

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 34 2nd Street NE
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Richmond State MN Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 56368-8072

County Stearns County

Telephone (320) 597-2016 Fax (320) 597-2599

Web site/URL
<https://www.rocori.k12.mn.us/richmond-elementary-home> E-mail johnsonk@rocori.k12.mn.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* Mr. Brad Kelvington E-mail kelvingtonb@rocori.k12.mn.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Rocori Public School District Tel. (320) 685-4185

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. Jason Wesenberg
(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):
- 3 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 5 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	8	13	21
1	13	8	21
2	15	9	24
3	7	11	18
4	13	12	25
5	12	13	25
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	68	66	134

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1.4 % Asian
 - 2.1 % Black or African American
 - 2.1 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 89.4 % White
 - 5 % 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: 1%

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	2
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	0
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	2
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	135
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.01
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	1

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

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %
0 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 26 %

Total number students who qualify: 35

8. Students receiving special education services: 11 %

15 Total number of students served

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

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

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 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.	6
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	8
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	3
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 22:1

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%	98%	96%	95%	95%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

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

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

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

Yes No

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

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

Making a difference today to create a better tomorrow.

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

According to the census of 2010, there were 1,422 people, 583 households, and 392 families living in the city of Richmond, Minnesota and. 28.3% had children under the age of 18 living with them. Our population is 98 percent white but that being said we have a strong understanding of some of the inequities within our school community. Our staff is always asking themselves the difficult questions and finding ways to help eliminate those inequities. Richmond is a small community that takes great pride in their elementary school. Richmond Elementary is apart of ROCORI School District. Our school currently has 133 students grades K-5. There is one classroom per grade level which creates a strong bond and sense of community within our school. Because of the one section per grade level staff, parents, and students build strong relationships over the six years together. We are like one family.

The strategies used within Richmond Elementary School that encourage and challenge all students starts with the staff's strong understanding of their data and how they use the data to drive their instruction. They use PRESS (Path to Reading Excellence in School Sites) Interventions to ensure all students are getting the differentiated instruction and interventions they need to be successful in Reading. Richmond Elementary School also has an academic achievement program that is there for students that need to be challenged beyond their grade level standards. Richmond assesses the needs of higher level learners and provides them with opportunities for challenges in the form of 21st Century learning styles. To develop a holistic approach to project-based learning by incorporating depth of knowledge (DOK) strategies found with within the framework of Bloom's Taxonomy: Thinking (cognitive), Feeling (affective), and Doing (psychomotor).

We also have STEAM/Maker Space area in our school to encourage innovation, creativity, and problem solving. During this time of distance learning Richmond has come together to provide our students with the best possible experience possible. They have used many platforms to deliver their instruction and ensure students are feeling connected and successful at home. The Teachers have gone above and beyond with virtually connecting with their students every single day. Our focus has been maintaining those strong relationships and staying connected not only with our students but with our families. Using various digital platforms has opened a whole new way to motivate students and help them academically but at the same time staying connected socially and emotionally. Our families have been strong partners in our distance learning journey and because of our close relationship with our families we are able to help our students succeed.

One of the most innovative and unique programs Richmond Elementary has and unique is their Family Groups. Students are put into cross grade level groups K-5 and these groups remain together for the duration of their career at Richmond Elementary. These groups are created to help build strong relationships across the school creating a great sense of community and belonging. Activities and events are planned each month for these groups to come together and be a team, check in with each other and just to have fun. When a new student comes to our school they are put into a Family Group immediately and their family helps that student become familiar with the school, helps them feel safe, welcomed, and have a sense of belonging on their very first day! Richmond's Elementary Family Groups is a long standing tradition that students, staff, and families love.

Richmond Elementary holds true to our Mission: Making a difference today to create a better tomorrow.

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

Richmond's overall approach and philosophy is all students can be successful. The path they take may be different but our staff works collaboratively to ensure that all students succeed. The teachers at Richmond Elementary are constantly using data to drive their instruction and find specific interventions students need to best learn. Each grade level uses the same curriculum in all core areas and uses the Minnesota State Standards to guide their instruction. The teachers use vertical and grade level teaming in our building and across the district to ensure that they are delivering the curriculum and the standards that are essential as they move onto the next grade level. Districtwide curriculums are purchased to ensure a cohesive, aligned curriculum in all subject areas that are research based, data driven, and executed with fidelity, to give teacher voice to curriculum decisions and instruction decisions, and to provide instructional support in all curriculum areas. Richmond focuses on all learners and work together to ensure success.

Richmond uses the Minnesota State Standards that are mostly and nicely embedded within their curriculum. We encourage teachers to be innovative and personalized in their delivery to ensure that all students are getting what they need. Teachers differentiate their lessons based on their data and based on their background knowledge of their students. We look at tier one, tier two and tier three students using data and our PRESS Interventions to provide what is best for all students. Our RtI Team meets on a monthly basis to help assist teachers with research based interventions and strategies to implement and document. Richmond also uses Daily Five to help provide their reading instruction which gives the teacher time to provide explicit whole group instruction, mini lessons, guided reading, along with independent reading and word work. Our teachers have access to technology via iPads, Smartboards, and Chromebooks. The technology is a tool to help deliver their curriculum in a different and engaging way. With the current situation with distance learning our teachers have time to explore many platforms that they feel helps engage students and challenge them at the same time. Formative assessments are used daily to help guide each student's learning and each of these types of assessments are used to ensure that students are getting exactly what they need to be successful. Whether the student needs more support and needs to be challenged we are constantly using our data to provide the best path for a student's success.

1b. Reading/English language arts

This quote by President Clinton on International Literacy Day, September 8th, 1994 states what our belief at Richmond Elementary and the ROCORI School District about Reading is, "Literacy is not a luxury, it is a right and a responsibility. If our world is to meet the challenges of the twenty first century we must harness the energy and creativity of all our citizens". How do we motivate and engage our students to succeed in reading and even love reading? At Richmond Elementary we start by modeling. We model good reading everywhere in our school not just during the reading block but throughout the school. When you walk through the doors of our small school you will see words and phrases with symbols or pictures representing words and phrases down every hallway. These words and phrases are purposeful and have meaning. They help students build connections with their own background knowledge but they also make connections to new learning. Teachers, custodians, paraprofessionals, secretaries, volunteers, cooks, and administration make it a point to refer to the vocabulary and the phrases on the walls to model the words and the love of reading. Of course this is just the very first step, teachers model oral reading in their classrooms across content areas. They point out the importance of reading in all content areas and the rich language and vocabulary in each area. We have a district wide curriculum for Reading that has the Minnesota State Standard embedded throughout the curriculum . We use Wonders for our reading curriculum. In the early grade, K-2 the curriculum focuses on the vocabulary, phonemic awareness, phonics, close reading and developing language in context. This is supported by engaging text that students can relate to. The curriculum also has a library of leveled readers for all students and grade levels which help support the student where they are at in their reading journey. In the upper grades, 3-5 there is a shift in focus to comprehension, cause and effect, and inferences but the focus on vocabulary is strong throughout the grade

levels. The curriculum is taught by using Daily Five. By using Daily Five it provides the students with whole group, small group, and individual instruction that is flexible to each child's needs. The teachers have had professional development with the curriculum, the different components of the curriculum, and they have been modeled on many ways they can deliver the curriculum. Richmond Elementary holds CORE instruction time sacred. All students are in their classroom reading block during Core. Core is when the Standards are being taught in a whole group setting and in an explicit way. Students are learning their grade-level content together as a class no matter what tier they may fall into. NO ONE is pulled out of the classroom at this time for another service, project, music lesson, etc. We believe that all students are entitled access and instruction to their grade level core content and how we reinforce, reteach, or challenge that content is handled during our intervention time.

Each grade level is scheduled a half hour intervention time each day. During this time Title One, Special Education, Academic Achievement, and the classroom teacher work together to deliver the proper interventions to students according to their needs. All students are working at their level during this time and getting added support. Teachers use self created and curriculum created formative assessments on a daily basis to help guide their instruction and ensure the students are getting the best possible instruction. Summative assessments are given as needed as well as our FAST Testing that happens 3 times a year. Teachers use this to monitor their students' progress and growth in Reading and Math.

Teachers also have time during their reading block dedicated to independent reading time, individual conferencing, word work, and writing instruction. During these times the teacher is able make observations, collect data, and assist individual student

We also work in partnership with our families. Reading is encouraged at home and we provide families with various strategies and types of reading students can be practicing or sharing with their families. Richmond students are successful not just because of our hardworking teachers but by the amazing partnership with our families! Because of this teamwork Richmond students are succeeding.

1c. Mathematics

Math at Richmond eElementary delivered everyday and it is similar to our Reading instruction. The district purchased a districtwide elementary Math Curriculum. It's philosophy is, "mathematical proficiency". The curriculum and our school also believe for students to learn number sense and be successful in math you have to have an conceptual understanding which is the understanding of mathematical concepts, operations, and relations, procedural fluency which is having the skill to perform the procedures with efficiency, flexibility, appropriately, and accurately. We also have adopted the belief that students need strategic competence, adaptive reasoning, and productive disposition solve to be successful. How do we do this? Breaking it down. Grades K and 1 focus on completely integrated units and hands on manipulatives to teach the concepts and using a students ability to draw out the problems gives them a visual representation of the concepts. In Grades 2–5 they have longer units that focus on and relate word problems, computation, algebra, and data. Each unit in Grades 2–5 is followed by a mini-unit that focuses on geometry or measurement and uses previously learned mathematics. Teachers take these lessons along with the standards and differentiate the content to meet the student's individual needs. Just like Reading, teachers do not pull students from the core instruction and intervention is set up so all students are receiving support where ever their level may be. Along with large group instruction teachers provide small guided group instruction as well as individual conferences to meet all needs. Teachers encourage various types of ways to solving problems and invites the students to discuss and describe how and why they solved the problem they way did. Richmond teachers also encourage working with their peers to learn and to talk through various concepts, equations, and algorithms.

Formative assessments, teacher and curriculum created, are used on a daily basis to monitor each student's progress and growth and help drive the teacher's instruction on a daily basis. Summative assessments are used as needed and three times a year we administer Fast Testing to help monitor growth and guide instruction. Our teachers have a great understanding that students learn in many different ways and with our curriculum and that belief our teachers really push our students to become independent thinkers when it comes to problem solving but the also the stress the importance of a strong foundation in number sense and

fluent in their math. Just like in every aspect of our school we rely on our strong relationships with our families and we ask that our parents be partners in helping our students and their children by supporting them at home with developing and sustaining a strong mathematical foundation together. Our teachers, students, and families have risen to this challenge and we are seeing the results!

1d. Science

Science at Richmond Elementary is a time for hands on and real life applications. Unlike other subjects, Science doesn't need any particular strategy to motivate and engage students with Science, Science is FUN and all students look forward to each day that they be apart of Science. I am also the Curriculum Director for our district and most of the time new curriculum is exciting but loses it shininess after a year or two. Teachers are constantly looking for ways to improve their delivery and keep it engaging for students. I know we aren't supposed to talk too much about the specific curriculums but with our Science curriculum I have seem a HUGE excitement not only in our students about Science but our teachers are just as excited because of our curriculum! Our curriculum is Mystery Science, a curriculum that focuses on doing science and engineering. Each lesson was created by common questions that children are curious about such as, how do flowers bloom in spring? The curriculum ensures a student will come away with an advanced understanding that is presented one layer at a time. The content is presented online with a mystery that hooks the students. A highly engaging story is then presented with amazing images and videos that set the stage for discussion. After each presented lesson there is a hands-on activity for students to do. For example, in a mini-lesson about why flowers bloom in the spring, students learn how the unique properties of water help flowers bloom in the spring. In this activity, each student will make a colorful paper flower and a greeting card that they can give to any special person in their life. When placed in water, the paper flower will unfold, appearing to move and bloom in front of their eyes!

The curriculum is aligned to the common core standards and every lesson begins with a mystery that hooks the students. The teacher then reads an amazing story told with stunning images and videos and it opens up to a discussion. This particular subject seems to resonate at our school right now not only because of the excitement the students felt at school but they are still feeling the excitement at home during Distance Learning. Teachers are giving our students access to the videos and images and being able to hold discussions virtually. Teachers and students are able to use basic items you find at home to do the hands on activities that concludes each lesson. The topics are real world and relatable stories that make the learning more meaningful. Richmond also provides STEAM activities in our Maker Space area in the Media Center. The student are able to access this area during Media, teachers bring it to their classroom, and students that are staying for our late bus are able to access the STEAM activities after school. It is a high interest area at Richmond and we are looking to expand in the very near future. Teachers encourage working collaboratively with their peers to make predictions, perform the activity, problem-solving, and drawing conclusions. Because of the strong relationships among our staff and students we see amazing growth with our students no matter what level they are at not only with Science but socially in how they work together. Teachers mostly use formative assessments and some summative assessments to monitor progress and growth in this area. Teacher also use observations to help in their assessments.

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

Social studies at Richmond elementary is done on the opposite days of Science instruction and it is also woven into the reading block when appropriate. The teachers use the standards to create their lessons and they use various ways to assess where students are at with their outcomes. Many teachers us project-based opportunities for students to work individually or mostly collaboratively with their peers. Presentations, displays, research papers, large and small group discussions and oral reports are just some of the summative assessments teachers use in assessing student's knowledge and growth in Social Studies. Formative assessments created by the teacher are also used to ensure students are retaining the grade level standards and other important information such as current events and citizenship. Our teachers also try to bring in community members to speak with students such as the Richmond and Chain of Lakes Fire Department, Richmond Police Department, the local Legion and VFW members, restaurant owners, and other community members to help build connections for students and at the same time build strong relationships with our community members. Our teachers hook our students with their Social Studies lessons by using a

students background knowledge and making connections to their world, their school, their home, and their community. Making connections make it real and relevant to the students and allowing them to explore even deeper into their high interest areas builds strong knowledge of their world around them . Social Studies is taught using teacher created lessons that focus on the four main areas of the Standards. They main areas are Government, Economics, Geography, and History The main concepts that are focused on are associated with familiar local environments and current times to faraway places and distant times. An example of a Kindergarten unit is the study of our local fire department. It starts off with the facts and information presented in stories, activities, and the important question of why do we need a fire department. The unit ends with a walk to the fire department as well as a visit by our local fire department to give them a tour of their trucks, equipment, practice a fire drill and even have lunch with our students. In grade 4, students focus on the Geography of North America. In grade 5, they study the History of North America up to 1800.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Richmond Elementary is lucky to have a four day rotation with our other curriculum areas so K-5 students are guaranteed each area once a week for 50 minutes and twice a week sometimes. We offer our students physical education, media/technology/library/STEAM, music, and art. All four of our specialist areas are highly engaging and students love their experience with each area during the week.

Let's start with physical education. Our students spend 50 minutes with our gym teacher each week and sometimes they are lucky to have 110 minutes in a week. Out of all four specialist areas physical education is the most popular. Richmond's physical education works collaboratively with other elementary physical education teachers across the district to create their units that are aligned to the standards but because each school is unique in its own way the teacher does add to the units that fit our school population and with our community connections. Even though he is only there once or twice a week he has built strong relationships with his students and families. He reaches out via phone calls, emails and attending all the special events at school. He makes himself visible which in turn shows how much he cares for our students, families and school. Our physical education teacher also works with the classroom teacher to take any themes, stories, and vocabulary being taught in the classroom and tie it to his lesson . Physical education is taught in units. The units that students experience at Richmond Elementary are dance, basketball, volleyball, and many more. These units focus on gross motor skill and fine motor skills. There is a strong emphasis on teamwork, and sportsmanship. Students also engage in fitness testing each spring to assess their skills.

Music is another specialist area that students love. Not only do they love music but they love our music teacher. He has been a part of Richmond Elementary for many, many years and has even taught some of our student's parents. He spends his time making connections with students, building strong relationships, and taking his music standards and finding a way to deliver them in a new and innovative way. He takes today's music and uses it to engage our students and help foster their love of music. How to read music and music theory are taught by modeling and practice, and performance. The music standards are demonstrated through various ways such as recorders, kazoos, rhythm sticks, bucket drums and singing.

Art is another highly engaging area for our students at Richmond Elementary. Like the other areas they have Art once a week at sometimes twice a week. The instructor does an amazing job integrating the standards with his different areas but at the same time creating connections with the students that relate to their world and the school. He collaborates with all the classroom teachers to combine what they are learning in Art to what their theme may be in their classrooms. The Art teacher has also integrated technology successfully in his instruction showing the students that Art goes beyond paint, paper or clay. Using technology in Art is an innovative and engaging way to deliver his standards and making it real to the students' world. An example of one of the units focuses on print making with rubber stamps. Students study who Andy Warhol is and make their own stamp of their favorite logo by learning the technique of carving out their own die cut. Each step is modeled by the teacher and then practiced by the students. At the end of the unit students' final piece of art is displayed throughout the hallways at Richmond Elementary.

Last but definitely not least is Media. At Richmond Elementary during their four day rotation they have 50 minutes of instruction and exploration with technology, STEAM, and the library. Our Media specialist takes the media standards and weaves them into the different areas under Media. She takes the skills such as typing and makes it relative to their world and makes it fun for them. Our Media Specialist blends the instruction of technology skills and tools with higher-level skills such as research into her instruction. Because of her love of reading and the strong relationships she has built with students she is our go to person when students and staff are looking for great literature and to books that make connections with students. If our students aren't typing, or reading you can find them in our Maker Space area of our Media center and students exploring electrical currents, a Lego Wall, building and designing buildings or structures, just to name a few. Our Media Specialist has created a welcoming, comfortable, and innovative space that student love to go to and learn! As this is a district approach it is Richmond's as well and because of the small size of our staff it works so well and it has enriched and strengthened the positive culture at Richmond Elementary.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

When students perform below grade level Richmond staff takes action to ensure these students get the supports they need. The first step in this process is knowing our students and using our data from formative and summative assessments as well as daily observations to identify the student and their specific needs. Once the student has been identified the teacher goes into action by collaborating with other classroom teachers and support staff to design a plan for their students that fall below grade level. Our district and our school use a researched based intervention that they have received ongoing professional development on, begin the intervention and begin to document and progress monitor. If after the four to six weeks of intervention and there is little to no improvement the teacher can bring the student to our Student assistance team to seek advise from the team on other interventions that could be used. Our special education teacher, social worker, psychologist, a classroom teacher, and our administrator sit on this team that meets on a monthly basis. Other options that are available to our students at Richmond Elementary are Title One, Reading Corps, and our social worker is also a strong support for our students. We see that working with our social worker and having another connection at school really can ignite student's learning in the classroom. Our staff also reaches out to our families so they are working as team connecting home with school and with all of these supports in place our students have responded positively to the interventions designed for them.

3b. Students performing above grade level

Richmond Elementary is very lucky to have an Academic Achievement program in our small school. Our teachers do an amazing job meeting the needs of all students but just as the students that are struggling need support we also know how important it is to challenge the students who need more. Our school district and Richmond Elementary assesses the needs of higher-level learners and provides them with opportunities for challenges in the form of 21st Century learning styles. The academic achievement teacher provides a holistic approach to project-based learning by incorporating depth of knowledge (DOK) strategies found within the framework of Bloom's Taxonomy: Thinking (cognitive), Feeling (affective), and Doing (psychomotor) and is the focus of each activity. In order for students to enroll in Academic Achievement they must be in grades 3-6 and meet minimum requirements on standardized testing from three different data points. The data points for the previous school year include the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA's), FastBridge Learning (FAST), and the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT). The students that do not qualify but we know need to be challenged are not forgotten about our teachers have implemented what is called Power Hour, Genius Hour, or WIN Time (What I Need). These different models are Academic.

Achievement programs offered to students who don't qualify for the core Academic Achievement program but could benefit from additional programming. One of the goals for this program is to place an emphasis on higher level learning and prepare the student with the 21st Century learning skills they will need today and in the future. Students in the program will have a lot of choice in their learning and have the ability to be self-

directed. This will provide them a chance to learn and explore what interests them while using skills that can be adapted and applied to other topics and situations.

3c. Special education

Special education programming focuses on specially designed instruction that addresses children's individual needs and differences. Assessing, planning instruction, and monitoring progress is completed by a team of teachers who work with the child. It is each child's team responsibility to consider their abilities that will help them be successful and independent in compliance with a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) through the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). A child receives special education services when a child is unsuccessful with interventions in the Response to Intervention (RtI) system. Students are referred for an initial special education evaluation to determine if they are eligible for specialized instruction addressing their needs. To qualify for special education services, the child must have a disability. A comprehensive evaluation determines the existence of a disability, below average performance does not qualify a child for special education services. The school conducts a comprehensive evaluation to determine the child's needs. Based on their overall performance, the team determines if a child is eligible or ineligible

for special education services. When a child qualifies for special education, the team develops an Individual Education Plan (IEP) that specifically identifies how the student's areas of need will be addressed through the development of goals and objectives. The IEP team meets annually to continually change their goals and objectives based on the student's present levels of performance. A child is comprehensively evaluated every three years. The child must meet Minnesota criteria in one or more areas according to Minnesota Statute (Chapter 2535 of Minnesota Administrative Rules): Our staff works closely with the family to develop the plan and communicates often to ensure the family and the student are getting their individual needs met and so that parents are feeling supported and connected to the plan just as much as the child.

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

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Richmond Elementary engages, motivates, and provides students with a positive environment by continually focusing on building strong relationships with the students, families, and the community. Our staff goes above and beyond making personal connections with students and continually checking in with students about home, friends, likes, dislikes, and of course school. I feel that our school, being so small, gives us a huge advantage to creating a trusting, safe, comfortable, and fun environment for students and families to be a part of.

Every staff member in our school dedicates their time in building strong relationships with our students. Our students know that there is at least one adult in the building that they feel they can trust and what is wonderful about our school is that students know they have more than just one that cares about them and will do anything they can to help or just listen if they need it. Our staff make it a point to attend their students' extra activities and make personal connections about their out of school activities, hobbies, events, and shows. Our staff has high expectations for all students and we really believe in educating the whole child. We not only have high expectations academically but we also have high expectations socially.

Manners, respect, responsibility, and kindness are always characteristics we model, teach and expect. Richmond Elementary closely monitors student data to ensure that all students are getting what they need academically whether they are needing more support or more of a challenge. They set aside their own personal time to ensure that their students are getting the supports they need academically and emotionally. Our staff greets each student everyday with a smile on their face and makes it a priority that the students know that we care and we are happy they are here. I am sure there are many schools that do this and make the same effort. There is no doubt in anyone's mind that Richmond Elementary loves their students and they will work hard for each and everyone of our 133 students to help them succeed and because of our close-knit school and community our families have great trust in us.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

This may come as a repeated? theme? throughout, but the fact that Richmond Elementary prides itself in the strong relationships with our students, families, and community is what makes our school the great place it is. With our partnership students are showing amazing growth academically, socially, and emotionally. Our school expects and provides opportunities for our families and community and to be our partner in our students' education and the small town of Richmond. Our families have risen to our expectations and it shows by the well-rounded, kind, and hardworking children that leave our door after their fifth grade year. An example of one of our community members making a difference within our school is one of our elderly volunteers. She is a former Richmond teacher that comes to our school every Thursday to help in the classrooms and with our students. She preps materials for teachers, she reads with students, and she builds relationships with our students who look for her every Thursday and they adore her.

We encourage parents and they know that our doors are always open to them when they want to volunteer in the classroom, for events, to help teachers, or to spend time with their child during lunch and recess. Parents also know that they should never hesitate to reach out with questions or if they are needing anything because we will find away to help or connect them with a resource if we cannot help directly. Our staff makes personal phone calls and emails to families on a daily basis to continue to build those relationships and provide support and to give good news about their child. This goes along way with building trust and bridging school with home and helping our students be successful. Richmond has a strong parent organization that also has staff on the committee that plans many events to bring our families together. For example they plan and organize a Winter Carnival, a school walk-a-thon, a school sleep over, and so much more! One of our most involved is the Richmond Lions Club. They donate funds to feed students that cannot afford their daily snacks or families that struggle with paying for their lunches. Richmond Elementary is so grateful for this generosity by our local organizations for our small school and to our special families.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Richmond Elementary teachers are hardworking, experts in their field, learners, kind, supportive, and fun. Richmond's professional culture reflects all of these characteristics and anyone that walks through the doors at Richmond Elementary can feel and see it all around the school.

The professional development in our school and in our district is not just led by administration but it is developed in partnership with the teachers. There is a committee of teachers across the district that work with administration to decide on what is the highest need for professional development needed for our teachers and this team is also responsible for making and implementing the plan. This model gives ownership and a voice from the teachers and develops strong teacher leaders in our district. Not only do they look for outside support to provide professional development but because of the district's commitment in supporting our teachers in their continual pursuit of learning many of our teachers are experts in areas. They become the teacher providing the professional development to their colleagues in other districts in multiple areas from reading, math, technology, interventions, etc. This is our district's approach but it is also Richmond's as well.

The small size of our staff has only strengthened and improved the positive culture at Richmond Elementary. The teachers are valued by the administration, the families, the students and the community by having their voices and ideas heard and executed. Within Richmond Elementary our teachers and staff are a part of various committees that focus on such things as data, professional development, student support, parent group, and an over arching building leadership team. Our school is lucky to have access to two academic coaches that are available to support our teachers with curriculum, instructional strategies, and technology needs, just to name a few. Having these coaches has helped to take some of the added stress they may be feeling in areas that they may have questions about.

These teams are lead by Richmond teachers and facilitated by the administrator. Our, "Team Richmond" approach has created an open, trusting, and innovation culture where we work together to create the best learning environment for our students and a happy place to work. One of the motto's at Richmond Elementary is, "We like to work hard and play hard." Richmond strives to be the best place for students and they work extremely hard to ensure success but Richmond spends extra time ensuring it is a fun place to work too. Monthly potlucks, morning coffee with colleagues, Team Richmond Day each week, staff activities outside of school, notes of affirmations to and from each other, etc. Richmond is transparent in all areas of communication whether it is administrator to teachers, teachers to parents or administrator to parents and community. We pride ourselves in open communication which has in turn built trust and respect within our walls. It is a school filled with genuine respect, kindness, laughter, smiles and love that you can see and feel!

4. School Leadership:

The leadership philosophy and structure at Richmond Elementary and the various roles staff and stakeholders play is a very simplistic but effective structure; it is a team philosophy and what's best for students. The administrator of the building works with the staff and empower staff to be leaders within the building and the district as a whole. We focus on the areas of clear, consistent, and frequent communication with our families, staff, and community when it comes to programing, instruction, events, etc. This is an expectation that is required by entire staff because we know communication is a key component to building trust and strong relationships with our students, families, and community. Another shared expectation is that we are focused on our data and what is best for our students. When we collaborate and are faced with decisions the question that is always raised, "Is it best for kids?" If we can say yes we work as a building team to make this happen. Our teachers are apart of district-level committees and building committees that make important decisions such as instruction, curriculum, PLCs, professional development, technology, interventions, and other supports. The district voice is communicated back to Richmond Elementary by the administrator and teacher leader and together Richmond works as a team to implement and/or make decisions that best meets the needs of our students. Richmond Elementary has high expectations for their staff and students and this expectation is modeled to our students by the administrator and staff and that expectation is carried over to our students. Not only do our teachers have access to their administrator and

teacher leaders within the building but district-wide; they have support from academic coaches, the curriculum director, the director of assessment and data. It is important Richmond staff feels supported in all aspects of their teaching and the administrator makes it their priority to ensure this is happening. Richmond Elementary is a team and a team that works all together to make the decisions that are best for our students and families.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Richmond Elementary does so many things well and it's all built around the philosophy what is best for kids but I think what makes us so successful is the emphasis on building relationships with our students, staff, parents, and community. Our school has worked very hard at establishing strong relationships and always having the focus on what is best for our students. The model that sticks out in our success is our Family Groups! Family Groups is a tradition with Richmond Elementary that students, staff, and parents take great pride in and look forward too each and every year. Students are randomly placed into their family group when they enter Kindergarten. Each Family Group consists of boys and girls from each grade level and at the beginning of the new school year the fifth grader is ordained as the leader and the Kindergartner is welcomed in as the new family member. Each family spends time together on a monthly basis throughout the year participating in fun school events and projects. The family groups promote working as a team, building a bond with each other, responsibility, and having fun! These groups remain with one another their entire time at Richmond Elementary so as you can imagine the relationships that are built are strong and a source of comfort, belonging, and safety for our students. Family groups are also used to welcome new students into our school. The Family Group gives the new student a tour of the school, is by their side throughout the day such as lunch and recess to make the new student feel welcomed and not have the fear of not having friends to turn to on those very first few days and weeks of a new school. Not only does this ease the anxiety of the student but of the parent as well. The parents feel so much more at ease knowing their child has a group of friends the very first day who can help and for their child not to feel alone. Richmond Family Groups are a support that is always there for students from their peers, a friend when they need one, and a group of your peers that are working together to help on another each and everyday in school but even outside of school. A strong bond is built that is long lasting and treasured by students. Richmond Elementary believes in strong relationships and because of this valued tradition it is taught, modeled and sustained by our students, staff, and parents. Because of our relationships and our commitment to our students and families academic, social, and emotional success is very apparent at Richmond Elementary.