

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

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

School Mailing Address 9 Lagunitas Road PO Box 1058
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Ross State CA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 94957-9661

County Marin County

Telephone (415) 457-2705 Fax (415) 457-8923

Web site/URL https://www.rossbears.org E-mail mpmcdowell@rossbears.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. Michael McDowell EdD E-mail mpmcdowell@rossbears.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Ross Elementary School District Tel. (415) 457-2705

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. Jeffrey Bergholt
(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):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 0 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 1 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	28	15	43
1	16	11	27
2	20	26	46
3	18	11	29
4	13	21	34
5	27	27	54
6	23	15	38
7	28	30	58
8	21	19	40
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	194	175	369

*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):
- 0.3 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0.8 % Asian
 - 0 % Black or African American
 - 6.4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 87 % White
 - 5.5 % 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 2019 - 2020 school year: 3%

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, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	9
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	3
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	12
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	383
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.03
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

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

Spanish

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 1 %

Total number students who qualify: 5

8. Students receiving special education services: 8 %

28 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>4</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>8</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>5</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>8</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>1</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 3

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	3
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	26
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	6
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	4
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	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 14:1

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

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

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

The Ross School District is committed to engaging learners in a safe, vibrant environment that supports academic rigor to ignite innovation.

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.

Ross School began the 2020-2021 academic year in a full-distance learning model for all students. Starting in September of 2020, K-8th grade students attended school in an AM/PM hybrid model which consisted of synchronous instruction via distance learning as well as in-person instruction on campus five days per week. Students were also given the option to continue in a full distance learning program for the duration of the school year. In November of 2020, K-2 students shifted from an AM/PM hybrid model to a merged cohort model that offered students a greater level of in-person instructional support. In March of 2021, 3rd through 5th-grade students followed suit, shifting from an AM/PM hybrid model to a merged cohort model offering a greater level of in-person instructional support, including afternoon in-person interventions. In April of 2021, all grade level schedules transitioned to full in-person schedules.

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

The Ross School is an award-winning school committed to academic excellence, social-emotional well-being, and innovation and is internationally recognized for academic performance, student health and wellness, staff professional development, educational innovation, and community engagement. While the school has never received the National Blue Ribbon Award, the school has been recognized as a “Gold Ribbon” School by the California Department of Education for its work in providing differentiated, targeted support services for general education students, special education students, and English Language Learners. Since the advent of the new California state assessments, the school has maintained high levels of performance including high levels of performance on the annual CAASPP exams in English-Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science. Ross School continues to perform above the state and county levels in both proficiency and annual progress. For instance, 3rd-8th grade students showed substantial progress and proficiency in English Language Arts on CAASPP as identified by the California Model Five-by-five Placement Reports and Data (i.e., "Very High 45 or more points above" and "Increased by 7 to less than 20 points") and in mathematics on CAASPP as identified by the California Model Five by-five Placement Reports and Data (i.e., "Very High 35 or more points above" and "Increased by 15 points or more").

In addition, the school continues to be ranked in the 99th percentile on the school climate index compared to similar schools and all state schools (School Climate Index includes high expectations and caring relationships, opportunities for meaningful participation, perceived school safety, school connectedness, low physical violence, low harassment, and bullying). The School has also been recognized as part of an Exemplary School District and a California Distinguished School for the work in supporting students in developing strategies for taking responsibility over their own learning.

The school benefits from a long history of outstanding support from its parents and the broader community, evidenced by the successful passage of multiple parcel taxes, bond measures, and annual fundraising contributions. The community has passed two bond measures to build a state-of-the-art building and multipurpose room. The community contributes close to 20% of the district’s operating budget, over \$1.45 million in Foundation, PTA, and Endowment contributions annually, and passage of a parcel tax to support innovative programs. Highly engaged parents support and promote community building through volunteerism and partnership with the school. Over the course of the 2020-2021 school year, the parent community supported the district in volunteering their time to assist with the recess and lunch programs, purchasing PPE to support the transition from distance learning to in-person schooling, and providing meaningful feedback to improve our practices and protocols.

The school has also benefited from the collaborative approach between faculty, staff, and administration in improving professional practices to serve student needs. The school has established “impact cycles” which is defined as a process of investigating and acting on evidence of student learning. Impact cycles have been used to select curriculum, identify professional development needs, and develop specific action plans for instructional improvement throughout the 2020-2021 school year.

As a part of this collaborative inquiry process, the school employs formative assessment processes within and between grade levels to inspect student clarity of expectations, accuracy of feedback, academic progress, level of rigor of tasks, and students’ development of metacognitive skills. Beyond formative cycles of assessment, the school invests in a robust system of interventions that incorporates a team of specialists that target student growth data and provides routine and adaptive interventions for all students K-8. The school has also invested in an early literacy curriculum to advance student learning in K-2.

The curriculum is based upon the Common Core State Standards grounded in rigor and differentiated supports for all levels of learners. In addition to core academic instruction, students are provided enrichment and innovative curricula taught by specialist teachers for music, art, PE, reading, Spanish, technology integration, STEM classes, and participation in Fabrication Laboratory courses. Beyond the curriculum, ideal support structures are in place including small classes (i.e., the average class size for grades K-8 is 22 students. The average student to teacher ratio is 13:1). In addition to working with their classroom teachers, K-5 students work with apprentice teachers, support teachers, or instructional aides.

Students in sixth to eighth grade have four core classes of Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies along with PE and electives. Electives include Art, Guitar, Band, Strings, Spanish, Fabrication Lab, Robotics, Appl Creation, Journalism, Community Services, Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA education), and Bay Area Ecology.

The school is proud of its reputation for being innovative and has been nationally recognized for its technology integration throughout its program. All students are offered embedded technology courses led by Planet Bravo with advanced curricula focused on student engagement. They are also offered project-based courses in the Fabrication Lab where design and maker education comes to life. In addition, students interact with science, technology, engineering, and math concepts in weekly STEM classes where Next Generation Science Standards are integrated.

The school is equally proud of the established culture of caring that is infused throughout the school. Students in grades K-8 are involved in Bear Families where 8th grade big buddies lead a series of community services activities for their families. Social skills and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion curriculum are embedded into the culture of the school. A middle school community services elective works with community members and has raised over \$36,000 for local and global charities. Students truly live the motto heart, mind, and action. The school leverages Bear Families, Advisory, Restorative Practices, Student Council, No Bully Solutions, Common Sense Media, along with a series of parent education options and general school-based counseling, psychological and nursing services to support children and their families in developing a sense of social and emotional wellness and connectedness with the school culture.

The school has committed to develop student knowledge, skills and dispositions in the areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion. For example, the school developed a strong partnership with Youth Equity Stewardship and brought schools together across different districts to support students in developing a myriad of equity focused outcomes. Middle school students utilized art, music, and the humanities to learn about perspective taking, strategies in interpersonal communication, and approaches to community organizing to build an inclusive community of learners within and across each school district. Staff participated in these efforts by designing problem and project-based experiences along with tasks to ensure students applied their learning in real-world situations.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Ross School has been able to provide continuity of service for all students including five days a week in-person instruction since September. Moreover, Ross School maintained all programs, services, and retained all staff in the 2021-2022 school year. The school maintained 0% cases of in-school transmission of COVID-19 in the Ross School District and ensured substantial student growth in learning as identified on the science, math, language usage, and reading data from NWEA (August of 2020 January of 2021). In addition, Ross School reconfigured elective options for students by investing more time in each elective and integrating elective work with core curriculum.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

Ross School utilizes a variety of formative assessments across the school year including the tri-annual (August, January, and May) deployment of the NWEA MAP assessment that provides progress monitoring of student growth in science, math, reading, and language usage from 2nd-8th grade. In addition, Ross School utilizes the Developmental Reading Assessment K-3 and the MDTP assessment in 5th-8th grade mathematics to promote and support student readiness and success in college mathematics courses. These assessments, along with the summative CAASPP assessment, enable grade level and department-specific professional learning communities to determine next steps in improving student learning. Moreover, this data provides learning center staff with the information they need to create appropriate Tier II and Tier III level and “just in time” interventions for students in classrooms.

The school utilizes the California Healthy Kids Survey to determine next steps in supporting and enhancing student social and emotional well-being. This data enables our health and wellness team, site council, diversity, equity and inclusion committee, and our entire staff to create effective interventions for students. Next year, the school will add the Youth Truth Survey to receive formative feedback in the fall of each school year.

Additionally, Ross School uses a number of adaptive software programs that incorporate student evidence to more effectively support staff in differentiating instruction for students. Moreover, the site provided synchronous whole class, small group, and individualized instruction for all classes and grade levels via features within Google Meets and Zoom. During the period of March 2019-January 2020, 1:1 and small group instruction was initially prioritized with K-2nd grade whereas small group and whole-class instruction was identified across 3rd-8th grade.

During the early months of the pandemic, Ross School identified early on the need to create a distance learning schedule that closely aligned with our in-person schedule while also ensuring that breaks from the screen were provided throughout the schedule. Ross School staff prioritized in-person instruction as soon as it was safe to do so. The administration spent most of the summer of 2020 developing protocols and procedures for bringing our students back and prioritizing our K-2 students to receive in-person instruction ASAP. In addition, in the current school year, to approximate in-class formative assessment, student tasks were broadened to encapsulate a wide range of ways to measure performance including oral, written, and performance-based tasks.

Throughout the crises, Ross School ensured a guaranteed and viable curriculum in all classrooms. This started with the selection and utilization of priority standards. Priority standards are standards that endure over time, give students leverage in other content areas and prepare them for the next grade level. Moreover, these standards are deemed the most essential for monitoring and reporting purposes. The five criteria the school utilizes for selecting learning standards included the following: (1) Endurance- Knowledge and skills that will last beyond a class period or course, (2) Leverage- Knowledge and skills that cross over into many domains of learning, (3) Readiness- Knowledge and skills important to subsequent content or courses, (4) Teacher judgment- Knowledge of content area and ability to identify more and less important content, (5) student opportunity to learn content that will be assessed) (Heflebower et al., 2014, p. 18).

The school utilizes a Response to Intervention (RTI) approach to support students who are illustrating less than one year’s growth in one year’s time on a set of academic or social-emotional skills or concepts. The RTI model begins with high-quality instruction in the classroom which includes a common core curriculum, high-impact instruction strategies, social and behavioral supports, and differentiation of instruction (i.e., Tier I). Teachers work with their colleagues to monitor student growth and performance individually through daily progress monitoring and weekly professional learning community meetings. Staff use a problem-solving approach entitled “Impact Cycles” to evaluate the effectiveness of their Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions and determine next steps to improve overall practice and enhance student learning and well-being.

Additionally, each grade level and department teams meet with specialists (i.e., psychologist, counselor, reading and math specialists) to review student data and determine rates of improvement or responsiveness of instruction. These groups, entitled “Data Teams,” also review the number of students and frequency of students entering our Tier 2 (short-term interventions for struggling students who have not responded adequately to the Tier 1 curriculum) and Tier 3 interventions (intensive individualized short-term interventions for students who do not respond to Tier 1 core curriculum and differentiation of instruction.)

The school utilizes a myriad of assessment tools that serve both formative and summative purposes. The school uses standardized assessments including CAASPP, DRA, NWEA, MDTP, and MARS tasks to ascertain student progress and proficiency on academic standards. Combined with authentic assessments in electives, specialists, in-class projects, and routine classroom-based monitoring of student engagement and performance on in-class tasks, the staff has a portfolio of performance data to make decisions on next steps in the teaching and learning process.

Ross School is the only school in Marin County that maintained continuity of instruction throughout the 2020-2021 school year keeping in-person instruction operational every day for kids. The school focused on continuity of instruction and overall student services throughout the pandemic including canceling spring break and providing class instruction, investing in summer programming in the area of SEL and core 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:

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

The Ross School provides a broad range of electives or specials to deepen the educational experience of children. All Kinder-5th grade students participate in a range of courses including music, drama, art, STEM, technology (cybersecurity, coding, robotics, artificial intelligence), makers classes, Spanish, and Physical Education. Middle School students participate in a wide range of core courses including Spanish, Physical Education, and electives ranging from Bay Area Ecology, Fabrication Lab, and Broadcast Journalism. Students also have the option across K-8 to participate in accelerated programs ranging from Algebra I and Geometry.

Teachers work together on Wednesday grade and department-level meetings to discuss student progress and proficiency in core and specialist/elective courses. Furthermore, teams meet to discuss interdisciplinary opportunities between courses. For example, students engage in transdisciplinary work via alignment of goals in STEM (e.g., understanding the scientific method), math (e.g., data analysis through appropriate representation of variables in charts and graphs), art (e.g., scientific drawings), and English Language Arts (e.g., expository writing).

Besides local benchmarks and state assessments, students receive progress and proficiency reports that are aligned to standards. Using research-based practices, the school uses standards-referenced grading. These reports provide accuracy and consistency for all students and enable children and adults to understand a student’s understanding at varying levels of complexity.

The school has designed scheduled time for grade level and department teams to meet and identify means for integrating learning intentions across core curriculum and electives including the design of musicals with humanities level tasks, integration of STEM and mathematics, and visual arts and history, technology, and English Language Arts.

Ross School augmented the normal schedule to restrict the potential mixing of students and teachers across cohorts. Specifically, K-5 students met with a single special for three weeks in-person and then rotated to other specials. Students continued to receive access to other specials via online synchronized programming. Most importantly, students continued to receive instruction in all specials and electives over the course of the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school year.

Ross School continued to offer all programs throughout the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years. Specifically, visual and performing arts classes were offered both distance and in-person for students in Spanish, PE/health/nutrition classes. Moreover, the school utilized online programs such as Sora to provide students with access to online fictional and nonfiction texts.

3. Academic Supports:

Ross School utilizes a Multi-Tiered System of Intervention (MTSS) to ensure all students gain more than one year's growth in one year's time in their academic and social-emotional learning. All staff ensures that students receive quality first instruction and interventions in every classroom. This level of instruction, referred to as "Tier 1" instruction, ensures students receive effective instruction.

Grade level and department teams use teacher-designed and school-based assessments to formatively ascertain student progress and proficiency towards key learning outcomes. Once the data is collectively understood, teachers work in small teams to review data, determine appropriate interventions to ensure students are making progress towards and/or beyond standards. Teams utilize a wide range of strategies to improve their impact on learning including internal and external professional development, instructional coaching, and in-class interventions from the Learning Center Team (LCT).

The LCT consists of an SLP, two SPED teachers, OT, psychologist, counselor, reading specialist, and math specialist to provide appropriate interventions for students and to support classroom teachers in ensuring appropriate accommodations and modifications for students. During COVID-19, the team provided tele-therapy from March 2020-September 2020. In September 2020, the team provided a blend of teletherapy and in-person instruction.

Furthermore, the school provides in-class support for our ELL students utilizing ELD standards, providing additional reading and writing support, and ensuring full access to all programs and services with all peers. Lastly, the Ross School provides intentional training to staff on supporting the LBGTQ community of learners and ensuring classroom resources, COVID-19 protocols, instruction met the needs of all students and staff.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

The Ross School motto “heart, mind, and action” is ensured by the intentional focus, design, and inspection of a classroom, school, and staff culture that focuses first and foremost on the concept of heart. “Heart” refers to the development and utilization of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence centers on the development of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social management.

The school employs a full-time counselor, nurse, psychologist, and Learning Center Team to facilitate the development of emotional intelligence. This team employs an advisory program for students to discuss contemporary inter and intra-personal issues and build knowledge, skills, and dispositions to prepare for future social development. Moreover, this team implements “Bear Families”- a group of students K-8 that meet bi-monthly to build community across the K-8 grade levels. The team also utilizes the second step program to teach specific coalition and emotional skills in all classrooms.

Beyond student activities and programs, the school adopted a restorative justice approach to student discipline. This approach required extensive training with all staff including the modeling of protocols (e.g. “circles”). After the adoption of restorative practices, student discipline significantly reduced across K-8.

In terms of assessing progress and proficiency of social and emotional development, students and staff take the annual California Healthy Kids Survey to assess student and staff mental health and perceived connection with the school, staff, and peers. Moreover, staff collect data on student perception of their relationship with their teacher as part of their evaluations. In the fall of 2021, the school will add a fall assessment of self and social health via the Youth Truth survey.

Student and staff perception data is evaluated by the school’s Site Council and the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. Both committees provide recommendations to the staff and the Superintendent on next steps to improve the school’s policies, programs, and practices.

In the spring of 2020, Ross School transitioned completely to a full 100% distance learning program. The school maintained a schedule of social and emotional programs including adhering to the Second Step program, maintaining electives and specialist programs such as Art, STEM, and music, and continuing to hold virtual assemblies such as our middle school Rock Award program. The school has maintained these programs through the gradual transitions from distance to full in-person instruction.

The school continues to maintain its programs related to social-emotional development including holding virtual assemblies to recognize student progress and proficiency in their progress, perseverance, and support of the larger community.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

The Ross School parent community is involved in various committees to support student learning and general well-being, raise funds to balance the budget and bring forward initiatives to continue to elevate student learning and support the general operations of the school. The school hosts a number of committees including Site Council, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, Parent Teacher Organization, Ross School Foundation, Financial Advisory Committee, a community COVID-19 testing parent volunteer group, and our Ross School Task Force.

In addition, the parent community provides support by substituting in classes and volunteering to support the school in the recess and lunch program. These supports have been invaluable to the school during the pandemic. Parent volunteers allowed the school to launch a full in-person schedule.

During the pandemic, the school has provided routine virtual meetings with parents to provide updates on schedule changes, COVID-19 related updates and policy changes, and academic and social, and emotional

progress and proficiency of all students. The school provided weekly newsletters, hosted several webpages that included all pertinent information related to the school, and hosted community COVID-19 testing bi-monthly for families.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Ross School is committed to active participation and shared decision making with faculty and staff. As discussed prior, the school is built on problem solving teams at all levels of the school to improve the school's operations and student outcomes.

During the spring of 2020, Ross School developed a Task Force to develop distance, hybrid, and full in-person instructional plans. Comprised of parents, faculty, administration, support staff, business officials, and trustees, the task force met weekly to discuss next steps in supporting all stakeholders throughout the pandemic.

Ross School continued the long-standing interest based bargaining process with union leadership to design a Memorandum of Understanding to ensure working conditions were in place for staff and student re-entry to school. These discussions led the school to re-align professional development days to provide needed support for transitioning schedules, Bi-monthly COVID-19 testing housed onsite for staff and the community, extended leave benefits prior to federal adoption of CFFRA, increased preparation time for all staff, free childcare for staff's children on site, and fully operational outdoor classroom setup for all teachers.

Throughout the many logistical challenges and changes, the school continued to inspect data and take action in teams via Impact Cycles. Moreover, the school adopted an explicit phonics curriculum to supplement our English Language Arts curriculum, provided professional learning on enhancing student collaboration and use of project-based learning, and incorporated new curricular materials to enhance student learning of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

4. School Leadership:

The school consists of an elementary principal and middle school principal. Each role shares in district-level responsibilities including student services and curriculum and instruction. The District office includes the Chief Business Officer and the Superintendent. The school district is represented by five elected trustees.

The school is focused on ensuring that all students gain more than one year's growth in one year's time in their academic and social and emotional learning. The leadership team adheres to a five-year strategic plan that focuses on high-quality teaching and learning. The key areas of focus include strengthening relationships, engaging in academic rigor and relevant real-world work, and developing reliable systems of practice. The school is currently centered on implementing policies, procedures and practices that enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion, social-emotional wellbeing and emotional intelligence. The school is working to develop means of teaching and assessing cross-cultural communication and finding and discerning accurate and reliable information.

Moreover, the school is investing in instructional methodologies that enable students to develop dispositions to handle setbacks, solve challenging problems, and have clarity and command over their own learning. The school is engage in professional learning to ensure all students gain problem and project based experiences, integrated cross curricular tasks, and sustaining research-based assessment and grading practices for learning beyond "meeting standards".

The school is working to scale these initiatives over time by refining communication systems to share data on student progress, proficiency, and perception, by improving coherent and consistent school-wide plan on technology use in and outside of the classroom, and by enhancing our school-wide plan on assessment/grading use in and outside of the classroom and RTI model for academic support/enrichment and student comporment/community development.

The leadership team is responsible for establishing priorities and implementing annual action plans related to student achievement. A part of this work includes the coordination of the school's MTSS program, impact teams, and data teams. Leaders implement these programs and team cycles of improvement by ensuring formative and summative evidence is utilized to drive staff development.

Each grade level and department team uses student evidence to inform individual and grade-level instruction and systemic interventions. This includes the continued use of NWEA MAP assessment to ascertain student performance and take immediate action in the classroom. The process of using rapid investigations of student progress and proficiency and the agile nature of professional responses to the data has enabled the school to be adaptive to ever pressing needs of students.

Based on the collective teacher efficacy work of John Hattie and the problem-solving approach of Simon Breakspear, the school has been able to develop and sustain a robust, adaptable, and impactful system of problem solving teams (i.e., "Impact Cycles") to diagnose problems, intervene via instruction, evaluate impact and sustain practices that made a meaningful difference to student learning.

While navigating a worldwide pandemic, the principals piloted a new English Language Arts curriculum, implemented the science NWEA MAP assessment, and devised small working groups to analyze key priorities for continued ensuring substantial growth in student learning. Those priorities include establishing instructional practices, curricular resources, and assessment practices that integrate multiple perspectives and cross-cultural and cross-curricular outcomes to solve real-world problems. Another working group focused on public relations and general communications.

The entire leadership team met weekly to discuss county-wide public health and state and federal school updates over the course of the year. The school created a learning and continuity plan, a safety plan that includes protocols and processes for ensuring safety (which was approved by Marin County Office of Public Health and OSHA).

The administrative team has had to merge roles to ensure all normal responsibilities within the administration were met (e.g., teacher evaluation, curriculum adoption). Moreover, leaders had to expand services to design, implement and communicate on distance and hybrid schedules, testing, contact tracing, safety protocols and procedures (e.g., transitioning in/out of school), and vaccine deployment. Infuse consistent programs and practices for K-8 students to enhance school, staff, and student relationships.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

In 2018, Ross School adopted three key equity-based policies. Those policies included Board Policy 0415 which stated a commitment to equity including (1) Eradicating institutional bias by evaluating and changing instructional practices, policies, and institutional barriers that negatively influence student learning, perpetuate achievement gaps, and impede equal access to opportunities for all students, and (2) Promoting and implementing strategies to promote equity in district programs and activities, which include (a) Measuring assessment needs based on disaggregated data, and (b) Analyzing expenditures and allocating financial and human resources to ensure equitable access to district programs, support services, and opportunities for success.

The school also adopted a board bylaw (9310-B) stating the district will proactively address equity and provision of equal access to opportunities for all students as well as policy 4111 stating that all hiring processes will be equitable, fair, and transparent.

The school established a diversity, equity, and inclusion committee to provide recommendations to the school on how to meet established policies. Over the past nine months, the Ross School District has prioritized supporting students in their learning and wellness through multiple mediums of learning. While navigating a worldwide pandemic, the Ross School Equity Committee devised small working groups to analyze key priorities for continued equity-based

work. Those priorities include establishing instructional practices, curricular resources, and assessment practices that integrate multiple perspectives and cross-cultural and cross-curricular outcomes to solve real-world problems. Another working group focused on public relations and general communications. This group focused on the intentional modeling of equity and inclusion as a way to bring people together and take part in discussions with community members on the work of retooling instructional practices to enhance student learning.

Recommendations from this committee enabled the school to reduce tracking across subject areas while maintaining accelerated services in mathematics, show a substantial decline in suspensions and increase in student perception of school, relationships with teachers, administrators, and peers, revamping of the grading and assessment system to more effectively align assessments to equitable based practices, staff understanding of the FAIR Act, develop student leadership practices and work with schools across the community to more effectively engage in diversity, equity and inclusion based practices.

As part of the school's strategic plan, the staff will begin infusing a higher percentage of inquiry-based experiences in the classroom, develop means of teaching and assessing cross-cultural communication, offer professional learning to teachers to enrich and deepen students' perspectives on core equity-based objectives, developing contemporary questions that require students to learn core content, analyze multiple perspectives, and solve key problems, expand and deepen foreign language programs, establish key partnerships with schools/systems/NPOs that are engaging in similar work.

The school brought forward a range of critical questions to the diversity, equity and inclusion committee to discuss and a formal list of key actions to ensure culturally responsive teaching and learning. Specific actions the school has taken include: (1) Co-designing a community convening to support anti-racism policies and actions in the community and the school, (2) Re-evaluating curricular resources in the school and each classroom, and (3) Professional development for staff and the community on anti-racism and inclusion, belonging, diversity and equity.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Ross School is particularly proud of maintaining all programs and services, providing a breath of additional wellness and family services to faculty, providing robust protocols and procedures for ensuring student safety leaders, ensuring continued use of standards referenced instruction, and standards-based grading across various instructional mediums (e.g., distance, hybrid, full in person), and building student agency. However, of the many key strategies used by the school to maintain safety and high academic and social-emotional well-being, the school's continued use of collaborative professional engagement to address student learning challenges and well-being is the key driver for sustaining student growth over time.

Each grade level and department team uses student evidence to inform individual and grade-level instruction and systemic interventions. The process of using rapid investigations of student progress and proficiency and the agile nature of professional responses to the data has enabled the school to be adaptive to ever-pressing needs of students.

Based on the collective teacher efficacy work of John Hattie and the problem-solving approach of Simon Breakspear, the school was able to develop and sustain a robust, adaptable, and impactful system of problem-solving teams (i.e., "Impact Teams") to diagnose problems, intervene via instruction, evaluate impact and sustain practices that made a meaningful difference to student learning.

Staff-based teams worked with our learning center to effectively respond to students and teachers who need support. The administrative team has co-developed an evaluation process with the certificated union leadership team that is evidence-based and centered on dialogue and professional respect and responsibility. Moreover, the administrative team continued to adapt new teacher training, curriculum adoptions, and annual professional learning offerings and outcomes to the work of impact teams.

This process has scaled to all facets of the organization including our pandemic response team (i.e., task force). The school site was able to compile multiple forms of qualitative and quantitative evidence to make informed decisions with the task force on the most appropriate schedule, medium of instruction, frequency and deployment of programs, and the efficacy of curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

The school has continued to scale this work to various committees including the diversity, equity, and inclusion committee and site council. The school is now planning to re-engage students on their development of agency using a simpler process of student impact teams to inspect academic growth, clarity of learning, dispositions for handling challenges. Students have experience in developing a language of learning, developing dispositions for handling setbacks, and using collaborative protocols in a restorative justice format and the school now has the opportunity to improve these practices for improving student individual and collective agency.

To initiate and sustain this work, leaders focused on ensuring a clear narrative of the work through continuous messaging, investment in professional development including a book study on mindsets, learning about collective teacher efficacy, exploration of design thinking, agile learning, connecting to continued work on student confidence (ACL and clarity). Moreover, the school worked in partnership with labor via interest-based problem solving to ensure staffing working conditions were met to meet the demands of impact cycles.