

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

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 150 Pierce Road  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Highland Park State IL Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 60035-5327

County Lake County

Telephone (224) 440-5987 Fax (224) 765-3408

Web site/URL https://www.nssd112.org/braeside E-mail jkahn@nssd112.org

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

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

Name of Superintendent\* Dr. Michael Lubelfeld E-mail mlubelfeld@nssd112.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name North Shore School District 112 Tel. (224) 765-3001

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 Alexander Brunk  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

*\*Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, leave blank.*

## **PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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The electronic signature on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2021 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2015 and grades participating in statewide assessments must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2019.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 or 2020.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

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

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 7 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 0 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	22	19	41
1	24	25	49
2	20	16	36
3	26	24	50
4	18	18	36
5	18	30	48
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
<b>Total Students</b>	128	132	260

\*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):
- 0.7 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 3.7 % Asian
  - 1.9 % Black or African American
  - 3.3 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 86.3 % White
  - 4.1 % 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.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	5
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	2
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	7
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	269
(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):

Cantonese, Spanish, Vietnamese, Malayalam, Polish, Russian, Romanian, Hebrew, Korean, Mandarin, Greek, Lithuanian

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 5 %

Total number students who qualify: 12

8. Students receiving special education services: 17 %  
44 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>6</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>12</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>6</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>11</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>5</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>14</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>1</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: 9
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	14
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	10
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	3
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

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 15:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Daily student attendance	97%	96%	94%	96%	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.

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

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

Yes  No

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

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

Our mission is to nurture every child toward becoming an inspired learner within a world-class environment that fosters innovation, respect, engagement, and intellectual inquiry.

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.

Heading into this school year we knew that success would be borne from adapting to the moment and finding consistency in delivering high quality instruction in any format required. Our guiding principles from the very start of the school year were to:

- provide safe learning environments for our students and staff
- provide proactive, concise communication to all families, staff, and students
- ensure that all students receive instruction that meets Illinois State Learning Standards and provide necessary support for success.

Prior to the school year the school district invested in mitigation efforts that put us in a position to be successful. These included rental AC units for our old building, Nursing Isolation Areas, hiring Enhanced Cleaning Specialists for high touch areas during the school day, purchased multiple sets of instructional materials so students were prepared in case of a shift to all remote instruction later in the year, rental of outdoor tents for flexibility in learning spaces, and asymptomatic testing for staff paid for by the district. These efforts ahead of the school year really set the stage for Braeside School to launch into the year ready for anything and everything.

In August we opened the school year with families electing to either participate in the Hybrid In Person Learning Model or the Remote Learning Model.

Hybrid Learning included assignments in either an AM or PM section of a homeroom class. Students participated in core English Language Arts and Mathematics classes in person. All other instructional aspects of the school day were done remotely. These included social studies, science, physical education, art, music, library, lunch, recess and extension activities from the previous in person learning opportunity.

Remote Learning provided all aspects of the student school day remotely with a consistently assigned virtual classroom teacher.

Beginning the year with nearly eight full weeks of in person instruction was successful because of our planning and execution of that plan. All students and staff participated in Crisis Go Self Certification prior to entry. Communication between home, school, the district, and local health departments was seamless and constant so people felt “in the know” whether it was about contact tracing efforts or changing of systems as we go.

We relied heavily on science to guide our success. So we made sure that everyone on campus wore masks at all times. We added hand sanitizer to every corridor and every classroom and encouraged more frequent hand washing/sanitizing during the day. Lastly, by having only half of the students in class in a hybrid format, social distancing was not only doable, but effectively in place.

In Mid-October the data dictated a switch to 100% remote learning for all students. In our region we were poised to stay in that learning model until the data reverted back to the safer threshold.

Our pivot was smooth as we established instructional practices that could be replicated into the Zoom platform without having to re-create the entire classroom experience. Homes were pre-equipped with instructional supplies so they already had what was needed to carry on with school. Students were equipped with 1:1 devices from the previous spring that supported connectedness in a way that was new for us all. And so we carried on with great pride and effort to keep students engaged and inspired.

On February 1, 2021 we pivoted once more from remote learning to our hybrid model. We maintained every mitigation effort that was in place before and the new behaviors for students and staff alike became typical to the school environment.

Then on April 6 we finally opened our doors for the first full day in person school experience of this year.

Our teachers are thriving in spite of the pandemic and the professional challenges they have faced. Our students are proving to be as resilient as ever showing their adaptability that we always knew was there.

More than anything, this year and these instructional models highlighted the importance of a strong home school partnership and we are forever grateful to our parents who were amazing partners for much of the school year.

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



## **PART III - SUMMARY**

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Braeside School is one of 10 schools that resides with the boundaries of North Shore School District 112. Nestled in the southeast corner of Highland Park, Illinois, Braeside is located about 25 miles north of the city of Chicago. North Shore School District 112 proudly serves 4,000 Pre-K through 8th-grade students, of which about 260 attend Braeside School. Our dynamic community is educating the next generation of leaders. We foster inspiring, innovative, and engaging environments to educate our students and prepare them for life success in a dynamic world.

Braeside has a unique diversity. While the vast majority of our students are from the surrounding neighborhood, we do have students that reside on the military installation at Fort Sheridan while family members are stationed there as well as from neighboring Highwood. We are also the home to the district Social Academic Integrated Learning program. This self contained special education program makes up two of our classrooms and services students with extreme needs that present socially, emotionally, and/or behaviorally. Our small school is linguistically diverse with over 13 native languages spoken in our homes. This one of a kind diversity is woven together to make its student success that much more meaningful.

One key strategy that we use to nurture every child to be their best self is the development of student voice early on. From oral language development to student choice, Braeside staff center the students in their lesson planning and leverage their interests to maintain a high level of engagement throughout the day, weeks, and year.

Voice is taught and developed at Braeside. In primary classroom whole group instruction students are asked to rise when they speak to acquaint themselves with talking to a group. Primary students use recording oral explanations of their work as a matter of routine. As students move through the grades this voice is exemplified and honed through unique events like STEAM Night where student voice is shone through inquiry. Our Student Success Block is a daily instructional block built on the backbone of students knowing what they need and helping them get it. Throughout the six years at Braeside something we see in our success are the voices of the students in our charge and as they grow up we could not be more proud of them all.

Braeside students enjoy a veritable cornucopia of co-curricular and extracurricular offerings from the school. Notably our WE School, Robotics Team, and Junior Board are all academically rigorous and socially - emotionally impactful additions to the typical school program.

Our WE School Braeside team comprises nearly 20% of the student body when running during in person instruction. WE School invites students to explore ways of contributing to their inner community like Braeside, the outward community like our city of Highland Park, and the broader community anywhere in the world. A part of the process for exploring the broader community needs is through socratic study of root causes for hunger, poverty, gun violence, and groundwater limitations. From here students invite speakers to join them in person or virtually to learn about action they can take to help educate our community and contribute to the solutions required. Many of these initiatives lead us towards a more just relationships with our BIPOC communities.

Braeside Robotics has been in existence for nearly eight years now. Our opportunities began as a one team, one robot adventure in self exploration with a fierce group of 5 students. Now the program boasts nearly a dozen robots of varying types and abilities led by over thirty students and two staff sponsors. Students compete annually with neighboring schools and often are some of the best opponents for the local middle school teams. In addition to the team, this group has led our elaboration of use of technology offerings throughout the building. Hour of Code is an annual introduction for students and staff. In primary grades we have Sphero balls and lego robots for students to learn how to build and operate. As students get older the robots get more complex and the coding is beyond the scope of this educator's understanding.

The Braeside Junior Board is a public - private partnership that we are so proud of. A local non-profit, the Eisenberg Foundation, works to bring awareness and funding to certain types of cancer and research. The

Junior Board is composed of students from throughout the school community, 36 of whom are Braeside students. At school we support their efforts with organizational support, leadership coaching, and opportunities to work on their messaging to combat cancer in the broader community. Our relationship has existed for five years now and boasts the CUREnival. This annual event is a student led carnival where all proceeds go to support the foundation goals of education and research.

Heading into this school year we knew that success would be borne from adapting to the moment and finding consistency in delivering high quality instruction in any format required. Our guiding principles from the very start of the school year were to provide safe learning environments for our students and staff; to provide proactive, concise communication to all families, staff, and students; and to ensure that all students receive instruction that meets Illinois State Learning Standards and provide necessary support for success. Some of the most notable supports included equitable access to technology, social emotional well being supports, and ensuring that we provide support to meet the needs of specific students groups. In this effort we have succeeded with much pride.

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

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

Over the past few years, Braeside has focused on implementing a guaranteed and viable curriculum (GVC), specifically in English Language Arts and Mathematics. Guaranteed means that we identify and emphasize the most important skills and concepts in each grade level so that the students are adequately prepared for the next year and beyond. Viable means that we provide enough time for students to master these skills and concepts, instead of simply dragging students through the standards and hoping that it sticks. Our GVC not only allows for students to have common experiences, regardless of which teacher they have, but also affords teachers the guidance to support and extend on the most crucial skills and concepts with the individual students who need it. Teachers focus on lesson planning that requires them to have a common understanding of the learning as well as common assessments that check for understanding and drive the instruction.

Our curriculum is paired with research-based instructional strategies to maximize student learning. Using Marzano's New Art and Science of Teaching to develop a district framework, Braeside has committed to common instructional elements that have been proven to increase student achievement in our lessons. This unlearning of past practices has given us new life as we update our teacher toolbox with research based strategies that work. Teachers are able to utilize a multitude of instructional strategies based on the needs of their students, content area, and instructional goal of the lesson. Establishing a common framework also encourages collaboration amongst teaching teams to intentionally plan using research-based strategies. The common language makes this collaborative effort even more efficient and can help increase collective teacher efficacy, ultimately leading to a profoundly positive impact on our students. Our teams constantly engage in a cycle of learning by analyzing data, setting goals, and learning individually and collaboratively, as well as implementing and adjusting practices to meet the needs of all learners. This process allows teachers to try new teaching practices and discover what's working and what isn't. We find this model best meets the needs of our students and supports teachers professional growth and development.

As we embarked into the 2020-2021 school year we were prepared to take our robust in person learning into the online world. Our instructional coaches served as superb conduits for communication in the planning phase for teachers to prepare for the year ahead. As a district we launched 1:1 technology to create equitable access to content and instruction. We subscribed to a new learning management system for digital lesson housing, assessment banking, and common structures for students and families.

Core resources for science and social studies that relied on hands on labs or group work were exchanged for digital platforms that could meet the same instructional standards with the flexibility needed for remote instruction and safety. Thankfully these tools provided much needed consistency for students throughout the school year. Whether learning was in person or online, the resources used were the same. Limiting the amount of change for students was a key indicator of success for Braeside during the pandemic. It allowed for us to focus on the students and teachers and not the plans and activities.

Assessments this year moved online and into a common format. While change is hard, streamlining our tools to quickly grade and analyze what students know and are able to do was beneficial for instructors and students. Teachers had immediate feedback to what was successful and not from the previous sequence of lessons. Students saw their own demonstration of mastery first putting them in charge of their own response to success or struggle. This has been evident in the increase in student self advocacy for support seen this year in the intermediate grades.

Our shift to the new learning management system and common formative assessments gave us a superb opportunity. As educators we were provided access to data that in previous years would take hours to uncover. This changes the focus of many team meetings to make them more content driven and response oriented to the data. Teachers and special education support members had greater clarity around student success during core instruction. This established not only more focused staff conversations, but a more robust support system during our student success block as a result. Upon return to full time in person learning, this change of behavior in assessment usage and instructional planning will not soon be left behind.

**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:**

At Braeside School responsive teaching is the hallmark of the teachers of music, physical education, art and library. The teachers of these subject areas listen to students' interests and plan activities that hook their learners. We know our students thrive in these different subject areas and for many students it is also a place of sanctuary. These teachers leverage the unique lens that comes with servicing 100% of the student body. They truly teach the community.

The Braeside students thrive in our visual and performing arts program, which fosters critical thinking, risk taking and collaboration. Students in grades K-5 attend art class once a week for an hour to broaden their exposure to famous works of art and provide them with opportunities to create and design their own masterpieces. Students create and design using paint, clay, paper, technology and numerous other media. Lessons emphasize gaining knowledge of the elements and principles of art while celebrating creative, individual talents. Walking through the hallways of Braeside, you will see students' artwork on display with students and visitors stopping to admire the work. Each year, the Highland Park Art Center features our district schools student artwork on display throughout the month of February. The students' work is truly inspirational.

All of our Braeside students participate in music class twice a week. Our music program includes singing, listening, note reading, playing instruments and movement. Musical performances are provided at each grade level and focus on important musical aspects. Our oldest students' musical performance is student driven, with students choosing the theme, music, writing the script and choreographing the dances. It is one of the highlights of their school year. Our current Braeside school spirit song was revised by a group of students who rewrote the lyrics, revised the music, and taught all of the students and staff the song during an all school assembly. Each year, our 4th and 5th grade students participate in the Reach, Teach, Play concert at Ravinia Festival that engages our students in musical song and dance.

The Braeside library is the front facing feature of our school building which resides on the Department of Interior, Historic Registry of Places. Students are welcome to stop in whenever they have questions, need reading suggestions or resources for doing inquiry projects in their classroom. In addition, students attend library class once a week. The library is also our Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Music (STEAM) hub, our center for the monthly Author Visit sponsored by our local foundation, and a place for writers to work through iterations of their pieces with coaching.

Our physical education classes have become a highlight reel of kinetic wellness over the past four years. It is not just a class for the fit and physical, but for absolutely everyone. Our physical education teachers meet every day and teach the importance of regular physical activity, teamwork and life-long fitness. Our courses over the year focus on movement, physical fitness, team building and health. They also leverage the instructional framework within their planning to maintain the focus on feedback with students. The health curriculum, embedded in physical education, focuses on nutrition while teaching students skills to increase physical, mental and social health. What sets this program apart are extreme elements that make students feel like a professional. After learning the skills of bowling, the gymnasium is transformed into an alley with lanes, real pins, and weighted balls and even cosmic lighting for the final day. What was once a single station climbing wall in the gym is now a ropes course tailored for elementary students to be risk takers, yet independent and safe.

Another part of our physical education program is celebrating disability awareness week. We partner with

an organization that provides insights about disabilities to increase acceptance, understanding and inclusion by demystifying disabilities and highlighting abilities. Students engage in wheelchair sports by learning how to play games such as basketball in a wheelchair. A culmination of physical education is Field Day, which is an annual tradition at Braeside that celebrates games and sportsmanship. Our 5th grade students are the field day facilitators and lead all the activities and promote school spirit.

The Braeside library is the front facing feature of our school building which resides on the Department of Interior, Historic Registry of Places. Students are welcome to stop in whenever they have questions, need reading suggestions or resources for doing inquiry projects in their classroom. In addition, students attend library class once a week. The library is also our Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Music (STEAM) hub, our center for the monthly Author Visit sponsored by our local foundation, and a place for writers to work through iterations of their pieces with coaching.

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

Braeside School is an inclusive school community. The educational needs of our students drive the decisions that we make and that means that structures and systems of support are fluid and ready to change as needed. As a staff we commit to ensuring that students are successful and performing at grade level or beyond. We work as a cohesive team to ensure that all students are able to meet grade-level expectations while working independently in their classroom. This means that at the lesson development level teachers plan to teach concepts and skills with a range of activities with a high ceiling for opportunity and a low floor for access. This ensures that varied abilities have equitable access to the same grade level concepts and skills with a finely scaffolding set of experiences.

Though we are staffed with a full time Advanced Learning Opportunity (ALO) specialist, working on extension and enrichment activities is not a novelty exercise at all. It is a finely woven aspect of our general education experience that this staff member supports. At Braeside ALO is about talent development and all students benefit from this level of engagement and differentiation.

There are several steps we take that define the pathway to success for Braeside students.

The first is our data days. As a School Leadership Team we analyze data and develop our school-wide instructional plan in the fall, winter, and spring. Our grade level data day meetings identify students who are struggling, areas of focus and a specific plan.

Next these plans lead to actualization of our school wide Student Success Block (SSB). Students are carefully placed in reading or math supports and grouped based on need. Students receive specific and targeted instruction with our reading development teacher five days a week. Students with needs in enrichment receive support during this time as well. It is an all hands on deck time when all students are assigned to programming that matches their need.

The last step in this cycle is the monitoring process where our data team assesses the degree to which the plan set forth in our data day is working for the students. The questions we ask are:

-Do we see the progress we expected set forth in our plan of action?

-Is it an acceptable rate of growth?

-If not, what do we need to do to meet our goals and/or increase those goals?

This cycle repeats itself as many times as needed and success is best resembled by the continued commitment by staff to not only talk about the needs, but act on the interventions required to make  
NBRS 2021

changes for students.

The above cycle of data review, support planning, and intervention is designed for all students. We use this process for students with specific IEP goals as well to ensure that goals are being met and no necessary changes are being overlooked. Sometimes the best for the student is the current plan, but this process gives us windows to make certain we are on the right track.

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

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

At Braeside School, we strive to create an environment that fosters innovation, engagement and intellectual inquiry. It is very important to us that students are engaged in school life. In addition to academics, we want them to feel a part of our school through a strong sense of belonging. One way that we do this is through talking a lot about community. We use our core social-emotional skills program as a conduit for ongoing classroom meetings about community, culture, and what it means to be a value added member of the school. This is a key component of engaging students to be co-creating the definition of the community with us and putting them in a position to feel safe in advance of the expectation of learning.

Another way we achieve this is by providing students with a myriad of enrichment club opportunities that meet during students' lunch time, before and after school, giving each student an opportunity to engage in learning outside the classroom while connecting with peers from different grade levels. The majority of these clubs are driven by and created around student voice and interests and taught by staff, parent volunteers and high school students. Our lunch time STEAM program has been a mainstay giving life to student inquiry for nearly 100 students a day. Many of these students continue their work in our Robotics Club that competes in our yearly district competition hosted at the middle school.

We provide multiple opportunities for our students to be leaders throughout our school building. We find that students in leadership roles make a positive contribution to our school environment. The younger students look up to these student leaders and see them as their friend and someone to go to when they need help. Our WE Green Program is a student leadership initiative that we implemented to model and support Zero Waste in our lunchroom and the self-sustaining garden outside. Here students leaders model for and support younger classmates in engaging in helping save the world. Book Match is an upper grade athletic feat of the mind that showcases for younger students how much fun it can be to fall in love with a book. These student leadership opportunities increase positive peer relationships and nullifies behavioral issues and peer conflict, especially at recess, and shows younger students a pathway for successful engagement in school.

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

Partnerships with families and the community are pivotal to student success and achievement. The Braeside school community is bursting with vibrant relationships for the benefit of children that attend the school. The tone for collaboration is set at the start of the year when parents are invited to engage in learning walks. Learning walks are an opportunity for parents to engage in a structured walkthrough process to examine the learning in the school and to have professional conversations about education.

The idea that parents are also teachers is well established at our school. COVID-19 provided an opportunity for us to approach learning a new way, rethinking our current practices with a focus on remote learning. Grade level teams leveraged our learning management system to make sure there were resources online for students and parents when needed. For all the paper tools, a second set was provided at home so parents could have what was needed at the time it was needed for learning. Teachers encouraged parents early on to listen in or sit with their children to gain foundational understandings in how cognitively complex tasks are approached. This helped parents know when to jump in and support or sit back and let the learning take place.

WE Schools, our student leadership group is student centered and student driven, but heavily parent supported. Last year our culminating event, WE Day, took place at AllState Arena. When our students were seated and the lights dimmed on the crowd, our students and their staff sponsor were spotlighted in recognition of their inspiring work for the WE Schools nationwide. This moment resonated with our parents who were getting their first in person glimpse of the magnitude of the work being done by these student leaders. What at times appears as just a local effort, has regional and national implications with the support of our families.

Our annual STEAM Night is another wonderful community event. This marvel of an evening rests on the shoulders of our youth and their inquisitive minds. This evening pairs their young questions with the excitement of the local high school robotics teams, alumni who return to share their experiences in math and science fields, and showcases local partnerships with research centers like Abbott Laboratories. This one night showcase was a bridge when COVID-19 closed our doors as well. When school was closed our students begin learning about the shortage of PPE. Reaching out to high school students and the research centers we found a community of 3D printing people printing frames for face shields. With the support of all principals in our district we gathered the 20 3D printers we have in our district and distributed them to students' homes. While quarantined these students opened, scaled, printed, filed, and bagged over 2,000 face shield frames that went directly to frontline workers in local hospitals. Their ability to take their interest and passion and put it to work to solve a real world problem exemplifies what we strive for here at Braeside.

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

Braeside school operates like a family where everyone looks out for and cares for others. Each individual teacher strives for excellence which in turn challenges surrounding peers to to be their best. Leadership encourages staff toward active learning and trusts teachers to share their high standards while planning and executing lessons. Teachers receive regular emails from the principal which provide encouragement pointing out specific successes. The principal exemplifies care by regularly checking with teachers throughout each day in order to discover and meet their professional needs. The leadership culture at Braeside values educators who take creative risks and do what is necessary to meet a student's needs. There is an ever present trust and assumption on the part of leadership that their staff always pursue what is in the best interest of the students. The principal serves as cheerleader, a listening ear, the team optimist, and astute analyst applying input gleaned from teacher surveys.

Preparing for hybrid learning was a key tenet in the professional development at Braeside this school year. Before the doors were re-opened for hybrid learning, all teachers were involved in training on how to use technology to drive their instruction while providing a much anticipated stretch of distance learning. Staff were given the choice of various break out sessions allowing each to engage with what would be most helpful. Everyone received general training in a new learning management system and numerous days of specific training on various of the new platforms intended to support teacher delivery in a dynamic way. In addition, during team meetings after this initial training an instructional coach would facilitate short demos reviewing the features of the new learning management system.

One example of additional support provided to the staff is the opportunity to work and collaborate with an instructional coach. Teachers are given autonomy in deciding how they might best utilize the services of a coach. Some teachers invited the instructional coach to join team meetings to help evaluate student data and collaborate at forming a plan for reteaching so that all students may master the standards. Instructional coaches often provided ways to differentiate instruction and meet the needs of a variety of students during remote and hybrid learning. In addition, the instructional coach gathered materials for teachers so they could provide extensions for those students already mastering standards.

As with so much at Braeside the culture rests on staging for one another to be successful.

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

Braeside leadership is best described as collaborative. Braeside stakeholders hold power and opportunity for leadership. Each member of the community is valued for the contributions they bring to our school and leadership can be seen from students, staff, and parents alike.

Braeside students are viewed as partners in education. WE School Student Leadership has three branches.

WE Spirit leads our student body through a calendar of events throughout the year that blend school spirit and engagement. These activities give everyone something to smile about and this year was needed. During in person learning WE spirit coordinated Red Ribbon Week and Friday School Spirit Days. During remote learning WE Spirit coordinated Window Art projects for families to do at home and then walk around to see

in neighbor windows. WE Spirit paired literacy to Halloween with our Storybook Character Pumpkin Decorating Contest. It was with the ideas and energy of student leadership that our community stayed connected this past year.

WE Leadership is our student government. Their guidance around decisions big and small contribute to the successful implementation and communication amongst the student body.

WE Green are student leaders for our Zero Waste Lunch initiative. This program has helped us reduce waste, educate our community, and take steps towards a green lifestyle that students can transplant into their homes.

We believe that there is dignity in every aspect of our work.

Staff committees focus on culture, climate, and alignment of our team toward instructional goals.

The Braeside School Leadership Team coordinates the adult learning pathways on an annual basis. Over the past year this team has built a syllabus of reading and activities to study *The New Art & Science of Teaching* by Robert Marzano. Using the anchor text, the team identified 12 indicators to study that align with instructional strategies rooted in research to coordinate our efforts towards student achievement.

This group analyzes building level data trends and helps us hone our effort toward improvement. Our students provide feedback through Student Engagement Surveys and participate in individual growth goal setting with homeroom teachers.

Supporting a strong culture our social committee ensures that lifecycle events amongst the team are recognized and celebrated with glee while Braeside Problem Solvers serve as coaches and counsel to teammates.

Finally, Braeside parents are engaged in building level committees and focus on overall school improvement. Their perspective is welcome and contributes to keeping student interests front and center.

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

At Braeside School we produce a climate of acceptance and community. This is an explicit effort to teach beyond the demographics of our school community and prepare each student for the partnerships and community they will find beyond where they currently live.

Educators and students will broaden their understanding of identity of self and others, allyship, family structures, vocabulary, gender expression, stereotypes, colors on the intersectional pride flag, and the historical contributions of BIPOC and LGBTQ+ people. All content has been developed and reviewed to ensure that it is developmentally and age appropriate for all students. We believe these lessons center both the academic and social-emotional needs of children, help build community, and are vital to supporting our district mission of preparing students to contribute positively to a global and diverse society. This work is vital to help our students see beyond the notion of mere tolerance and to name the many ways in which our current students, families, and staff contribute to the community we so cherish.

A unique quality of our culturally responsive teaching efforts is in our charge to value student backgrounds and interests without tokenizing students or staff who are the lone representation of diversity within the learning space. Through invitation we bring leaders into the building who can showcase for students that contributions in our society come from all over and celebrate the stories from near and far that complete the historical landscape for our students.

These lessons put our staff and students in a great position to discuss, debate, and learn from the

current events of the recent past. Whether the topic is Black Lives Matter, hate crimes, or a school shooting, students are well equipped to enter the space safely and respectfully inquire and listen. In this work we do not have experts. We only have willing participants and parents have been wonderful support to us as we venture into a space that some view as political, yet we view as support of the needs of this generation finding its place in this world.

Some of the best explorations of these topics comes from the driver, our WE Schools study of root causes of societal issues. The mere notion that students desire time to study, speak, and write on contemporary issues like race and gender says a lot about the type of school experience we need to be providing.

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

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There are many factors that play into Braeside's success. One practice that permeates throughout all of the Braeside community is our systems of feedback. Robert Marzano defines feedback as "the information loop between teachers and their students that provides students with an awareness of what they should be learning and how they are doing." We use feedback to be specific about student learning, to center our goal setting on growth and self reflection, and to create once in a lifetime partnerships between stakeholders for each child.

Within our classrooms this means that Braeside staff ensure that students understand the progression of knowledge within a given lesson and the association of that knowledge to lessons prior. Staff are continuously setting expectations for learning and raising expectations for instruction. It is the redundancy with which high expectations are shared that make it so typical for our school community. This is ultimately about being clear on our learning goals and maintaining the highest standards possible.

Feedback is a process to help students leverage assessment data for self reflection, goal setting, and adherence to the notion that learning is never done. Being student centered, educators work in grade and vertical teams to design lessons and build formative assessments that will inform the educators about student learning and share that same information in a deeply personal way with the student. Students are keenly aware that they are on a journey to be their best self. We highlight for them explicitly that the best teacher they will ever have in school will be themselves! In this we are giving the power for learning directly to the student.

Our adherence to collective and specific feedback create better partnerships between educators who collaborate to meet the needs of students with disabilities or other needs. Our general education and special educators collaborate together to plan for full inclusive experiences. For our students who participate in self contained special education programming, the feedback loop and collaboration it creates gives us a lot of consistency for learning targets, expectations, and experiences across classrooms.

Parents are partners and have never been more important than during this pandemic. Our adherence to specific school improvement work around feedback has made our goals and communications with families clear. Parents are engaged with knowledge of the journey their child is on, what they can do to help, and how we are supporting them along the way.