

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[X] Choice

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

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

School Mailing Address 1723 Okemos Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Mason State MI Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 48854-9401

County Ingham County

Telephone (517) 676-6499 Fax (517) 676-1978

Web site/URL https://www.masonk12.net/ E-mail barnums@masonk12.net

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. Ronald Drzewicki E-mail drzewickir@masonk12.net
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Mason Public School District (Ingham) Tel. (517) 676-2484

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. Kurt Creamer
(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):
- 4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 6 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	3	2	5
1	36	37	73
2	47	32	79
3	37	33	70
4	39	36	75
5	38	39	77
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	200	179	379

*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
 - 0.3 % Asian
 - 0.5 % Black or African American
 - 6.9 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0.3 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 86.5 % White
 - 5.5 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2019 - 2020 school year: 3%

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

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

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	3
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	10
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	13
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	399
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.03
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

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

Albanian

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 27 %

Total number students who qualify: 101

8. Students receiving special education services: 12 %
45 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>8</u> Autism | <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>1</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>1</u> Developmental Delay | <u>11</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>18</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>4</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.	19
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.	10
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 19:1

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%	96%	98%	95%	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.

Mason Public Schools is committed to academic excellence in a safe environment where students develop critical thinking skills, are empowered to succeed, and are encouraged to serve their community.

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.

Alaiedon Elementary School began the 2020-2021 year operating with all students attending in a distance learning model. Students logged in online for a full day of instruction with their teachers using a district-issued Chromebook, and hot spots where needed. A few weeks into the school year, Alaiedon established Learning Labs for students with poor internet connection, at-risk students, and parents needing assistance with childcare. Simultaneously, special education students returned to in-person instruction four half-days per week. In mid-October, all elementary students had the option to return in a hybrid HyFlex format (cohorts two days per week) or remain online. Shortly after, the special education programs transitioned to four full days of in-person instruction. From mid-November to the end of January, students returned to distance learning. The hybrid hyflex model was again implemented from January 25, 2021 until March 22, 2021. Currently, all Alaiedon students have been offered the option to return to four full days of in-person instruction, while distance learning remains an option for all students this school year.

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

PART III - SUMMARY

Alaiedon Elementary School is located in Mason, Michigan. Mason, Michigan is in a rural area south of Michigan's capital, Lansing. Mason has a population of approximately 8,500 people. Our city consists of a mixed workforce of both blue-collar and white-collar jobs. Overall, Mason is a city of professionals, sales and office workers, and service providers. The education level of Mason's citizens indicates that 33.31% of adults have a bachelor's degree or higher. The per capita income in Mason in 2018 was \$32,986, which is upper middle income relative to Michigan and the nation. The people of Mason belong to a variety of racial and ethnic groups. The greatest number of Mason residents report their race to be White, followed by Black or African-American. The most common language spoken in Mason is English.

Mason Public Schools has an enrollment of approximately 3,225 students. There are five school buildings in the district, including one pre-K through kindergarten building, three elementary buildings that house grades one through five (1-5), one middle school, and one high school. The average class size across the district is 18 students per classroom.

Mason Public Schools students are assigned to Alaiedon Elementary primarily by residence/district boundaries. A small percentage of out of district Schools of Choice students attend Alaiedon Elementary if space is available. Alaiedon is a building that contains grades 1-5 with a student population of approximately 374 students. Thirty-three certified staff provide classroom and special education services to students on a daily basis.

In the Fall of 2019, Mason Public Schools launched an all-encompassing LEVEL UP campaign to support all our learners' needs from pre-K through grade 12 in our district. Under the LEVEL UP umbrella, one can find individualized supports and interests for everyone. Through a partnership with Lansing Community College (LCC), on-site courses led by LCC instructors were available for Mason Public School students. Some of the courses offered included, Beginner Robotics for grades two and three, Battling Robots, Jr. for grades four and five, Battling Robots, Sr. for grades six through eight (6-8) and Java Programming for Beginners for grades nine through twelve (9-12). These courses started in January of 2020, and 11 of our Alaiedon students were enrolled, while many other students across the district also participated.

As a district, we worked diligently to offer LEVEL UP enrichment courses led by our own Mason Public School teachers as well. We were planning to launch these after-school enrichment classes on March 17, 2020. Due to the COVID-19 closure, we were unable to provide this opportunity, but look forward to offering it in the future, when it is possible. Additionally, we had plans to offer LEVEL UP in the summer, which had to be put on hold as well. Fortunately, our LEVEL UP umbrella is returning, as we find ways to offer enrichment opportunities to our students and still follow all the recommended Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance for effective mitigation strategies.

At Alaiedon Elementary, we are fortunate to have an extraordinary Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) that works in partnership with our school staff to provide the very best for our students. The PTO focuses their efforts on fundraising to be able to positively support the additional motivational activities that can make elementary school such a wonderful place for everyone. Alaiedon's PTO supports events including author visits in March, the Mileage Club in spring, grade level field trips, and end-of-the-year sponsored activities for our grade five students. In addition, they coordinate an extravagant STEAM night that is a school wide favorite each year. Finally, our PTO supports our teachers each year by providing them with an annual classroom budget to use to spend on supplies they need.

In Winter of 2018, our staff selected a school slogan. Learn, Lead, Succeed. For each word, we identified action steps that we would be responsible for implementing so that each and every one of our students at Alaiedon would truly Learn, Lead, Succeed. Under the word Lead, our staff committed to organizing a student council. Any student in grades three, four, or five was encouraged to run for their class representative position to become elected as a member of the school's student council. This was a very positive process that encouraged students to step out of their comfort zone and into a leadership role within our school to have a voice in opportunities to offer their peers throughout the school year. One example was

their effort as a student council to provide smoothies as a reward students could select from on their classroom reward menu. Another activity they led was ensuring that our school grounds were free of litter.

Since the COVID-19 closure of schools, Mason Public Schools has directed work through the district's Reimagining and Reopening of Schools committee that includes administrators, teachers, and parents to reinvent how we can best offer an exemplary learning community even amidst global pandemic.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

Since March 2020, Alaiedon’s instructional focus in both mathematics and literacy has been targeted to the essential standards, identified through district grade level collaboration. In order to support the student’s knowledge required in advancing grade levels, essential standards were selected based on their foundational importance and vertical alignment in each grade. The teachers tailor instruction to focus on these essential standards and use summative assessments to identify skills mastered by students. Assessments have been modified to focus solely on the essential standards which are now administered online across all grade levels. Students are offered tiered and differentiated instruction based on their needs through materials below, at and above grade level.

The math program used at Alaiedon Elementary, Go Math!, has been in place since 2016. It is aligned to the Common Core State Standards. Lessons are designed with the 5E model of instruction; Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, and Evaluate. Students receive direct explicit instruction, use manipulatives, explain their thinking, and engage with mathematics at a high level. Daily formative assessment occurs to gauge student learning and guide instruction. Each unit of study is summatively assessed and learning is evaluated at the standards level. Many teachers at Alaiedon conduct small group instruction in mathematics to support the individual needs of every student. The online components of Go Math! have been useful resources during online instruction.

Alaiedon Elementary adopted the Wonders Reading program, which is aligned to the Common Core Standards as our English language arts (ELA) core curriculum in August of 2017. This program features weekly formative assessments and summative unit tests to assess student’s knowledge and understanding of the Tier 1 instruction. In addition, Wonders offers a variety of instructional approaches to meet the various needs of students, including online instructional support, face-to-face instructional materials, small group materials, and intervention materials that target on level, above level and below level abilities to support student needs. Prior to March 2020, Alaiedon aligned instruction to follow the entire scope and sequence of the Wonders program with all-encompassing formative and summative assessments.

Mason Public Schools adopted Amplify Science in Fall of 2020 for grades K-8, and Alaiedon was slated to implement this in grades 1-5. Amplify Science blends hands-on investigations, literacy-rich activities, and interactive digital tools to empower students to think, read, write, and argue like real scientists and engineers. Our school utilized the distance and hybrid learning resources called Amplify Science@Home created for use during the pandemic to support virtual science instruction. Our teachers have received training in Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). The framework for K-12 science education is based on specific practices, crosscutting concepts, and core ideas. The objective is for students to turn to these practices to support their learning and demonstrate their understanding of science and engineering. This mode of science instruction has made a lasting impact on our students.

Social studies instruction follows the recently revised Michigan Grade Level Content Expectations for this core subject. For each grade level, The Arc of Inquiry and Social Studies Process and Skills are identified. There are four social studies disciplines: civics, economics, geography, and history. Our grade level teachers collaborate to create meaningful lessons that follow the grade level content expectations and provide our learners with a diverse and rich understanding of these four social studies disciplines.

Formative and summative data in both literacy and math is analyzed weekly during our Professional Learning Communities (PLC) time. Grade level teachers evaluate the data to determine modifications to Tier 1 instruction, and to identify students who need additional intervention and enrichment. Khan Academy is also utilized for additional math support. Likewise, both the reading and math programs offer online tools, games, and resources to support each student’s varying learning needs.

In addition to program specific formative and summative assessments, Alaiedon participates in benchmark testing three times per year in grades 1-5 for both literacy and mathematics using aimswebPlus. Upon completion of benchmarking, grade level teachers meet with literacy coaches, multi-tier system of supports

(MTSS) staff, and other specialists to identify what would best fit students' needs in the form of interventions and enrichment for each student and create "What I Need" (WIN) groups. In grades 3-5, students also participate in state standardized testing called the Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress (M-STEP) annually.

Alaiedon engages in a data review process three times per year where benchmark data, M-STEP data, perception data, and behavior data are reviewed. A problem-solving process is followed and decisions about school improvement, priorities, and goals are made. Alaiedon has a building leadership team that supports this work and participates in shared leadership to implement decisions.

Further modifications to curriculum and instruction during the time of school closures have included aligning lessons to real world situations, and an added focus on problem- and project- based learning. Self-paced instruction, self-monitoring, and learning hubs were initially used. Alaiedon then transitioned to a more blended approach of synchronous and asynchronous instruction, with teachers always being available to students during school hours. Currently, 75% of students at Alaiedon attend in-person and 25% attend virtually. All teachers use a HyFlex model to simultaneously instruct their in-person and distance learners. Technology support, professional development, coaching, and resources have been increased dramatically this year to support the successful implementation of hyflex for the teachers, students, and families.

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:

Alaiedon offers a rich variety of specialized classes in grades 1-5. For physical education (PE), grades 1-4 receive instruction two times per week, while grade five participates in PE once per week. Students work to demonstrate competency in a variety of motor skills and movement patterns. They also learn to apply knowledge of concepts, principles, strategies, and tactics related to movement and performance. In addition, students learn to demonstrate the knowledge and skills to achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical activity and fitness. They are taught to show responsible personal and social behavior that demonstrates respect for themselves and others. Finally, students learn to recognize the value of physical activity for health, enjoyment, challenge, self-expression, and social interaction. In February, the annual event, Kids Heart Challenge, brought awareness to the importance of taking care of your heart as students jumped rope as a class to raise funds for the American Heart Association.

Art is another curriculum area that each grade level attends once per week. In this course, students learn how to properly use materials, techniques, and media to communicate ideas. They work to learn the Elements of Art and create art in various mediums. Finally, they select and prepare artwork for presentation at our annual Spring Art Festival.

Music is offered twice per week in grades two and five, while grades one, three, and four attend once per week. The reason for this is that in both grades two and five, the students present a music program for their families each year. The focus in all grades is on singing or playing melodic and rhythmic instruments, independently and in a group. Students learn to read and notate music, identify music symbols, musical terms, and musical instruments by sight and sound.

Spanish is a special that every student in grades three through five has once per week. In this course, students learn to communicate to exchange information, interpret written or spoken language, present information to an audience and describe cultural practices and products. Cinco de Mayo is a beloved celebration that our Spanish teacher hosts every year, which everyone looks forward to.

Library is the most recent special we have added for our students. Each grade level attends library once per week. Our media specialist supports the Tier 1 ELA curriculum during this time by partnering with the grade level teachers to support essential standards. Media specialists organize a fun and motivating March is Reading Month each year. This year, districts across the state collaborated to offer a virtual author visit focused on diversity with nationally recognized authors presenting their Caldecott winning books.

Prior to March 2020, students in all grades had the opportunity to participate in enrichment instruction through performing arts (plays), research projects of their own choosing, and STEM and STEAM investigative instruction with an instructional support staff member or a classroom teacher. In addition, the students were offered the opportunity to participate in an after-school robotics program run by Mason High School and other enrichment programs run in conjunction with Lansing Community College. This has continued on a much smaller degree through the restructuring of our current school model due to the pandemic.

3. Academic Supports:

Teachers at Alaiedon strive to ensure that Tier 1 instruction is on grade level, whole group, and uninterrupted. All students participate and this typically meets the needs of most learners. Sometimes students need additional support and Alaiedon has a multi-tiered approach to addressing students' needs in conjunction with the various special education programs offered. Alaiedon is fortunate enough to have a literacy coach, interventionist, multiple paraprofessionals, social worker, English Language Learner teacher, and a full special education staff to support the individual needs of all learners.

Alaiedon staff look at a variety of assessment data to determine what instructional interventions may be needed to support students that are not meeting expected grade level standards. These assessments include state approved screeners, such as aimswebPlus, district-approved assessments in Wonders and Go Math!, and teacher input from student data through classroom work. This data is analyzed with collaborative teams during data review and through small group instruction, online support in Wonders through the Wonders Adaptive Learning program, WonderWorks, Khan Academy and small group math instruction. Students needing additional support are offered it. In addition, Go Math! personal math trainers are geared to provide additional practice in the skills currently being taught in the whole group lessons.

Alaiedon dedicates time to interventions through the WIN (What I Need) support time which is offered to each grade level daily. During this time, both teachers and instructional support staff use research-based interventions to provide additional Tier 2 and Tier 3 support and instruction to students based on data collected identifying students' needs. These students are progress monitored weekly or biweekly with a state-approved progress monitoring tool to ensure they are making academic gains in their area of need. Data is analyzed by teachers to determine if the intervention is meeting the needs of the student, the intervention needs to be changed, or the student will succeed with Tier 1 instruction only. Students not needing intervention participate in engaging enrichment opportunities.

Alaiedon houses a couple of specialized programs for students with special needs in addition to a resource classroom. Young learners with autism participate in our Reaching Independence through Supported Education (RISE) program. Additionally, there is a classroom for students with moderate cognitive impairments (MOCI). These classrooms are located within the main portion of the school building between general education classrooms. Students in the RISE and MOCI programs join peers for specials and core instruction throughout the day with the assistance of a paraprofessional if needed. These students also attend schoolwide assemblies, participate in schoolwide celebrations and all mandatory drills.

When Alaiedon began following a HyFlex model, there was a need for students to be able to attend school yet still follow CDC guidelines for a safe return to instruction. Alaiedon launched Learning Labs to provide support to students needing reliable internet connection, staff support with academic areas, and a caring learning environment when students are not participating in face-to-face instruction with their classroom teacher.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Teachers and students at Alaiedon use a growth mindset when facing academic challenges. This mindset is supported by “I can” statements displayed, discussed, and referred to frequently during instruction and goal setting. Learning targets are discussed and displayed, so students know the expectations, goals of instruction, and learning outcomes of each lesson. Furthermore, teachers at Alaiedon participated in a book study using John Hattie’s work, and implemented and used instructional delivery methods with the highest effect size.

Goal setting and students tracking their own progress is a motivational technique used by many of our teachers. When students know where they are at, and where they need to go, it helps keep them on track and striving to improve. This continues through our intervention time, WIN, where students that need additional support are progress monitored each week or biweekly and made aware of and track their progress.

Many teachers continue working through the Literacy Essentials to provide research-aligned teaching practices. These essentials were published by the State of Michigan in the quest to improve literacy instruction in Michigan. One essential, that has been a focus for the past few years, provides guidance on literacy motivation and engagement within the classroom. The practices include book talks, literacy circles to discuss a common book or topic, and Dyad Reading, which pairs a strong reader with a reader needing more support, to read a book of common interest together at the higher Lexile Level. Although some of these practices, such as Dyad Reading, had to be altered due to distance learning, many practices continued into the distance learning environment.

When the school moved to distance instruction and then to hybrid, teachers were provided information and guidelines for engaging students, while in a distance learning environment. This included using small group instruction, various technology tools to engage students and enhance distance lessons, and a process to provide effective feedback virtually through the Intermediate School District (ISD). The teachers have access to this information through recorded webinars and Google how-to documents.

Another key component to a healthy and engaging learning environment is the social emotional health of our students. Our social worker supports classroom needs, family support, and implements programs, such as Playworks, to build relationships during both instructional and non-instructional time during the school day.

Alaiedon students are recognized for demonstrating respectful and responsible behavior through our SOAR program. The motto states: “As an Alaiedon Student I promise to SOAR; I will be Safe. I will respect Others. I will have a positive Attitude. I will be Responsible.” Students that demonstrate such behavior have the opportunities to earn SOAR tickets and are able to turn those tickets in to participate in an activity of their choice from the nominating teacher’s menu of activities. In addition, the SOAR students are recognized in the weekly newsletter provided to all parents by the principal.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

In March of 2020, Mason Public Schools teachers and staff worked diligently to create tools of communication that allowed learning to continue in a distance learning environment. One means of communication our school uses to inform parents, streamline assignments, and boost collaboration are utilizing learning platforms, such as Seesaw and Google Classroom. Teachers use these platforms to inform parents of students’ assignments, weekly schedules, and optional learning activities. Furthermore, during the school year, teachers communicate student growth and concerns through virtual conferences, which are held in both the fall and spring, as well as hosting a virtual open house and various other family engagement nights.

In order for students to continue on their learning path during distance learning, each student was provided

with a district-issued Chromebook. Funding to provide such technology was possible as a result of a partnership with the Dart Foundation. This enabled learning to move forward despite school closures. Alaiedon also received support through the Mason Public Schools Foundation. This organization provides significant contributions that enhance our resources during both in-person instruction and distance learning. A few of these resources include headsets, additional Chromebooks, and mice.

Our school also partnered with a retired university professor to work with teachers and students to provide asynchronous lessons that align to the essential question taught in the Tier 1 instruction during weekly literacy and math instruction. Many of these lessons include family member participation. In addition, parents and staff were offered the opportunity to explore ways to help students succeed in school and life through a book discussion centered on the book, *Seven Winning Strategies*, by Bill Cecil. The book was made available to all parents and guardians this school year free of charge. To help guide the learning process, the author continues to provide audio blogs to address the strategies and steps within each strategy, as a resource for families to reference.

Ensuring all students have access to books and spend time reading at home with their families is a top priority at Alaiedon. Students in grades one through three, who are identified as having a reading deficiency based on the aimswebPlus benchmark screener, are provided with an Individualized Reading Improvement Plan and at-home reading activities tailored to his/her specific needs. These at-home activities help engage parent support with regards to literacy development and improvement. Again this summer, all students at Alaiedon will be provided with books to read and keep through the Kids Read Now program. The students will choose eight books they want to read over the summer and be provided with a ninth book to author on his/her own. Each book contains a discovery sheet for parents to engage in conversation with their child about the book. Prior to the end of the school year, Alaiedon will host a virtual meeting to inform parents and guardians of this program.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Teachers at Alaiedon are afforded a plethora of professional development and collaborative opportunities to address the ever-changing needs and challenges of education. Prior to the start of the school year, teachers engage in two-and-a-half days of professional development on a variety of topics. Choice is built into these days, so all teachers are able to have their individual learning needs addressed. These professional development sessions are led by Mason's teachers, Ingham ISD consultants, national speakers, and other outside professionals.

To address the increased use of existing technology and new technology needed to provide distance and hybrid instruction, the district partnered with Communications by Design to provide an asynchronous course called "Remote Instruction Essentials" and offered technology coaching to all staff. A new help desk portal with a live chat feature was implemented, additional technology staff was hired, and numerous professional development sessions and support documents were created to meet the needs of each teacher, student, and family as they arose.

Weekly, teachers participate in Professional Learning Communities (PLC) with their grade-level colleagues to create formative assessments, review data, discuss student learning, and make adjustments to their Tier 1 instruction. Teachers are also allocated common planning time so they can work together on curricula and instructional strategies across grade levels and plan instruction based on grade level reviewed data.

Within our school, literacy coaching, available to all staff members, provides support, instruction, and learning opportunities for teachers in the areas they identify in which they need additional support. The learning opportunities and coaching provided to the teachers is targeted to align to the research-based Essential Practices in Literacy, which is supported by the State of Michigan in its goal to be the Top 10 in 10 Years.

In addition, new teachers are provided additional support through our Teacher Learning Academy. This program is a three-year induction program that pairs a new teacher with a mentor teacher. The program offers them the chance to attend monthly meetings to explore professional learning opportunities,

collaborate with other new teachers, participate in book studies, and receive constructive feedback on their classroom instruction, lesson planning, lesson delivery, and classroom management.

Youth Mental Health First Aid professional development was also offered to our teachers. This professional development helps teachers identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illness and substance use disorders in youth and help reach out and connect those students to the appropriate care.

Keeping the morale high, recognizing the achievements of teachers, and celebrating them is of utmost importance at Alaiedon. We recognize teachers that are doing amazing things through district Nice Job Notes, which are read by the superintendent and the School Board at Board of Education meetings. A new program called Mason Teachers - Challenge Accepted was launched this year in which short articles featuring the incredible things our teachers do every day are shared with the community on social media.

4. School Leadership:

The philosophy of Alaiedon's School Leadership comes from carefully weaving together the components of three styles of leadership including servant leadership, transformational leadership, and instructional leadership. A positive and productive school environment has come from the desire of our school's principal to help teachers and students improve their performance through maintaining high expectations, yet listening, building community, and showing empathy. Our principal understands the members of the staff and the student body. Time was dedicated to developing a shared vision and ensuring the health and well-being of our staff. We developed our building "Why" and continued to grow and build trust through a book study of *The Way of the Shepard* by Dr. Kevin Leman and Bill Pentak.

Having this as the established foundation allows the components of instructional leadership to take shape through purposeful planning, evaluation, coordination, and improvement of teaching and learning. Our decisions are data-driven. Time is dedicated for our Professional Learning Communities (PLC) each week to meet and discuss common formative assessments and approaches that are needed to reteach concepts until every student learns every standard.

Through years of hard work, determination, and collective efficacy, the components of transformational leadership evolve. Our principal empowers school teams to assist in the decision-making processes and enable collective goal setting. At Alaiedon, we have a Building Leadership Team with grade level representation that meets monthly. Through the examination of school data, this team identifies strengths and weaknesses, and determines action steps that can be monitored for progress. Every 12 weeks, there is a District Data Day that reviews building progress for benchmark assessments and state-wide assessments.

During COVID-19, our school principal has worked at the county and district level to ensure we are offering our students the very best we can in these very challenging circumstances. A committee with the title, Reimagine and Reopening of Schools, was formed that included administrators, teachers, and parents across all grade levels to put our best thinking together on how to deliver quality instruction in the midst of a global pandemic. Our district committed to ensuring our students had access to live instruction each day from their teacher on a bell to bell schedule. Every student in our district was provided their own Chromebook and charger. Learning platforms were chosen and kept consistent across grade bands with students in kindergarten through grade two using SeeSaw and grades 3-12 using Google Classroom. Implementing these changes has allowed us to easily move between virtual and in-person instruction when needed.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Mason Public Schools launched a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee in December of 2018. Since that time, a lot of work has been directed by this group that includes administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community members. The mission statement is: "Through authentic learning opportunities, Mason Public School is committed to an inclusive environment. Our students, staff, and community respectfully acknowledge and value the diverse cultures,

lifestyles, experiences, perspectives, and identities of each other.”

Under the guidance of a professional diversity consultant, our district is working to establish goals, an action plan, and strategic plan alignment to provide learning opportunities for the district and community as a whole. Mason Public Schools is committed to promoting diversity in all forms. Ensuring those from different backgrounds are represented and welcomed in our schools is important to our culture.

In August of 2020, a film study and discussion was led for district staff to participate in. Our district has recently participated in DEI professional development with scheduled follow up discussions focused on key learnings and reflection questions. In addition, we are conducting a book study of Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain by Zaretta Hammond. We offer a safe space to have open conversations across our K-12 staff every Wednesday via Zoom. The Mason Public Schools Foundation is investing in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion books for each school’s library.

At Alaiedon, students have developed learning projects related to diversity that they have presented to their class. Our school welcomes our special education students into our grade level classrooms for inclusion opportunities. The school social worker plays a big role in educating our general education students on the different needs of our special education students. In addition, she leads an annual Kindness Challenge and has trained our lunch aides in a support tool called Playground Works.

Our Virtual Author Visit was focused on diversity this year. Our school district joined several other districts across the state in a virtual experience designed for learners of all ages, including Pre-K through 12 grades, in listening to well renowned African-American authors share their Caldecott winning books to kick off March is Reading Month and create excitement centered around books rich with cultural diversity.

Mason Public Schools is gaining momentum and is committed, as well as focused on its work in the areas of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. There is a dedicated core team that is leading the way for our district to live out the mission statement related to culturally responsive teaching and learning.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Alaiedon is proud to be performing favorably in Ingham County and the State of Michigan on several areas of our state assessment. The collective efficacy of our entire Alaiedon staff is an influencing factor contributing to the positive growth and achievement of all our students. We work tirelessly to meet the diversified learning needs of each student, and our commitment is evident through our work in our Professional Learning Communities (PLC). Mason Public Schools has committed time, training, and resources in growing a shared districtwide understanding of the purpose of PLC, which we dedicate ourselves to, in an effort to benefit every student. We pride ourselves on living out the motto: Every Student, Every Standard, Every Day, as we work in our teams and truly have shared ownership for all students' progress.

Late start Wednesdays is part of our school calendar, which indicates the level of commitment our district has designated for our PLC process. There is a focus on strong vertical alignment through grade level collaboration using quality curriculum materials to ensure student success. Our fourth year of What I Need (WIN) time, which is offered four days per week for thirty minutes, has provided the targeted research-based interventions needed to support our Multi-Tiered Systems of Support approach. This approach has allowed us to address our learners' needs. We are proud to offer interventions and enrichment during this time. Our enrichment focus has centered on STEAM education. Through our SOAR/PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) program and quality curriculum, we create an exemplary learning community for all. At Alaiedon, we teach, and we want everyone to know why we teach. We teach so that every student at Alaiedon can Learn, Lead, and Succeed!

Our staff is committed to action steps for each word in our school "Why." For Learn, we agree to model/teach the growth mindset, engage all our students, and encourage best effort. For Lead, we agree to support our students to demonstrate integrity, be a role model, and actively participate. For Succeed, we agree to celebrate progress, persevere, and reflect on growth. A few ways we put this into practice is by nominating a Leader of the Month from each classroom, intentionally teaching a growth mindset, displaying student work in the hallways, and holding data days every 12 weeks to monitor building progress.

Alaiedon Elementary's dedicated staff who maintain high expectations, build strong relationships with every student, and focus on collective commitments have resulted in developing consistent systems to ensure student success with a focus on results.