

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 140 Andrew Avenue
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Naugatuck State CT Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 06770-4303

County New Haven County

Telephone (203) 720-5221 Fax (203) 720-5213

Web site/URL https://andrewave.naugatuck.k12.ct.us/ E-mail lisa.lachance@naugatuck.k12.ct.us

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Mr. Christopher Montini E-mail Christopher.montini@naugatuck.k12.ct.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Naugatuck School District Tel. (203) 720-5625

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 Litke
(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):
- 5 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 3 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 9 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	19	16	35
1	30	24	54
2	24	16	40
3	25	22	47
4	23	31	54
5	0	0	0
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	121	109	230

*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
 - 0.4 % Asian
 - 9.1 % Black or African American
 - 35.3 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 53 % White
 - 2.2 % 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: 14%

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	19
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	17
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	36
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	249
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.14
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	14

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

Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Polish, Arabic, French

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 13 %
31 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 70 %

Total number students who qualify: 160

8. Students receiving special education services: 13 %

31 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>1</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>6</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>2</u> Developmental Delay | <u>12</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>8</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: 2

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	13
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	5
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 18:1

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	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 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 Mission is to create a community of learners who are responsible and engaged community members; demonstrate initiative, persistence, and adaptability; are curious and value risk taking as part of the learning process; access and analyze information and formulate an opinion; communicate effectively; and work individually and on teams to solve real world problems.

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.

Andrew Avenue began the year with 149 students in-person, full time. The first month of school, the students were in school until 1:00 and went home to access asynchronous lessons online. All students were issued a Chromebook that they take to and from school each day. After the first month of school, students participated in full school days Monday through Thursday and a half-day on Fridays. Learning continued for students online on Friday afternoons, while teachers were given the opportunity to plan for students as well as participate in school-based and district PLC meetings.

At that time 74 students were learning from home. The district assigned at-home learners exclusively to a distance learning teacher. Throughout this year, 36 of those students have returned to in-person instruction.

All of our students continue to sit six feet apart and have individual shields on their desks for extra protection. The district purchased tents for our teachers and students so that classes can take mask breaks outside, in the shade. Students have two meals a day in their classrooms. Art, music, P.E. and library media teachers push into the classrooms to teach their lessons.

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

Andrew Avenue Elementary School (AAES) is a close-knit community of learners. As one of the smallest elementary schools in the district, our students face the greatest socio-economic challenges. Seventy percent of our students qualify for free or reduced lunch. Along with district initiatives for social and emotional learning, we use a trauma-informed approach embedded in everything that we do. Our Naugatuck Public School (NPS) guiding principles extend to all of our families at Andrew Avenue. We utilize a team approach to educate families and communicate our purpose consistently. As a team, we identify the needs of our families and provide the support, materials and resources for their children to have a safe and equitable access to education.

All teachers, regardless of grade level, maintain a Google Classroom that is standardized in setup. Every Google Classroom features assignments for students under the date with specific information. Teachers were encouraged to use the following programs with their students whether in-person or virtual: Google Suite (i.e., Docs, Slides, Forms, Sheets, etc.), Google Meet/Google Hangout; ScreenCastify; Jamboard; FlipGrid; Edulastic (for assessment); EdPuzzle (for videos).

Teachers received professional development on these programs at the beginning of the school year. District and school leaders were preparing students and teachers for all models of learning in the event that the model would have to change suddenly throughout the school year.

Teachers maintain and use a Google Classroom as part of their instruction. PLC time will help teachers decide how to present learning so there is consistency between schools. Naugatuck Public Schools teachers instruct students using Google Classroom as well as effective instructional strategies for in-person instruction. Students are well-acquainted with Google Classroom and how to access, complete and turn in assignments in their digital classroom. This will allow for near-seamless transitions to hybrid or distance learning should guidelines and directives from the state change.

Instructional Routines for all grade levels remain consistent to provide coherence and familiarity for students and for families should a shift to virtual instruction be necessary. Every classroom teacher will include the following strategies in their daily instruction every day: Facilitate a daily meeting: Every morning or at the start of every class, teachers will greet students and review the focus and purpose of the lesson and how it connects to the larger essential question of the unit. This daily meet will include: a warm welcome and the learning target; a brief overview of the learning for the day (context); a concrete connection between the stated purpose and the work; instructions to students to small group work time and focus; a RULER check-in with a student's emotional well-being for the day. This check-in will grow to include student cognizance of other RULER principles like what they will need to do to be their best selves and how they will plan to take a meta moment to regroup and reframe their situation.

Students should have a brief, mini-lesson, not more than 10 minutes, that guides them through the skill for the day. Teachers can choose to use Screencastify and record their mini-lessons for viewing with the whole class. Any meeting with a student should provide actionable feedback the student can use to improve their work in the moment. This can be through a one-on-one meeting, a FlipGrid response, or other verbal exchange. This could also be written, as long as the student can engage with the teacher, like through the Comments feature on a Google Doc or through Google Classroom. It is expected that students in Kindergarten through 4th grade will be part of a guided reading group that meets 2-3 times per week, with assigned reading and use of the running records feature in Learning A-Z. This feature will allow you to listen to a student's reading and note any errors so that you may provide feedback to the student. This can also be done in-person, but the features in Learning A-Z will allow you to spend more in-person time with students providing instruction. All Math instruction in-district will begin with a Number Talk. Resources have been provided so that teachers can reflect and plan for this important, powerful instructional tool regardless of grade level. All teachers K-12 will use Number Talks to understand students' thinking about numbers, number sense, and mathematical concepts. Google Classrooms will be standardized. This will help families with more than one child in Naugatuck schools. It will also be familiar to students from their time in distance learning and will be an integral part of in-person instruction. All schools will run weekly

PLCs with grade levels. These PLCs will focus on planning for instruction and exploration of the curriculum. This is a valuable tool for ensuring consistency in what is delivered to students and, in some instances, how it is delivered (i.e., centers). Some district norms for PLCs are to assume best intentions from colleagues and to collaborate and listen to different ideas about how to implement the curriculum effectively. Everyone should speak once before someone speaks next and ask Questions for clarification. In meetings, teachers should be open to new ideas and take risks.

One strategy that Andrew Avenue practices and sets us apart from other schools is the development of the students' sense of self and belonging. We use district programs such as RULER as well as PBIS (positive behavior intervention and supports) that is aligned with NPS's Vision of the Graduate. Woven into our daily routines and tasks is the celebration and recognition of the diverse culture and uniqueness of our students. We explicitly plan for our students so that they can see themselves in the stories that we read, plan tasks that help them understand their culture and give them opportunities to explore and express themselves as well as giving them tools to regulate their bodies to be ready to learn.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

Naugatuck Public Schools has used the four guiding principles to make decisions about what is best for our students and how to best keep everyone safe throughout this school year. The first is personal relationships. Personal relationships are at the heart of what we do. We value the relationships that we build with our students because they directly impact the instruction we deliver. Whether in person or online, we build strong bonds with our students in order to give them a high-quality learning experience. Second is Access and Opportunity for All. Our school-based support teams will assist families with options to get online so students can remain active in their education. These teams also offer many different levels of support, from daily check-ins with students to small-group and one-to-one counseling. Our interventionists work with students to ensure they have the skills they need to keep moving forward in their learning. Third, is Health, Wellness and Safety for All. Keeping our students and staff safe and well is a primary concern. Wellness screenings and emotional check-ins daily will help us to keep everyone healthy, both physically and mentally. Cleaning protocols, personal protective gear, and adherence to Centers for Disease Control guidelines will help our students and families feel safe in school. Last, is Meeting and Exceeding High Expectations. Learning can happen anytime, anyplace, which is why we value and practice adaptability, flexibility and customization. Naugatuck's Competencies and Vision of the Graduate ensure that everyone works toward the highest expectations and acquires the most important skills and concepts. Everyone in our school system works to ensure every child receives the supports they need to succeed.

The curriculum of the Naugatuck Public Schools is continually evaluated and revised according the following priorities: Socio-cultural relevance, NPS Competencies(grounded in state and national standards), the latest research on learning and the brain and the learning cycle model that encompasses both curriculum, instruction and assessment. All curriculum design and tasks are written to reflect the stages of the learning cycle model: making meaning, investigation, creating/producing, communicating/presenting and reflecting. Feedback is woven throughout the model. Without actionable feedback that students can use to improve their skills and deepen their understanding, learning has a greater potential of being superficial and procedural rather than deep and enduring.

The curriculum model is founded on the teacher's planning of the daily learning experience that is prescribed in the task that encompasses the learning within the topic. A curriculum unit of study can have more than one topic, and all topics are linked together through the unit's essential questions and enduring understandings.

The units of study are carefully developed to align with themes of learning that guide the questions we ask and the knowledge and concepts we ask our students to explore and understand. These themes also drive the courses that are designed and are predicated on the NPS Competencies, upon which all students will be assessed. Demonstrating competence in our competencies - along with engaging in the practices and learning experiences demanded by our Vision of the Graduate - will guide our students toward becoming that vision and being equipped for the next stage in their lives.

At Andrew Avenue students experience instruction in Humanities (Social studies taught through reading), Math and Science. The curriculum in each subject area is aligned with the Common Core State Standards in Math(Math) and ELA(Humanities), CT Social Studies Framework(Humanities) and the Next Generation Science Standards.

The Humanities Curriculum is reviewed and updated each year and includes unit topics such as; Community Relationships, Folklore and Literary Traditions, and Sense of Self.

Teachers at Andrew Avenue engage in weekly PLC's where the focus is on planning and instruction aligned with the curriculum. They meet with their grade level team and the literacy and math coach in the building with their peers as well as meeting with their grade level peers district-wide. In the PLC's the teachers plan for grade level learning, anticipating potential gaps and embedding learning where it will be most effective and useful to students and to ensure consistency in instruction, focus and purpose. Teachers also meet with

support staff, special education teachers, and the English-language teacher to customize learning so that students are grouped and instructed in what they need to keep their learning moving forward. Teachers meet with their students in small groups or one-to-one to support their learning and deepen their understanding. During the school-based PLC's teachers are examining data from assessments. Andrew Avenue is using Interim Assessment Block (IAB) in both reading and math for third and fourth grade students. Teachers are using the data to inform them for both whole group and small group instruction. Teachers are piloting programs that provide both diagnostic data and personalized instruction. MClass reading data is used to identify students' need for tiered instruction in a pull out model as well as push in 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:

Andrew Avenue's special area teachers provide instruction to our in-person learners as well as our virtual learners. All of our students receive two 44 minute lessons in Physical Education, one period of Art, one period of Music and one period of Library Media. Their schedule was designed to meet the needs of all students throughout each day, with scheduled time for both models. A well-rounded educational experience includes students' participation in physical education, and the arts. Program modifications are necessary to attend to students' health and safety. The implementation of physical education, fine arts, and music curriculum considers the needs of all students, and can be adapted as needed to ensure the participation of each and every student, regardless of time and place. Our library media teacher has included lessons on the technology that the teachers are using including Peardeck and Jamboard to increase students' knowledge and practice with those virtual strategies for instruction.

Physical education, Art and Music include the strategies of RULER (recognize, understand, label, express and regulate) in their daily lessons. P.E. and music utilize outside spaces as much as they can. To limit students traveling throughout the school, special area teachers push into the classroom.

Our Art teacher has provided all of our students(in person and at-home learners) with a bag of art supplies to continue her rigorous art curriculum despite the physical restrictions. Our P.E. teacher has included health and nutrition lessons in response to students' limitations during online learning.

All special area lessons are aligned with NPS competencies and students are assessed on specific indicators each trimester. Our model measures what the students can do within each indicator. Special area teachers plan lessons and tasks that target the specific skills so that students show growth throughout the year.

Our daily schedule includes built-in time for social and emotional learning. Our support staff are assigned a classroom and all students experience a social skills lesson once a week. Our support staff use the Sanford Harmony curriculum that is a researched based curriculum that is aligned with the CASEL competencies. We use the DESSA universal screener to identify students in need of tier II and tier III behavioral and emotional support. With all of the students receiving SEL lessons in tier I, we are able to target specific skills in tier II and tier III and progress monitor the success of the interventions.

3. Academic Supports:

Naugatuck Public Schools is dedicated to the revision of the curriculum so that all students have access to diverse literature. NPS is developing an anti-racist curriculum that addresses racism, diversity, and sexism. Units in Humanities are being collaboratively developed by leaders and teachers to meet the diverse and individual needs of our students.

Students at Andrew Avenue who are performing below grade level are closely monitored. Data is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure expected growth in tier I. Students who are not making expected growth, the PLC plans for the intervention focus and reviews data. Students are serviced by an interventionist or counselor (behavior) and monitored every other week. The services provided are either in small group, pull-out or push-in. After 6-8 weeks the data reviewed by the team and the interventions are adjusted or changed. The students' tier can also be adjusted or changed. If the student is not making expected progress with intense intervention, students are recommended for further evaluation. At Andrew Avenue, the schedule is created to include two "Individualized Blocks" throughout the day for reading and math instruction. During these two blocks of time, students' individual needs are met in small groups. Students who have an individualized education plan are serviced in the resource room, students in tier II and III are pulled into small group instruction with a focus on reading or math and students in tier I remain with the classroom teacher. The teacher is able to provide enrichment activities for those students who are above grade level to push their thinking beyond the grade level curriculum with higher level text and complex math problems.

In the district and at Andrew Avenue we are in the process of planning to use acceleration strategies to address the learning gaps. We are planning to use a universal screener where we can pinpoint and target the students' conceptual knowledge and teachers can use this data to plan for and build on the students prior knowledge of the grade level curriculum. Eleven out of thirteen classroom teachers are piloting two programs that provide teachers with that information. Those teachers will provide the district with feedback so they can make an informed decision as to which program was the most successful. We are exploring tutoring strategies, extended day and summer school opportunities to address the gaps.

Our Special Education Teacher is participating in professional development to be able to write Individualized Education Plans that align with grade level competencies. This process will increase expectations for our special education students and provide them with a rigorous program of individualized instruction that aligns with grade-level state standards.

At Andrew Avenue we are working towards meaningful inclusion opportunities for our special education students and our English language learners. In advance of the classroom experience, our experts are pre-teaching concepts and skills so that students can meaningfully participate in their class lessons and tasks.

NPS is creating an EL handbook that includes structured pedagogy for our bilingual students that includes push-in and pull-out support as well as progress reports that align with CELF standards. Our district plans to offer a certification program for TESOL teachers so that we can service our English language learners more effectively and efficiently. This will directly impact our students at Andrew Avenue in their services which will allow them increased access to the curriculum.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

At Andrew Avenue we use two core approaches in our daily practices to communicate expected behavior and teach self-regulation strategies so that our students are emotionally and physically able to access the curriculum. First, our Positive Behavior Intervention and Support System is a universal, Tier I initiative that is used throughout the school day. Our PBIS system focuses on the attributes; Safety, Understanding, Pride, Empowerment, and Respect (SUPER). We aligned our PBIS system with our district’s vision of the graduate. Our students are SUPER Scholars. Teachers worked together to develop a matrix that defines our expected behaviors across all settings. Lessons are explicitly taught throughout the school year using examples and non-examples. Students are recognized for their positive behaviors by getting a ticket that the students can save for weekly rewards. Teachers participated in professional development to calibrate our language and practices. Teachers hand students a ticket and specifically say, for example, “Thank you Sam for being safe in the hallway by maintaining 6 feet in between your friend”. We develop school spirit-like events during the school day that align with our SUPER Scholar program. Students are working to show positive behaviors to get a visit from the “Elf” or the “Queen of Hearts”. In the Spring, students are working towards extra recess. Every morning a student is recognized for being a SUPER Scholar. A teacher nominates a student and specifically defines how the student was being a SUPER Scholar. These behaviors align with NPS’s Vision of the Graduate (A Responsible Citizen, an Innovator, a Communicator, an Informed thinker, a Problem Solver, a Researcher). AAES recognizes students who exemplify SUPER Scholar behaviors each month with a virtual ceremony. The recording is sent out to all families.

Our second core approach is our RULER Program. RULER is an approach that teaches students to Regulate, Understand, Label and Regulate their emotions. We start every day with a school-wide meta moment. Students are asked to take two deep breaths and think about what their best self will look like during the day. All students and adults participate in this activity everyday. A mood meter is one of the anchors of the RULER program. It helps students and adults identify a quadrant that they are in based on how they feel. It is determined by energy and pleasantness. This mood meter is adapted for each grade and students are learning the language and meaning of different emotions. They learn how to express where they are now and how they want to be feeling, for learning to be at its best. Another anchor of the RULER Program is a class charter. Each class has chosen the five feeling words that they want to feel in the classroom every day. Teachers continuously refer to it and hold the students accountable for their actions and feelings in the classroom. Self-regulation strategies that are aligned with RULER are woven into everything the teachers do at AAES. It is used within curricular tasks and daily lessons. For example, students are asked to understand how characters feel in stories they are asked to think about how they feel when learning about critical events in history. Most importantly, time is spent talking about and teaching self-regulation strategies (building and expanding a student’s toolbox) so that they can be ready to learn and perform at their best.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

At Andrew Avenue, the key strategy to the success in fostering strong and trusting relationships with parents and families is communication. Our teachers are continuously communicating with parents through email, traditional phone calls and our communication system called ParentSquare. Since meeting in person is not possible with our restrictions, teachers are meeting with parents on Google meets. Communication is important throughout our community of teachers and the teachers understand the value that positive communication and relationships have on our learners. We use a translation service to communicate with our parents who do not speak English or we collaborate with our EL teacher to support in the communication to the families. At times, we will go on home visits or deliver materials that students need to their homes. Building trusting relationships with our families is important to our students and our overall climate and culture. It is important to us that families are a part of our community and are empowered to be included as a team member to make the important decisions for their children.

COVID-19 has prevented us from doing our traditional engaging events such as Math and Reading nights,

In-person conferences, awards ceremonies and movie nights. Families are feeling very isolated after a year of social isolation. It is very difficult to make up for the lack of in-person activities to engage families at school. Our approach has been to increase our communication with the families. Teachers regularly send out newsletters to the families and positive messages to share good news. Teachers spend their prep time making phone calls to reach out. Our virtual parent-teacher conferences were well-attended in both the fall and the spring. The majority of them were over Google Meet. Those who could not attend, arrangements were made to touch base over the phone either before or after school. Teachers were able to communicate the growth of the students in the conferences.

We are currently planning not only a kindergarten orientation, but we are going to plan a first grade orientation for the students in kindergarten who are distance learners. These students have never been in the school and will be with two classes of children that have been here for a year. We want to make them feel welcome and them and their families a part of the community. We are shifting how we have done these kinds of activities as a result of COVID. We are thinking about all of our learners and their socio-emotional needs.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Andrew Avenue has created an environment where teachers feel valued and supported by all. We lead with high expectations for all in a community where teachers and the administrator communicate and support each other. Andrew leads with a problem-solving approach and a growth mindset where all members of the team are included and have a voice. Flexibility is a key component of a positive school culture and environment, especially this year where teachers are asked to do things differently and out of their comfort zone. Schedules have been changed, rooms have been moved to be in compliance with safety guidelines. Transparency in communication and leading with the value that decisions are made in the best interest of children first, creates a community where adults will adapt and change.

The school's professional development approach is to respond to the needs of the teachers and create opportunities to increase the capacity of the teachers. These opportunities include equity, feedback, data-driven decision making, trauma-informed practices, and PBIS. All professional development opportunities directly connect to what the teachers are experiencing in their classrooms so that they understand the purpose and the context of what they are learning. Most recently teachers were asked to create a goal setting document. Teachers developed a strength and a goal for each student. They identified the support each student needed as well as the support that they needed. Teachers used this document in their planning as well as in their conferences with parents. Administrators used the document to support the teacher with resources for individual students or classroom.

Supports have been provided to teachers in different ways this year. Teachers need the support due to the increased stress on them and their students through the restrictions of COVID. At Andrew Avenue push-in support has been given to teachers with larger class sizes. The restrictions force students to be six feet apart and they are unable to come in close contact for small group work. The push in support provides the teacher an opportunity to meet with the students in a group (virtually) in the classroom while the support staff can monitor the learning of the other students in the class.

Teachers have been provided with professional learning time on Fridays. Students are on an early dismissal schedule and teachers continue their day. Each week the teachers participate in a Professional Learning Community with their grade level peers or their grade level school teams. Literacy and math coaches lead the teachers in the work. They support them as their peers in developing common assessments for math and share resources for Humanities. During their school based PLC, teachers are examining class data from unit assessments, student work samples and screeners to plan for instruction to keep the learning moving forward as well as support students in need.

4. School Leadership:

Andrew Avenue is dedicated to provide all students with equitable access to the NPS curriculum along with rich and diverse educational experiences. We keep the development of personal relationships at the core of NBRS 2021

our learning program. When families and students are connected to their teachers, learning can be deeper and more meaningful. We will use the appropriate NPS Competencies in the curriculum for all subject areas and disciplines. In addition, Andrew Avenue strives to build and maintain a culture of excitement and positivity for learning for all students and their families. It is important that we take time with students to create a positive, exciting culture for learning. While we want our students to be better prepared for the next grade level, we also want to create that positive, exciting culture through personally connecting with students who may need us to keep in contact and keep touching base on their health and emotional well-being.

With a team approach, we foster empathy and compassion. So much has happened to our students this past year. Families are returning to work, and students may be returning to after-school and childcare programs. We collaborate with each other, families, and outside resources to meet the needs of our students. Flexibility will be key to our work this year as we put the student at the center and plan instruction to accommodate their needs.

Andrew Avenue created a Return to School Committee composed of various stakeholders including the administration, the nurse, teachers, support staff and parents. The purpose of the committee was to hear concerns from the different members and garner feedback about our draft plans. The stakeholders were given a voice and an opportunity to problem solve as a group. Administration was able to hear the concerns and communicate the district's plan of action. The next step in communication was to hold a community meeting. All parents were invited to a virtual meeting where Andrew's return to school plan was presented. Parents were able to ask questions and voice concerns. Administration was able to communicate the comprehensive plan for both in-person and virtual learners.

The role of the administrator during this year has shifted with the added guidelines to keep students safe and healthy, while keeping the learning moving forward. The daily collaboration between the nurse and administrator became a priority. The nurse and the administrator at Andrew Avenue have worked in sync since the return to school. Daily communication with each other, teachers, support staff and families has been a critical part of the success of maintaining the health and safety of our school community. Together, the team communicates the expectations of health and safety so that learning time is maximized and there is minimal disruption to the school day.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Our culture for equitable learning is the foundation of Naugatuck Public Schools. It is the very essence of who we are and who we strive to become. Together, we ensure that our schools are safe, engaging, and happy communities where each and every child develops into the Vision of the Graduate. The Four Principles of the Naugatuck Public Schools Learning Culture are that each and every learner is a contributing and dependable member of their community. That each and every learner champions the ideals of social justice and equity. That each and every learner feels valued for their uniqueness and that each and every learner engages in inquiry and demonstration of competence. (Learner refers to both children and adults)

In Naugatuck Public Schools, we depend upon one another and we understand that we are only as healthy as our most vulnerable members. We constantly examine ourselves, our interactions with others, as well as our practices, procedures, and policies to be sure we are taking care of, and holding high expectations for all of the members of our community. Our learners actively contribute to the school community and beyond. We reflect upon the impact our actions have on the success of our community.

In Naugatuck Public Schools, we are committed to holding one another responsible for the educational success of each and every child. Together, we discuss sensitive issues such as race, identity, disability, and poverty. We identify and address social justice issues that are apparent in our district. We investigate outcomes between and among various groups identifying and

responding to evidence of disparities. We seek out multiple voices and consider impact in our decision making. We change our practices to ensure every learner has limitless opportunities.

Our community is built upon trusting relationships. Learners in Naugatuck Schools seek to understand the complexity of humanity. We take pride in honoring one another's story. We feel safe sharing our unique experiences. Diversity and uniqueness are valued in our schools and district. Our curriculum, instruction and assessment are designed to provide access, relevance, and meaning for all learners.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

In 2018, teachers in the Naugatuck Public Schools were trained in the RULER approach. RULER is a systematic approach that aids students at Recognizing, Understanding, Labeling, Expressing and Regulating emotions. The RULER approach was rolled out to students in 2019. For two school years, we have been teaching students the core tools of RULER and how to utilize them in the classroom and at home.

Each day Andrew Avenue students are led in a meta-moment. This meta-moment is a time for all to relax, and think about what their best self will look like. They can think about how they are feeling and what strategies they will use to get to how they would like to feel where they are learning at their best. Each class has a mood meter and it is used during morning meeting time to identify the way that they are feeling in that moment. Students are asked to put feelings into words. At the beginning of the year, each classroom created a classroom charter. The students chose the feelings that they would like to feel in their classroom to feel safe and comfortable.

We have all embraced RULER and students are learning new feeling words each day. They are also learning new strategies to independently regulate their emotions. This self-regulation is helping our students persevere through tough tasks and feel safe enough to take risks in the classroom by asking questions and thinking deeply.

RULER has proven to be a successful approach to emotional regulation. Now, more than ever, students must be able to understand their emotions in order to express their emotions in a safe and positive way. Teachers are able to build strong relationships with their students when they feel safe and are taught the skills to express themselves and given the space to regulate. Teachers are utilizing these skills during these stressful times.

During the school shut down in the spring, Andrew used the mood meter to take attendance and check in with all of the students. Each student was asked to sign in on the mood meter (Google Form) each morning at home. They identified how they were feeling and gave a reason why. This helped us keep track of the students that were accessing their virtual classrooms and also helped the support staff check in with students who were expressing that they were sad or mad.

NPS has embedded the RULER tools throughout our Humanities curriculum. Our first unit this year was titled, "The New Normal". It was the revised unit on "Needs and Wants" and included RULER strategies and teaching how to keep themselves and others safe from COVID-19 including social distancing and hand washing.

Throughout the units of study in Humanities, social and emotional learning is embedded. When 4th grade students are learning about change, adaptation, culture and individuality the tasks include thinking about how people were feeling during the time period and how the students are feeling learning about the struggles and conflicts in history. Students are learning empathy as well as thinking deeply about how these events make them feel while learning about social justice.