

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 11601 West 181st Avenue
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Lowell State IN Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 46356-9404

County Lake County

Telephone (219) 696-7541 Fax (219) 690-2616

Web site/URL https://lp.tricreek.k12.in.us/ E-mail lstoelb@tricreek.k12.in.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. Andy Anderson E-mail andy.anderson@tricreek.k12.in.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Tri-Creek School Corporation Tel. (219) 696-6661

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. Doug Ward
(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):
- 3 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 5 TOTAL

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

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

- Urban (city or town)
- Suburban
- Rural

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

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	30	36	66
1	43	35	78
2	20	29	49
3	23	30	53
4	41	28	69
5	32	35	67
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	189	193	382

*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 % Asian
 - 0 % Black or African American
 - 11 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 88 % White
 - 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: 5%

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

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	9
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	9
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	18
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	364
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.05
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5

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

Spanish³

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 24 %

Total number students who qualify: 92

8. Students receiving special education services: 13 %
48 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>3</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>10</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>2</u> Developmental Delay | <u>12</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>3</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>31</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>3</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 4
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	16
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.	11
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 24:1

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

Required Information	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Daily student attendance	96%	97%	96%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2020.

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

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.
 Yes No

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

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

All members strive to create an environment that **INSPIRES** a passion for learning and **DEVELOPS** responsible and caring citizens who are **EQUIPPED** to **ACHIEVE** their goals.

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.

LPE has been open for in-person learning all year. Our families had the choice of returning in person or enrolling in our virtual academy. The families in our virtual academy can choose to return to in-person learning at the end of each nine week grading period. Throughout the year, we have had two weeks, one after Thanksgiving and one after Christmas, where we have chosen to close the building and switch to at-home learning in order to allow additional time after the holidays. During this time, students followed their normal schedule and teachers taught the lessons through Google Meet. If a students had to quarantine or isolate, students complete assignments through Google Classroom and meet with their teachers virtually for instruction, sometimes this is done with a live stream, other times it is done through an individual online meeting.

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

Lake Prairie Elementary is a 365-student K-5 public school in Lowell, Indiana, about 50 miles southeast of Chicago. Lowell is a distinctive, rural town where evidence abounds of its pioneer roots, as well as its proximity to metropolitan areas. It was founded in 1852 by Melvin A. Halsted who built a flour mill, which was pivotal to the economy of south Lake County. His legacy is still evident as citizens work together to keep Lowell family-oriented, with annual events celebrating the area's past and future including the oldest Labor Day Parade in Indiana.

Lowellians are also very invested in the town and school system's academics, athletics, and extracurricular activities. You will often hear the phrase "Red Devil Pride" (RDP) throughout Tri-Creek School Corporation; a testament to our belief in who we are and what our students can accomplish. Parental and community involvement, and support of our children, in sports, 4-H groups, parks programs, churches, libraries, performing arts, academic bowl teams, and more, demonstrates the value we place on their development and success.

Lake Prairie is proud to be part of Tri-Creek School Corporation (TCSC), which covers 178 square miles, encompassing the southern third of Lake County. TCSC includes one high school, one middle school, and two other elementary schools. Lake Prairie Elementary was opened in 1959 and originally served grades K-8. Before the 1999 school year, the school building was renovated to add classrooms and expand existing spaces to accommodate a growing population.

As a Lake Prairie family, all members strive to create a safe and nurturing environment that inspires a passion for learning and develops responsible, productive, and caring citizens who are equipped to achieve their goals and dreams. This mission cannot be achieved without looking at the student as a whole - emotionally, socially, and academically.

Building relationships and character is an essential piece of what we do at Lake Prairie. We cannot achieve academic success without starting from within each student. Our principal takes great pride in being very hands-on and personally connected and available to our students, staff, and parents. Our student support advisor (SSA) provides consistent social-emotional learning support by way of lessons, counseling sessions, and school-wide activities and initiatives. Our teachers and staff work hard to educate and nurture our students, and one another, with great attention and focus. Our students know we care about them as we strive to build positive character in their hearts and minds. Each month, students focus on a character trait which is focused on daily in character education lessons in all classrooms. Posters throughout the building remind students of the trait, and each month ends with special recognition of one student from each room who exemplifies it.

In order to better build character, we made a shift two years ago and began adopting principles from the Responsive Classroom. This approach is student-centered, evidence-based, and designed to create safe, joyful, and engaging classrooms and school communities for both students and teachers. One key piece of the approach is for every classroom to start their day with a Morning Meeting, which involves four components: greeting; sharing; group activity; and morning message. During this time, students are able to discuss and practice character traits, life lessons, mindfulness exercises, and other SEL topics. Meetings are also a great time to broach any concerns in the classroom. Since implementing Morning Meetings, our classrooms feel like cohesive communities. Kids feel welcome. Discipline issues have decreased.

Another area that has helped support our academic success is the adoption of new curriculums. When searching for the right fit, we wanted materials that would require our students to complete rigorous tasks. In math, we wanted more than the basic memorization of facts and concepts. What we've adopted helps encourage inquiry and exploration, so students attain deeper levels of understanding. In reading, we needed a curriculum that would help create more consistency. With its implementation, our students are reading rigorous grade-level passages, as well as passages at their reading level; continually writing about their reading, and investigating multiple genres to help develop a greater passion for reading.

In correlation with encouraging growth, we've redefined how our many students who receive Title I services are identified. We've restructured how they move through the tiers of intervention and how to determine when services are no longer needed or when to move forward with an educational evaluation. A team of teachers, the SSA, and the principal, identified times throughout the year when students were assessed using NWEA. This data serves to help decipher who needed additional support. For those students, goals were developed and monitored regularly. The Title I teacher and classroom teachers closely collaborated to provide relevant support. Lake Prairie grade-level data teams met weekly with the Title I teacher rotating through each team to discuss the students she serves. Closely monitoring the students' data has allowed more targeted interventions to occur. It has also helped ensure the students with the greatest needs were receiving the correct level of support.

Lake Prairie takes pride in providing an atmosphere where students and adults want to come each day to learn and play. We are committed to doing everything we can to meet the needs of every student. Despite the challenges of COVID and virtual learning, we press on together - Tiger Strong.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

In literacy, Lake Prairie Elementary follows the scope and sequence of the reading curriculum, Wonders. In this holistic curriculum, teachers focus instruction on a firm understanding of genre. Weekly lessons are then provided to highlight the comprehension strategies that fit within that genre. In each unit, students read from several texts which are connected through a central theme. This theme is driven by an essential question. Classroom discussion allows the teacher to foster speaking and listening skills based on their noticings. Leveled readers can be used to scaffold independence with the genre and weekly skills. In writing, students analyze an expert model to generate a piece of writing that matches the genre they are studying. Teachers have access to intervention lessons that match skills on which the students are working. The classroom climate encourages and inspires teaching the whole child.

Teachers collaborate with their grade-level teams to ensure the fidelity of this program. In these collaborations, teachers discuss literacy data to meet the needs of specific students. The data dashboard within the program helps to see specific strengths and weaknesses for the class. It was easy to transition to e-learning since many teachers utilized the online components prior to at-home learning. All texts are available online. Teachers can assign books, skill practice, vocabulary, word study, and/or assessments as needed. The curriculum provides leveled readers for the students to access. The teachers have access to all grade-level materials to support remediation and enrichment.

At Tri-Creek, we adopted the Everyday Math curriculum because it has a scope and sequence that spirals through all grade levels and aligns with state standards. Teachers have received extensive training on the utilization of Everyday Math curriculum to ensure fidelity. It is our belief that students need to develop a strong number sense, develop efficiency in solving problems, and fluently evaluate the reasonableness of their answers. Teachers use unit assessments, NWEA data, IXL, ESGI (kindergarten only), exit tickets, and informal assessments to guide instruction and fill in any gaps along the way. Teachers also use extended response and open-answer questions to challenge students to think at a deeper level. Teachers utilize this data to differentiate instruction. Small groups are used, as needed, to either excel or remediate students. This allows the opportunity to target individualized instruction.

Teachers incorporate supplemental programs to enrich and remediate student learning in both reading and math. IXL is used to close the academic gaps. Some staff members choose to use the skills plans in IXL that correlate directly with our math series. This is useful in providing an opportunity for students who need extra practice to work at home and at school. Other staff members use the diagnostic portion of IXL to target precise skills students are ready to learn. These programs allow for independent practice at each student's level. Teachers also use Headsprout and MindPlay to reinforce gaps in students' foundational skills. Instructional aides are used to help support students who struggle with specific skills. Our curriculum has intervention lessons which make it easy for the instructional aides to teach these lessons.

Since the spring of 2020, Lake Prairie has needed to make some adaptations to curriculum and instruction. During e-learning and virtual learning, teachers have adapted instruction by making videos to share with the students on Google Classroom. Assignments have been made tech-friendly to ensure the best learning environment possible. For example, some of our math assessments have been created using Edulastic and/or TeacherMade. Students have used more online games to strengthen their math skills. Due to Covid, individual manipulative bags have been given to students to use throughout math instruction so students are not sharing items.

Our science curriculum contains interactive lessons that engage students in scientific inquiry, STEM activities, problem-based, and hands-on learning. Blended print and digital experiences engage students and support Next Generation Science Standards. Interactive science includes strong literacy connections for learners at all levels.

Our social studies curriculum is based on themes outlined in the Indiana Academic Standards. Our kindergarten begins by learning how to live and learn together. First grade focuses on home and school

environments. Local and regional communities are studied in second grade. The learning continues into third grade with the local community as well as communities around the world. The history of Indiana and its place in the nation and the world is highlighted in fourth grade. Our fifth graders take their learning on to the history of the founding of the United States. This learning occurs through explicit instruction, cooperative learning, including group and family projects, field trips, research activities, and guest speakers.

Social studies and science learning standards are addressed and assessed in both our literacy instruction as well as our content area times. This cross-curricular approach was chosen to provide a deeper understanding of concepts and to become more authentic and engaging for our students. Integrating our content areas into literacy is also helpful during online learning and time constraints in the classroom. When faced with online learning, teachers were able to shift traditional learning and assessments to technology-based platforms. A variety of assessments are utilized including performance tasks, open-response questions, multiple-choice questions, demonstrations, and presentations.

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:

To expand students' horizons and help them develop skills outside the core curriculum, all of our kindergarten through fifth grade students participate in one of five specialized classes each day for 45 minutes. These classes are physical education; art; music; media lab; and character education.

The goal of physical education (PE) at Lake Prairie is to promote the value of physical activity and build skills that encourage a healthy lifestyle in our students for years to come. Through individual practice and small-group instruction, students learn about an array of games and sports using a skills-based curriculum. Team activities, like our annual Field Day, where students demonstrate learned skills together and enjoy the day outdoors alongside teachers and staff, promote relationship building, confidence, and inclusion. Students also engage in yoga, which focuses on mindfulness and strengthening mental health.

Promoting appreciation and cultivating creativity are the main goals of our art program. In primary grades, the focus is small motor skills, color theory, and learning to work sequentially. The older grades dive deeper into art history and learn about famous artists and their styles. This scaffolded approach helps develop a well-rounded student who will be prepared for continued learning. We also offer an after-school Art Club where we take on more extensive projects. This is a great opportunity for students with a propensity for art to further develop their abilities and be challenged.

Since music is an essential part of human expression, all Lake Prairie students will learn age-appropriate music fundamentals. Students take time each week to listen, move, sing, play instruments, and develop music literacy skills. Music vocabulary is also developed. Performing for special events such as a Christmas Sing-Along and Grandparents' Day have become traditions at our school. Fourth and fifth graders are also invited to audition for Nifty Notes, our elementary honor choir. It is our goal to prepare our students for performing groups such as band and choir at the middle-school level.

During media lab, our media specialist focuses on nurturing a love for reading in our students, which she models through her own passion for books. She chooses engaging materials to share that corresponds with curriculum, current events, and character traits and keeps our library very up to date. In addition to focused literacy time, students enjoy exploring and problem-solving during Makerspace. While this has been challenging during COVID, our media specialist has provided individualized materials for students so they can continue creating. A wide variety of science, technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM) tools are provided for student use, from building blocks, to cardboard, to a 3D printer.

Character education is designed to address the social-emotional learning (SEL) of our students in a very intentional way. During character education, students participate in instruction that corresponds with the Indiana Department of Education SEL competencies and is also focused on the character trait of the month. These developmentally appropriate lessons incorporate engaging videos, songs, and activities, as well as practical application steps for daily use.

In order to equip students to succeed in our technology-driven world, they utilize software programs such as Learning.com, Tynker, and Code Spark during the week. These programs help build foundational skills like digital citizenship, keyboarding, and coding languages. Students also have the opportunity to be part of a Coding Club starting in kindergarten, which teaches them how to code a variety of robots including Ozobot, Dash & Dot, and Mini Sphero. Students in grades three through five can try out for one of our robotics teams, where they further their coding skills, learn to build and program robots, and participate in competitions.

3. Academic Supports:

Each classroom at Lake Prairie is allotted 25 minutes each day, per the subject area of reading and/or math. This instruction time, referred to as RTI, is devoted to students identified as needing small group, academic instruction. In August, December, and March, all students are assessed using the formative assessment, NWEA. Students are provided with data they can use to identify their strengths and weaknesses in their learning, set goals, monitor their learning progress, and serve as instructional resources for their peers.

After close analysis of the NWEA data, Title I instructors provide differentiated instruction using Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Literacy Instructional Curriculum and readiness activities using McGraw-Hill Everyday mathematics. Also, using the NWEA data, students who are at the 40th percentile or lower receive a MindPlay license and are expected to work on it for 150 minutes a week to reinforce reading skills.

The Tri-Creek School Corporation high ability (HA) program is meant to challenge students to reach their potential by providing a wide range of opportunities for students who are identified as needing services in math and/or ELA. The program is designed to meet the intellectual, social, and emotional needs of identified students. Currently, Lake Prairie has cluster classrooms in grades kindergarten through fifth. These classes are taught by teachers who have been trained in gifted and talented educational practices.

The HA curriculum consists of advanced placement, standards-based coursework. Our ELA curriculum is Junior Great Books, shared inquiry, an active and collaborative search for answers to questions of meaning about the text. It is a research-supported method of learning that promotes deeper thinking through reading, discussing, and writing. It focuses on higher-level thinking such as inferring, analyzing, and comparing various genres of literature. We have two online enrichment programs available, Redbird Language and IXL Language. The HA math curriculum, Redbird Math, is an inquiry-based program that uses real-world math applications and provides students with complex mathematical reasoning opportunities.

Our HA teachers offer Genius Hour in the classroom. Genius Hour is an approach to learning built around student curiosity, self-directed learning, and passion-based work. In Genius Hour, students are in control, choosing what they study, how they study it, and what they do, produce, or create as a result. As a learning model, it promotes inquiry, research, creativity, and self-directed learning. It allows students to explore their own curiosity through a self-manifested sense of purpose and study while within the support system of the classroom. Students connect with teachers to plan, peers to produce, and experts and community members to establish a sense of purpose for their

work. Students in HA will often present their Genius Hour projects showing what they learn to other students throughout the school.

The continuum of services provided to Lake Prairie Elementary students who have an IEP (Individualized Education Program) will best meet the student's needs related to academic, behavioral, and emotional support. Services and supports are provided within the general education classroom or within the resource room setting by the paraprofessional or the special education teacher. All students with a special education diagnosis participate in the general education classroom instruction to the fullest amount possible to meet the least restrictive placement. Individual student progress is measured on a regular basis to monitor the progress and growth of the students with making progress towards meeting their individual goals.

Lake Prairie English language learner (ELL) students receive pull-out and push-in services based on their World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) score. A certified ELL teacher focuses on areas of vocabulary, phonics, writing, grammar, and reading comprehension. The pull-out program uses a variety of academic resources including Team Toolkit (Continental Education), hands-on resources, and Zip Zoom (Scholastic), among other resources to address both grade-level and language-level needs. These programs focus on all four domains of language development - reading, writing, listening, and speaking. All teachers with ELL students in their classroom are provided with an Individualized Learning Plan to identify any necessary supports and accommodations needed for ELLs to succeed in the general education classroom.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Keeping students engaged and motivated is essential to supporting their academic, social, and emotional growth. This is especially important this year due to COVID restrictions in the classroom. At Lake Prairie, students feel a sense of belonging from the moment they arrive at school as they are greeted by school staff in the car drop-off line and at the bus doors. During morning announcements, the principal recognizes students for both academic and character achievements. Students are engaged and feel ownership in their behavior as the school recites a positive behavior pledge every morning. Birthdays are announced and continue to be celebrated with treats parents can purchase from the cafeteria, as outside treats aren't permitted. The principal also personally delivers birthday bracelets.

While classrooms look different this year, with students all facing forward and at least three feet apart, teachers and leaders have found ways to keep them engaged socially and emotionally. Each class begins the day with a Morning Meeting, which helps the students feel a sense of togetherness. Students get to know and encourage one another by engaging in a greeting. They also watch short video clips to reinforce character traits, share their thoughts regarding topics provided by our student support advisor (SSA), and engage in fun activities together. Even during times of at-home learning, Morning Meetings continued each day using Google Meet. This enabled students to still interact with one another and start their day in a positive manner.

Teachers have also found ways to keep students engaged academically during this pandemic. Due to not being able to share items, teachers have made manipulative baggies for each student to keep at their seats so they can still participate in all activities. Classroom libraries are still in use with a few extra guidelines, such as sanitizing hands before getting a book to read and quarantining returned books for three days. Reading groups are still possible by setting a timer for less than 15 minutes, spacing students, and using small lap desks to complete work on the floor. When learning at home, students participate in mandatory Google Meets for reading and math instruction. Teachers also provide an extra meeting for students' questions.

In regard to college and career readiness development, we participate in College Go Week in September and Career Ready Week in April. Lessons utilize books, games, and Learn More Indiana magazines. Students also enjoy learning style surveys and career interest inventories, as well as Spirit Week festivities.

Due to COVID restrictions, we weren't able to provide as many enriching extra-curricular activities and teams as we usually do, such as Kinder Coders, Spell Bowl, and Art Club. We did, however, find a way to have our Robotics Team, Math Bowl, and Student Council, by meeting in larger settings and limiting group numbers.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Parent and community engagement is, and has always been, a top priority at Lake Prairie. Even in the midst of a global pandemic, we strive to keep our families involved and invested in our school and their child's education. Lowell, Indiana, is a small town, and Lake Prairie has that "family feeling" where the staff, families, and community are all stakeholders in the success of our students.

Clear and consistent communication with our families is a vital part of keeping them connected. Beyond emails and weekly newsletters, the principal, student support advisor, and teachers utilize a variety of communication avenues. Class Dojo has become a consistent communication tool we use on a daily basis. It's an effective way for our school to send out important information and reminders, as well as to celebrate student successes. Classroom teachers have found Class Dojo to be an easy way to instantly keep parents in the loop regarding their child's behavior, academic progress, class news, and even to share a picture or video of the wonderful learning taking place in our school every day! Likewise, our Lake Prairie Facebook page allows our parents and community to be in tune with our students' experiences and stay connected as a school family.

A great success we experienced in regard to engaging families was not allowing COVID to shut down our annual parent-teacher conferences. These conferences are a wonderful way for teachers to directly speak to parents about the successes and struggles of their children. Keeping parents informed about the specifics of their child's academic progress helps bolster our students' achievement. For the first time ever, we held these meetings virtually. It was a huge success with 97.5% of families in attendance! The feedback from parents was overwhelmingly positive. Many parents reported they felt more comfortable in this setting, and we noticed many more fathers participating.

While COVID might have deterred our PTO-sponsored family events this year, such as the Daddy/Daughter Dance and Mother/Son Event, it didn't stop us from moving forward with fundraisers and working with our community to give back to others. We collaborated with a local church to distribute the makings for a holiday dinner for those in need. Student Council also held a drive for Valentine's Day to collect items for a local care facility and had a Spirit Week to raise money for Riley's Children's Hospital. Making positive connections in our community is high on our priority list.

Along with health and physical challenges, COVID brought social and emotional challenges. We are very proud of our community partnership with Crown Counseling, a local counseling firm. Having this resource provides additional support for those students with needs beyond what our school counseling program provides. We also continue to partner with the Geminus Community Partners program, Fair Haven, and Department of Child and Family Services for training and support regarding child safety and wrap-around programs for families.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

When we all went virtual, teachers were put in a position to teach in an unprecedented time. As this was anything but a normal situation, teachers and administrators came together to share ideas and strategies. Teachers found online resources, such as FlipGrid and Dojo Portfolios, and shared how to use them with students and with other teachers. We divided up specific areas and made instructional videos that taught content, then shared with the other teams, which lessened the workload. After our in-person learning resumed in the fall, some students went into quarantine. Teachers came together to figure out the best way to conduct Google Meets while teaching the in-person class.

Teachers have been supported throughout this school year as we have moved from at-home learning in the spring of 2020 to in-person learning at the start of the 2020-2021 school year. Safety measures were immediately put in place to ensure the safety of teachers, students, and all staff. Administrators made a list of protocols to follow. This included social distancing, all desks facing forward, a mask requirement for everyone, seating charts, sanitizer and water bottles provided, and a no-visitor policy in the school, among many other procedures. Feeling safe upon returning to school was essential this year, and the administration ensured a safe environment for all.

At Lake Prairie, we utilize weekly data team meetings with our grade-level teams. Each meeting has a focus that aligns with our strategic plan and is centered around common data with a goal of student achievement. We have wonderful professional discussions, create action plans for targeted groups of students, share resources and ideas, and collaborate well. We also have opportunities to align with grade levels above and below to help foster vertical alignment.

With each curriculum adoption, decisions on what is adopted are left to a committee composed of administrators and teachers. We have a strong say in what publisher we will go with and how it will fit into our strategic plan and into our classrooms. We have always been provided with ample professional development prior to implementation as well as during. Teachers are consistently asked by administration how we are doing in each area and if we feel that we need further support from our publishers. If the need is there, professional development is provided. Having such input into these decisions helps maintain that professional culture.

To further build professional culture, the element of caring is needed. The staff enjoys helping one another

and celebrating special moments and festivities together, as well as showing support in difficult times. Pre-COVID, we had quarterly potluck luncheons, treat weeks, and a holiday dinner. Despite COVID, we still show appreciation for each other through PAWS notes and personal gestures. During spring quarantine, our principal and SSA delivered flower pots to recognize the teachers' outstanding efforts. Around the holidays, our principal organized a Secret Santa gift exchange and bought individualized treats. Little things make a big difference.

4. School Leadership:

A transformational leadership style guides Lake Prairie Elementary School. The leadership team is continually looking for ways to grow and improve in order to best meet the needs of all students and see them succeed. This is our ultimate goal. Administrators, our student support advisor (SSA), and three teacher leaders work together, along with the rest of the staff, to find innovative ways to meet it. Teachers' individual needs are supported in order to make them a reality.

Our approach is very student-centered and inspires effective teaching and learning throughout the building. The principal works to ensure policies and expectations are aligned with academic standards, support student achievement, and contribute to school improvement. She is visible throughout the day, greeting students, spending time in the cafeteria, and visiting classrooms for regular observations.

As an instructional leader, the principal sets the tone by supporting curriculum and district initiatives. This spreads to the instructional teacher leaders, who are recognized as exceptional teachers throughout the building. Colleagues regularly seek their guidance regarding next steps and student needs. The SSA assists with student behavior, plans engaging character lessons, and focuses on the social-emotional needs of all students. We truly employ a team approach.

The principal and SSA ensure policies and expectations are clearly communicated to all stakeholders and are always available to speak with them regarding concerns. Decisions are made and supports are provided with careful consideration of not only student needs, but also those of parents and staff. The principal takes pride in scheduling, which allows teachers to maximize instructional time and improve student learning. Staff members value this and appreciate the structured work environment.

The COVID-19 crisis has caused the leadership team to confront numerous changes. It's been a very challenging time, and our goal is for our students and families to feel minimal stress. When it began, thankfully, Lake Prairie was already using iPads and had experience with e-learning. However, everyone knew that alone wouldn't be enough. Teachers quickly worked together to learn new techniques and create a completely virtual learning environment. Our administration, teacher leaders, technology experts, and the district curriculum director provided training, support, and resources to ensure solid teaching would continue. Throughout virtual learning, teachers were able to openly communicate their concerns and questions.

During the summer, the leadership team worked on modifying procedures so all students could return to the building safely in August. The district administration put structures in place and then relied on teacher leaders to decipher possibilities and problems we might face. Daily procedures were adjusted, while social distancing and mask-wearing guidelines were introduced through videos, which conveyed a consistent message for all students. The collaborative effort helped alleviate the nervousness for family and students, which was our main objective. Teachers, led by the administration and leaders, believed educating in person was vital for students' academic and social-emotional needs. We still do believe this, and we're proud our efforts have been successful.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

At Lake Prairie Elementary, we strive to ensure diverse needs and backgrounds of students, families, and staff are being recognized and met. In order to promote equity, cultural awareness, and respect within our classrooms and school, we work to maintain an environment where

communication, collaboration, and community are key. This requires a comprehensive approach, built on a foundation of trust, which begins on day one.

From the beginning of the school year our students are taught, and reminded of, our PAWS values daily. They learn that in order to be Tiger Strong, we must band together to Practice safety; Act responsibly; Work hard; and Show respect. These values, which are at the heart of our social-emotional learning (SEL) programs, are consistently reinforced. This helps foster an atmosphere of acceptance and equity in many areas. Staff regularly celebrates the demonstration of PAWS values, both individually and as a class effort, through rewards that promote connection and allow all to be involved. Every student is held to high expectations and encouraged to reach their full potential, which enables students to support and inspire one another. Since we know emotional and social wellness and growth are crucial to academic achievement, character education is a part of our specials rotation; all students participate every week. Small group and individual interventions, both academic and SEL related, are also utilized to help bridge gaps.

In regards to cultural awareness, our SEL lessons and Morning Meetings provide opportunities to expand our students' worldview by learning about other languages, cultures, races, and abilities. Around the holidays, we explore celebrations and traditions from different cultures. We recognize Disability Awareness Month through engaging displays and activities from our LRE facilitator. We provide learning opportunities during Black History Month, and we plan to engage in National Hispanic Heritage Month this fall. Our SSA, who is bilingual, provides exposure to the Spanish language and cultural insights, as well as interpretation and translation assistance across the district. Our districtwide English Language Learner (ELL) program offers meetings and support for our students and families, even virtually during this time. Opportunities we hope to bring back next year include Family Game Night and our end-of-the-year Family Dinner, where community partners address pertinent topics, including college resources and assistance programs.

In the midst of racial and political tensions in our nation, we are empowering and educating students regarding issues like racism, bullying, and empathy. We place a strong emphasis on what it means to be an Upstander, and champion those who live it. We celebrate Unity Day and The Great Kindness Challenge each year, highlighting the importance of not only standing up, but standing together. Throughout the year, teachers use sources such as NEWSELA, Kids' News, and our Wonders Curriculum to provide enriching topics and inspire deeper conversations about current events and social movements that affect us all. Our aim is to continue cultivating a climate of kindness, where everyone is welcome.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

This unprecedented time of COVID has presented a need for consistency in the midst of chaos. As a result, there exists a confidence in continuing with what we know works, intermingled with pauses to make sure it still does. At Lake Prairie Elementary, through the years we've discovered there's great success and pride in growing a school family in, and outside of, our building. We've celebrated student successes together with hallway parades and fifth-grade marches. We've included families in quarterly award assemblies. We've asked parents to work alongside us to create memories and support academics. We've invited community helpers to educate our students about fire safety, dental hygiene, environmental stewardship, and more. Keeping students connected to one another, and to trusted adults, has always been important. Now, it's essential. Maintaining a solid foundation of connectedness has been the most instrumental practice in our ability to continue successfully educating and supporting students since school closures began in March 2020.

With the shift to virtual learning last spring, there was a need to creatively carry our in-person connections into the online learning world. This could only be adopted through teamwork. Teachers contributed greatly in many ways. They continued Morning Meetings, so classes could still start each day together. They held open Google Meets where students could visit with one another, as well as ask for help. They also took time to send and deliver cards, letters, and goodies to their kids. Our principal and student support advisor (SSA) created weekly morning announcement videos. Our SSA held whole-classroom lessons and individual counseling sessions via Google Meet. Several staff members contributed to "We Miss You" and individual story-time videos, so students would remember we care. Weekly meals were delivered to families who couldn't pick them up. We truly did our best to be a consistent presence in students' lives, even while apart.

Upon returning in fall 2020, it was almost like we'd never left. Throughout our building, beautiful student-created art and encouraging signs created by our art teacher lined our hallways, as is our usual practice. Giant "Tiger Strong" banners, alongside posters with CDC safety reminders, showed us we had old and new expectations to consider. Yet, we've still celebrated and grown together. We've had to make some celebrations virtual and classroom-based - community helpers, our holiday sing-along, our awards. But, as the year progressed, we added bulletin boards draped with Mind Play and IXL certificates honoring hard work. We have Student of the Month pictures applauding positive character. We heard announcements recognizing student dedication and success. Incredibly, our Tigers still thrive in spite of the challenges COVID has brought into our lives; maybe even because of them. We believe our students know they matter to us, and that matters to them. We've been reminded that when students feel like they belong and someone cares, they're more equipped to handle life's challenges - and learn.