by both classroom and support teachers using research-based interventions from Pathways to Reading Excellence in School Sites (PRESS), Formative Assessment System for Teachers (FAST), and reciprocal teaching.

In order to serve our students with appropriate individualized instruction as needed, Northside Elementary uses the FAST test from FASTBridge. This assessment is given in the fall, winter, and spring of each year. Students are given the aReading computer adaptive test to measure their overall reading along with the auto reading assessment that measures their phonics and word knowledge. Teachers also administer the Curriculum Based Measure (CBM) to check a student's fluency and accuracy. Grade-level teams then meet with the principal and learning specialist teachers to look at each student's data both from FAST assessments and formative classroom assessments in order to determine specific student needs and next steps. Input is also given by our EL teachers. Decisions are made collaboratively as to whether a student needs tier two or tier three instruction, what intervention will be used if needed, and who will be responsible for delivering that instruction. Progress monitoring is completed either weekly or bi-weekly and data is then reviewed every six weeks. When data is reviewed, decisions are made regarding the next step to take. For students at Northside, this may include continuing with the intervention, changing the intervention if needed or releasing the students from further intervention if they have met the grade-level benchmark at least three times.

1c. Mathematics

Northside Elementary's math program is aligned with the Minnesota State Standards and is delivered to students using a variety of best practice strategies. All students K-5 are taught mathematical concepts with an emphasis on Number and Operations, Algebra, Geometry and Measurement, and Data Analysis. Teachers have designed common formative assessments that align to the MN state standards in order to address key learning targets for each grade level. The design of the math instructional framework supports the varied needs of students and embeds both intervention and enrichment opportunities for students. Classrooms utilize MyMath as an instructional tool that provides a framework for teachers to utilize the gradual release method through their lessons.

A typical lesson consists of direct whole group teaching, followed by explicit modeling of the daily learning target, and small group instruction that is differentiated based on student need. Students also are provided technology-based support through IXL and Seesaw. Technology-based supports provide the opportunity for formative assessments that drive teacher's instructional decisions and assists in identifying the strengths and growth areas of individual students in real-time. In-class instruction coupled with technology-based supports and FAST data allow for teachers and support staff to target areas of need for individual students.

Students in the intermediate grades (3-5) embed flexible groups within their daily lessons. Embedded within the core instruction, is the opportunity for hands-on learning that allows students to gain a concrete understanding of the learning targets being taught.

Assessment drives instruction within Northside Elementary's math program. Teachers use a variety of formative assessments such as, exit tickets, whiteboards, google forms, and/or IXL to help gauge student understanding. Formative assessment data helps to form groups for differentiated instruction to help students grow in their math proficiency on targeted skills identified within the unit. The formative and summative assessments further help to determine the root cause of student misconceptions and help to identify students who may need a targeted intervention.

Through the PLC process, grade level teams are able to determine students who are in need of extension or reteaching based on assessment data. Teachers at the end of each unit answer the following questions: How will we extend for students that have mastered the learning targets? How will we respond for the students that have yet to master the learning targets? Through that process, reteaching is delivered to low-performing students, by providing building block material to help the students experience success, reinforcement to standard level mastery students, and opportunities to extend students who have demonstrated mastery on the

given concepts or skills as measured by the MN state standards in conjunction with the district math curriculum.

1d. Science

Northside Elementary's science program is aligned to MN state standards. Science instruction is taught using a combination of project-based learning, experiential learning, technology-based support, and direct instruction. Technology-based supports such as IXL, Mystery Science, and Flocabulary help to enhance the school-based curriculum, Seela Science, in order to address the standards. The technology-based supports have been integrated within the units of study in order to pull activities out that are STEM focused and provide opportunities for students to work collaboratively on hands-on tasks. Our science curriculum is composed of three dimensions: science and engineering practices, crosscutting concepts, and disciplinary core ideas. The majority of the science instruction is focused on the disciplinary content strands: physical sciences, life sciences, earth and space science, and engineering, technology, and the applications of science that align to MN state standards.

One highlight is the first grade rock unit, aligned to MN state standards, where students come to understand that earth materials have different observable physical traits that make them useful. A local geologist visits each year to assist students in the grouping and classification of rocks. Students then conduct observations and investigations on rocks within the classroom and rocks found around the school. Another highlight is the third grade universe unit. The MN state standard aligned unit allows for students to understand the sun and moon have locations and movements that can be observed and described. Activities within this unit are hands-on where students explore the moon phases using Oreos, research planets and describe their characteristics, along with creating various models of space and the constellations. Staff call this one of Northside's "contagious units", as students gravitate towards library books about space throughout the unit and beyond.

Northside teachers during the 2018-19 and 2019-20 school year have been deconstructing the standards in order to better align instruction to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Through this process, teacher teams have aligned grade-level generated curriculum and created common assessments that are aligned to our standards, while connecting the concepts and principles taught during the STEM essential. Students utilize an inquiry notebook to allow students to reflect on their experience in science.

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

Northside Elementary's social studies program is aligned with the Minnesota State standards and is delivered to students using a variety of best practice strategies. The majority of social studies instruction is focused on the disciplinary content strands: citizenship and government, economics, geography, and history. Social studies standards and instruction around civic engagement have been integrated throughout the language arts reading curriculum, along with opportunities for group projects and inquiry based instruction. We have chosen to integrate social studies within our reading curriculum in order to help solidify students' conceptual understanding of historical events. This extends beyond rote memorization of names and dates. Students are assessed through common formative assessments or project based activities, such as the fifth grade decades project, where students select a decade to research and become the class expert. Throughout the research project, students help bring historical events and identify how they connect to our modern world.

Our school Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) program also promotes core social studies values: courage, respect, integrity, compassion, and responsibility. These values are embedded within our behavior expectations that are visible throughout the school as an opportunity for students to engage in civic participation.

A key highlight each year for civic learning and engagement is the Veteran's Day program where students invite community members who are Veterans to be honored at the event. The event is highlighted by a keynote speaker who shares their experience in the military and shares about civic responsibility.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Students at Northside Elementary receive instruction in Visual Arts, Music, Physical Education, STEM/Library, and character building, also known as "essentials". The essentials teachers provide 60 minutes of instruction once every four days for grades 1-5 and 30 minutes of instruction for Kindergarten. Kindergarten receives 30 minutes of Physical Education daily.

Using training and resources provided by Turnaround Arts, the elementary visual arts and music program have been able to successfully collaborate with classroom teachers on arts integration. The Kindergarten-2nd grade music program, aligned to MN state standards, focuses on helping students to become musical by singing, moving with expression and keeping a steady beat. Rhythm instruments, games, listening and discussion of types of music and their history are included in this learning. 3rd-5th grade students continue with this work while also adding folk dancing, which is also integrated into 2nd grade content, guitar and recorder instruction. Hearing, reading, and writing rhythm patterns and melody patterns begin partway through 2nd grade and continues through 5th grade.

The new Minnesota Visual Arts Standards are the framework for the K-5 visual arts program. The learning focuses on process in addition to product. The foundational knowledge and skills are embedded in the artistic process. Woven throughout the curriculum are experiences with Visual Thinking Strategies, arts collaboration and the exploration of different media. As students move through the K-5 Art curriculum, they acquire skills while they investigate artists and artwork. The artists connect students to different perspectives and cultures in the world. The study of Art movements and Contemporary Minnesota Native American Art allows for students to integrate knowledge and personal experiences while responding to art.

Visual arts and music essentialists have become an integral resource for classroom teachers over the past six years, as lessons and units have been developed that utilize art or music class to introduce a concept, skill, or technique that supports students in making connections to learning a skill/content in their regular classroom. Results of this cooperation between teachers and students can be seen in hallway exhibits that show math/art tessellations, animal habitat works of art or artist statements. Culture in our school is emphasized through art and music as students are able to "see" and "hear" themselves throughout the building.

One key highlight of the music program at Northside is the yearly production of a musical for students in grades 3-5. Our community enjoys this opportunity. This culture of high student engagement is a result of the arts being infused into classroom content.

Physical education helps support student's acquisition of essential skills and knowledge through a variety of exercises and games. Those of which include aerobic fitness, muscular strength, flexibility, and physical skills. During each class period, students perform a variety of exercises that promote physical fitness. Instruction aligns to skills from the national physical education standards, SHAPE. Reading, spelling, and math are also integrated into sessions where students learn social skills, teamwork, and how to work through adversity. A key yearly highlight of Northside's Physical Education department is Jump Rope for the Heart, where students learn ideals found in philanthropy and wellness.

Beginning with the 2019-20 school year, the traditional media classes were transformed into STEM classes. This transition also included incorporating a Makerspace Area for our students in grades 2-5 which is instructed by our STEM/Media teacher. In addition to the core instruction received, students receive 10 minutes of time to checkout and read books from the library. For the first half of the school year, students are engaged in technology courses that encompass the following skills: login practice, mouse skills, and skill progression of Google Suite. Students in grades 3-5 also receive instruction on Google Classroom. Students learn keyboarding skills on a regular basis and engage in a variety of other computer tasks. The second half of the year, students engage in STEM challenges. Students follow the design process and work through problems that relate to our world. Challenges foster the development of 21st century skills: critical thinking, collaboration, communication, problem solving, and creating. As students progress through challenges, they are encouraged to improve on their initial design in preparation of their final products.

Students then have the chance to share their successes and failures and how they learned from their failures to find success.

A positive addition to the media center this year is the Makerspace area. Students in grades 2-5 have the opportunity to engage in a variety of hands-on activities. With the help of our media assistance, students can choose from a number of challenges, which include Legos, K'Nex, Magniforms, Brain Flakes, Keva Planks, Robotics, and other engineering materials. In addition, students can be creative with art challenges using perler beads, origami paper, and various art mediums. All completed projects and challenges are put on display to share with others.

At Northside, the social worker provides services that meet the student's social-emotional, behavioral, and development needs. The social worker uses a variety of programs to teach students essential skills and information that helps guide their growth and development and their positive decision-making. In classroom sessions, all students are presented information on bullying through a bullying prevention curriculum aligned to MN State standards. Students in 4th and 5th grade receive information and gain awareness of mental health concerns based on activities and information from the Children's Mental Health Association Curriculum, and 5th grade also receives information on chemical health provided by the Southern Minnesota Drug Task Force and MN Health Curriculum. Beyond classroom sessions, the social worker provides both individual and group sessions that range from self esteem, character education, anger management/self-regulation and friendship skills. These classroom sessions help students gain essential skills and awareness to be able to navigate childhood developmental stages successfully and promote all academic learning.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

As previously referenced in the school summary, Northside Elementary utilizes a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) model to best reach the needs of all learners. Differentiated instruction is a part of classroom routines, but more intensive support is offered within two thirty-minute intervention blocks for each grade level. During these thirty-minute intervention blocks, grade level teachers and Title I learning specialists provide further Tier II and Tier III supports to students that need the added support.

Northside teachers progress monitor weekly for students who are receiving targeted interventions from Pathways to Excellence at School Sites (PRESS) or Orton-Gillingham. Every six weeks, teachers participate in team data meetings to review student data and make informed decisions relating to the next phase of the intervention process. Students that continue to demonstrate a lack of growth may be brought forward to the Teacher Assistance Team (TAT) to further discuss potential challenges and roadblocks that may be hindering the student's academic achievement. Decisions from the TAT team could then shift the student to the Child Study Team (CST) where the decision will be made to refer the student for a special education evaluation or alter current interventions to assess whether adequate growth is present.

3b. Students performing above grade level

Utilizing the PLC process, teachers identify students that have demonstrated mastery of concepts taught in class. The identified students are then provided extension activities and direct instruction during the daily scheduled intervention blocks. These structured intervention blocks allow for students performing above grade level to be provided with additional challenges and opportunities to deepen their understanding of concepts at a more rigorous level. These additional challenges and opportunities take the form of project based learning that encompasses the unit's learning targets. For example, in fourth grade, students were tasked with designing their bedrooms, where students were provided with the area of their room along with a budget for expenses. Students were provided a mini-lesson on surface area, a fifth grade MN standard, in order to assist students with the "bedroom challenge".

3c. Special education

Northside Elementary school tailors instruction to meet the diverse and individual needs of students with disabilities. Most students that receive special education are serviced with their peers in the mainstream setting, as the least restrictive environment. In collaboration with EL, Title I, and Special Education, a school-wide intervention schedule was developed so that when students are pulled for Title I, Special Education services, or ELL services, the remaining students are engaged in small groups with their general education teacher working on specific skills to increase their academic skills. This specific intervention time is provided twice a day for 30 minutes. Students receiving special education services may receive extra services, such as EL support, or if they qualify for related services such as speech, occupational therapy or adaptive physical education. In this case, these students receive extra one on one or small group instruction in order to help them gain the skills they need to be successful. These extra services, along with time with their peers in the general education classroom helps to close the achievement gap because they are receiving the direct and personalized instruction they need while remaining an important participant of the general education classroom. Students that require additional supports have access to paraprofessional support, extra service time, and the school's motor room in order to best meet the needs of each identified student. Accommodations and modifications are also provided to the student as decided by the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team, which includes the parent. The accommodations and modifications outlined in the IEP may include modified assignments, additional supports for tests, preferential seating in the classroom, and the use of assistive technology among others to make content as accessible as possible for students.

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

The EL program offers pull-out content-based English Language Development instruction for all students who qualify for EL supports. For most students, this consists of one 25-30 minute EL class period daily. Newly arrived students have two EL classes per day for additional support. These EL classes occur during the two grade-wide intervention times, so that students do not miss any core instruction. Students who qualify for Title I reading intervention are also able to receive needed reading support during the second intervention period. Bilingual paraprofessionals assist newcomers for a portion of the day in the mainstream classroom also, helping with basic English skills as well as classwork. EL classes are content-based and align to the learning goals and topics being covered in the mainstream classroom. Within these topic areas, the EL teachers focus instruction around building skills in academic listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These classes also include academic vocabulary instruction and grammar instruction in meaningful contexts.

The EL team collaborates with mainstream teachers to plan teaching strategies, accommodations, and interventions to help students be successful throughout their day. EL teachers share Can Do Name Charts with teachers at the beginning of each year detailing students' English proficiency in the four language domains. Also, the EL team shares EL strategies and tips in the weekly school newsletter, and EL teachers keep in touch with their students' mainstream teachers to share ideas. In some cases, EL teachers and mainstream teachers create Language Development Plans for individual students that include specific strategies and goals. In order to support students' multilingualism as an asset, teachers across the building incorporate Spanish into the classroom through bridging charts, Spanish chants, bilingual books, and opportunities for students to share their own linguistic and cultural knowledge.

Over the past two years, our students have performed 13% higher than the state average for ELs in reading and approximately 18% higher than the state average for EL students in Math. Given those exciting numbers, there is still an achievement gap at Northside. We are addressing the achievement gaps by continued focus on strategic planning and providing interventions for students through our EL programming and intervention services. Beginning in the 2020-2021 school year we will be adding two grade levels of co-taught EL classes in order to provide additional support to targeted students in order to continue to address the achievement gap.

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

St. James has experienced a socioeconomic shift within our community over the past 20-25 years. Currently 62% of our student body qualifies for free or reduced (FRP) lunch. In order to address the growing needs of our students, we have established a Backpack Program at Northside. Every Friday, identified students are provided food through the program. Our Backpack Program serves over 100 students each week. Over the past two years, we have decreased our achievement gap for our FRP students by 4.5% in reading and 2.1% in math. Our overall gap in both reading and math are below 10%. As we continue to provide support for our FRP students, interventions will continue until we eliminate the achievement gap.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

At Northside, instilling a positive school climate and culture for both students and staff is at the center of everything we do. In order to engage and motivate our students, it begins with relationships. The research surrounding the correlation between positive school culture and improved student outcomes are important, which is why Northside teachers make it a point to greet students in the hallways and at their classroom doors each day. Given the importance of school climate and culture, as a school community we collect data to inform us of our strengths, as well as, our growth areas. The student survey shows that 100% of students feel the teachers care about students, 92% of students feel teachers are interested in them as a person, 95% of students feel adults treat students fairly at school, and 97% of students feel that adults listen to the students at school. Our staff takes pride in those numbers, as it demonstrates the impact relationships have on engaging learning. Beyond the initial focus on relationships, we take pride in providing voice for the students at Northside. Student voice is activated through student leadership, PBIS program, Girls on the Run, and the school musical.

Philanthropy is at the heart of the Northside student leadership group. Student leadership is comprised of two representatives from 1st through 5th grade led by the school social worker. Student leadership helps to organize the Formal Dinner each year, as well as raise money through various fundraisers, for school programming and local charities.

One way we recognize students is through our Saints Power tickets. Saints Power tickets are part of our PBIS program, where students can receive a ticket for demonstrating respectful, responsible, and safe behavior throughout the school. Students may also be recognized as the "Good News Call of the Day", where the identified student gets to call home with the principal to share the Saints Power news.

Girls on the Run is an after school program for all 3-5 grade girls. All students are encouraged and able to join. Our cultural and family liaison works tirelessly to make sure the application is accessible to all families. Girls on the Run lessons are based on 6 components: character, confidence, care, connections, competence, and contribution. Through these components, the lessons provide the girls with tools and confidence for how to handle real life situations. Because of this program, the girls are able to make connections with students they would normally not have met. They are able to greet each other when they see each other in school and hold each other accountable for utilizing the tools they've gained. We've been able to see these girls use their new tools and skills in school to navigate challenges in daily life. Daily lessons build in endurance to prepare the girls for the end of the season 5K. The confidence, pride, and sense of accomplishment in these girls once they cross the finish line is incredible. For a final component, the girls are able to utilize all that they've learned in planning and implementing a community impact project. Through Girls on the Run, the girl's demonstration of empathy, compassion, and sense of accomplishment soar!

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Northside Elementary celebrates its highly diverse student body. In order to better communicate and collaborate with all stakeholders, we hired a family and community liaison. This position is extremely valuable as communication and understanding of school structure, expectations, and involvement has increased throughout the St. James Community. Our liaison works with all families who need support by providing assistance for both educational and community support purposes.

Families of all cultures and backgrounds are invited to participate in the district advisory board and school-wide informational meetings annually to give input on how the district can better serve our students and community. Through this advisory board, we have been able to pinpoint specific areas where our community would like to see more support and involvement. In order to open lines of communication and inform families of various events, our community liaison, along with other staff members, have spent time at our local food processing plant during lunch hours. Parents are able to learn more about various

opportunities in the school and community for their children. This has proven especially important before the summer months. We have also provided community information during conferences and at the end of the year all-school picnic.

Partnerships are created with local businesses and our Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) to provide activities for our families to participate in and books for families to take home and read. Little Free Libraries were placed throughout the community and are maintained by local residents with the help of some of our high school students, so that families always have free access to books. Northside Elementary has an extremely supportive PTO who supports and manages four or more nightly events throughout the year. Each event focuses on a different curricular area such as STEM Night, Literacy Night, Health and Fitness Night, and the arts. They provide a culminating all school picnic at the end of the year where everyone gathers, has fun and is able to get information about summer opportunities for their children. Translators are available at each of these events.

Families are informed of their child's progress not only by their classroom teachers through on-going communication but through parent-teacher conferences, which take place in the fall and the spring. Interpreters are available to help parents and teachers communicate, but one of our most successful practices is our student led conferences. Our family participation at conferences is between 95-98%.

Community organizations such as local banks, our public library system, and community Healthy Families organization provide information, resources, and events for all families to participate in where they can also learn. Since starting a STEM program at Northside, our Public Library also holds STEM events. They are also involved in our literacy nights and helping families sign-up to use the public library. Our banks have provided school supplies for our families in need at the beginning of each school year. Our community Healthy Families community group hosts both Breakfast with Dads and Muffins with Moms and provides educational information that relates to health and nutrition.

All of these aspects have helped us build a strong school and community culture and climate. At the heart of Northside Elementary is an incredibly caring staff and community. The St. James community is the village it takes to raise our children!

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Cultivating a culture of professional learning is valued immensely at Northside. All staff have the opportunity to be a part of various committees where they can provide input and have their voice heard. Northside has a Leadership Team, where decisions are made that directly impact student learning, an Equity Committee to ensure equal opportunities for all students, a Principal Advisory Committee (PAC) team to discuss the day to day operations of the school and support the PBIS program, and a Staff Development Committee that provides ongoing learning opportunities for all staff. School administration routinely encourages staff to submit professional development requests and best practice grants through staff development.

Over the past two years, the Staff Development Committee (SDC) has changed the way we support our teachers and staff in their educational growth goals. Instead of the traditional "one size fits all" approach to staff development, we have implemented a "flexible professional learning" plan. The staff is encouraged to seek professional opportunities that will meet their own educational needs. After approval, the SDC releases funds to cover workshops, conferences, webinars, and other related expenses. The SDC also provides days in our school calendar where training is offered to meet the re-licensure requirements for teachers and professional development for all staff that directly impacts our students. Beyond the district level staff development committee, faculty meetings at Northside are treated as professional development. The principal leverages the faculty meeting as a way to highlight staff for incorporating teaching moves that have been successful in the classroom.

Secondly, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) have had a profound impact on improving outcomes for students. PLCs have created a professional culture of learning, where teachers have created curriculum that aligns to state standards in order to provide high quality rigorous education for each student at

Northside. Teachers are continually refining and creating common formative assessments that best meet the criteria for mastery on given learning targets. PLCs have also allowed for teachers to analyze and identify areas of strength and potential growth areas for both individual students, teachers, and entire grade levels. Teachers are able to utilize that data to inform their instruction, which ultimately pays dividends for the academic achievement of students.

Lastly, there are district-level professional development goals that align with the strategic plan of the district. Over the past three years, there has been extensive training provided to staff in the following areas: bullying, suicide awareness, Ruby Payne and poverty, ACE's, implicit bias, and active intruder. These district-wide professional development opportunities have allowed for staff to build greater connections and relationships with their students. Ultimately, our focus on cultivating a professional culture at Northside is for the betterment of each student we serve!

4. School Leadership:

As both an instructional leader and servant leader, the principal spends much of his day in classrooms, leading restorative circles for students, reinforcing school expectations, and both greeting and saying good-bye to students at the beginning and end of the day. The principal is typically found in the school commons space, rather than his office, as he wants to be visible for students and staff in order to provide support when needed.

Northside Elementary further believes in a shared leadership model. This begins with the Northside Leadership Team, Principal Advisory Committee (PAC), and Arts Leadership Team (ALT). Each leadership team is comprised of a grade level rep and a representative from each instructional support staff group (Title I, EL, Special Education, Essentialists) in order to provide voice to each staff stakeholder group. The Leadership team determines the instructional focus of the building, by analyzing school data and creating a continuous improvement plan in order to continue pushing for academic success for all students. The PAC team discusses grade level building issues or issues raised by parents. This team also serves as the PBIS team and analyzes student behavioral data to better inform our decisions for where additional support may be needed throughout the day. Lastly, the ALT, meets to share how various groups have integrated the arts within their content area. This team also discusses how to celebrate the various cultures and diversity within our building, so that students can continue to "see" and "hear" themselves on our walls.

Another important member of Northside's leadership team is the family and cultural liaison. She is the eyes and the ears of the community and received valuable feedback from our multilingual families on how the school can better support their children. The cultural liaison also translates documents and provides support for teachers when needing to communicate with our multilingual families. She also serves on a number of community organizations that have helped establish various community partnerships with the school in St. James.

Lastly, effective school leadership requires the ability to listen, communicate, build consensus, and build a culture of learning where students, families, and staff thrive. The teams and individuals discussed above are an integral part of soliciting stakeholder feedback, as well as, create the vision for Northside, which will always come back to the students and relationships!

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Northside Elementary has found much success in the school-wide team approach to instruction and intervention. Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) has transformed both teaching and learning since being implemented at Northside in 2014. Screening assessment data from Formative Assessment System for Teachers (FAST), along with the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs), Pathways to Excellence at School Sites (PRESS) diagnostic assessments, and formative classroom data are analyzed during team meetings to determine student needs. Two thirty-minute intervention blocks are provided for each grade level. During these blocks, targeted interventions for the lowest 30% of all students are provided by licensed intervention teachers. Classroom teachers continue to provide differentiated practice, interventions, and extensions, and English Language learners are provided extra support.

Our intervention structure has played a key role in student achievement. Both the licensed intervention teachers, classroom teachers, and other support teachers have been trained in research-based interventions from PRESS along with the Orton-Gillingham approach. FASTBridge has now also provided intervention suggestions based on the FAST assessments students take three times each year. Closing the achievement gap is every teacher's responsibility at Northside Elementary.

Northside Elementary supports a balanced approach to literacy, but through data analysis, it was determined many of our students lacked phonological awareness and decoding skills needed to read with fluency in order to provide the capacity required for the process of comprehension. The Orton-Gillingham approach was introduced to classroom teachers, support staff teachers, and paraprofessionals serving in an intervention support role. This approach is incorporated into weekly phonics and morphology instruction for all students. Students needing extra support in the area of decoding are provided that support from Title I interventionists through explicit, direct instruction using this approach or decoding interventions from PRESS, depending on each student's particular needs. Students who need support in other areas, such as fluency and comprehension, are provided that support by both classroom and support teachers using research-based interventions from PRESS, FAST, and reciprocal teaching.

Students' progress is monitored weekly using FASTBridge progress monitoring probes. Every six weeks, teacher teams and interventionists work together to look at the most recent data in order to make well-informed decisions for each student. Once a student has reached their own personal goal with at least three data points, decisions are then made as to what the next steps for that student should be. Driving our success is thoughtful and effective teamwork.