

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 561 Merriewood Drive
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Lafayette State CA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 94549-5507

County Contra Costa County

Telephone (925) 927-3550 Fax (925) 284-5891

Web site/URL <https://bves-lafsd-ca.schoolloop.com/> E-mail mdolley@lafsd.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* Mr. Richard Whitmore E-mail rwhitmore@lafsd.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Lafayette School District Tel. (925) 927-3500

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. Rob Sturm
(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

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

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):
- 4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 0 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 5 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 |
|-----------------------|------------|--------------|-------------|
| PreK | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| K | 59 | 48 | 107 |
| 1 | 50 | 47 | 97 |
| 2 | 56 | 46 | 102 |
| 3 | 46 | 61 | 107 |
| 4 | 70 | 56 | 126 |
| 5 | 69 | 66 | 135 |
| 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 | 350 | 324 | 674 |

*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
 - 12 % Asian
 - 0 % Black or African American
 - 11 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 50 % White
 - 27 % 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: 20%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain:

The reason our mobility rate is so high is solely due to the pandemic. We typically have very little turnover from year to year. However, when things shut down, we had many, many families move out of state to return to where their families are. We completely understand this turnover and it has actually given us an opportunity to look at how we welcome and include our new families to Burton Valley.

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, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year | 51 |
| (2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year | 54 |
| (3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)] | 105 |
| (4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019 | 535 |
| (5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4) | 0.20 |
| (6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100 | 20 |

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

Pashto, Ukranian, Spanish, Portugese

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 2 %

Total number students who qualify: 12

8. Students receiving special education services: 11 %

74 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>16</u> Autism | <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>13</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>21</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>23</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: 4

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.

| | Number of Staff |
|--|------------------------|
| Administrators | 2 |
| Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher. | 34 |
| Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc. | 7 |
| Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students. | 23 |
| Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc. | 2 |

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 20:1

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

| Required Information | 2019-2020 | 2018-2019 | 2017-2018 | 2016-2017 | 2015-2016 |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Daily student attendance | 97% | 97% | 97% | 97% | 97% |
| 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.

| 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.

Our students are prepared to be creative, responsible, productive, and kind citizens in an ever-changing society. We embrace rigorous, comprehensive curriculum to provide a quality education in a safe and nurturing environment. We commit to meet the needs of all students, to foster continuous learning and promote respect.

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.

Burton Valley began the 2020-2021 school year in full distance learning. Then we opened in November 2020 for small group interventions and our Special Day Classes came for three hours a day, four days a week. On February 18th, 2021, Tk-5th grade opened up in a hybrid model. Students Zoomed with their class in the morning and then half of the class attended in person on Monday and Tuesday afternoons while the others worked on independent work. Then the groups would switch for Thursdays and Fridays. Wednesdays were a day for teachers to have meetings, collaborate and prep. Students were on Zooms with our Science teachers, music teachers, LPIE art instructors, PE specialists and librarians. On April 12th, 2021, we are opening full time. Tk-5th grade students will start attending in person from 8:30am until 12:45pm each day. We also have a small portion (about 25 students total) continuing in a Distance Learning format. We will have them work with grade level students from across the district. We have Distance Learning teachers teaching each grade level for the remainder of the year.

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

n/a

PART III - SUMMARY

Burton Valley Elementary School, home of the Bobcats, is situated in the hills of Lafayette, California and could easily be mistaken for a beautiful park amongst the rolling green fields, luscious vegetation, and surrounding open space. Playgrounds are filled on weekends and late afternoons. On any given day, the campus is visited by a wide variety of wildlife from wild turkeys roaming the grounds, squirrels in the hallways, lizards in our community garden, coyotes in the early morning and even the occasional visit from an actual bobcat coming down to see what our property has to offer their clowder. The setting is serene and gorgeous; conducive to a productive learning environment.

We are 676 Bobcats strong this year with over 100 staff members working on our campus every single day. Complete with 32 Tk-5th grade general education classroom teachers, two Special Day Classes, two Learning Center classrooms, three talented music teachers, two prolific science teachers, two dedicated office managers, four incredible custodians, two reading specialists providing support for over 20% of our students, a computer specialist, one curiosity-provoking librarian, 40 instructional and special services assistants working magic with small groups in classrooms or one-on-one with students through their Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), one motivating PE specialist and a garden specialist that educates the children on native uses of our plants.

Burton Valley educates the whole child through a multitude of programs which augment the standards based curriculum in the classroom. We have a supportive education foundation in Lafayette Partners in Education (LPIE) that funds docents to teach art classes twice a month and weekly music, science and PE lessons. LPIE also funds our library specialists who support students' love of reading through weekly visits to our library.

Our school's prioritization of the social-emotional health and academic growth of our students has been guided by our tiered approach of support. Our onsite Special Education programs are available to eligible students starting as early as two years old. Beyond our SDC programs, we have an ironclad Special Education team serving about 11% of our population from kindergarten through fifth grade. Burton Valley's program for Special Education consists of four Instructional Support Teachers, three speech pathologists, two school psychologists, a school psychologist intern, a part-time Physical Therapist, and our very own Occupational Therapist. This team of specialists has helped mold our school into an inclusive community of learners that honors, appreciates and motivates all students.

It is easy to look at our school, see the beauty, and hear or read the statistics about all the programs and opportunities offered for our students. However, the true beauty of Burton Valley is in its kindness, strength of character, and love that can be felt and seen when walking through our halls. The heartbeat of our school rings through every staff member and every student; the feeling of "all are welcome" is palpable. All means all at Burton Valley - it's the Bobcat Way. We welcome all, we teach all, and we most definitely love all.

When the COVID19 pandemic physically shut down our campus, our community was far from being shut down. Teachers and staff quickly pivoted to a Zoom platform to teach and support their students, while our entire school community learned how to "work from home" and reach out for assistance in new ways.

Four years ago, Burton Valley adopted the values and principles of Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) and it has been incredibly helpful; particularly throughout the pandemic. As a school, we focus on the positive and build an inclusive school community where everyone finds belonging. Through our work with PBIS, we've learned that when children feel a sense of belonging, they are safe to be themselves. When they feel this way, their ability to show up, learn and grow is not only amplified, but is imperative to their learning. Since having PBIS as a backbone to our school, we have been able to offer a way for students to earn, celebrate and stay motivated - even from a distance.

At Burton Valley, our students are represented with a variety of family structures, socioeconomic backgrounds, over 20 different races and cultures and a multitude of diverse academic and social and emotional needs. Focusing on positive behavior and kindness has increased Burton Valley's empathy toward

diversity in a way that has increased our inclusivity, rather than divide us. This year we have included an anti-racist set of ideas and understandings, using our foundation of kindness to help enter these necessary, yet sometimes difficult conversations. Through these discussions, we have been able to move forward with the understanding that Burton Valley is a safe place to learn and that each Bobcat, whether an adult or child, will be greeted with kindness and love every day.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

Burton Valley's core curriculum is based on the instructional approach of the workshop model. Through workshop, we have found that student agency and choice are vital elements to breaking down barriers for the success of all students. While we've adopted different curricula; Lucy Calkins' Reading and Writing Units of Study, Math Expressions and TCI Social Studies, it is the delivery within a workshop community that holds the greatest impact for our students. Workshop allows all students to work at their individual level, building in differentiation seamlessly.

Students in grades Tk-5 move through common language and developmental progressions, while honing their skills in different genres of reading and writing. This consistent approach at each grade level allows students the comfort of predictability and choice.

Math workshop is rooted in the scope and sequence of Math Expressions, and equally allows students the fortitude to become mathematicians in their own right. Through practice, games and multiple output options for problem solving in a workshop classroom, students are able to learn, and master, grade level standards. Math workshop is a game-based approach in our classrooms that allow students to experience multiple repetitions while congruently alleviating stress and academic threats that might arise in other scenarios.

Training educators in our school using the workshop model was an intentional and thoughtful decision. These curricula are founded upon California Common Core Standards and have Universal Design Learning (UDL) elements woven throughout. This consideration allowed for successful Tier 1 supports in classrooms, as part of a greater Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) approach that is used to offer supports to all of our students at every level.

Not knowing that a pandemic would be a consideration in 2020 and beyond, our students were inadvertently set up for success in a distance learning platform. Of course learning Zoom required training, but the curriculum itself was a quick pivot to distance learning.

Even through Zoom, workshop proved effective. Students consistently receive the mini lessons at the beginning of workshop, and then go "off screen" to independently work on their reading, writing or math at their own individual level. Teachers are able to place students into breakout rooms to conduct one on one student conferences, and even small groups when it made sense. Overall, our academic outcomes through this pandemic are rather extraordinary and the need for learning loss mitigation is quite low due to our strong foundational curriculum and its ability to effectively transcend through in-person or Zoom instructional delivery.

In addition to Tier 1 supports in the classroom which are embedded in workshop classrooms through multiple output opportunities, one on one teacher and student conferences and small group instruction, we also offer Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports to our students requiring further intervention.

Our MTSS system is designed for a team of educators to convene and monitor student progress closely. When a student exhibits need(s) which require further support and intervention, the team considers Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports. Tier 2 interventions are available for math, reading, writing, and behavior. Do the Math is a program that targeted students attend either before or after school. Our reading lab supports students through one on one or small group intervention in reading or writing and service delivery is provided by reading specialists during the school day. Our PBIS program offers a check-in/check-out system and incentive plan for students who require a deeper level of support with positive behavioral outcomes.

When a student has had the opportunity to participate in Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions, but are still requiring more support, we offer Tier 3 support. This typically launches the school based team into a discussion with the student's parent/guardian about the need for further data collection through assessments and student eligibility for an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The assessment results determine which goals best address the student's needs and which Tier 3 services to offer, which could be any variation of the

following: learning center, speech therapy, counseling, occupational therapy, etc. Our MTSS system is largely successful because of the consistent, school-wide Response to Intervention systems we have in place.

Our teachers conduct weekly formative assessments. Pre-COVID19, these assessments were quick pen and pencil tasks. Now in distance learning, they are hand signals, emojis, responses via the chat feature, individual whiteboard answers, and Seesaw and Google Form entries; all through the Zoom platform. Teachers still convene (though safely distanced) to sort through student results and determine next steps in the curriculum based on these assessments. The more summative assessments in math are done through a district wide online platform called Illuminate. For reading, we continue to use early screeners and use Fountas and Pinnell running record assessments for ELA. The grade level teams gather every eight weeks, even in a pandemic, to closely monitor student progress and discuss which students might benefit from extra support.

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

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Burton Valley Elementary School offers a robust curriculum in the areas of arts, music, science, library and technology funded by LPIE. We have a PE specialist that works with our Tk-5th grade students weekly. Each class has either a 30 or 45 minute class, dependent upon grade level, where they work on fundamental skills and PE standards. During the pandemic, our PE specialist offered both pre-recorded workouts and live Zoom workout sessions. Our library sciences were taught in their regular weekly cadence. During the pandemic our students would log into our librarian's Zoom to hear a great story and learn how to utilize the digital catalog to check out books on a weekly basis, along with other research skills taught by grade level. We share a technology support teacher across our district who has offered countless hours of IT support and professional development in the areas of Zoom, Pear Deck, Screencastify, and Google suite (to name a few). Our district technology PLC put together a comprehensive technology website for both our staff and parent community. Our science teachers pivoted to compile take home bags in order to bring the robust science lab experience into the homes of our students each week. Filled with different supplies to wrestle with different landforms, light capacities and molecular compilations; these kits provided the hands on experience that our campus science lab and science specialists offered before the pandemic. Instead of learning in their labs, the specialists would host weekly grade level Zoom lessons for our budding scientists. Music was similar in its approach to keeping the love of music alive - even from a distance. Our music staff also assembled take home bags and instruments for our musicians and offered weekly Zoom classes for them to continue their learning at each level. Our art curriculum is 100% supported by LPIE. The district works in conjunction with our foundation to hire docents (professional artists) to come in and teach classes bi-weekly. This year, they have supported the art curriculum by creating videos for each lesson and also supplied our students with a take home bag of necessary art materials for the year. In all of the logistical challenges made it so that our students continued with some of their favorite classes while not being physically at school.

3. Academic Supports:

Burton Valley strives to live up to our mission statement of ALL students. When a student is performing below grade level, we support them through Tiers 1, 2 and 3, depending on their individual need. We work closely with families to decide which supports are appropriate for their child's needs. When a student is working above grade level, we differentiate the curriculum to offer a balance of increased grade level expectations and a new approach to tap into a students' depth of knowledge and understanding. Through our RtI process, grade level teams, and various service providers, meet and discuss which course of action would best meet each student's individual

needs.

Our special education department is quite robust: a seamless pull-out academic program, two separate Special Day Class programs, and a variety of push-in and pull-out support services. When we were able to be on campus, students rotated through different systems of support throughout the school day. This has remained the same over Zoom in our distance learning program. Each grade has a block of Academy time. During this time, students who receive Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions are pulled out of class to access those supports. The students remain in class either receiving Tier 1 interventions or extension assignments to meet their needs. The core curriculum is not taught at this time in order to minimize any learning loss of new information. This has been a tremendous gift of time for staff and students alike. We have noticed a vast improvement in test scores of our students with disabilities since implementation of "Academy" two years ago. While nearly 90% of our students with disabilities were coring below and far below basic, after adjusting this Academy time school-wide, coupled with other interventions, nearly 90% of our students with disabilities are now scoring on grade level or approaching grade level. Not only has Academy time been helpful in students not missing new academic instruction from their teachers, it also helped to have them take practice tests in a smaller group setting with Tier 2 and 3 service providers. These changes were made based on the data demonstrating that our students with disabilities were scoring far below their general education peers. And if our mission statement says ALL students, we needed to implement this change to properly serve ALL students.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Student engagement is what we believe at Burton Valley to be the single most important tool for success. Due to our compelling belief, we have prioritized character education and our PBIS system. Four years ago Burton Valley developed a school-wide foundation of Choosing Kindness as our theme. As our theme took hold with students, staff and families, it opened doors that we didn't know existed. Through this foundation of kindness, we were able to successfully introduce PBIS to our school and have our staff and community take hold quickly. Our character education was lifted to a new level, as students didn't want to just "hear" about our monthly character trait, they wanted to live it, talk about it, and develop a plan of action alongside our staff. It has been an incredible journey thus far. While we continue to focus on monthly character traits as an entire school through monthly read alouds, we also have ongoing projects and conversations about how to apply those character traits in the classroom and throughout the broader community. These month long conversations take place with each class and are both powerful and palpable. While the intention was for there to be a program to set behavior expectations and then reward students when that expectation was met, it has turned into a far-reaching community building and student engagement catalyst that we are so grateful for during this pandemic. Our students, staff and community share that they have never felt more connected and bonded. Instead of students using their PBIS points to purchase material objects such as pencils and erasers, they are using their points to have a Lego Day over Zoom with their class, or read to a buddy class over Zoom, visit a friend's Zoom class for a period, change their teacher's name on Zoom for the day or even have lunch over Zoom with a principal or teacher. These are all ways our students and staff are staying engaged, beyond the teaching and learning.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Clear and frequent communication was a necessity during this pandemic. With campus closed, it was hard to get information to our students and their families without typical Friday Folder communications being sent. We quickly turned to email communication and website updates. Staff emailed families weekly and administrators emailed updates twice a week until August of 2020. When distance learning was up and running the same month, our school reverted to weekly communication from administrators and biweekly from our staff. This kept our community abreast of all the most up-to-date protocols and information.

Part of the communications were weekly dance break videos our staff made for the community. This helped the students still "see" all of their teachers and enjoy a dance break to offer some reprieve from the stressful situations we were all enduring. Frequent "Coffee with the Principal" Zoom sessions were also helpful for our community. They were able to share ideas, offer support and answer questions in this format. This also proved to be a successful way to capture working families.

The district's social and emotional learning PLC created a 6-week course for parents covering topics from how to set up a productive learning environment at home to how to have a safe playdate for your child, along with how to keep calm themselves. Each session of this course was well- attended by our community and helped all of our families; regardless of where they fell on the spectrum of struggle.

Partnering with our PTA, we were able to reach all of our families to ensure we could deliver meals to those in need, hosted multiple "Parent Nights In" events for parents who felt alone and disconnected, held school-wide drive-by parades, and coordinated porch drop offs for our graduating 5th graders. We partnered with Contra Costa Food Bank and our community came through with over \$2,000 in donations to supply meals for many in our county. These acts of community - both large and small - were beautiful ways in which we showcased how our community stepped up in the face of adversity, banded together to achieve goals and successfully move through this pandemic with great, kindness and patience for all.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Students emotional well-being is always top priority for educators. However, supporting the emotional well-being of staff has moved front and center during this past year. Burton Valley and the Lafayette School District offered support through our own Curriculum Council and Contra Costa County Office of Education. Our superintendent worked with our Curriculum Council to create two weeks of virtual lesson plans when the shutdown first hit. This allowed teachers and staff to narrow their focus on the enormous pivot that would ensue. Allowing this time was paramount to everyone's success. The district also purchased licensed Zoom accounts for each teacher and subscriptions to any digital platform that was requested for their student(s).

Before launching full Distance Learning in August 2020, our district hosted three days of workshops and professional development. We had speakers from each district PLC (Technology, SEL, Special Education, Safety and Curriculum) deliver professional development webinars. At Burton Valley, we also held PLC conversations for Distance Learning. The groups consisted of curriculum, Zoom and any workspace needs, distribution supply logistics, along with any emotional support and communication needs. Our staff shared their list of questions and ideas which provided a roadmap to a successful launch into our Distance Learning program.

Our district also purchased pre-recorded videos from Lucy Calkin's Units of Study. This support offered layers of professional development to our staff. First, they could watch a staff developer from New York teach their students and learn from the ways they navigated the lessons. This also allowed for our staff to plan for 1:1 conferences or small groups, rather than preparing for a daily mini lesson. Our staff felt so incredibly supported through this.

The site administrators unified with the PTA and broader community to support the teachers and staff. PTA secured volunteers to bring weekly lunches, arranged for local coffee shops to offer free cups of coffee, contacted a local nursery to offer each teacher free pumpkins from their patch, collaborated with local restaurants to offer free meals for our teachers, and worked closely with local bookstores to gift each staff member with a diversity book of their choice. These community partnerships showed our staff that they were heroes in their own right. As we move toward opening schools for a full in-person schedule mid-April 2021, our staff continues to feel the support from each of their classes, our school, and the broader community.

4. School Leadership:

There is one principal and one assistant principal at Burton Valley. They have very specific roles and responsibilities, but a shared leadership philosophy of transparency, respect and trust. The leadership philosophy at Burton Valley can be compared to the role of a music conductor. In an orchestra, the musicians are the main focus, letting the music they create shine the brightest, with the conductor silently leading the way. We apply this concept here at Burton Valley. The principal supports by providing a space for the talent - be it students or staff or both - to shine. The administration has developed a trust and professional respect amongst the staff through monthly PLC meetings, regular grade level meetings and committee engagement. The teachers and staff are the heartbeat of this school while the administration are their biggest cheerleaders and provide support when needed. The administration believes in our foundation of kindness and inclusivity and work to support teachers through trainings, model lessons and systematic approaches to fostering an inclusive community, such as topics for discussion at staff meetings, doing monthly read alouds inside each classroom and school-wide clear expectations for behaviors and clear protocols for interventions. Decisions are collaborative in nature with teachers and staff sitting on a leadership council representing their perspective teams. This council collaborates with the principal and makes school-wide decisions together. The committee work at Burton Valley is an important part of the positive culture. Each staff member sits on a committee; a PLC, focus committee or leadership council. Most decisions are made utilizing the teacher leadership in these committees.

This strong foundation and relationship was the backbone to the success of the many pivots the staff and community have had to make throughout this pandemic. While administrators were typically behind the scenes supporting teachers, the admin are now taking on duties of furniture movers, distribution supply coordinator, counselor to families and staff and problem solving technology barriers with a wide spectrum

of staff and so much more. The pivot to Distance Learning then to hybrid, then to eventually a full return has been successful through teamwork and an "all hands on approach". Staff members are being asked to do things far outside their job descriptions, including the administration. It is this teamwork mentality that has been fostered here that has allowed us to support our students in this brand new way.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Burton Valley has a strong commitment to not only fostering a community of kindness, but utilizing our kindness campaign to open doors to other, more important conversations. We strongly believe all means all at Burton Valley. In order to welcome, support and teach all, we need to ensure our curriculum, language, and our programs are all inclusive. For four years we have had a parent and teacher committee devoted to Diversity and Inclusion (D&I). This committee helps drive parent education opportunities in the area of D&I work, helps plan community events with a D&I lens and offers several other programs for our parent community. For our students, we have monthly read alouds that address social justice topics while teaching about a focus character trait for the month. We have intentionally purchased books that have characters of color for our read alouds. This way, this one book is woven into each classroom at Burton Valley and the conversations that ensue are remarkable. We want to provide those windows to the world and also mirrors through these characters for our students of color. It's been an incredible journey to have these conversations about race and racism with each class over the years. This year our school adopted the No Place For Hate framework and have formed a student D&I group that works along with our student council. These students have elevated voices of many Bobcats to tell their stories through padlets and videos to our community. It's been an incredible, student-led experience. Our staff is committed to diving into their curriculum to find areas that need deepening in order to share all perspectives. At Burton Valley, students are taught about being upstanders and allies and to speak up against hate and racism. When racist acts and other current events have happened this year, we have addressed them head on both with the parent community and with our students in age-appropriate ways. We believe learning these values at a young age will help create a more kind, loving, inclusive and anti-racist world.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

In thinking of the many strategies that we utilize to enhance student achievement at Burton Valley, Academy time has been the most instrumental to the success for our students, especially during school closures due to COVID19.

We implemented a school-wide grade level block of time where there is no new instruction being taught two years ago. This is a time where students who receive pull-out services attend without missing a new lesson in class. Academy time has allowed for teachers to provide Tier 1 supports, catching all students before they fall behind since there is no new instruction being introduced during Academy. Weekly formative assessments are used to determine which small groups for reteaching or which students need some extension. These Tier 1 interventions are then employed during Academy time. With students being pulled out for Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions during Academy, they are not falling further behind due to their services. This was an enormous leap of success for our students who benefit from Tier 2 and 3 supports.

During the pandemic, Academy time was also implemented school-wide over Zoom. Teachers would "send" the students in their class to their Zoom pull-out services during their specific Academy time. This allowed the teacher to then check in on the rest of the students' progress or pull small groups based on the data from the formative assessment results. This daily time allowed for no student to fall behind and all students to receive exactly what they needed.

Designing weekly formative assessments is an incredible collaboration opportunity for grade level teams to determine the most essential standards in each academic area. Teams came together and looked through the data and discussed error analysis each week over Zoom. This helped identify Tier 1 strategies teachers could utilize over Zoom. Through this process, teachers were able to quickly identify students' academic needs even from a distance. These collaborative initiatives and the strategies that were applied during Academy time throughout this pandemic most definitely allowed our students the time and space to succeed during one of the most difficult years we've ever had in education. While there are many silver linings to this pandemic, this fine tuning of Academy time has definitely moved to the top of the list and will be something we continue for our students and staff at Burton Valley for many years to come.