

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 3820 68th Street SE
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Caledonia State MI Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 49316-8384

County Kent County

Telephone (616) 698-8982 Fax (616) 698-2117

Web site/URL https://www.calschools.org/dutton-elementary/ E-mail veitchs@calschools.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. Dedrick Martin E-mail martind@calschools.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Caledonia Community School District Tel. (616) 891-8185

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 Mrs. Marcy White
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

Date _____

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

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

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

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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

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

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

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

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 5 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 8 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	20	23	43
1	34	23	57
2	21	21	42
3	29	20	49
4	24	22	46
5	31	24	55
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	159	133	292

*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
 - 3 % Asian
 - 3 % Black or African American
 - 2 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 76 % White
 - 16 % 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: 7%

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	11
(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)]	22
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	302
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.07
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	7

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

Spanish, Nepali, Vietnamese, Bosnian, Gujarati, Kinyarwanda

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 45 %

Total number students who qualify: 132

8. Students receiving special education services: 19 %

56 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. All students receiving special education services should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <u>1</u> Autism | <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>3</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>3</u> Developmental Delay | <u>11</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>25</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>11</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: 8

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.	12
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	2
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	5
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

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	94%	95%	95%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

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

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

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

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

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

Dutton Elementary prepares students to make a positive difference by empowering and equipping all students to achieve their best, ensuring the highest quality of learning.

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.

In the 2020-2021 school year Dutton Elementary has provided face to face instruction for the students. Throughout the year, some classrooms have been quarantined for up to 14 days. During the quarantine, students received virtual instruction from their classroom teacher. Students with Individualized Education Programs (IEP's) also received virtual instruction and services. Students who received interventions also received intervention support virtually from interventionists. Caledonia Community Schools had two days of virtual asynchronous instruction on November 23 and November 24 when the number of COVID cases for staff and students were increasing.

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

Dutton Elementary School is focused on serving families and the needs of the whole child. To this end, the staff is compassionate and diligent in providing support to each student that calls themselves a “Wildcat,” the moniker of the school. This support not only relates to serving the social and emotional aspects of the individual, but it also connotes meeting the rigors of high academic standards.

Dutton Elementary is a Schoolwide Title 1 school nestled within the greater Grand Rapids area, approximately 15 minutes south of the city. In detail, it is located on the north end of Caledonia near M-6 and is one of five elementary schools in the school district. Caledonia, as a community, continues to grow, requiring the district to grow as well. In fact, over the past 25 years, Caledonia has transitioned from a small rural school district with a few elementary schools, one middle school and one high school, to a district with multiple township-based elementary schools, two middle schools and two high schools. Throughout all of this change, the heart of Dutton continues to be on the individual, the individual family, and the individual student.

Over the past five years, the school leadership team has made a concerted effort to bolster the academic success of the students. In this time, they have adopted a common curriculum across the core subjects and set common expectations for staff members. To build sustainability, classroom teachers, interventionists and the principal meet every six weeks to analyze student data. As trends arise, building and grade level goals are implemented. They are monitored by way of data notebooks at the meetings. Student level data also presents opportunities to service the needs of the individual. Should a student show a deficit area relative to the curricular standards, goals and plans are established commensurate to the depth of the need. As with the building and grade level goals, student data is closely monitored to ensure positive learning experiences.

The aforementioned data notebooks are an integral part of the goal review process. Students meticulously document their progress toward an established goal. And when students show academic, behavior, or social-emotional growth, they are uniquely celebrated. Videos, showcasing the area of growth, are created and shared for the school community to see. In addition, the principal (or designee) hosts reward celebrations!

Aside from the videos, Dutton Elementary has provided other incentives to promote a positive learning community. Staff members, in conjunction with families, have come together to foster a cohesive plan encompassing behaviors that align to academic achievement. The expected behaviors are defined within a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) matrix highlighting the school moniker, WildCATS. Here, the C stands for Cooperative, A equates to Always Respectful, T is for Trustworthy, and S stands for Self-control. The matrix is posted and reviewed routinely. In fact, it is often a point of emphasis by the principal during morning announcements. As students demonstrate the expected behaviors, they are given “I Caught You” tickets, which can be turned in each week for pre-determined incentives. Though, students can also earn a larger item at the end of the year if their names are selected.

To increase positive behavior recognition, and include family involvement, Dutton has created Golden Ticket postcards. These postcards, highlighting the CATS acronym, are mailed out each week for students that exceed the articulated expectations in one or more areas of the matrix. Students that receive the Golden Ticket in grades Kindergarten through second are sung to by the office staff and offered a small treat. Students in grades three through five are inducted into the Principal’s 100 Club, giving them the opportunity to write their name on the 100 board. Once five students are connected in a row, they earn a Mystery Motivator with the principal. In both the lower and upper grades, student tickets are sent home, drawing attention to the defined behavior.

COVID-19 has presented the Dutton Elementary staff with the freedom to reflect on past practices and adjust to meet the family and student needs. Against all odds, Caledonia elementary schools have remained in a face-to-face instructional model for the entire school year. This has resulted in a significant change from face-to-face instruction to a virtual instructional option. Families assessed their situations and made appropriate determinations accordingly. At the start of the school year, 57 students chose virtual instruction. During the semester change, families were given the ability to change instructional formats. Forty families

chose to return to the familiar format of face-to-face instruction. When asked why, many of the families referenced the positive atmosphere promoted by the staff and students as well as the secure structure of the environment at Dutton Elementary.

Because of the work ethic of the staff, and the support of the school community, Dutton Elementary was recognized by the State of Michigan as a Reward School in 2018-2019. To receive this award, a school had to meet specific criteria points, including all A's or above average scores for each academic category. This is one example of the success Dutton Elementary has experienced as a result of placing families and student needs at the center of decisions.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

Dutton Elementary follows all the adopted standards by the State of Michigan. For Reading, Writing, and Math, Dutton has implemented the Common Core State Standards. However, for Science, the school follows the Next Generation Science Standards and for Social Studies, the school follows the Grade Level Content Expectations. To facilitate instruction relative to the standards, Dutton Elementary has made three Tier I (i.e., core instruction) curriculum resource purchases over the last five years to ensure a viable curriculum. Caledonia’s school district purchased Battle Creek Science units for science, Core Knowledge for language arts, and Ready Math for mathematics. The latter two, Core Knowledge and Ready Math, have Tier II instructional components as well.

This is Caledonia’s third year using Core Knowledge for English Language Arts (ELA). Caledonia teachers have been diligent in creating common pacing guides, common assessments, and interventions that align to core instruction. In Kindergarten K), first, and second grades, Core Knowledge consists of two curricular focal points: skills and knowledge. The skills portion emphasizes phonemic awareness and phonics instruction. The knowledge strand is intentionally written at two grade levels above the implemented grade; and the primary instructional mode is based on a read aloud. Knowledge is intended to build the students’ vocabulary and provide background information. Each classroom in grades K-2 has two hours of uninterrupted time for ELA instruction. Third grade is a transition year where skills and knowledge blend together. The third grade daily schedule also includes two hours of ELA instruction. Instructional models in fourth and fifth grades emphasize fluency, comprehension, and writing. At these grade levels, the daily schedule includes 90 minutes of uninterrupted instruction. Caledonia teachers have participated in three years of professional development to make sure they are supported with this new curriculum.

As a district, Caledonia is in its first year of Ready Math implementation. A group of teachers and administrators spent a year in curriculum review before choosing Ready Math. This year, our Professional Development (PD) has been centered on Ready Math. During the PD, classroom teachers and interventionists have been equipped with information to facilitate program components. Caledonia Schools administration looks forward to seeing great math growth in the years to come. Classroom teachers have a minimum of 60 uninterrupted minutes for math instruction.

Our Battle Creek Science Units provide our students with a great deal of hands-on learning. The curriculum includes significant writing components. As such, the teachers implementing Battle Creek Science Units are able to guide students in demonstrating knowledge through writing.

In addition to the district wide curriculum structures, the staff at Dutton Elementary has adopted Thinking Maps as a supplemental instructional element. Research shows that over 75% of information that is gathered comes visually. The four remaining senses encompasses the other 25% of information. Dutton Elementary School decided to implement eight common thinking maps in every classroom. Overall, the maps have saved the staff instructional time as they give a clear indication as to what the students understand about the revealed content. After Dutton added the common use of thinking maps, teachers were eager to dive into the book, *Making Thinking Visible* by Ron Ritchhart, Mark Church, and Karin Morrison. The staff has learned how to embed these thinking routines into the already-established thinking maps as a platform to capture and extend student learning.

Dutton Elementary, as well as the Caledonia Community School District as a whole, have targeted Social Emotional Learning (SEL) for students. The district purchased Sanford Harmony as our SEL curriculum. Teachers are expected to have two whole-class lessons each month that relate to a monthly theme. Parents are sent out an informational letter each month letting them know about the conversations that are occurring in school. Student Support Specialists then have individual or small group meetings with students to help them dive in further, if the need exists. Teachers also have daily classroom meetings and use “Meet Up, Buddy Up” cards to get the students interacting and practicing key social emotional and social-cognitive skills.

Dutton Elementary has been focusing on a common approach to writing instruction. Our staff uses The Write Structure, by Lindsay K. Veitch, in combination with thinking maps to create a solidified structure for writing instruction with common language. Dutton teachers have also worked on range finding using the Michigan MSTEP rubric for writing. These efforts have led to tremendous growth in student writing. In fact, a 5th grade student from Dutton Elementary School recently won the Write Michigan Contest. While this is only one example, it does highlight the strong writing culture at Dutton Elementary.

In combination with core instruction, Dutton Elementary has a curriculum protocol for all tiered evidence based interventions under the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). Students, who receive Tier 2 interventions, are progress monitored every bi-weekly, and Tier 3 students are progress monitored weekly to ensure adequate growth. If growth is not being made, protocols are followed to either change interventionists or change the curriculum being used for instruction. This process is well laid out by the district and tightly followed at Dutton Elementary.

Earlier in the year, because of the unknown associated with COVID dynamics, teachers created Google Classrooms for their class. The teachers have used this as a hub to host their daily lessons. Classroom teachers worked closely with the principal to make sure that if a student, a classroom, or the building was quarantined, all students and staff were prepared to pivot to virtual instruction. Teachers practiced having Google Meets with their class while in face-to-face instruction and practiced presenting material through Google Meets. The teachers have adapted instruction with a variety of techniques including, but not limited to; using two screens to monitor engagement and project materials simultaneously, using a Learning Management System for face-to-face and virtual students, using iPads to get immediate feedback, and self-recording small group instruction.

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

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Students at Dutton Elementary stay with their primary classroom teacher from the start of school until the end of the day, 8:50 AM to 3:45 PM, for grades K-3. In fourth and fifth grades, students switch teachers for science and social studies daily. With the arts, known as “Specials,” students either travel to the identified classroom or the Specials teacher pushes into the classroom. Our Specials are defined as: Physical Education, Spanish, Art, and Music. All Specials teachers have been trained in thinking maps and thinking routines and use them frequently in their class. Aside from these, the students attend Library for 30 minutes each week. The following information references more details about many of the aforementioned Specials.

Dutton’s Physical Education teacher works to incorporate thinking maps and intentional vocabulary instruction within daily lessons. In the past, the teacher has written grants, and accompanied with the support of the P.T.O., has received 20 bows and arrows to provide our students in third through fifth grade with an archery unit. This is one of the students’ favorite units! In the future, the staff plans to develop an after school Archery Club for our Dutton Elementary students.

The Art teacher also incorporates thinking maps and thinking routines into lessons. One thinking routine that is used frequently is See, Think, Wonder. Students are able to look at a piece of art and state facts about what they see, followed by what it makes them think about. This thinking routine is rounded out by students developing questions and wonderings related to the piece of art. Dutton students have also made art to donate to nursing homes to help encourage the adults during our time of social distancing. Dutton students were highlighted on a local news station, Wood TV 8, for their kindness in thinking of others.

As a way to ensure alignment across the district and to prepare for a variety of instructional formats,

Dutton's Spanish teacher has focused on developing rich content with the help of other district Spanish teachers. The district Spanish program created a website for all students to access. While face-to-face, thinking maps and thinking routines are used daily in her instruction. Engaging games continue to be a goal to keep students actively engaged in Spanish education.

Several after school opportunities exist for students. Lego Robotics has been popular at Dutton. Many students have been recognized and won awards in their competitions in past years. The Caledonia Community Resource Center also provides enrichment activities for students. In addition, students have the opportunity to perform in a musical every year. Further, Caledonia Community Schools also allows fourth and fifth grade students to participate in orchestra. This opportunity takes place before school with the high school orchestra teacher.

3. Academic Supports:

At Dutton, the Free and Reduced numbers of qualified students continue to rise. Yet, success is still defined as helping all students continue to grow in their learning through personalized instruction so that each student meets their individual potential. To this end, Dutton Elementary strives to help the students reach their potential by implementing Explicit Instruction by Anita Archer, a targeted and evidence based practice proven to help students despite obstacles that may exist. One of the focus areas has been to maximize student response rates within the lessons.

Dutton Elementary has three benchmark data meetings: Beginning, Middle and End of year. The assessments used for the benchmark meetings include, Acadience and NWEA. In addition to benchmark data meetings, every four to six weeks classroom teachers meet with the Principal and our Intervention Specialist to look at data for every child. The data, coupled with teacher input and observations, allows our team to group students into small groups that match their individual needs. For students who are below benchmark, data is progress monitored weekly or every other week, and then analyzed. The teacher, group size, and resources used, are considerations when determining student needs.

Students above the benchmark work on extensions during their 40-minute CATS Reading block. Kindergarten and first grade students work on reading longer passages and developing answers to text-based questions. In 2nd grade, students analyze text using Thinking Maps. Third, fourth and fifth grade students use a Thinking Map based book club to capture their connections, wonderings, and further questions. These students then engage in rich discussions about the books they are reading. One map of particular use is the Retell Flow. It enables students to home in on the main idea while also stating a prediction and three details in sequential order.

Dutton Elementary offers additional support for students with learning disabilities and houses the district's Cognitively Impaired (CI) program. For students with disabilities, additional time and support is directly tied to the students' individual education programs (IEPs) goals. Students with cognitive impairments are doing wonderful things in the building as well. The main goal is to have students in the CI program push into the general education classroom as much as possible. To assist in this, the CI program is supported by a peer-to-peer structure. In this program, students with special needs build close relationships with their peers in their grade levels. Both the CI and general education students do a remarkable job of working together to support one another.

Dutton's English Learners (EL) also receive support through our MTSS model of support. They may either receive intervention or extension support during their CATS block, depending on grade level and academic or behavioral data. English Learners also receive additional support from the EL teacher on a weekly basis. The main focus for this instruction is vocabulary work. Dutton's EL teacher works hard to pre-teach students before they receive core content instruction from their homeroom teacher. As a result, Dutton continues to see terrific progress on summative

assessments, such as the Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress (M-STEP) and the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA).

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Many visitors to Dutton Elementary School describe it as learning-centered, full of joy. Thus, the students experience a blend of high expectations, positive energy, kindness, and care. To mobilize this experience, the theme at Dutton Elementary is to make a positive impact on the world and spread kindness. Operating with this theme allows students to think beyond themselves and encourages affirmations of others. It also highlights for everyone the simple reality, all of us have the ability to make a meaningful contribution and uplift those around us.

At Dutton, each day begins with a Principal greeting. The students enjoy an enthusiastic smile as they exit vehicles to enter the building. Once inside, students are welcomed by a host of other friendly faces, including the Custodian, Office Staff, and Teachers. The agreed upon practice is for Teachers to be present and available outside the classroom doorway as students enter the learning environment. Schoolwide announcements occur daily. The Principal creates and emails the video announcements to teachers. They often include a quote that connects to Dutton’s CATS behavior matrix and/or social emotional learning goal. The video announcements allow the teachers to view them at a time appropriate for their students; it also enables students learning at home the ability to stay engaged with their school.

It is important to the Principal that he remembers each child’s name. This requires dedication and determination as there are 292 students. Yet he understands that knowing names is a connection point and makes students feel included. As the Principal passes students in the hallway, on the playground, or interacts with them in another environment, he addresses them by name and reminds them that they are important.

Whether face-to-face or online, student engagement is the first priority when striving for student success. The school has identified three common thinking routines to increase student engagement. These specific engagement routines are used in all classrooms including, PE, Art, Music, Spanish, and academic intervention blocks. Common language across the building helps students stay engaged in the content and pushes them to think critically.

Additionally, having students set goals is a life skill and an important part of the Dutton Elementary culture. These annually created goals, centering on math and reading, allow students to invest in their own learning. They also spur intentional conversations at home, for once they are written out, they are further developed at home. Students earn incentives should they meet their individual goal(s).

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Timely and consistent parent communication is critical. To this, Dutton Elementary staff sends out weekly information, highlighting important or upcoming events, and student growth celebrations. Dutton Elementary School also has its own Facebook page. It serves as a secondary source of content for the events or happenings at Dutton Elementary.

Parent surveys are conducted annually. The results continue to show that students and families feel welcomed and supported by the Dutton Elementary staff. To engage parents, we intentionally give voice to our parents through the membership on our School Improvement and Title I teams. They play a vital role in planning for success. Parents are also active in the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO).

Community partnerships play a significant role for Dutton Elementary. Ada Bible Church has been a substantial contributor to our ability to offer personal connections to students and families. In detail, they provide volunteers to our Kids Hope and Hand2Hand programs. Kids Hope is a mentoring program for our students. Because of COVID, this program has taken on an added benefit. The implemented protocols has enabled mentoring to continue using Google Meet as a platform. Thus, students have been able to continue their relationships with their mentor. Hand2Hand is a food distribution program for students to make sure they have food during non-school days (e.g., weekend or scheduled breaks). Ada Bible Church also supports

and encourages the Dutton staff throughout the year. More specifically, they provided several luncheons, kind notes of encouragement, and thoughtful gifts.

In addition, Ada Bible Church partners with Dutton Elementary School for a summer reading program titled, 'Reading at the Mill.' On Wednesday evenings in the summer, teachers, the Principal, and volunteers from Ada Bible Church go to a local underprivileged development to read and play games with the students. Over 50 Caledonia students live in this area, many attending Dutton Elementary School. During the scheduled event, teachers read one or two of their favorite children's stories and then share the reason the book is special to them. Once they have completed their read aloud, Scholastic Books donates hundreds of books for each child to choose for their home collection. The goal is to help the students build a library of books at home. After the students have chosen their book, they play games, and have a provided snack. On the last night of 'Reading at the Mill,' Ada Bible provides a grilled meal for students and families to enjoy. After eating, students are able to choose a backpack filled with school supplies as well as a brand new pair of gym shoes. It should be noted that the church also operates a site-based school supply drive for Dutton Elementary School.

The local Fire Department is another valued partner for Dutton Elementary. They complete a fire safety lesson with all kindergarten, first, and second grade students. The Fire Department also participates in our annual Field Day celebration. One of the highlights of the event, because the Fire Department is on hand, is when they shoot water into the sky, making it 'rain' on the students.

Moreover, the fire department plays a large role in Dutton's fifth grade celebration. In detail, they drive a fire truck near the school, and close the road to allow the students to cross the busy road in front of Dutton Elementary. Once across the road, the students are treated to grilled hamburgers at the Fire Station.

While receiving a lot of support, Dutton Elementary School also seeks to give back to the community. Last year, the school had a coin drive challenge to buy the Ada Bible staff lunch as a way to show our appreciation for their volunteer efforts. We are also seeking to contribute food to the local food pantry through our March is Reading Month challenge. The theme for the month is 'Reading Makes a Difference.' And to be clear, the goal is to make a difference in our community, which, of course, as a staff, we hope transcends far beyond the month or even the school year.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

According to polling and survey data, Dutton Elementary School Teachers feel valued because of the safe, family-friendly climate. Moreover, they see significance in the way that academic expectations are communicated and celebrated.

As it relates to celebrations, all employees have bought into the Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) plan for staff members. Each staff member hands out "staff bucks" (personalized notes focusing on compassion) to each other. Once received, the staff bucks are displayed on the doorway of the office or classroom. At the end of the year, they are collected and put in a raffle for PTO-sponsored prizes, such as gift cards. The Principal takes pride in reading the staff bucks aloud, highlighting the care of fellow employees. It should be noted that even last year, after the school had closed due to COVID, employees virtually met to connect, support each other, and give out "staff bucks."

Professional Development (PD) is vital to the success of Dutton Elementary. These staff learning opportunities are designed to be timely and relevant to teachers. In the spring of 2020, when the school suddenly closed, teachers were provided with a two-week PD plan to scaffold the learning of teachers so they could adequately use Google Classroom. Teachers were supported with additional learning opportunities that helped create seamless asynchronous lessons. The support staff also went through training to prepare for virtual student meetings, including how to best deliver high quality interventions via Google Classroom.

As was the case last year, Dutton Elementary staff again devoted PD time to learning about virtual instruction. However, with several months of learning in hand, the learning was dedicated to increasing

academic expectations and rigor. In detail, the teachers delved further into Google Classroom and Google Meet functions so that they could easily pivot should the need arise. Teachers and students practiced holding Google Meets to ensure readiness. Thankfully, Dutton Elementary School was not required to close its doors in full during the 2020-2021 school year; though, several classrooms have had to go to a virtual setting because of quarantining students. The aforementioned practice paid off however, as the staff has received several positive comments about how prepared the students were when going virtual.

4. School Leadership:

Strong leadership is a vital part of the achievements at Dutton Elementary, and it starts with the Principal. While the role of the Principal in an elementary school can take many forms, none is larger than the support of the students, families, and staff members. At Dutton, this is taken to heart, as the Principal is tireless in his commitment toward each stakeholder group with programs or initiatives. Planning, coordinating, and at times, leading professional development (PD) for families and staff members are quintessential examples of his dedication. PD opportunities include Thinking Maps, requirements associated with Title I programming, elements of Read by 3rd Grade legislation, and safety measures all populate recent PD experiences for both groups. To help facilitate these experiences, the Principal creates content, builds PowerPoint slides, and develops videos.

Engaging in the process of communicating and upholding academic success is crucial as a principal. The Principal at Dutton understands this reality, and as such, takes an integrative approach to instructional leadership. Not only does the Principal meet with teachers and support staff to share and receive ideas, but the Principal also helps cultivate expectations associated with academics. Primary articulation methods include videos, emails, and letters. With students, in particular the Principal produces school-wide progress reports in the form of a Screencastify. The students enjoy seeing how they have contributed to the grade level and school-wide goals; and as you might imagine, look forward to seeing what they have earned as a result. For the past year, the students met their middle-of-the-year reading goal and earned a game of kickball with the Principal.

Moreover, the Principal seeks to understand the stakeholders so that they can be better supported through external agencies or internal support structures (e.g., programming or personnel). Through the process of better understanding, stumbling blocks are frequently uncovered. By engaging deeply, the Principal is able to connect the stakeholder with commensurate assistance. Thus, the Principal takes a genuine interest in the success of the people frequenting Dutton.

The Principal encourages students, families and staff members with notes, comments, and videos. While the content and delivery changes from stakeholder to stakeholder, the messages are primarily focused on supporting others toward the collective success of the school.

Leadership is more than one person. Teachers are a critical component of the Dutton Leadership Team. Working together, the Principal and the teachers focus on establishing, monitoring, and updating school improvement goals (SIG). Academic and social-emotional supports are features of the plan that necessitate ongoing conversations. By adopting a common philosophy of holding each other accountable, the Team has molded a structure that aligns all stakeholders toward continuous improvement.

Student safety is an extremely important aspect of school functioning. Keeping this in mind, Caledonia Administrators worked throughout the 2020 summer to create a Return to Learn playbook for the district. After the district-wide focus, principals were tasked with customizing the playbook to meet the needs of the buildings. By working with other leaders, the Dutton Principal created a plan for small group and whole class instruction. With the former, students were cohorted appropriately. For the latter, students' workstations were distanced six feet or more. Caledonia Administrators continue to meet several times a month to discuss the Return to Learn playbook, which is posted on the district web page.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Caledonia Community Schools has incorporated diversity and equity training into the five year strategic plan for all staff. Diversity, Belonging, Equity and Inclusion (DBEI) training was originally scheduled to begin in 2022, but due to the social justice movements across the country - as well as feedback from the staff - it was decided to begin professional learning this school year. Through the work of various district employees, training was introduced to collectively engage staff in a level of understanding about implicit bias, and equally important, how that plays out in the school system.

In particular, Dutton Elementary staff members expressed an interest in the student body and the diversity that exists. Resulting lessons enabled students to share information about their heritage. This has proven to be a powerful way for students and staff to cultivate and foster a meaningful, trusting relationship with each other and with students. As the staff invests in learning about each child as a whole person, there is a deeper understanding about the needs that exist, which allows for a better, more adaptive response. The staff is proud of the groundwork they have established to celebrate the uniqueness of each individual, though knows more work lies ahead.

Dutton Elementary staff has set high expectations for all learners. If a student is falling short of meeting his or her potential, the staff tailors a plan to scaffold their learning. Teachers and support staff meet to adjust plans as needed. They often take inventory of who they can encourage as a way to foster a higher success rate, keeping the needs of the individual at the forefront.

Should behavior or social-emotional needs become apparent the Support Specialist responds. This service is available for students, families, and staff. Each Wednesday, the broader Support Team - made up of district social workers and counselors - produce a "Wellness Wednesday" email with encouragement and wellness strategies. In more detail, short uplifting videos are created highlighting staff members throughout their unfolding life journey. If called upon, the Dutton Support Specialist follows-up with stakeholders.

In addition, the Dutton Librarian and Art Teacher work together to construct monthly themes targeting cultural awareness. Examples of the themes include: National Hispanic Heritage month, American Indian Heritage month, Black History month, and Women's History month. Varying holiday celebrations are also incorporated into the themes. Within each month, the Librarian selects texts for read-alouds that harness the natural energy from each heritage. The Art teacher infuses projects that further illuminate the main components of the themes.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

More than anything else, the strategy that encapsulates academic success at Dutton Elementary is investment. Dutton Elementary School is comprised of men and women and boys and girls who are fully devoted to the collective vision. Suffice it to say, each stakeholder group is involved in the learning process, knowing that everyone plays a role in the advancement of the whole.

Since the 2020 COVID related closure, teachers, support staff and the Principal have committed time and resources (in addition to some sweat and the possibility of a few tears) toward distance learning. This has required making difficult decisions, decisions that mean sacrificing easier short-term fixes for more time-intensive, yet more advantageous long-term solutions. As an example, shortly after the closure, the Principal set-up a meeting with the reading paraprofessionals to discuss intervention programming. Rather than simply implementing an online program, the team identified the logistics of creating authentic and specific lessons for students in need of text-based support. The team had to isolate the resources per identified deficit area and then go through the process of acquiring training for live virtual instruction. This decision was challenging in the beginning, but proved to be well worth the initial allotment of time and resources, as the initial disruption lasted much longer than anticipated. Students were the beneficiaries as they actively engaged in the live instruction, ultimately growing their academic abilities.

The Dutton Elementary teachers have contributed countless hours toward their learning through grade level and school level teams, staff meetings, and professional learning. The contribution seemed to enter a different phase in the Spring of 2020, not in terms of added significance; rather, they were more focused on a different instructional format - synchronous and asynchronous teaching. Daily lessons, recorded or live, had to be aligned and concise in order to facilitate learning to the degree of collective proficiency. The Google platform - Classroom and Meet - was effectively used to broadcast learning when students were not face-to-face. Pre-learning (i.e., practice sessions prior to needed use) proved to be extremely helpful when students, or classes, had to be quarantined due to COVID.

It could be said that the staff went above and beyond, though the staff would not necessarily consider that to be accurate because they are simply responding to the culture, the heart of Dutton. During the early stages of COVID 2020, the staff committed to connecting with students and families. Notes of encouragement, positive videos, and home visits were commonplace. In addition, the staff answered academic questions and/or concerns related to instruction, school operations, and safety protocols. The Principal met with teachers, support staff, students, and families during all times of the day, including evenings and weekends. This level of investment maintained through the 2019-20 school year.

Nothing could more clearly define investment more than the safety and security measures implemented during the pandemic. Starting in the spring, and maintained throughout this school year, guidelines were established, communicated, and upheld, so that students could focus on learning. The staff met over the summer to refine what was learned from the end of the 2019-20 school year. That learning culminated in a Return to Learn playbook, which captured all aspects of a student's school day. This level of detail, while challenging to amass, communicated the depth of the care for student safety. Zoom meetings were offered to staff at several junctures to ensure deep understanding of the changing operating landscape at Dutton Elementary.

Being mindful of the social-emotional toll is not lost on the Principal as a recent initiative suggests. A few months ago, the Principal introduced "Sweets for Sweets." Each time a student earned an "I Caught You" ticket for doing something sweet in the classroom, they received a piece of candy. This has served as a simple gesture to bridge any uneasiness and promote positivity in spite of the societal instability. Other incentive measures (e.g., Golden Tickets and secret motivational notes) have also been established as a normal part of practice for the Principal. The target for these communications is to showcase student success in terms of academics and behavior.

The summation of these endeavors is love. That is the strategy that directs the beliefs and actions of the Staff at Dutton Elementary. They exhaust their talents for the students and families because they know their

investment will make a positive difference in the community. Many of the actions put in place since March have been previously considered or implemented. However, the pandemic honed the staff member's collective energy because the need was more evident than ever before. So it is that they have mobilized one strategy, investing in the act of love for the sake of the students and families.