

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 1740 Constance Boulevard NE
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Ham Lake State MN Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 55304-5636

County Anoka

Telephone (763) 506-3400 Fax n/a

Web site/URL https://www.ahschools.us/mckinley E-mail michael.koenig@ahschools.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* Supt. David Law E-mail David.Law@ahschools.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Anoka-Hennepin School District Tel. (763) 506-1000

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 Ms. Marci Anderson
(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):
- 26 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 7 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 5 High schools
 - 1 K-12 schools
- 39 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	43	42	85
1	50	56	106
2	49	47	96
3	51	54	105
4	50	50	100
5	81	48	129
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	324	297	621

*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):
- 0.3 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 3.4 % Asian
 - 0.6 % Black or African American
 - 1.4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 87.4 % White
 - 6.9 % 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: 4%

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	19
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	4
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	23
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	621
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.04
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	4

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

Cantonese, Chinese, Hmong, Russian, Spanish, Turkish, Oromo

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 3 %
16 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 14 %

Total number students who qualify: 88

8. Students receiving special education services: 12 %

76 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>9</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>6</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>6</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>5</u> Developmental Delay | <u>15</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>35</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</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: 9

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	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	25
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	15
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	11
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

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 25:1

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	97%	96%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

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

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

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No

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

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

Every Child, Every Day, Whatever it Takes. This has been our school mission statement for a number of years. The mission statement continues to be valued and expected and remains as the fundamental principle of the McKinley culture. We support all our students with an intentional focus on their social, emotional, ethnic, and educational needs.

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.

This has been a year in which the need for flexibility has been paramount. Over the course of the 2020-2021 school year, we have provided instruction in three instructional formats, which includes in-person, hybrid, and distance learning models.

School was delayed one week in the fall for staff to prepare for the hybrid model. In this model, students were divided into two instructional groups, A and B cohorts. Students in the A group attended school in-person on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and the B group students attended in-person on Thursdays and Fridays. Mondays were asynchronous days where the entire class met with their teachers in the mornings virtually for math and English language arts lessons. The rest of the day on Mondays was designated for collaboration, meetings, planning, and checking in with students who may have missed learning opportunities during the previous week.

With the number positive cases of COVID-19 increasing in November, we had to quickly pivot and move to full distance learning for all students. Students were provided the technology resources needed to participate virtually from home. Students were also provided all the materials necessary to be able to successfully work from home.

On January 19, students in kindergarten, first, and second grades returned to school full time for in-NBRS 2021

person learning. Safety protocols were established in alignment with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Minnesota Department of Health, and the Minnesota Department of Education. Two weeks later, on February 2, third, fourth, and fifth grade students returned full time to in-person learning. We continue to be in this learning model as this application is being submitted in mid-April.

Throughout the time we have been in hybrid and in-person models, all families have had the choice to have their child(ren) continue to learn through distance learning. Currently, over 94% of McKinley students are in school full time for in-person learning.

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

McKinley Elementary School is located in the city of Ham Lake, Minnesota, which is 25 minutes north of Minneapolis, and offers "Convenient Country Living." The city of Ham Lake was named after the lake near the center of the city which had acquired that name due to being shaped like a ham. Homes in Ham Lake are generally built on lots with some acreage. There is not a true "downtown" Ham Lake, and most of the area within Ham Lake, with the exception of businesses along major highways running through the city, is semi-rural. Students have actually come to school on a snowmobile in the winter! The doors to McKinley Elementary opened to welcome students in 1965. Our mascot is Buddy the Bulldog. Our students know, "once a Bulldog, always a Bulldog!"

An integral facet contributing to McKinley's success is perennial community and parental support. Consistent community engagement and involvement in schools has proven to provide short- and long-term benefits for students. There are a large numbers of volunteers who serve hundreds of hours to support students and teachers every year. Our PTO shares the cost with us for a Volunteer Service Coordinator who recruits volunteers, organizes, and tracks their work, and submits background checks. Local businesses donate items for silent auctions, provide field trip venues, and donate free lunch vouchers to recognize student of the month winners. The Ham Lake Fire Department comes to the school each fall with their ladder truck and equipment to teach students about fire safety. One of the most noteworthy endeavors achieved by parents and the community was completely funding the construction of a new, state-of-the-art playground.

The goal at McKinley is to develop dedicated and compassionate lifelong learners. Children are expected to be challenged, supported, and engaged. We believe it is crucial to focus on the whole child. Focusing on the whole child fosters academic achievement as well as nurturing students' development emotionally, physically, socially, and ethically. Staff teach with the knowledge that all children are highly capable and hold them to high expectations. Staff get to know each child on a personal level and strive to do more than just teaching academic skills. There is a belief that the education of students is a team venture. All staff members accept the notion that we are all responsible for the success and well-being of every student who walks through the doors. We have moved beyond the traditional paradigm that a teacher is only responsible for the children residing within the walls of his/her classroom. Each week our technology paraprofessional creates a video with information for students, a class leads the Pledge of Allegiance, and the sign off is always our principal saying, "Be kind, be responsible and be the best you can be. The choice is yours."

We do more with less at McKinley. The help available for students consists of the classroom teacher, the part-time literacy specialist, the part-time math specialist, the part-time talent development teacher, the part-time English Learner (EL) teacher, and special education staff for students who qualify with special needs. We make use of our elementary paraprofessionals to supply guided practice time for students after teachers have provided instruction.

McKinley Elementary, like many schools, has recurring annual events that are steeped in tradition. In late September, we have a large walkathon fundraiser, McKinley Walks Together, sponsored by the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). In November, we host a community program for Veterans Day. We have a choir, directed by our music teacher, that begins practices after school and prepares to perform a holiday concert at the local mall and usually at some type of senior living facility. In March, McKinley Showcase provides students a venue to share their talents. The Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs), our state's accountability test, typically take place in the second half of April. McKinley Olympics, track and field day, takes place in the middle of May. The final day of school our fifth grade students walk to the local bowling alley to have fun together with their classmates one last time before moving on to middle school. At the end of the last day, there is a fifth grade stroll. Parents and students in grades K-4 line the sidewalks around the school that lead to the buses. The fifth graders then begin their final walk to the buses. It is very emotional on many levels. At that point, our staff has done everything we can possibly do for each and every fifth grade student to ensure their future success. It is time for them to continue on their academic life journey.

What is the purpose for sharing these events? Last year, when the COVID-19 pandemic began, we had just completed the McKinley Showcase. That meant every event following the Showcase had to be cancelled or modified. We have adapted the best we could. MCA tests were cancelled last year. McKinley Olympics were done individually in a virtual format. Fifth grade was not able to go bowling or have the fifth grade stroll. However, we did have a fifth grade "drive through" where the staff lined up, socially distanced, on the sidewalk of our bus loop, and parents drove the students through, giving a sense of closure and appreciation for everyone. This fall, neighborhoods were encouraged to participate in McKinley Walks Together as a group. Unfortunately, we were not able to have a Veterans Day program or have students participate in choir this year. We will also not be able to have a traditional McKinley Showcase. Instead, we have decided to have students, who are interested in doing a live performance, register through a Google Form signup, and then we will record them doing their performance at school. We will put all of the performances together in a video and make it available to our families. This will allow us to share the talents of our students without holding the traditional McKinley Showcase. Flexibility, adaptation, and modification were the norms for this past year.

As we look to the future, we are hopeful we will be returning to some form of normalcy similar to where we were prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers will continue to provide and model the same distinguished pedagogy they have been providing with or without a pandemic. Eventually, events will resume in a traditional manner and we will once again be able to share the social fellowship of those who choose to invest their time and resources into the students at McKinley Elementary.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

McKinley Elementary is one of twenty-six elementary schools in the Anoka-Hennepin School District that has adopted new curricula in English language arts (McGraw Hill Reading Wonders) and math (The Math Learning Center - Bridges) over the last five years. The curricula chosen best meets the needs of Anoka-Hennepin students, includes researched-based teaching practices, and are aligned to Minnesota Academic Standards. We feel the core curricula have an abundance of materials, lessons for differentiation, and meaningful assessments. At McKinley Elementary, it is the teachers who make the curricula come to life for our students. The curriculum provides teachers with the science of what to teach which allows our teachers to provide the art in which to teach.

We are a high performing school and with that comes high expectations for students and staff. Weekly grade level collaboration meetings provide dedicated time to create an action plan, outlining how we will meet these high expectations. We set and reflect on unit, trimester, and yearlong goals in all subject areas to help us track student growth and proficiency. Our building Math and Literacy Specialists support these meetings and offer embedded professional development.

We continually strive to exceed 80% proficiency regardless of baseline scores. We use norm referenced assessments to collect data, such as FAST (Formative Assessment System for Teachers -eReading), Leveled Oral Reading Fluency (ORF), and NWEA-MAP (Northwest Education Association-Measures of Academic Progress) throughout the year to monitor student achievement. NWEA-MAP and the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) will be administered again this spring to determine any gaps that may be experienced because of COVID-19 and the need for alternative teaching models from fall to spring during the 2019-2020 school year. All the norm referenced data is stored and analyzed at the student, grade level, school, and district levels. This allows our school to look at the whole child's academic history and make decisions from multiple data points. Teachers sort students into categories of high risk, some risk, or on grade level standards. This monthly analysis, along with the teachers' formative and summative assessments drives whole and small group interventions and extensions. Visual representations using graphs and tables are created for every grade levels' reading and math data to ensure all students' academic needs are met. At McKinley, we know at a quick glance what every student needs to continue to grow academically.

Reading/ELA:

McGraw Hill's Reading Wonders sits at the center of our reading and writing instruction. Having a curriculum with a research-based scope and sequence and brisk pace ensures our students are getting a balanced reading education. McKinley teachers have embraced teaching with fidelity from intervention to enrichment. This fidelity to the curriculum has had many positive effects for students and teachers. Teachers are no longer searching for resources to meet the needs of individual students or small groups, including special education and English language learners. We have increased common language around reading and writing skills and have a firmer understanding of reading development in grades K-5. Leaning into fidelity has also increased teaching and learning time. Students are spending more time with eyes and ears on grade leveled, appropriate text, talking collaboratively about what they have read, and responding daily in writing. If we read about it - we write about it every day in every classroom.

Transitioning to distance and hybrid learning was less challenging in reading than in math. McGraw Hill's Reading Wonders already operates in a digital platform, so students have access to all weekly texts and assessments. In order to balance screen time for students, we also sent home writing packets and leveled books to mirror traditional learning. Our media specialist supported self-selected reading by offering a check out and pick up day, so students could continue to access authentic texts during hybrid and distance learning formats. Regardless of the operating schedule, McKinley students were provided with live literacy instruction daily, meaningful feedback on writing pieces, and opportunities for summative and formative assessments. Our setting for reading instruction may have changed, but our expectations stayed the course.

Mathematics:

Bridges, our newly adopted curriculum for math, carries the same philosophy that our staff embrace at McKinley. We believe that math should be taught conceptually, include real-world connections, and lessons should be linguistically, visually, and kinesthetically rich. As we started the 2019-2020 school year we began implementation of the Bridges curriculum. McKinley teachers were excited about how engaged students were with the lessons and how accessible it was to all learners through the visual models and with the manipulatives that were available. The strength of the new curriculum quickly became the new challenge for teachers as the pandemic hit. The question became, "How do we teach virtual math lessons that rely on manipulatives, structured investigation, and students playing partner games to build their math skills?" The task of teaching in that manner appeared to be daunting; however, McKinley teachers embraced the opportunity to become more familiar with the technology platforms available to best support students as we pivoted to distance learning. Teachers started each day live, virtually, with their class via Google Meets for morning meeting and Number Corner lessons. Number Corner, a structure within the Bridges curriculum, engages students with calendar centered activities and provides repetitive practice with critical number sense concepts. McKinley teachers viewed Number Corner instruction as the perfect vehicle to help them stay connected to their students. It delivered powerful mathematical class discussions and added to that balance of time spent maintaining relationships with students, and teaching and learning. Daily core lessons were also taught through Google Meets to include the valued dialogue between the class and the teacher.

As we entered the 2020-2021 school year, our district's curriculum department and the McKinley staff had more time to prepare and plan for the virtual instruction that was occurring. Classroom teachers became experts at making personalized slide decks for core lessons to provide more visual models of concepts for students learning from home. Students were provided with individual math manipulative kits to use at home when they were learning virtually. Unit screeners and summative assessments were implemented and adapted so teachers could proctor them online. Reteaching re-engagement activities were mapped out at weekly collaboration meetings based on the outcomes of these assessments and each grade levels' power standards. McKinley teachers value of student centered math instruction remained constant through all shifts of teaching and learning.

Science:

Full Option Science System (FOSS) is a research-based science curriculum that offers students opportunities to explore and make sense of the natural and designed world we live in. During distance learning and hybrid learning formats, teachers had to modify the lessons. Materials for experiments were sent home with students whenever possible and teachers would conduct the experiments virtually while guiding students through the inquiry process.

Social Studies:

The Anoka-Hennepin School District uses a collection of resources to support the Minnesota Standards for social studies. The Understanding by Design (UbD) model was used to plan the scope and sequence for each grade level. The UbD process uses the state standards to guide the planning of units to be taught at each grade level. The main areas of focus include citizenship, history, geography, economics, and governmental studies. Distance learning consisted of lessons taught through recorded videos and online materials that were posted on Google Classroom sites to allow students to participate in weekly assigned projects. Students routinely participate in community building and service projects throughout the year. This practice continued during the distance learning. For example, our second graders performed random acts of kindness by delivering rocks with positive messages to neighbors during the spring of 2020.

Even during a national pandemic, McKinley teachers and staff held their students to high expectations for work and attendance and provided a caring and inclusive learning experience for all learners. The hybrid and distance learning schedules allowed many parents to learn alongside their students and gave them a front row seat to support the curricula at home. One positive impact of the pandemic is that it has strengthened the bridge between home and school through increased communication, increased understanding of common academic language, and reinforced the need for high expectations.

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:

McKinley Elementary offers a rich, well-rounded curriculum to all kindergarten through fifth grade students which extends beyond the core subjects of math and reading. Students participate in weekly physical education classes, music, art, and media classes. Students also participate in Core and Explorations classes. Core classes are devoted to reteaching and enriching reading and math skills that have been taught throughout the week. Core teachers use academic game play and interactive lessons connected to the curricula to extend students' understanding. Explorations lessons are designed to teach lessons aligned to the Minnesota Standards in science and social studies. Students enjoy the hands-on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) and project-based learning activities. Third graders learn about live organisms in the crayfish unit and learn about building scale model marble runs.

While in the hybrid and distance learning models, our special subject teachers (art, music, physical education, Explorations, Core) were integral in maintaining student engagement. Each teacher still provided meaningful lessons in their content area, both live and recorded lessons that students could access through their Google Classroom. Special subject teachers also provided office hours to answer students' questions and provided time to reach those students who needed additional academic and/or social emotional support. Caring and content continued on at McKinley regardless of the operating schedule.

In addition to our robust special subject courses, the students have access to several grade level specific programming opportunities. The music program has offered two school choirs for students to participate in, called the Bulldog and Pups Choir. These groups perform at several locations in the community, including a local senior living facility, and share their talents with their families at other venues. Biz Kids and the third grade marketplace are programs geared toward building financial literacy and entrepreneurship. Fourth and fifth grade students create a business model from conception to manufacture a variety of crafts, products, and food items to sell. Students sell these items at the annual winter event, North Pole Treasures. Third grade marketplace is a hands-on opportunity for students to write a business plan and produce a product. Instead of selling their goods, they learn to barter and trade with their classmates.

McKinley Elementary also supports and celebrates the visual and performing arts at our annual Showcase. The event allows students to perform individually or in groups, where their talents are on display through dance, music, and visual arts in a festival-like format. Family, friends, and the community come to school to watch live performances and see the gallery of projects. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Showcase will be offered virtually where students can still share their talents in the visual and performing arts.

Physical education is also a vital part of building strong minds and bodies for our students. Students participate in weekly lessons and beyond that participate in the spring track and field day, the McKinley Olympics. Students take part in a variety of individual and team track and field events. The opening ceremony includes all students and staff dancing and stretching together prior to the big gala. Students who participate in the Fuel Up to Play 60 Club offer their support and encouragement in leading the opening ceremony. The day concludes with the very popular teacher versus fifth grade student relay race. During distance learning last spring, the format was modified to encourage students to participate in a virtual track and field day. Students submitted videos of themselves running, jumping, and participating in other fitness activities.

3. Academic Supports:

Fall baseline data collection sets the stage for goal setting, creates the foundation of collaboration, and is administered again throughout the year to support all our learners. McKinley uses assessment scores and grade level benchmarks to inform teachers which math and reading skills need to be taught in whole group settings and which students need immediate, intensive intervention.

All students at McKinley take reading and math screening assessments in the fall. These include FAST eReading, Bridges Number Corner Screener (K-1), and math and reading MAP in grades 2-5. These screenings help us identify students that are at risk for not meeting grade level proficiencies and to ascertain individual and small group needs. These assessments include a phonics survey, informal reading inventory, foundational concepts of math assessment, or number sense interview.

This year was more challenging administering assessments due to COVID-19. We had to get creative to assess as many students as possible. While the students who participated in hybrid learning were able to complete the assessments at school, the distance learning students were able to take them at home with a school-level proctor. We also offered after-school hours for students to come in and take the assessments in a socially distanced classroom to create a safe testing environment.

Grade level teams, EL teachers, and Special Education teachers collaborate every week to discuss student progress. Each grade level identifies students in need of an intervention. Some grade levels share students to make the interventions more efficient. However, due to COVID-19, classrooms were not able to share students this year. Intervention time is carried out each day during two separate fifteen minute time blocks. The data collected is reviewed each week during collaboration. The intervention may continue for another cycle, some students may exit, or others may join a new intervention group. Interventions may be delivered by the classroom teacher, Literacy or Math Specialist, academic paraeducator, or a trained Reading Corps tutor. Our EL teacher, Talent Development teacher, and Special Education teachers also support their student populations during intervention time.

If a student is not demonstrating improvements, staff seek out assistance through our school intervention team (I-Team). The team is made up of our Literacy Specialist, Math Specialist, school psychologist, special education team lead, school social worker, and school administration. The classroom teacher completes a referral form to describe the student's concerns. The teacher notifies the student's parents of the I-Team process and gathers their input to share with the team. At the meeting, the team identifies a specific skill to focus on and an intervention plan is created (I-Plan). The I-Team reviews the data every four to six weeks and makes adjustments to the programming. If a student is making progress, the intervention continues until the student is proficient with the skill.

When a student demonstrates ongoing concerns and is not making adequate progress, the I-Team discusses moving forward with a special education evaluation. At this point, the teacher has had a conversation with the parents about moving forward with a special education evaluation. The parents are invited to attend a child study meeting, which includes the evaluation manager, school psychologist, administration, school nurse, classroom teacher, speech and language pathologist, and the special education lead teacher. The special education evaluation will provide specific information to help guide the family and school in supporting the student's needs.

If a student is demonstrating above grade level performance, McKinley offers TD (Talent Development) instruction based on a triangulation of MAP, MCA, and CogAT (Cognitive Abilities

Test). Students with scores in the 98th percentile or greater are also offered to attend an alternate district program called Nebula, School within a School. Currently, most students that qualify for this program have chosen to stay at McKinley to receive their TD instruction and remain a part of the McKinley community. McKinley provides TD instruction to 16.7% of our second through fifth grade student population in reading and/or math. Students enrolled in this program enjoy STEM activities, passion projects, novel studies, and off-campus learning experiences for young scientists and writers. During distance and hybrid learning models, TD students still met with the TD teacher for live instruction. Distance learning offered some exciting opportunities for our TD students. For example, students participated in live virtual sessions with the Minnesota Wild Hockey Team for an interactive STEM lab involving heart rates and the cardiovascular system.

The English Language Learner (ELL) program at McKinley Elementary provides opportunities for students who speak other languages to gain English Language skills. ELL services are provided in a small group setting and within the classroom. During distance and hybrid learning, our EL teacher was a valuable resource for communicating with families through translators, helping to translate communications, and ensuring families understood all of the schedule changes and protocols.

As part of our extended McKinley community, we utilize trained volunteers to support our students. For example, we partner with Minnesota Reading Corps, a program supported by AmeriCorps, to provide reading tutoring to at-risk students during the school day. We also have the highest number of trained parent volunteers in the Anoka-Hennepin School District to deliver reading and math practice through the K-Skillbuilders program and Challenge Reading and Math programming. These trained volunteers give our students an extra boost or extension in their skills so they can be the best they can be.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

McKinley staff take pride in making sure our students have a positive experience. Student engagement begins the minute students arrive. Our students are greeted by staff at every entrance to start the day on a positive note. In past years, student council members were in the hallway to help younger students that seemed lost, or who appeared to need help and support. Each student will find their teacher at the classroom door ready to give a high five, hug, or a friendly smile.

Building lasting relationships is extremely important to the McKinley staff. We have made it a school-wide focus to begin each day with a class morning meeting. This ensures students have a positive start to their day by playing games or participating in class-building or team activities. Morning meeting is a time for students to start their day with a positive message and get their voice heard. The weekly McKinley Morning Show, a pre-recorded video production, is something that our students and staff look forward to every week. McKinley students are included in the episodes in many ways. Students show ownership in the school by being highlighted in the morning show. All classrooms take turns reciting the pledge, student achievements from outside the classroom are featured, and at times fun or interesting student photos and videos are shared for entertainment. There are recurring characters that encourage our students to have a growth mindset in math and reading development. The weekly video ends with the principal giving students words of encouragement and the message to, "Be kind, be responsible, and be the best you can be. The choice is yours." This message has become an informal student motto and they make an effort to display these values every day.

Building positive relationships begins with the morning meeting but continues as teachers engage their students by supporting their development in other areas. Teachers lead reading and math clubs after school for students who need extra support in these curricular areas. When students attend these classes, they have shown great growth, not only in test scores, but in their confidence. Teachers also lead a student council that helps make decisions about school spirit days, support with community building projects such as collecting food and other donations for a local food shelf and help kindergarten and first year students make it to their classrooms in the mornings. Our kindergarten and support teachers host a Kindergarten Round-Up in the spring for the next year's incoming students. Parents are introduced to the curricula, students get to ride a school bus for the first time, and parents and children get to experience the warmth that McKinley offers. McKinley has offered other experiences for students, such as the Kindness Club, student of the month recognition for each classroom where students are recognized with awards, and a fifth grade graduation parade. The parade can be an emotional send-off for our students who have been at McKinley since the beginning of their educational career.

With the COVID-19 pandemic this past year, new challenges were brought to our students and staff. Along with daily learning, teachers developed creative ways to make students still feel like a family. Some examples of the teachers' creativity included virtual lunch times, Google Meet fun days, and teachers recording themselves reading stories for our primary students to listen to before bedtime. If students did not have what they needed to make distance learning successful, our staff made special trips to drop off supplies, learning packets, or even a special visit as a pick-me-up at a child's home. Above all, McKinley teachers and staff made sure any student that needed support during the pandemic could connect with a staff member. We are always thinking of our students and how to best support their social, emotional, and academic needs.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Every Child. Every Day. Whatever it Takes. It is not only our McKinley Mission statement for the staff, but it is also the mission of the community surrounding our school. Our parents and supportive community are second-to-none when it comes to putting our students, their children, and grandchildren as priority number one.

McKinley's Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) worked tirelessly to acquire funds through school fundraisers to build an enormous, accessible, modern playground that focuses on student fitness while having fun. This playground was completely funded by our PTO, families, and community businesses with no district financial assistance. To keep up with advancing technology needs, our PTO has purchased new Chromebooks and iPads for students. These have been used to help keep our students connected as we moved to hybrid and distance learning teaching models.

Our PTO continues to engage students and families by hosting numerous after school events. One of the biggest and best attended event is the McKinley Walkathon that takes place each fall. Families come together to meet teachers, get together with their child's classmates, enjoy the camaraderie that the event creates, and be part of our school culture. The Minnesota Twins Food Truck is invited to offer families dinner. A local business, Conquer Ninja, brings in an obstacle course for students to engage in, and students earn charms by walking the playground track. The McKinley mascot, Buddy the Bulldog, welcomes students and their families and is a favorite attraction. The best part of this event is the number of teachers and staff who volunteer to help make the walkathon amazingly successful. Additional school engagement activities include the winter North Pole Treasures event, combined with BIZ Kids. The PTO also hosts a school carnival. This after-school event occurs each spring. The dunk tank is always a student favorite, especially when they can dunk their principal or favorite teacher! What cannot be overlooked with all the events the PTO plans is the vast number of volunteers that are needed. Teachers and staff are one source of volunteers, but it is amazing to see the many alumni that are now in high school or college return to give back to the elementary school they attended. Once a Bulldog, always a Bulldog!

McKinley teachers are always working to engage students and families in many ways. Our approach of communicating has been very effective with teachers and their families. Our principal sends out a monthly schoolwide newsletter, The McKinley Messenger, and teachers send out weekly newsletters to keep families well-informed on what their child is learning in school. Postcards are written to students to welcome them in the fall or to provide encouraging words. What student does not love seeing mail come to them! Teachers also make frequent phone calls to connect with parents. We strive to have as many positive interactions with our families as possible.

Our teachers also take on more than just teaching to make our families feel part of our McKinley community. Our Veterans Day program brings in hundreds of current and former military veterans that live in our community or are family members of our students and staff. We have invited local authors to visit and read to classes. We even have a former staff member, now author, who still comes back to McKinley to teach writing workshops. The school social worker works closely with a local faith-based partner to gather donations and supplies for students and families in need. After Halloween, students have donated some, or all, of their candy collection to "Treats for Troops." The candy is donated to local military organizations and some is even sent to troops stationed overseas.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Feeding the soul of the teacher, feeds the soul of the students. This statement expresses the culture of the McKinley Elementary staff. Our teachers feel valued and supported by one another. We are a family inside and outside the building and are invested, not only professionally, but personally.

Our staff takes the initiative to create social events outside of school to build community among the McKinley team. These activities have included breakfast clubs, book clubs, crafting events, and golf/social outings. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it was even more important to keep staff connected. We continued to "get together" online in creative ways to participate in events, like coffee club, book club, and game night. Teacher teams connected virtually on a regular basis to discuss student participation and show continued encouragement with one another. Supporting each other has been most important during times of personal tragedy and hardship. When a staff member is in need, the entire McKinley family steps up to support them without hesitation. The sense of community and family in the building has been a factor in the high retention rate of staff.

engage in weekly collaboration to implement best practices for student growth and achievement. The collaboration model allows teachers and staff to work together to make decisions regarding content area needs, behavior support, classroom management, and community building. Another beneficial practice we have seen in our building is teacher shadowing and side-by-side coaching with the literacy and math specialists. Teachers are supported in their interest to observe peer classrooms to watch and analyze topics, such as instructional strategies, classroom management, or technology implementation. Side-by-side coaching with the math and literacy specialists allows teachers to team teach with knowledgeable content area specialists. We have the same vision and commitment to maximize everyone's knowledge and capabilities to improve and provide the best practices for our students.

Our staff continually participate in professional development (PD) to enrich and enhance teaching practices. Our staff continues to participate in continuous Catalyst (previously, ENVoY - Educational Non-Verbal Yardsticks) professional development for staff. This course focuses on preserving and enhancing relationships with students by avoiding power struggles. The use of non-verbal strategies in classroom management practices is a key component to increasing instructional time. Another focus on professional development this year has been a series of training events that foster an understanding of the foundational vocabulary for understanding and articulating racism and inequity. Teachers have learned the history of race, and have reflected on their own experiences with race, culture, and equity. We have discussed ways to make all McKinley students feel welcome and empowered to show their individuality and continue this conversation through our culturally responsive teaching.

4. School Leadership:

Leadership at McKinley is a shared responsibility. Our principal, assistant principal, office administrative professionals, teachers, paraprofessionals, custodial supervisor, and the child nutrition supervisor work collaboratively to provide input into school decisions. Staff are encouraged to take on leadership roles on committees and school events. The Building Leadership Team (BLT) plays a significant role in supporting and guiding school initiatives. The team, which has representation from all grade levels and departments, provides input into school improvement, creates, and revises routines and procedures, and ensures the social, emotional, and academic needs of our students are high priorities. While navigating the unknowns of the COVID-19 pandemic, the BLT had an urgent and important responsibility to create strategies and procedures to provide the safest environment for the return of students back in the building. As the modes changed throughout the year, the team was flexible and continued to provide strategies during the changing times.

Another leadership team at McKinley is the Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) committee. This group of staff lead and provide direction in our efforts to better understand cultural awareness and competency. The team has presented to staff and provided ideas, strategies, and professional development for staff to learn and grow in their journeys with cultural responsiveness. Staff are encouraged to reflect on their backgrounds and beliefs and use strategies to build stronger relationships with students. When our staff make efforts to connect and understand all students, we are able to ensure they feel respected, safe, and motivated to work toward higher academic standards. We want all our staff and students to have a strong sense of community and belonging.

The Sunshine Committee provides leadership in a social and emotional capacity. This team takes on the responsibility in providing support to all staff in need, including celebrating life changing events and building staff morale.

The McKinley leadership model is an example of a village coming together to support the entire school community.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning is something that allows staff and students to build relationships, increase student achievement, and celebrate the uniqueness of our students. The

relationships built between students and staff is something that sets McKinley apart from other schools. We strive to bring out the best in our students by valuing their individuality.

Students and staff go above and beyond to get to know their students on a personal level. Teachers attend sporting events, performances, and special events of students. Former students often invite McKinley teachers to attend middle and high school recognition events and banquets, such as the National Honor Society Induction and Presidential Academic Awards celebrations. These students may invite teachers who have made an impact on their learning career. It is amazing to see the number of McKinley staff who are honored each year.

When you walk into classrooms, you will find teachers who are aware of their students' interests and learning styles. Some of the ways staff get to know students is through morning meetings. This allows students to share beliefs, experiences, and interests in a safe and welcoming environment. Teachers enhance relationships with students through the use of games, read-alouds, team building activities, and class opportunities for sharing. Teachers incorporate student names and interests into their lesson plans to make it personable. Cafeteria staff know hundreds of students by name. Many teachers have purchased books for their classroom libraries that represent students' cultures, interests, and backgrounds. It is common for students to seek out their previous teachers and staff for a quick hug or a high five.

This year the CRT team felt it was extremely important to make an intentional focus on learning more about race and equity. McKinley staff are participating in a course called, "Foundational Vocabulary for Understanding and Articulating Racism and Inequity." The foundation of this course is rooted in the history and vocabulary that revolve around racism and inequality and the real-life connections associated with it. The course allows staff to discuss misconceptions about race and equality and how we can best have a self-understanding on how to create a welcoming and nurturing environment for all students, families, and staff.

The school climate and culture is one of respect and cherished relationships. These relationships go beyond the walls of McKinley Elementary and last a lifetime.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

It is difficult to isolate the one integral thing we do that leads to the success of our students. Professional development has been a priority to ensure staff have a high level of competency and are able to effectively implement the valid and reliable curriculum adopted by the district. Decision-making is data-driven and staff use this information to inform instruction. Intervention blocks are scheduled for each grade level to address the needs of all learners via remediation or enrichment. We set yearly school and grade level goals and revisit them consistently to reflect and revise them as necessary. Teachers use data to identify the specific students they need to target through intervention to maintain or achieve proficiency.

However, during the spring of 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic began, the main contributing factor to our success was McKinley's culture. That spring, when students and teachers were forced to move to a distance learning model and uncertainty was the norm, the agility, flexibility, and professionalism of staff to pivot and continue to teach students, stay connected to families, and provide interventions was key. The settings may have changed, but the expectation of all stayed the same. In order for distance learning to be successful, students needed technology and internet access. With district support, we were able to provide every student with a Chromebook to use during distance learning. We also worked with the Anoka-Hennepin Education Foundation to supply families with a wireless hotspot if they did not have internet access. Staff quickly learned and implemented Google Classroom, scheduled Google Meets, made use of technology resources that were a part of our math and English language arts curriculum, and integrated web-based applications, such as Pear Deck, Flip Grid, and SeeSaw. The culture of our school and community is one where we support each other and families in times of need.

The culture of our school is complex. Many factors contribute to the professional and social culture of the school community. The underlying belief that all students have the potential to succeed, and that teaching is a team sport, is the heart of the culture. Our educators and staff are equipped to help students succeed academically and socially, no matter what their background or economic circumstances might be. Our culture promotes respect, trustworthiness, fairness, responsibility, kindness, and responsible behavior for all stakeholders - students, staff, parents/guardians, and the community. It is an environment where excellence, commitment, goal setting, reflection, and effective use of resources are the expected norm for students and staff. "Every Child. Every Day. Whatever it Takes," is what we do as a school and community.