

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2021 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 901 Douglas Avenue  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Brewton State AL Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 36426-1523

County Escambia County

Telephone (251) 867-8410 Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Web site/URL https://www.brewtoncityschools.org/domain/26 E-mail bwood@brewtoncityschools.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. Kenneth Varner E-mail drkennethvarner@gmail.com  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Brewton City School District Tel. (251) 867-8400

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Mrs. Regina Watson  
(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, leave blank.*

## **PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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The electronic signature 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 2021 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 must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2015 and grades participating in statewide assessments must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2019.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 or 2020.
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

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Data should be provided for the current school year (2020-2021) unless otherwise stated.

**DISTRICT** (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools.)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 3 TOTAL

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools. Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not the district.)

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, 2020 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
<b>PreK</b>	18	18	36
<b>K</b>	45	44	89
<b>1</b>	42	43	85
<b>2</b>	47	34	81
<b>3</b>	40	42	82
<b>4</b>	43	40	83
<b>5</b>	0	0	0
<b>6</b>	0	0	0
<b>7</b>	0	0	0
<b>8</b>	0	0	0
<b>9</b>	0	0	0
<b>10</b>	0	0	0
<b>11</b>	0	0	0
<b>12 or higher</b>	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	235	221	456

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 0.2 % Asian
  - 32.2 % Black or African American
  - 3 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0.4 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 63.2 % White
  - 0 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2019 - 2020 school year: 7%

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.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	14
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	17
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	31
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	456
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.07
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	7

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

Spanish, Fijian

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %  
5 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 51 %

Total number students who qualify: 232

8. Students receiving special education services: 13 %  
61 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. All students receiving special education services should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>8</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>2</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>1</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>8</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>12</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>27</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>3</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: 2
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. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	23
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	10
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	8
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 19:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

<b>Required Information</b>	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Daily student attendance	95%	94%	94%	95%	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 2020.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
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.

Everybody Learns, Every Day.

16. Briefly describe how your school has been operating during the current 2020-2021 school year (e.g., open as usual, online only, a hybrid model, etc.)? If different grade levels in your building operate in different ways, include this. If the school began with one model and switched to another partially through the year, include this as well.

Brewton Elementary began the 2020-2021 school year with two options, traditional and remote learning. Approximately 84% of students began the year in a traditional manner with that number moving to 98% traditional by the end of the first semester. Remote learners were required to participate in quarterly progress monitoring and conferences as well as state testing.

17. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

## **PART III - SUMMARY**

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Brewton Elementary School is located in Brewton, Alabama, a small town of 5,500 in Escambia County, just north of the Florida line and the panhandle. Brewton is a timber town, with many of its residents employed at a local paper or lumber mill. Wages are above average resulting in relatively low poverty for a rural community. Formal education in Brewton began in 1886 with the Brewton Collegiate Institute which served as a grammar and high school until 1924 when T.R. Miller High School was established. In 1941, Brewton Elementary became its own institution with the construction of an elementary school which served its students until 1976 when it was replaced by its current facility. Throughout the south, many communities like Brewton had segregated schools for the period. Brewton recognized the value of the Civil Rights Movement early and fully integrated ahead of most communities and to this day, has not had a private school in its area. That culture and commitment to the rigorous advancement of education for every child still holds true and has been a guiding principle for the school system for over half a century.

That commitment to the schools extends beyond culture. Our area's many community organizations are steadfast supporters of the schools. Organizations such as the Greater Brewton Foundation, Escambia County Commission, and the Brewton Garden Club are regular contributors to Brewton Elementary through volunteerism and financial contributions. The area businesses and individual benefactors support character education programs like "Liberty Learning" and upgrades to the facilities.

The mission of Brewton City Schools and Brewton Elementary is "Everybody Learns, Every Day." That simple but effective statement guides our school on a path to ensure that every person within the school is actively engaged in the learning process. We believe in continuous professional development and advancing the skills of our faculty and staff to better serve our students. Through programs such as AMSTI (Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative), ARI (Alabama Reading Initiative), and First Class Pre-Kindergarten programs, Brewton Elementary has built a strong foundation of professional learning grounded in research-based strategies. The result has been the development of a strong culture of high expectations for every child. Our students and community expect strong performance in every area of school life. They expect an inclusive and nurturing climate within the school and rigorous standards of instruction in the classroom. That strong culture of achievement has led to many families outside the Brewton city limits choosing to bring their children to our school, further increasing the diversity and success of Brewton Elementary.

The early months of 2020 brought incredible challenges with the COVID-19 pandemic. Like most systems and schools, we were ill prepared for immediate remote learning. However, staffed with quality innovative educators, we quickly assessed the moment and implemented what proved to be an effective mitigation strategy for the spring. Our teachers immediately began a variety of instructional practices to meet the diverse needs of the moment. The overall goal was student, parent, and community engagement. Brewton Elementary issued Chromebooks to students in grades 2-4 to immediately take advantage of digital learning programs already in use like ExactPath and Khan Academy. We also created a bi-weekly pickup and drop-off system of learning packets for every child to maintain that personal student engagement. We packed meals for the community pickup and also put those meals on every bus route to reach every child in our system. From the moment the schools closed, teachers used our social media to record announcements and the Pledge of Allegiance every day, further maintaining that engagement with all stakeholders. Using a number of tools, teachers developed virtual lessons and maintained engagement throughout the semester, continuing to deliver content, assessments and feedback to our students. Those efforts proved vital in many areas beyond the mitigation of loss of in-person learning. Our teachers expanded their skill base and found new paths to differentiated instruction with many of those tools becoming part of our regular school day as we returned in the fall.

As the 2020-2021 school year began, the majority of students (84%) returned to school with standard COVID mitigation practices such as masks, social distancing, enhanced cleaning, etc. As we quickly proved our measures to be effective and the remaining digital learners realized the difficulties of remote learning, the majority of those rapidly chose to return to traditional learning by the end of the first semester. The result has been a positive experience of success through adversity. Our students, staff, and community have

chosen caution over fear and assertiveness over circumstance. Everybody learns every day, and we learned that we can do more than just survive a crisis; we can grow and thrive when we come together as a community.



## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.**

At Brewton Elementary, “Everybody learns every day!” Teachers use Alabama’s College and Career Ready Standards to drive instruction. Alabama’s standards provide teachers with a rigorous set of expectations across all content areas.

Brewton Elementary utilizes a research-based language arts curriculum. Our core curriculum is Scott-Foresman Reading Street. The weekly target skills and strategies align with Alabama’s standards. Teachers incorporate supplemental, high-quality fiction and non-fiction texts to build vocabulary and background knowledge. Teachers use Heggerty Phonemic Awareness curriculum to develop a deeper phonemic awareness foundation. The core curriculum addresses phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary. Teachers instruct using a multisensory approach to engage and meet the needs of all learners. During the literacy block, students participate in whole group instruction, small group instruction, and literacy centers. During small groups, students receive differentiated instruction tailored to meet their individual needs. Literacy centers allow students to reinforce skills in cooperative learning groups. Teachers often use literacy centers as an opportunity for students to engage in project-based learning.

At Brewton Elementary, every content area is important, but reading is critical! Teachers understand the importance of building lifelong readers. Our teachers participate in a variety of professional development opportunities to increase their knowledge and improve their instructional practices. Our ELA teachers have most recently participated in Orton-Gillingham (OG) and Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) training. OG is a research-based, explicit, multi-sensory approach to teach students struggling with literacy skills and reading, however, it is effective for all students. LETRS gives teachers the research and knowledge to improve literacy and language development for all students.

Foundational math skills are another critical component in elementary instruction. Teachers use Eureka Math, a widely used, research-based curriculum. Eureka math aligns with our Alabama math standards. The key concepts build throughout each grade level. Low math scores several years ago motivated our math teachers to reach out for support from a neighboring county. Those teachers were invited to be a part of a professional learning community to unpack the new math standards and participate in the Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI). Over the next several years, after implementing the new Eureka curriculum and strategies learned through AMSTI, math scores increased and have continued to show steady improvement. Using Eureka math in each grade level at Brewton Elementary has proven to be effective in increasing students’ number sense, properties and operations, and mathematical principles. Our math teachers have also used a variety of supplemental tools such as Khan Academy, Academy of Math, and Classworks as intervention and enrichment.

Students are assessed using summative and formative assessments. Summative assessments may include alphabet or word knowledge inventories, fluency assessments, and comprehension evaluations. Summative assessments allow teachers to track progress throughout the school year and address individual strengths and weaknesses. Using summative assessment data, teachers can identify interferences in reading and math to address those interferences with tiered instruction. Students identified as “at-risk” receive Tier II instruction with their classroom teacher. Students that demonstrate a consistent deficiency in reading and/or math receive Tier III instruction with an interventionist. Using frequent formative assessments, teachers can quickly identify any misunderstanding and adjust instruction.

Throughout the content areas, teachers frequently use Google Classroom and Classworks as technology-based support systems. Google Classroom is used as a formative assessment tool and increases students’ participation. Classworks monitors each student’s progress weekly and adjusts instruction to meet students at their instructional level.

At Brewton Elementary, Social Studies content is integrated throughout the curriculum. Students have many opportunities to connect to real world experiences through various field trips and community partnerships.

Our student body presents a Veteran's Day program each year where we recognize those who serve or have served in the armed forces. Our 4th grade students visit Rikard's Mill to learn more about the pioneer era and the state capital seeing first-hand what they have learned in the classroom. Teachers use Studies-Weekly to supplement curriculum and deepen content knowledge. Students interact with a newspaper style text highlighting vocabulary, taking notes, and organizing information using graphic organizers.

Our science curriculum is a hands-on, discovery-oriented curriculum. Brewton Elementary School has partnered with AMSTI. Students are doing science, not just reading science. Students use critical thinking skills where they think like scientists. Students learn note-taking skills, work with charts, graphs, and diagrams, and they plan and construct.

Brewton Elementary opened its doors for the 2020-2021 school year on August 10, 2020. Students were given a chance to enroll as virtual students or face-to-face. Due to a small number of virtual students, BES enlisted two virtual teachers to provide instruction and monitor progress for those students. Virtual students were provided with a Chromebook and other necessary materials. Virtual students and their families were provided with a training session to learn how to access and use our online learning platform. Our virtual teachers used Schools PLP to access the content needed for our students. Content from the regular classroom was also included when deemed necessary. Virtual students come in quarterly for assessing and monitoring progress. Virtual students that are struggling are allowed to meet with a certified teacher after hours to receive individual or small group instruction.

**1a. For secondary schools (middle and/or high school grades):**

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

Brewton Elementary School has two First Class Pre-K classrooms. Students enrolled in our program come from various backgrounds, socioeconomic statuses, and learning abilities. Our teachers use Alabama Standards for Early Learning and Development (ASELDs) aligned to the Kindergarten through third grade standards. Standard alignment helps to create a smooth transition for students entering Kindergarten. Our Pre-K program helps ensure our students have a great first experience in a school setting and are Kindergarten ready. We aim to meet our students' needs in the areas of social-emotional skills, language skills and development, cognitive development, literacy and math skills, science and technology, social studies, and the arts.

When returning to school for the 2020-2021 school, our Pre-K teachers incorporated new procedures to keep everyone safe. Students began each day with handwashing. Play center routines include sanitizing hands before and after touching any toys. Toys are sanitized each day. Students are assessed each morning for fever or any COVID-19 symptoms.

**2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

Brewton Elementary School students are afforded the opportunity to partake in many other curriculum areas beyond the general education classroom. All students develop project units through our enrichment program. Some examples of these units include Coding with Scratch, Thinking Outside the Box, Stock Market Game, SET, Chess, Robotics, Careers, Kids are Authors, Architecture, etc. Coding with Scratch, for example, helps students learn basic coding skills using the program Scratch. This program uses the block method, teaching students to understand how coding works. Students in this unit create their own animation stories based upon their own creations. The Robotics unit is another amazing opportunity for students to acquire essential skills such as problem solving and teamwork. During this unit students work in groups to create robots from Lego kits. Students participate in lessons that will teach them how to code the robots to complete certain tasks. Once they have mastered the coding skills, they spend the remainder of time coding the robots to complete more difficult tasks.

In addition to the independent learning opportunities offered to BES students, all of our second and fourth

grade students participate in “Liberty Learning”, a community funded program designed to promote a love of our country and celebrate the diversity of our people and traditions. This is a civic education program that uses live experiences to teach, inspire, and empower our next great Americans. Libby Liberty, the lady in green, brings history to life with a 10-week, project-based learning experience. The students learn lots of valuable lessons for life. Most importantly, students learn what it means to be a citizen.

The music and art programs at Brewton Elementary School offer general music and art instruction to every student in Kindergarten through fourth grade. These students receive two 30 minutes lessons with an art teacher and two 30 minutes lessons with a music teacher each week. The curriculum is based on state and national arts education standards. It seeks to give students a foundation on which to build for those students who wish to continue pursuing their musical and artistic interests after leaving elementary school. Listening and creativity are vital components of music and art instruction to aid in students’ acquisition of essential skills and knowledge. Listening is a lifelong skill, necessary for following directions, while creativity lends itself to critical thinking and problem solving. Music students are also offered the chance to enroll in BESOE. BESOE (Brewton Elementary School Orff Ensemble) is an after-school choir open to 2nd through 4th grade students who wish to further their musical experiences. BESOE provides performance opportunities in and around the community. For example, BESOE usually performs a concert of Christmas carols for the local nursing home each year. This performance helps them to develop a sense of responsibility to those in need in the community and helps them to understand how they may use their talents in positive ways. High behavioral standards are expected of all students choosing to participate.

The library media program at Brewton Elementary School offers all students kindergarten through fourth grade the opportunity to extend their knowledge of how a library works, of books, and technology. This weekly, thirty-minute session is packed with read aloud fun and discussions as well as Alabama standards-based unit lessons designed for each age group. For example, the third-grade units include the Dewey Decimal System, Explore Each Dewey Decimal Section, Book Awards (Caldecott, Newberry), Fiction & Nonfiction, Biography & Auto-biography, Poetry, Latitude & Longitude, Atlas & Globe, Using Reference Books, Map & Map Key, Newspaper Fun, Safely Exploring the Internet, etc.

### **3. Academic Supports:**

Brewton Elementary School believes that exposure to rigorous differentiated content facilitated by dedicated professionals in a safe and nurturing environment is the key to success for every child. While most students are meeting and exceeding school goals, some of our students demand extra support. Identifying those students and their needs begins with progress monitoring. Brewton Elementary employs a deliberate progress monitoring schedule for all students using STAR Reading, Early Literacy, and Math. Students performing below the 40th percentile in Reading or Early Literacy are placed in our Tier Program. A SRIP (Student Reading Intervention Plan) is developed with the assistance of the parents to begin a path to meet the students’ needs. Students struggling based on STAR Math assessment are also entered into the Tier program to provide additional instruction on an individual’s needs.

Brewton Elementary employs two paraprofessionals that monitor two computer labs. Those labs, equipped with Chromebooks, allow every student access to differentiated digital content for at least 30 minutes, every day. Those labs also ensure a quiet classroom environment for the teacher to facilitate Tier instruction in a small group setting for students performing below grade level. Brewton Elementary also employs a reading interventionist (currently four hours per day to be expanded full time next year) who is trained in the science of reading and multisensory strategies to best meet the needs of Tier III students.

Our special education department consists of two special education teachers and one speech and language pathologist. Both teachers are engaged in professional development in LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling) and have multisensory experience. The school invested in interactive panels for both teachers and the students they serve benefit to a

higher degree from tactile learning and increased participation from the panels while meeting additional digital literacy standards. Inclusion for our special populations is our foremost goal and we strive to meet every child's needs while respecting the child's least restrictive environment. Our students with orthopedic impairments share the same experiences as their non-disabled peers with minimal accommodations, each according to their plans.

In serving our English language learners, Brewton Elementary utilizes our special areas teachers (music and art) to provide individual reading times allowing those students to meet class reading goals. We enlist bilingual volunteers from the community to assist with parent conferences and English Learner plans. Every effort is made to ensure adequate progress for the student and inclusion in all school activities with no barriers to enrollment or achievement.

While Brewton Elementary currently has no students who classify as homeless, there are no barriers to enrollment for that population at our school. We maintain an adequate number of student supplies and access to resources to assist families with immediate needs when we suspect a student may be homeless.

## **PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE**

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### **1. Engaging Students:**

Brewton Elementary prides itself on having a positive and inclusive culture for every student, every day. That culture begins with building leadership and permeates every area of the school. At every drop-off point in the mornings every student is greeted in a positive manner by a faculty member. Students exiting the buses on Fridays are met with music from our special population teachers and a warm start to the day. Positive interactions from staff are seen as the critical element in establishing an environment that facilitates social, emotional, and academic growth. Students sent to the office for exceptional academic progress or behavior are rewarded by the principal with a “Mr. Wood is Proud of Me” sticker. Building leadership installed large monitors in the building foyer and lunchroom as a digital bulletin board. The school’s bookkeeper took immediate ownership of the content and takes pride in displaying birthdays and events as well as student awards and accomplishments. She makes a concerted effort to reach out to our virtual students for pictures and content to ensure their continued inclusion in school activities.

During the spring closures, these positive activities were not possible. Our teachers coordinated with parents to have students record the Pledge of Allegiance which was then shared with our announcements on social media. Teachers recorded Zoom lessons and rewarded students virtually by recognizing them on our Facebook pages. The most meaningful interactions came from our meal deliveries. With a free or reduced lunch percentage of 51%, many of our families rely on our school lunches as a healthy part of their children’s day. Simply offering a nutritious meal was not enough as many parents lack dependable transportation or felt the anxiety of leaving their homes, especially during a pandemic. We made a commitment to engage our students academically during the closure and the need to engage socially and emotionally was seen as just as critical. We mobilized volunteers from the staff to pack meals twice a week and enlisted our transportation department to run routes with teachers and administrators at all levels delivering days’ worth of school meals to our students. The images of a teacher, principal, or superintendent handing out lunches to families hardest hit by the effects of COVID-19 would serve as a powerful fuel to power us through the following school year.

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

Our school system's success is a product of the partnerships we share with our families and our community. We have partnered with our local community college, Coastal Alabama, and our local churches in volunteer programs. These programs are led by retired professionals and college students. These volunteers assist our students in book study groups, guide independent projects, partner with ELL and other students to build vocabulary, act as study partners for practicing math facts, teach students organizational skills, and many other educational opportunities. We also enlisted "Tiger Buddies" within our system, which are older students setting an excellent example for younger students to help with these educational opportunities. Our Brewton Elementary School Orff Ensemble (BESOE) program partners with the local nursing home. Our students provide entertainment to the elderly with concerts while learning the importance of remembering to care for our elders. We also host a Reading Night and Math Night. Parents and students rotate through educational centers. These rotations provide the students and parents with games and activities (all materials included) that are grade-specific. Family Night allows teachers to share with parents what is being worked on in the classroom while providing them with fun and engaging activities to do with their children at home to enhance class skills. Our PTO also hosts dinner, so participation is always high! Everyone loves food! Our third graders participate each year in a unit study focusing on the appreciation of our country's many cultures. Within that unit, students participate in "International Food Day." Students provide a recipe card and sample for each student of their food. The recipe they choose should be reflective of their culture. They must explain why that food is representative of their culture. The students and parents enjoy participating in this activity!

We use our school's Facebook page and our school's website to provide parents and students with updates, reminders, student achievements, information on the teachers and staff working with students, etc. We also use parent/student communication apps like Remind 101, Google Classroom, and Classroom Dojo to

communicate with and receive immediate feedback from parents and students. Because of COVID-19 precautions, we amended many of our activities. We opened up our outdoor picnic areas for parents to come and eat lunch with their students. We also turned major events like Character Dress-up Day and Awards Day into drive-through events so that parents could participate in these special moments.

### **3. Creating Professional Culture:**

Brewton City Schools and Brewton Elementary School have a strong culture of professional development that stems from our mission statement, “Everybody Learns, Every Day.” Over 55% of our teachers have graduate degrees with several more currently enrolled in graduate school. Our system is committed to continuing education for faculty and backs up that commitment with tuition reimbursement for its certified employees. That culture of professionalism was critical to our ability to adapt quickly during this pandemic to meet the unprecedented challenges of remote learning in short order.

In early March when the COVID-19 threat was still vague, we instructed our teachers to begin planning and teaching in two-week “folders”. Should the crisis advance, our staff would be immediately ready for temporary break in school. When schools began to close at the end of March, our teachers were already prepared and we turned our focus as a faculty to digital and remote learning professional development. All options were available to teachers with the one directive being to use any tools available to engage students with rigorous content through remote learning. We instructed teachers quickly on programs such as Google Classroom, Zoom, and the applications of social media. Grade levels came together in common planning to create a map forward and teachers with an aptitude for technology mentored those needing skills. Early grade levels maintained a combination of learning packets where technology was a barrier in underserved communities or households. Those measures gave us confidence as we finished the school year and prepared for the fall.

As we prepared for the fall, we amended our in-service week at the beginning of the year to allow for two additional days of professional development in the programs that would be used for remote learning, Schoology and SchoolsPLP. We adjusted policies and ensured every student at Brewton Elementary had a school issued Google account to access digital content. We enlisted two staff members based on projected numbers to be virtual facilitators after-hours with compensation. We held parent meetings with staff present to discuss the programs, goals, expectations, and re-entry into traditional learning.

When the vast majority of students elected to attend Brewton Elementary in a traditional manner our staff was prepared and equipped with the tools necessary to best deliver content despite COVID-19 precautions while our virtual teachers engaged the remaining few in a meaningful way.

### **4. School Leadership:**

The principal’s leadership philosophy comes from his experience in the military, “leadership is action, not position.” That philosophy of empowerment of staff and students to take risks, make informed decisions using the best data available, and to make good choices to the benefit of others has improved the culture at Brewton Elementary School. The principal builds relationships with staff and students based on Maslow’s hierarchy of needs; that people best perform when not motivated by safety or fear of consequences, but by love, self-esteem and self-actualization. The result has been a climate of trust and acceptance from students, staff, and community and improved data across all areas.

The strong school culture of achievement drives the leadership and faculty. School resources are deliberately allocated to student success based on need. Title I funds are entirely allocated to personnel, reducing the student/teacher ratio and to provide for a highly qualified and certified reading interventionist. Paraprofessionals to facilitate computer labs that ensure quality digital learning while allowing for deliberate Tier III instruction are keys to success.

The school’s leadership structure includes a reading specialist, counselor, and building leadership team (BLT) made up of grade level chairs and department representatives. Those leaders have demonstrated their effectiveness during this pandemic through a number of issues, such as development of COVID-19 safety

procedures and effective instructional practices in respect to those protocols. Earlier in the spring, the BLT made recommendations concerning how to best engage the students and community. Grade levels assigned teachers days to record school announcements for social media. Leadership at all levels participated in meal packaging and deliveries to the community by school bus.

Working with district leadership and other building leaders we implemented effective protocols such as enhanced cleaning after hours, adherence to social distancing guidelines when practical, and adjustments to attendance policies to allow for parents to monitor ill students. The results were continuous operation of all district schools with less than state and national averages for COVID-19 infections among staff and students.

## **5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:**

Brewton Elementary TIGERS: are Tolerant and Inclusive, set Goals, practice Equity, are Responsive, and practice Safety. All these elements work together to perpetuate a positive climate.

Brewton Elementary celebrates the individual differences and diverse needs of our students, families, and staff. Our teachers motivate all students through culturally responsive teaching with an emphasis on high expectations. Teachers model equity, cultural awareness, and respect in the classroom at all times. Culturally responsive teaching is fluid, and it will continue to be an on-going challenge for our faculty when teaching vocabulary, spelling, literacy instruction, and culturally relevant literature. Teachers are continually learning about strategies and methods to make learning more culturally responsive and relevant. Our media center actively seeks diverse literature through grants such as the Coretta Scott King Book Awards.

Activities throughout Brewton Elementary that promote culturally responsive teaching and learning are Read Across America week, in which teachers will use resources that promote diversity and inclusion. During this week, students read and learn about characters from diverse cultures. The goal is to motivate students with culturally relevant books. Our second and fourth grade students attend, twice a year, the Liberty Learning Foundation program. Teachers are empowered with resources to teach civics, character, financial literacy, and career readiness. Students learn about the diversity of our country and how to become a super citizen. Third graders use Scholastic News. This year's editions have covered many topics from the presidential election to animals on the endangered list and how we can help. Each edition published this month covers the stories of history makers that are people of color, such as Sylvia Mendez, Ruby Bridges, and Matilda Evans. Units are dedicated to culturally diverse literature.

Students read books like Suki's Kimono and discuss how it must feel to move to a new country like Suki as well as discuss her traditions and what they mean to her family. We read Jalapeno Bagels and discuss how different cultures affect our foods and clothing. We celebrate our diversity with International Food Day. Each student brings in a dish to share with their friends that represents their own culture.

During Black History Month our teachers discuss and ask students to share their perspectives on topics and issues that are of interest to the students. There is a climate of safety and respect for students in the classrooms to share ideas without judgment and with open hearts.

## **PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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Brewton City Schools and Brewton Elementary School implemented a number of practices to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and deliver instruction to all students like so many others during this pandemic. When schools began shutting down in the spring and some chose to limit instruction or assessment, we kept advancing our agenda, ensuring that every standard required was achieved. However, the ONE practice that we felt was most important to implement and maintain and that we made a commitment to achieve was continuous in-person instruction in a manner consistent with the high standards of our school system.

When Brewton Elementary opened August 2020, we did so from a position of caution, not fear, with appropriate precautions and a staff that ensured a sense of calm and normalcy. We created cohorts of classes that allowed for movement within the school while reducing the chance of virus spread. We adopted a deliberate progress monitoring schedule to assess and address the COVID learning gaps. We adopted take-out boxes for meal prep that allowed for less handling of lunches in the cafeteria and protection of our cafeteria staff. We invested in technology such as Google Classroom, Chromebooks, and web-based learning programs to differentiate learning for every student. We invested in professional development days for every reading teacher to become trained in LETRS. All of those tasks are exponentially harder in a remote learning world.

For so many students across the academic spectrum, that sense of normalcy of knowing that a teacher, a principal, and a friend was waiting for them to come to school was a powerful tool in keeping our school and community on a positive trajectory. And we've been successful. Since opening in August, we have maintained school every day. Those days are not just quality instructional days, those are days where the high expectations are maintained. Those are days where social and emotional learning are ensured. Those are days where every child felt empowered to come to a safe and welcoming school where they are a part of something special. In the end, we made a commitment to open our school and ensure our mission, that Everybody Learns, Every Day.