

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

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 310 5th Street SE  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Barnesville State MN Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 56514-0189

County Clay County

Telephone (218) 354-2300 Fax (218) 354-7797

Web site/URL https://www.barnesville.k12.mn.us/ E-mail thenrickson@barnesville.k12.mn.us

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

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

Name of Superintendent\* Dr. Jon Ellerbusch E-mail jellerbusch@barnesville.k12.mn.us  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Barnesville School District Tel. (218) 354-2217

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. Dion Bredman  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

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

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

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

## **PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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

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

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

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

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 2 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	40	38	78
1	29	34	63
2	41	31	72
3	39	31	70
4	37	27	64
5	38	29	67
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	224	190	414

\*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):
- 0.9 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 0 % Asian
  - 0.6 % Black or African American
  - 2 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 92.6 % White
  - 3.9 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

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

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

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

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

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	7
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	6
(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	414
(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):

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 16 %

Total number students who qualify: 67

8. Students receiving special education services: 17 %  
69 Total number of students served

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

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>5</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>8</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>5</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>12</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>4</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>34</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>1</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 17
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	23
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	10
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	16
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.

<b>Required Information</b>	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Daily student attendance	96%	97%	95%	96%	98%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

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

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

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

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

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

Working Collaboratively to develop responsible students in an innovative environment.

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.

We began the year in-person. We had thirty-six students choose to utilize the Distance Learning option. As the year progressed, we did go distance learning schoolwide for two weeks. One week was due to our custodial and kitchen staff being quarantined. The second week was following the Thanksgiving break as we knew families would be getting together.

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

## **PART III - SUMMARY**

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Barnesville, Minnesota is a rural community, 25 miles east of a regional metropolitan area. Families choose to make their homes in Barnesville because of the quality schools, small town atmosphere, close-knit community and short commute to work, and entertainment opportunities. In Barnesville you know your neighbors, and your neighbors know you.

Barnesville or Atkinson Elementary School prides itself on forming strong relationships with students and their families. This is accomplished through small class sizes, teachers utilizing evidence-based strategies during instruction, and support staff working with individual students performing at or below grade level. Our school has implemented several intervention programs intended to assist with student growth and progress. Programs, such as PRESS (Pathways to Reading Excellence and School Sites), RTI (Response to Intervention), Renaissance Star Reading and Math, AIMSweb Plus, and AR (Accelerated Reader), identify students in need and aid in developing an individualized program for their continued growth and success.

As a staff, we meet regularly to develop cohesive learning opportunities that address the whole student. This includes collaboration with outside agencies to benefit the unique needs of our students. Local agencies include Lakeland Mental Health, Lakes Country Service Cooperative, and Lake Agassiz Special Education Cooperative. These agencies provide support for students struggling with mental illness, trauma, and social and emotional needs. They have also assisted teachers with students having needs in the areas of visual and hearing deficiencies. Our school and support agencies provide ongoing training for special education teachers and paraprofessionals to address student academic, behavioral, and mental health needs. During the past year we utilized a variety of virtual tools, previously unknown to us, to help meet program needs.

For emotional and social support we have a Student Assistance Program (SAP). This resource is available for all students to assist them in working through issues which may arise and interfere with their day-to-day learning. The SAP Coordinator works with students one-on-one or in small groups in the areas of stress management, anger management, self-esteem, understanding feelings, classroom behavior, grief, and children coping with divorce. The Coordinator also visits individual classrooms providing grade appropriate presentations relating to social needs and character development. This falls directly in line with our school-wide Second Step Curriculum. Second Step provides instruction in social-emotional learning with units on skills for learning, empathy, emotion management, friendship skills, and problem solving.

Each year, our school celebrates the following character-building campaigns: Unity Day - we all unite together to show we are against bullying and are united for kindness, acceptance, and inclusion; Red Ribbon Week - this is an alcohol, tobacco, and other drug prevention awareness campaign; and, Random Acts of Kindness Week - we celebrate and encourage acts of kindness and giving. We have also teamed up with a local community group, Leadership Barnesville, to present a program on Mental Health Awareness. Through this program, students are taught coping strategies and where to find help if needed.

Leadership is an area we focus on with our fourth and fifth grade students. We have fourth grade Peer Mediators to assist our Paraprofessionals during Kindergarten and first grade recess. They are role models for the younger students as they assist them in resolving conflicts, enforcing playground rules, and helping with minor injuries and other needs as determined by the paraprofessionals. Our fifth grade students have the opportunity to join the School Safety Patrol. They provide a safe environment as students cross the streets both before and after school.

Another way our elementary school forms relationships with families is through our use of technology. Historically our school has been on the cutting edge of modern technology. Our classrooms are equipped with smart boards, Apple TV, voice enhancing sound systems, and MacBooks with updated operating systems. Additionally, through our district's technology program, "Move 21," we have become a 1:1 iPad school.

Our staff and students' familiarity with technology and platforms, such as Seesaw, Schoology, Classkick, and Google Classroom, in addition to all elementary students being provided their own iPads, made for a

fairly smooth transition to Distance Learning. Our students have thrived even with the challenges of learning through Zoom, limited interactions with classmates and teachers and learning to social distance. Wearing a mask, placing plexiglass dividers on all tables, and staying with a small core group of people all day, every day has become the norm.

Our school provides instruction for students remaining at home due to COVID-19 through the use of Distance Learning Teachers. These instructors collaborate daily with classroom teachers, who provide all learning videos and online activities for the distance students. This is a benefit to the entire school when quarantine and local COVID case numbers require the district to move between in-person instruction, Hybrid, and Distance Learning.

The use of individual student and staff iPads allows us to differentiate core instruction in the classroom as well as during distance or virtual learning.

This individualized approach provides teachers the ability to supplement core material while building confidence within students as they learn at their own pace. This teaching strategy is well supported by our administration as we are given the flexibility to adjust pacing guides to best meet the needs of our students.



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

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

The technology and digital resources our school has in place have helped teachers implement the current curriculum without the need for many adaptations. Much of the curriculum, including math and social studies, has online components that ease the transition to distance learning and teaching. Many of the accommodations teachers made this year address the ability level and needs of incoming students. Many kindergarten students did not complete a full year of preschool and came to kindergarten with less exposure to early literacy, math, and fine motor opportunities, as well as less opportunity to interact with peers and develop socially. To identify and address those needs, Atkinson Elementary teachers spent time at the beginning of the year assessing each student and partnering with families to identify areas of success and the next steps for their child(ren). Teachers were then able to modify and adapt their lessons to meet the unique needs of their classes as well as those students who chose distance learning.

Kindergarten teachers have changed their core curriculum to accommodate the many students who came in with lower than usual exposure to a school setting and academics. At a glance, kindergarten teachers began the year blending preschool and kindergarten learning targets, allowing time for students to develop socially and emotionally. They have placed a higher emphasis on early literacy and phonics, and this year is the first year of implementing daily phonics practice utilizing the Heggerty Phonemic Awareness curriculum. As kindergarten students progressed through several phonics and reading milestones, teachers introduced the Steve Dunn Writing curriculum at a much later start date than a typical year, ensuring students had the proper foundation skills.

Throughout this school year many grade levels were encouraged to use a cross curriculum approach by embedding science, social studies, and Steve Dunn writing curriculum into the reading curriculum. Teachers have also videotaped lessons to adapt to online learning and/or to provide additional support for in-person learning. Zoom instructional sessions were also held on distance learning days. Teachers in grades K-5 have created Classkick slides, PowerPoint slides, SeeSaw activities, and Google slides to enhance the digital learning experience for students. The Classkick platform allows students to engage in the curriculum content in a one-to-one setting on the iPads. It also allows educators to differentiate the tasks and do flexible grouping.

Our enVision math curriculum has an online component and focuses on operations and algebra, numbers and computations, measurement and data, and geometry. The content is developed with focus, coherence, and rigor. The attention to rigor reflects a balance of conceptual understanding, procedural skill and fluency, and applications. The math curriculum is supplemented with the SplashLearn app. In this app, educators can track students' growth on specific math concepts. The upper grade levels use IXL to help supplement the envision math curriculum. Here teachers are also able to track growth and implement interventions where they are needed.

Teachers in all grade levels implement a literature-based reading curriculum along with supplemental curriculums such as Guided Reading and Accelerated Reading. Atkinson Elementary has a vast assortment of guided reading books in our very own Guided Reading library in addition to the books that are leveled for Accelerated Reading in the school's library. The combination of the literature based curriculum in conjunction with these supplements allow educators to differentiate instruction to meet individual needs. In addition, all grade levels follow the Daily five or Daily three structure in the classroom to maintain a small group setting during reading rotations. During these reading rotations, teachers focus on phonics, fluency, reading comprehension, and written language. Teachers also rely on paraprofessional support for RTI interventions for 30 minutes every day. This time is valuable for providing additional phonics and fluency instruction for students in a tier 1 or tier 2 category.

Success in the core curriculum has come from teacher pacing, adaptations, and technology, but also from the opportunities working with students in small groups, thereby providing a high level of differentiation. Due to the pandemic, teachers could not rely on the typical Response Through Intervention time. All teachers have instead relied on paraprofessional support, with each classroom having extra support for 30 minutes

each morning and 35 minutes twice a week in the afternoon. Paraprofessional support allows students to work in small groups or on a 1-1 basis, targeting individual needs and learning goals. Classroom teachers also continue to differentiate through curriculum programs such as Daily five and Guided Reading as well as Math Daily three.

Formative and summative assessments are guiding instruction, and teachers assess daily through classroom observation and completion of learning activities. The Seesaw app allows teachers to create a portfolio of student work samples that showcase student learning and achievements. Summative assessments, including our quarterly testing through ESGI, and Title 1 assessments, such as PRESS and AIMSweb, are also used when planning and preparing lessons for classes. Teachers also regularly assess the students with weekly theme tests, STAR reading, STAR math, and Early Literature assessments. These assessments guide us to address specific needs and target skills through appropriate research based interventions.

**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:**

Kindergarten through fifth grade students sing, play instruments, dance, compose, and learn basic music theory. Preparations for and performances at a Veteran's Day program and holiday or spring music programs build collaboration, performance, creativity, and critical thinking skills. In fifth grade, students begin band, fostering a sense of responsibility and belonging. During the pandemic, students received music instruction via video, and programs were adapted to a virtual format.

Visual arts are incorporated within the general classrooms to provide an arc between art and other subject areas. Artwork by students of all ages is displayed throughout the building, teaching students to take pride in their work, and to think about others' artwork as well.

Physical education challenges students physically, mentally, and socially, building their confidence so they can live life-long healthy lifestyles. Students develop motor skills and learn the benefits of a healthy diet. This year, students received extra outdoor or fitness time to accommodate smaller groups attending music and physical education.

Fourth and fifth grade students learn about puberty and hygiene from videos, handouts, and discussion. This year, instruction on these topics will occur in their classrooms, rather than in a large group. During dental month, a teacher visited a dentist and created a video of the experience to share with first graders. Typically, this would have been an in-person field trip.

During the school shutdown in the spring of 2020, our staff provided breakfast and lunch to all district students. Staff advertised and encouraged all families to take advantage of this opportunity. With milk, juice, and breakfast funded by the state, staff encouraged all students to eat breakfast each morning.

While our school does not offer foreign language classes, foreign language and other cultures are often included in other aspects of the curriculum. Students in music sing songs from other countries in other languages, and read books with other languages.

Our school library gets students excited to read and helps them find books that fit their reading levels and interests and foster their love for reading. With a wide variety of books, the library door is always open to put them into the hands of students. The Accelerated Reading program rewards students with prizes and parties for meeting and exceeding quarterly reading goals. During the pandemic, our librarian brought book carts to classrooms and provided recorded library lessons.

In Makerspace, robotics provides an avenue for teaching technology. Younger students navigate devices through obstacle courses. Older students experiment with programming and coding. During the transition to online learning, our technology team helped teachers choose platforms that work best for their students and provided crash courses in video recording. They facilitated Accelerated Reading testing for students at home. When we returned to classrooms, the team provided the proper technology to educate students at home and in the classroom.

Our Student Assistance Program (SAP) coordinator works with students one on one, in small groups, and within the classroom on stress/anger management, self-esteem, grief, coping skills, social interaction, friendship skills, honesty, respect, fairness, responsibility, courage, tolerance, good citizenship, and other life skills. The “Second Step” curriculum also addresses these skills.

All students in the district may also take a variety of art, Family and Consumer Science (FACS), and physical fitness classes, teams, and camps through our community education program.

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

Barnesville provides each student an iPad to assist them with coursework, organization, and communication among their teachers and parents. The iPads provide students access to the internet, as well as applications to meet their classroom and individual learning needs, allowing learning/instruction across environments. The iPads allow for individualized applications that will support students' needs, such as accommodations for reading, writing, and mathematics. During the pandemic, each family had access to internet services, free of charge. Due to prior preparation, training, and practice with previous e-learning requirements, students and teachers were already familiar with the iPad technology. Therefore, the transition from in-person learning to distance learning required minimal focus on technology, allowing teachers to focus their efforts on creating virtual curriculum.

In order to monitor student academic achievement, our school administers the following assessments throughout the school year: STAR Early Literacy, Reading, and Math for comprehension; AIMSweb+ for fluency; FASTBridge for consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) acquisition and fluency; Boehm Test of Basic Concepts (administered to all kindergarten students in the fall and those below target are assessed again in the spring) for vocabulary concepts; and PRESS (administered to all kindergarten and 1st-grade students) for phonemic awareness and phonics. Students in grades two through six who are performing below target are also measured.

Test scores from these assessments allow general education teachers, special education teachers, Title staff, and the school psychologist to make data driven-decisions and individualize core curriculum. General education teachers, Title teachers, and the school psychologist have ongoing grade-level meetings to discuss achievement gaps and address them for individual students. This team of professionals collaborate to determine the most effective and efficient way to educate and monitor student achievement. Interventions, including explicit instruction, are discussed and tailored to meet the needs of students who are not making progress.

If interventions are not successful, teachers have the opportunity to bring student needs to TAT (Teachers Assistance Team). The team consists of various grade level representatives, special education teachers, and Title representatives who provide discussion and additional interventions to trial. If the student fails to make adequate progress, a referral to special education may be recommended. If this occurs, a comprehensive assessment process will be implemented looking at the whole child. If the student qualifies for individualized services using Minnesota state criteria, an Individual Education Program is written by a specialized team specifically addressing individual student needs.

In an effort to minimize achievement gaps and summer regression, our district offers summer school to ALL students who would benefit from this instruction. Furthermore, teachers continue to add new curriculum to their repertoire, addressing areas where specialized instruction is needed in order to decrease those achievement gaps.

Barnesville schools currently do not have students who are part of migrant, English Language Learners (ELL), or homeless populations. In the past we have collaborated with a neighboring school district and cooperatives to contract teachers with the appropriate licensure for assistance in addressing students' diverse needs.

In the past, when we have had students who were homeless, every effort was made to provide transportation to keep the family in our district and have consistent attendance until a stable family and home situation were established.

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

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

The Atkinson Elementary staff continues to engage students during our COVID year by providing opportunities through our 1:1 student devices that the children were already familiar with and confident using. We used the programs and apps to supplement and deliver instruction even as students were continually coming in and out of quarantine. The students, who needed to be quarantined, Zoomed in daily to meet with their teachers allowing the personal connection to stay intact whether it was for a few days or a few weeks. The students maintained an interactive connection with their physical education and music teachers, even when the entire school needed to distance learn, using pre-recorded lessons as well as live Zoom sessions. Our music teacher created virtual music programs for families by recording each classroom individually and creating a combined video shared online for families to see.

As a whole school community, we continued to engage in all school celebrations for school spirit: Read Across America, Kindness Week, Red Ribbon Week, and Unity Day. Teachers took a more active role in trying to encourage all students to participate and stress the importance of being one big family encouraging each other while not always getting to be physically together.

Over the past year, we have many staff members taking on many different roles to help students maintain instruction and engagement. Due to COVID restrictions, we have to limit exposures throughout the building which has resulted in many staff members needing to meet with our students in our classrooms instead of having the students come to them. With our students staying in their homeroom groups and not being able to intermix with their peers as often as they would have in the past, there have been strong friendships formed within each classroom setting.

Many teachers drove on their own time to their students' homes to drop special items, that they were not able to have delivered in our initial pick up night, when we began our distance learning in March 2020. We stood in driveways, waving, and sending air hugs to let them know how much we missed having them in school. Teachers sent "Flat Mrs./Mr." to their students to share adventures at their home. We even had virtual track and field days. Parents sent videos of their children doing different activities in their backyards.

Atkinson Elementary staff created a fun and heartfelt "bring back school property" drive through last May. We encouraged parents to bring their children with them as they returned school property so they could see how proud their teachers are.

We changed our back to school night to an "in-person" 30-minute one-to-one family visit before students started the 2020-21 school year. We wanted the children to meet their teachers in masks and see their classrooms with plexiglass dividers to ease anxiety and give them an opportunity to ask their own questions about how our school days will go.

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

We are a Trojan Nation! Barnesville Public Schools is the epicenter for entertainment and is the heart of our area's social network. Friends, family, and neighbors gather together to support student athletics, attend theatre productions, and enjoy seasonal music performances.

Our local newspaper, the Record Review, dedicates much print space to promoting upcoming events and sharing our school and students' successes. In addition, we have an active school Facebook page and an informative school website. These and many other community and School support groups helped create a smooth transition to distance learning in March of 2020. Continuing this year, as we have navigated between distance and in-person learning;;, had students, teachers, and staff in quarantine;;, and, implemented the numerous health and safety requirements due to COVID-19, our students have flourished because of our strong community and communication.

Visiting our school Facebook page is the most efficient method of getting information regarding our school. It is updated throughout the day and provides families with important announcements as they are generated. This guidance was imperative when the world and our educational system changed so suddenly last spring. Our Facebook page directed families towards our school website where links to teacher-created tutorials were located. These instructional videos taught parents how to operate their student's iPads and utilize new or unfamiliar learning platforms such as Zoom, Classkick, Seesaw, Schoology, and JMC.

As we began a new way of teaching and learning, our entire community stepped up to help. Knowing many families depend on the healthy meals their children receive at school, the Barnesville Bus Company began delivering daily meals to all interested families, with the local Dairy Queen donating paper lunch bags. Then this fall when there was a sudden shift back to distance learning, the Atkinson Elementary Parent-Teacher Organization, local Food Pantry, and Our Savior's Lutheran Church donated full grocery bags filled with food for all district students. Knowing our students' basic needs are being met is important to our community, and they are always looking for opportunities to help.

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

As a small community, our teachers rely on one another for support and guidance through difficult times. This strong emotional and instructional support is nurtured through weekly grade-level planning meetings. Intentional monthly meeting times are purposefully set aside to allow for strong collaboration within grade-level teams. Staff members rely on each other to collaborate and plan school-wide activities.

The staff development team also intentionally plans for community building activities. Teaching and education are always changing. Staff development gives us opportunities to ensure that we maintain and enhance our skills needed to deliver a professional service to our school and community. When given the training and developmental tools, teachers feel appreciated, and their confidence increases with their roles.

Teachers are able to Zoom into their rooms instead of taking sick leave during quarantine so academics being taught are consistent as if they were in the classroom teaching. A benefit of this would be that students are still learning directly from their teacher and the teacher can continue to work with students. Additionally, to reach the distance learning/quarantined students, teachers are given time on Fridays to prepare videos for daily lessons. Teachers can also collaborate with their teammates during this time to assure learning and success is being reached.

Team members are encouraged to add concerns or thoughts to our site council team where one representative from each grade level and department meets. During these monthly meetings, teachers are able to share their experience and expertise on a variety of topics. By doing this, teachers feel appreciated and feel that their voice matters.

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

At Atkinson Elementary, the philosophy of leadership is built on collaboration and cooperation. Important decisions related to policies, programs, and resources go directly through our Site Council. This group consists of one teacher from each grade level, one paraprofessional, one representative from our special areas, one school board member, and the principal. Input from all is the cornerstone of our decision-making process.

Our Site Council began meeting last June to develop a re-opening plan in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. They were charged with the task of developing three different learning models. The In-person, Hybrid, and Distance Learning Models had to be ready for implementation. We also needed to be able to move seamlessly between the models. This group was also responsible for developing a dismissal schedule for the end of the day, pickup and drop-off procedures for parents and buses due to our construction project, and a more effective, safe way of holding our Back-to-School night to begin the new year. This group met weekly to put all of these new procedures in place.

The principal also met independently with Food Service Personnel, the Physical Education Teacher, the

Music Teacher, the Library Aid, and our Title I Lead Teacher to discuss schedules, protocols, and guidelines for these different areas. These meetings led to a number of changes for the upcoming school year. A few of the changes are as follows: 1) music, library, and lunch would take place in each of the classrooms with schedules being adjusted-; 2) a third rotation was added so music and physical education could be done without inter-mixing classrooms-; and, 3) schedules were developed for our Title I Paraprofessionals so they were able to cover lunch, the third rotation, supervising classrooms when needed, and the supervision of our childcare program.

The principal and superintendent also met frequently during the summer and throughout the school year to look at protocols that would ensure the safety of both staff and students. These meetings resulted in the following: 1) masks being provided for all staff and students-; 2) face shields provided for all staff members; 3) plexiglass dividers provided for all desks and tables; 4) the purchase of two temperature scanners; and 5) mist sprayers that were used daily to disinfect the building. Our superintendent was also responsible for keeping all employees informed on the many different guidelines that were to be followed as well as the different changes that occurred.

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

As culturally responsive teachers, we are committed to teaching inclusivity within all our lessons to help our students be more culturally responsive citizens. We do this by teaching our students to look at historical events in our curriculum through multiple lenses.

Our school district adopted a program called Second Step which teaches social and emotional learning activities at each grade level. These activities are universal in their teaching so they can be developed and understood across all grade levels with common terminology. This program teaches students to respect and accept everyone from all backgrounds.

We have a coordinated effort with our local High School Philanthropy and Youth (PaY) group to provide supplies and household items for families regardless of income. This group looks for ways to help students or families that may not have everyday essential items, such as coats, boots, hats, clothes, school supplies, etc.

Our school also has a backpack program where families secretly sign up and the school provides everyday essentials to their child in a discreet way. This program has helped many students and families with food, toiletries, and other household items that all families need.

During the last year, our school and our teachers have personally delivered school items and gifts to families' homes due to the school shutdown. Our bus company, paraprofessionals, and cooks work together to deliver meals to each house for anyone who signed up for meal deliveries. Our community also found a way to make sure every family has Internet for their children to utilize with schoolwork as we are a 1:1 student/iPad district.

Our district also is in a cooperative with a localized company that provides social and emotional services for students in need. These instructors come to our school and meet with any students that need this service. It is a widely popular program that benefits our children who may not be able to get the help they need otherwise.

The district also provides social, economic, or emotional services to its teachers free of charge for those that may need help and cannot get it on their own. The lengths that our entire district goes to ensuring our students have all the resources they need for equity, cultural diversity, character traits, and respect to everyone, while meeting the social and emotional needs of the students and staff, is above and beyond that of normal in today's society.





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

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Nine years ago, the Barnesville Public School District made the decision to become a 1:1 iPad school. Technology is an important component in an ever-changing world for which students need to be adequately prepared. The transition to iPads did not happen overnight. It took effort and training to become comfortable enough to incorporate them into our daily educational process. In 2017, legislators passed a law allowing schools to hold E-Learning days during inclement weather. This meant students would receive instruction, learning activities, and assignments digitally, in each of their classes, on snow days. The staff of Atkinson Elementary School embraced this opportunity as a way for students to have a meaningful and relevant learning day. This was a much more successful option for student achievement than a make-up day at the end of the school year. This also turned out to be a valuable experience for the school closures that occurred due to COVID last spring. With a solid foundation for distance learning in place, teachers were able to focus their attention on creating digital lessons and spend less time educating themselves on operating specific programs.

A solid background in technology was crucial to the successful transition to distance learning. However, the number one factor in our overall success has been and continues to be our staff. As new and unforeseen challenges arose, solutions were discovered. Group conferences as well as 1-on-1 meetings were held daily. These student contacts were held in the mornings, afternoons, and often in the evenings. Our teachers have done a phenomenal job accommodating our students for two simple reasons – they are dedicated and caring professionals!

Collaboration among team members continues to be instrumental in our ability to successfully support our students. Teachers support one another time and time again. They have learned a great deal from each other throughout this process in the areas of academics and technology. It is important to note that they have also been there for each other to offer emotional support when needed.