

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

---

[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Eldorado Middle School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1907 1st Street  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Eldorado State IL Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 62930-2103

County Saline County

Telephone (618) 273-8056 Fax (618) 273-2943

Web site/URL https://www.eld4.org/ E-mail btippett@eldorado.k12.il.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. Ryan Hobbs E-mail rhobbs@eld4.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Eldorado Community Unit School District 4 Tel. (618) 273-6394

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. David Bartok  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

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

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

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

## **PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

---

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

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

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

---

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

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

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

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

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)
- Suburban
- Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2020 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	47	34	81
7	46	30	76
8	41	38	79
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	134	102	236

\*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
  - 0.8 % Asian
  - 0 % Black or African American
  - 1.3 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 91.1 % White
  - 6.8 % 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: 8%

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	9
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	11
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	20
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	236
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.08
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	8

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 58 %

Total number students who qualify: 138

8. Students receiving special education services: 22 %

51 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>5</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>15</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>26</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>3</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>1</u> Speech or Language Impairment         |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>1</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 6

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.	20
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	4
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	2
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 17:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Daily student attendance	95%	94%	94%	93%	94%
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.

The mission of the faculty and staff at Eldorado Middle School is to develop knowledge, academic skills, self-esteem, and self-discipline in each student to be successful in life.

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.

I am extremely proud to say that our school has been operating from 8-3 Monday- Friday this whole school year and we have not missed a day for covid-19. We did have about 20% of our kids in the beginning that chose to remote learn. That number has been lowered dramatically since the beginning of the year.

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

## **PART III - SUMMARY**

---

Unfortunately, Eldorado is a community that has experienced tremendous increases in poverty. This has changed and shaped many of the ways we educate our students. One out of every four individuals (25.2%) living in the community experienced poverty in the past 12 months, which is almost double the state average. At Eldorado Middle School there are approximately 60% of children that qualify for free and reduced lunch compared to the state average of 50.2% of children qualifying (NCES, 2017). In addition, individuals living in this zip code experience more unemployment (US Department of Labor, 2017), food insecurity (Feeding America, 2014), family mobility, single-parent households, disability, and less high education graduates (US Census Bureau, 2015) than the rest of the state. At Eldorado Middle School, students and families show significant academic, social, and emotional struggles.

Eldorado Middle School has implemented many strategies in recent years to encourage and develop students academically, emotionally, and socially. An after-school tutoring program was developed to target students who need extra help. Summer school programming has also been offered.

In an effort to address the extreme social/emotional issues students at Eldorado Middle School face, we wrote for and received the Project Aware Grant. This grant was awarded to three districts statewide. This program will offer student counseling, family counseling, and drug awareness education.

Currently, in our district the Project Aware Grant has allowed us to hire more counselors for our at risk students. These counselors are now present in our schools everyday for instant access when needed. This grant has also enabled us to create more opportunities to create wrap-around services that include the student and their families.

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

---

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

Due to Covid, Eldorado Middle School was forced to adapt our instruction and curriculum to meet the unique needs of our students. Additional staff members were hired so ELearning students could be given quality instruction throughout the day via Google classroom. Students were monitored for learning loss and students who were unsuccessful with remote learning were encouraged to return to in person instruction or agree to receive additional help.

Besides adapting our instructional methods by using more one-on-one time, we have also increased our interventions of students who have not been successful. Using our truancy interventionists and administration, we have increased home visits by over 50% during the 2020-2021 school year.

Eldorado Middle School has used the easements contained in Go Math, Star Reading, and the formal easements required by the state this spring. The main purpose of testing and analyzing results this year will be to address learning loss and ensure both in-person and remote learners do not fall behind.

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

At both the middle school and high school, local and state funds are coordinated with: Career and Tech Ed Improvement Grant, Perkins-CTE-Federal Grant and the Healthy Community Investments Grant to offer learning opportunities in business, home economics, and agriculture.

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

### **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

Eldorado Middle school has a full-time art teacher as well as a full time band teacher. Introductory and advanced art classes are offered. The Eldorado Middle School Band consists of approximately 20 to 30 students and participates and competes alongside our high school band in performing contests. Individual music lessons are available for students.

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

Eldorado Community Unit School District #4 uses the following measures to identify students at risk for failure:

(1) The GO Math curriculum includes diagnostic assessments and benchmark tests to assist in the identification of at-risk students. GO Math allows teachers to tailor a variety of formative and summative assessments to meet the needs of all their students. These include Leveled Quizzes and Tests, Performance Tasks, and Diagnostic and Quarterly Benchmark Tests. The program's assessment resources allow for varied and ongoing assessment of student learning and progress. The diagnostic component of the program allows teachers to assess if students are prepared for the next lesson or chapter. It also allows the teacher to decide if students need intensive or strategic intervention. The formative components, "Rtl Quick Checks" and Mid-Chapter Checkpoints, help teachers monitor and assess student learning and understanding and adjust instruction accordingly. The summative component permits teachers to use the Data-Driven Decision Making chart to provide intervention to students who haven't mastered chapter objectives. The GO Math program provides teachers with thousands of items, correlated and searchable by lesson, State Standards and depth of knowledge. Teachers can use the program reporting tool within the "Personal Math Trainer" to learn where their students struggle and where they excel. With the "Personal Math Trainer" teachers can target individual needs with prepopulated intervention assignments and build



lessons with content that is designed to help individual students, as well as student groups.

(2) The Renaissance STAR testing will help to identify at-risk students in both reading and mathematics by providing interim data that can be used to set goals, respond to student needs, and make informed decisions to personalize student learning. This program enables teachers to measure students' progress and pivot instruction as needed. STAR assessment can be administered at the beginning of the school year, midyear and throughout the year, and at the end of the year. At the beginning of the school year, STAR assessments inform teachers how students are performing when compared to expectations. In less than 20 minutes of testing time, teachers will see which students are meeting benchmarks and which students need intervention. Tests given at midyear and throughout the year measure students' progress and pivot instruction as needed. These tests inform teachers regarding proficiency, intervention, progress, skill, etc. The end-of-year test measures proficiency and celebrates students' mastery of the Illinois state standards. They enable teachers to prepare for continued growth next school year. STAR reading measures students' understanding of multiple reading skills across a variety of domains. These domains include: (A) Foundational Skills (e.g. Phonics and Word Recognition, Inflection Ending), (B) Reading with Comprehension (e.g. Key Ideas and Details, Craft and Structure) (C) Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity (D) Reading Informational Text, (E) Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, and (F) Vocabulary Acquisition

(3) Another measure the district will take to identify students at risk of failure is to analyze a detailed summary of the State assessment, currently IRA

(4) The Middle School offers seven of their "Assist Classes" for qualifying students, an after-school tutoring program is funded by a "Healthy Community Investments" grant, before-school and after-school tutoring is provided by Middle School teachers.

Migrant/Homeless/English Language Learning students are addressed through the following plan:

(1) Immediately enroll the homeless child, even if the child is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment. (2) Immediately contact the school last attended by the child to obtain relevant academic and other records. (3) Maintain records for the homeless student that are ordinarily kept for students according to District policy and procedure on student school records. (4) Ensure each homeless student is provided services comparable to services offered to other students including:(a) Transportation, (b)Educational Services, (c)Educational programs for children with disabilities and education programs for students with limited English proficiency, (d)Programs in vocational and technical education, and (e) School nutrition programs.

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

---

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

This without a doubt has been the most difficult year to keep our students engaged and motivated. The best thing we have done is to stay positive and to make sure our students and teachers know that we are all in this together. Throughout the school we have tried many strategies to help with COVID exhaustion for our staff and our students.

Throughout the year our staff has had meetings about what we can do as a school to help create and keep a positive environment in our school. We have allowed mask breaks throughout the day. During this time our teachers will take their students outside to spread out and take their mask off. We also schedule random dress up and hats days throughout the year. We also include our E-Learning students in this as well. We also allow our E-Learning students to participate in our sports programs if they choose to do so.

One part of our COVID plan this year was to conduct temperature checks at our student entrances. This was a perfect opportunity to put a positive staff member to welcome our students into the building to help start everyone's day off with some positivity. We used two retired teachers who had excellent personalities and great relationships with our students to be the welcoming person. Our parents really enjoyed talking to these people also.

Our teachers were also a major player in having a positive school environment. The Stress and Trauma Center offered free services and held meetings for our staff to make sure that they were doing ok as well. Our administration also held numerous meetings on how we could keep our teacher morale positive. We had certain days we would cater lunches, had days where we let them go home early, gave them plenty of time to work in their rooms during in-service days, and gave them surprise days off on our remote learning days.

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

We are very fortunate to have a community that really supports our school district. We are also lucky to have a health department and youth stress and trauma center located in our town. McDonalds has also opened their restaurants to us for nights to gather with the families of our students.

Our Eldorado Health Department has been very instrumental in providing excellent resources for our students' and their families. They not only provide counselors for our students but they also provide counseling and counseling resources for our families. Through the partnership with the health department, we were able to split the cost of a family resource developer. This person is someone who has dealt with crises with their own children and can relate to a lot of the things our families are dealing with regarding their own children.

The Health Department has also catered their programs to meet the needs of our students. We started a Signs of Suicide program in our building a couple years ago that address the signs of poor mental health and the causes. The Health Department hired and provided the educator for this program.

The Stress and Trauma center in Eldorado has also been a great resource for our students and their families. Just this year, the Trauma Center and our school district applied for a grant called Project Aware. Only three school districts in the state received this grant and we were one of them. This grant provides the funding for high risk counselors to be placed in each one of our buildings. The access to this has been very beneficial to the improvement of behaviors in some of our students. It has also built trust between our school and our families.

McDonalds is another business in our community that really supports our district and provides a bridge for our parents and school district. For several years our school district has scheduled a night where our staff works and waits on our families in our community for a couple of hours. This gave everyone an opportunity to see each other in a different light. This night allowed us to build positive relationships with our families.

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

Our teachers are also a major player in having a positive school environment. Keeping our staff in a positive mind set through this is extremely important to our administration. Our administration held numerous meetings on how we could keep our teacher morale positive. We looked at many ways to make sure our staff knew that they were valued and cared about.

One of the ways we decided to treat our teachers was with food. One of our local restaurants once a month would cater in some food for them. It was a very minor suggestion but our teachers seemed to appreciate it. We would also have special food days in the cafeteria where our teachers got to pick the menu. This was fun for the students as well.

We were also determined to find extra time for our teachers to work in their rooms during in-service days. One of the major complaints was that our teachers needed more time. So whenever we would have scheduled in-service day, we would allow our teachers to work in their rooms. This was another little gesture that let our staff know that we understood the stress they were under. We also had built in remote learning days when we would let our teachers go home early on.

Our Stress and Trauma Center also played a role in our teacher morale. They would set up meetings or schedule times for our teachers to attend so they talk through whatever they needed to. They would also set up rooms for our teachers to meet together as a form of fellowship. All of this was done anonymously.

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

Building relationships has always been at the core of our school district's leadership philosophy. Our school strongly believes that if we will first build positive relationships with our students, the performance of our school will take care of itself. This philosophy starts at the top and then trickles down to our leadership team and staff.

The role of the principal is to create a climate that fosters learning and creates a vision for success. Our students need to feel like what they are doing is important and will lead to future success. You must have high expectations and goals for your students to achieve success. We also set high expectations for our teachers. The trust between our teachers and administration is key to our success. The administration creates the school environment and then gets out of the way to let our teachers teach.

Our teacher leaders played a vital role in the improvement of our school. In our building, we have two teacher leaders. We have one from our ELA department and one from our Math department. They run our curriculum meetings and help ensure that all of the teachers are pulling in the same direction. They do an excellent job communicating and concerns or needs to or administration.

Another important part of our improvement and success has been our school board. This year has been the most challenging yet rewarding years that we have had due to the pandemic. Our administration put a return to school plan together very early on and our school board has trusted that plan. Anything that our administration and staff has needed, our school board has supported.

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

Our teachers do a wonderful job of teaching and responding to any culturally responsive topics that may arise. A lot of the topics can be difficult to talk about but it's very important that we let our thoughts, opinions, and feeling be known. We started a current events class about six years ago and this has really helped us to be able to have open intelligent conversations about the world and the things going on around us. I feel like this has encouraged trust amongst our staff and our students.



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

---

This year has been unlike any other that any school district has ever faced. In August, we welcomed back students and staff that have been through the loss of loved ones, loss of income, as well as many other unseen challenges like isolation due to the impact of COVID. In the end, we believe that there will be a better understanding and appreciation between our school district and our community.

Our school district knew that we had to address those needs before we could worry about how our students were doing in the classroom. Early on in the pandemic we set up bus routes and pickup locations that would help provide food to all of our students in our district. It was amazing to see our cooks and other staff members work together to prepare and deliver these meals.

Our school district also applied for and was awarded a grant to provide extra support and counselors in each building. This was essential to providing the social-emotional help that our students needed. Every student now has access to not only our school counselor, but also substance abuse counseling and high-at risk counseling. These counselors also created a bridge for the families of our students to seek family counseling if needed as well.

We also put our federal funds and technology grants to good use. We purchased 700 Chrome books and 90 hotspots for our students and families. We also scheduled professional development for our teachers to make sure our students were trained properly on how to use them. We used Google classroom and the first two weeks of school, all we did was train our kids in case we ended up having to go full remote. Fortunately for us we never did, but knowing that we were ready in case was a huge weight lifted off our shoulders.