

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Wyndmere Public School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 101 Date Avenue PO Box 190
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Wyndmere State ND Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 58081-4100

County Richland County

Telephone (701) 439-2287 Fax (701) 439-2804

Web site/URL https://www.wyndmere.k12.nd.us E-mail scott.strenge@k12.nd.us

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Mr. Anthony Morrison E-mail anthony.morrison@k12.nd.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Wyndmere Public School District Tel. (701) 439-2287

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. Chris Busche
(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):
- 0 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 0 High schools
 - 1 K-12 schools
- 1 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	7	16	23
1	11	7	18
2	12	7	19
3	10	14	24
4	11	12	23
5	17	15	32
6	10	4	14
7	7	11	18
8	5	10	15
9	8	8	16
10	11	8	19
11	8	4	12
12 or higher	9	11	20
Total Students	126	127	253

*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):
- 2.7 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 % Asian
 - 0.4 % Black or African American
 - 6.6 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 90.3 % White
 - 0 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

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

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	8
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	5
(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	257
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.05
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5

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

Spanish

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 19 %

Total number students who qualify: 49

8. Students receiving special education services: 10 %
26 Total number of students served

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

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>1</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>12</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>4</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>7</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>2</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: 5
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	3
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.	3
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	9
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 11:1

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	99%	95%	96%	95%	96%
High school graduation rate	85%	94%	93%	86%	100%

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	12
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	17%
Enrolled in a community college	58%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	10%
Found employment	15%
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. 2013

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

Empowering growth within a community of learners.

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.

Wyndmere Public School provided both 100% in-person learning as well as online only. For the fall semester, students in grades K-8 were able to join the SE North Dakota Virtual Learning Academy Consortium. For grades 7-12 we offered our students the choice of streaming into the classroom full-time, or for our high school students they also could choose the North Dakota Center for Distance Education online learning platform. After discussion with our teaching staff and evaluating the additional amount of work and effort needed to teach in person and streaming, for the spring Semester, we eliminated the full-time streaming into the classroom option for grades 7-12. We did however, still allow streaming into the classroom for students who needed to self-isolate for 7-14 days.

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

Wyndmere Public School is made up of a number of small rural communities spread out over 300+ square miles in the southeast part of North Dakota. Although our area is primarily agricultural-based, the location of our school district allows families access to larger communities that provide a multitude of job opportunities. Families that want a small-town atmosphere and access to a variety of employment possibilities that larger communities provide can do this by living in the Wyndmere School District.

One of the main reasons students of Wyndmere Public School have been successful year in and year out is that we ensure they have the necessary support needed to thrive. Our students are assessed multiple times per year to monitor adequate academic progress. We utilize this data to confirm that every student is progressing and that each has the support and interventions necessary to reach maximum potential.

An equally important part of the success of our students is the support we have from parents and guardians. One goal has been to encourage and welcome parent engagement in our school. The percentage of parent attendance at conferences, as well as our back-to-school open house, various classroom invites, and other school activities are always well attended. There are numerous studies that support a strong correlation between parent involvement and student success, and we see that on a regular basis in the Wyndmere School District.

Every student can be challenged, and at Wyndmere Public School, we promote alternative ways for students to learn and demonstrate academic proficiency. Along with standard quizzes and tests, teachers incorporate many authentic assessments such as NASA's inSPIRESS, multicultural expo projects, digital book trailers, projects based on solving real-world problems, interactive notebooks, job shadowing, student debates. Teachers are encouraged to utilize a variety of assessments to allow students to show proficiency in the standards being taught in the classroom.

We also encourage and incorporate innovative teaching practices such as cross-grade and cross-curricular activities. A great example of this is our STEAM days. Students from multiple grades worked together on projects that require real-world problem-solving skills. It is also an opportunity for students to experience success through failure. From engineering cardboard chairs to cupcake wars, our students have taken creativity and innovation to the next level.

Wyndmere focuses on creating an environment where learners are safe, respectful, and responsible; this creates an atmosphere conducive to learning. We have two counselors that support mental and emotional health in K-6 and 7-12. We also employ a mental health clinician who provides therapy sessions and interventions to individual students. Not only does this accommodate students who require a more in-depth session, but it also allows parents the opportunity to keep their children in school instead of taking them to outpatient care. The Wyndmere School District is committed to ensuring that no student in our district who requires the services of a mental health clinician will be denied those services due to a financial hardship.

Our school district worked diligently to ensure that all students' needs were met during the COVID-19 lockdown. Those students, who did not have adequate technology to receive online education during the statewide lockdown, were provided laptops and internet service at their homes. Teachers utilized a number of online platforms to reach students, and additional support was provided by para-professionals who were assigned to struggling students. Prior to the 2020-2021 school year, a restart committee was formed made up of administrators, school board members, teachers, support personnel, parents, and local community leaders. This committee developed a plan that allowed Wyndmere Public School to reopen at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year to full-time, in-person, face-to-face learning. This committee also provided, those families with concerns, an alternative distance education program. Approximately 6% of our student body chose this alternative program.

Learning loss is always a concern when there is a disruption to the regular education process. Wyndmere Public School has provided remedial courses, summer school, additional support personnel, and alternative curriculum to help offset this expected learning loss. The regular progress monitoring we have in place has

also identified students who are in need or have experienced learning loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our elementary was awarded the 2013 Blue Ribbon School Award. It solidified our culture of excellence and high expectations. Our students, staff, and the community take pride in academic success. We celebrate it through various incentive and recognition activities, school awards and banner displays, publications, and award days to name a few. Wyndmere Public School has a culture of high expectations from staff, students and the community and we all work hard to support it.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

Wyndmere Public School’s curriculum decisions, implementation, and educational practices are all guided by the North Dakota State Standards in the core content areas. Each teacher is highly qualified and works to improve and adapt their practices each year to better serve their students. The Covid-19 pandemic has reinforced this approach and our staff has learned to take their already strong practices and apply them in a variety of in-person and virtual settings.

The English/Language Arts utilized by WPS focuses on building a strong foundation in phonics and comprehension in the elementary school. Zone of proximal development reading is utilized throughout all grade levels. Grammar, research, and application are stressed in grades 7-12 to prepare students for post-secondary options. The elementary school utilizes the Journey’s curriculum with additional spelling and grammar supplements. Teachers use online programs such as Spelling City and Google Classroom to help ensure students have access to all materials regardless of whether they are in-person or virtual. Literacy circles, reading towers, and a yearly battle of the books competition help to foster a love of reading and student goal setting. Middle and high school students take part in various research projects that include Native American culture and career planning. They participate in research trips to a local university, job shadowing, interviewing, and project presentations. Students have had the opportunity to interview scholars via Zoom from around the United States and Europe. MyPerspectives is the main curriculum piece for the high school with Latin & Greek Roots Vocabulary supplementing grades 7-12 where students recite words into an online program (Audacity) to help with pronunciation. All grades monitor student progress through quarterly STAR testing, in-class assessments, and benchmark testing. The Accelerated Reader program is used as a guide to help students find books that challenge them, but also allow them to see success and growth in their abilities.

Saxon Math is the main curriculum component in the Wyndmere Elementary School. Saxon Math uses a spiral approach, which helps reinforce main ideas and concepts for students through repetition, common vocabulary, and consistent review. Students are monitored through STAR assessments as well as in-class benchmark assessments, quizzes, and projects. Teachers supplement student learning with online programs such as Prodigy, IXL, and projects. Many teachers utilize STEM projects to help teach concepts in geometry, budgeting, and problem solving. Each year, select elementary and secondary students are invited to participate in the Math Olympics and other area competitions with surrounding schools. Students in middle and high school are offered Algebra I & II, Geometry, Practical Mathematics, and Pre-Calculus. Classes use a paced note packet that helps them learn new concepts step-by-step with their teachers and presents examples throughout the lesson to help check for understanding in real-time. Teachers use online videos and Khan Academy to help supplement students who may be struggling while challenging other students. STAR assessments are used to help monitor student growth, which allows teachers to get proper interventions if necessary.

The science curriculums used at Wyndmere Public School range from InSpire Science for elementary students, iScience in grades 6-8, to other general education programs for high school students. The main focus in the elementary is to help students build skills such as predicting, experimenting, and forming conclusions, which are the base for higher level sciences. Mystery Science is used as a supplement, which provides interactive videos to get students engaged in asking questions. Teachers incorporate STEAM activities in their classrooms and offer hands-on projects such as raising brine shrimp, bug dioramas, owl pellet dissection, animal habitats, and others. Middle and high school students are presented with a lab-based approach. During the Covid-19 pandemic, many labs transitioned to an online format using simulations. Students work collaboratively to implement the scientific method in a variety of situations with a focus on problem-solving. Each year the high school physics class takes part in the InSpiress program, which partners with NASA. This program focuses on collaboration and competition with a focus in engineering as students are presented with a problem that they must solve resulting in a presentation to NASA engineers. These programs, combined with various STEAM days, help build strong scientific reasoning and problem-solving skills.

The social studies curriculum at Wyndmere School emphasizes a knowledge of the United States and surrounding World while helping to instill a strong sense of citizenship in each student. The elementary curriculum is Kids Discover, a monthly magazine that focuses on various parts of social studies. These magazines align with the state standards and provide students with accurate information, colorful photos and diagrams, and questions that are age-appropriate while challenging. Students participate in various projects with the 5th grade students collaborating with Juniors on a Native American presentation, which is open to the public. 4th grade students participate in North Dakota studies and are able to attend various field trips in the area to help learn more about their local history. Middle and high school students are offered US History, World History, Geography, Civics/Economics, Sociology, Psychology, and Problems of Democracy. These classes combine to help students build a sense of community and understanding of how the political systems, history, and geography all help shape the world around them. Students participate in the state Geography Bee and each student must pass the state Civics examination before graduation.

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

Wyndmere high school works hard to make sure students are college/career ready and in alignment with the North Dakota Choice Ready standards. The school counselor sets up a series of career information days that help get kids attend informational career conventions and on-site experience. These conventions are broken into categories such as non-traditional jobs, vocational/technical jobs, as well as others. Along with these experiences, students fill out interest inventories to help expose them to potential career paths they might not have sought out initially. Students also participate in job shadowing, as juniors and seniors, which is a joint program through the counseling department and the school's language-arts teacher. This program follows an in-depth CEO project, which students participate in as sophomores, that allows them to research jobs, interview experts in the field, and present their findings to the community.

Students in Wyndmere are also given the opportunity to participate in vocational education through North Dakota State College of Science in the areas of culinary arts, construction management, auto mechanics, and medical terminology. These classes are either on-site, hands-on experiences, or presented through interactive video. Teachers also work hard to create various projects that relate to real-world experiences such as budget planning, problem solving, engineering, and wood-working. Wyndmere School works closely with area organizations and businesses to ensure students are exposed to various scholarship opportunities that may help advance student college/career plans.

For a rural school, Wyndmere takes advantage of the resources available to help set students on the best path for college/career readiness. Whether through hands-on experiences, military recruitment, guest speakers, or real-world discussions, students are given the opportunities to discover what their interests are and where their career paths might go.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Wyndmere Public School offers students the chance to participate in other curriculum areas such as arts, physical education, health, foreign language, and technology based learning. These are done in both general education classrooms as well as individual classes.

Physical Education is offered to students throughout their time at WPS. Each elementary class is provided with 90 minutes of physical education each week as well as two daily recesses. Classes range from 20-30 minutes and emphasize gross motor skills and an understanding of various sport concepts. Secondary students are provided with general physical education courses and a lifelong fitness class. Students who have completed their work can also utilize the gym during the school's FLEX time.

General music classes are offered to all elementary students. These classes introduce basic musical concepts, composers, instrument identification, and musical theory. Choir is offered in grades 7-12 and band is

optional for students in grades 5-12. Groups participate in various performances and festivals throughout the year with many achieving high state awards. A one-act performance is also offered each year, with performances for the students, public, and region/state competition.

Although Wyndmere high school no longer holds in-house Spanish classes, students are able to participate in classes held through our ITV system. Basic foreign language concepts are also introduced in various elementary classes.

Students are able to take classes in computer applications, which introduces basic computer skills, coding, and word processing. In past years, WPS has participated in the worldwide hour of code and offers Lego League Robotics for elementary students. WPS provides 1:1 iPads for grades K-3 and 1:1 laptops for all students in grades 4-12. This emphasis on technology allowed learning to continue throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

Vo-Ag classes are also offered at Wyndmere Public School. These classes work with the sciences, introducing students to botany, animal anatomy, habitats, and food production. Students are also introduced to basic woodworking, welding, agriculture, and mechanics. High school students may also take advantage of classes offered through the NDSCS in culinary arts, sports marketing, anatomy, construction, auto mechanics, and medical terminology. These classes produce strong real world life skills that students can use immediately in their everyday lives.

3. Academic Supports:

One of the strengths of Wyndmere School is our dedication to helping all students succeed to the best of their ability. This process starts in the elementary school. Students are routinely assessed using STAR early literacy, reading, and math tests, which are given to all students 4-5 times per year. Students who are struggling will be assessed more often to help monitor growth. Grade-level meetings are held after each round of testing, which bring together administration, classroom teachers, paraprofessionals, and teachers from the LD, ED, Title I, and Speech departments. Student scores and progress are discussed, analyzed, and interventions are proposed. The RTI process is used to help monitor student growth and those students who are receiving interventions is constantly changing. Teachers in the LD, ED and Speech departments work closely with classroom teachers to assist in identifying students who are struggling and helping to provide in-class practices to help them grow. Students who are identified as needing special education services are given supports through on-site LD, or ED specialists as well as paraprofessionals. Intervention curriculums such as Reading Mastery and Saxon Math are used to help struggling students continue to grow to the best of their abilities in the subject areas they are performing below-standard in.

In middle and high school, students are also assessed regularly in English and math. WPS employs 10 paraprofessionals who are able to help supplement instruction and give individualized attention to struggling students. Structured study halls and a school resource room are also available to students each day. The secondary school has also implemented a FLEX time each day where teachers and paraprofessionals can work 1-on-1 with students who may be struggling. This time also allows all students to ask questions and get assistance when needed.

Students who are performing above grade-level are challenged in a variety of ways throughout the building. Elementary teachers utilize programs such as Prodigy and IXL, which allow students to work ahead in the materials, take various assessments, and learn new concepts while being monitored by the teacher. In recent years, Wyndmere has provided LEGO League Robotics for elementary students as an extracurricular activity, which teaches teamwork, engineering skills, problem solving, and coding. Teachers use various STEM and project-based activities to challenge students to dive deeper into subject areas and apply concepts to their everyday lives. Middle and high school students are given the opportunity to participate in a variety of STEAM days

throughout the year. These days are focused on collaboration and teamwork in an attempt to solve a problem through the application of science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics. High achieving students may try-out for the Acalympic team, which has won multiple state competitions. This team practices multiple times throughout the year and are challenged frequently by a team of staff members to ready them for competition. Math students participate in various competitions at area universities as well. Wyndmere School doesn't just focus on students who achieve above standard in academics, but also students who show exceptional leadership skills. The school's FFA program offers many opportunities for students to be leaders, practice their public speaking and presentation skills, and go outside of their comfort zone. These programs help students with all types of exceptional abilities find avenues to both grow, and demonstrate these skills, which is celebrated by the school district.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, paraprofessionals were instrumental in helping students while learning virtually. Paraprofessionals helped to deliver and pick up materials, clean out lockers, and make phone calls to students to check-in on their socio-emotional well-being as well as their learning needs. Our special education teachers continued to provide individualized services through online platforms such as Google Meets and Zoom.

Wyndmere School has one part-time ELL coordinator who works with a variety of students, helping to build their English proficiency and understanding. A homeless/foster liaison is also tasked with helping in the identification of students who may be experiencing homelessness and ensuring they are provided with appropriate support.

The high teacher to student ratio allows teachers to work closely with students and build strong relationships. Teachers are invested in student learning and will work before and after school to help students if needed. Because of this culture of dedication to learning, student achievement is high at Wyndmere School with high graduation rates and successful post-secondary careers.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Wyndmere Public School works hard to keep students engaged whether learning in-person or virtually. Although academic engagement is a main focus, emotional and behavioral engagement is also emphasized. Programs such as Kindness Counts (MS/HS) and Wonderous Warbirds (Elementary) celebrate students who are “caught” going above and beyond to help others and display positive behaviors that are an example to others. Students in the middle and high school participate in various STEAM days, which build collaboration and problem-solving skills as well as a sense of community. Students from all grades are mixed together and must work together to accomplish their STEAM goal. The Sources of Strength program helps students identify those around them that they can lean on for support and gives them the tools to discuss the challenges they are facing. Public service activities, which often include the elementary, are student driven and help lead the entire school to accomplish fundraising goals.

Academic engagement is accomplished through interactive classroom activities, high expectations, and by challenging student thinking. Teachers are constantly molding their lessons to include strong bell-ringers and meaningful closures. Students are given the opportunity, and are encouraged, to ask questions and go beyond the main goals of the topic being presented. High school students create videos, skits, models, and presentations to help them gain a deeper understanding of the material, beyond what is written on a page. Wyndmere Public School celebrates academic accomplishment as proudly as we do athletic achievements, which sets the expectation for students, staff, and stakeholders about what is hoped to be accomplished at our school.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, these qualities that our school has prided ourselves on became even more important, and much more challenging to implement. Teachers, administrators, and staff members took it upon themselves to provide the best education possible despite the situation. The first day after school was closed saw a majority of staff members back in the building, creating lessons, cleaning out lockers, organizing technology, and preparing to get students the materials they would need to be successful while at the same time changing lesson plans to fit virtual learning. Paraprofessionals made calls to students in all grades, checking up on their academic progress and socio-emotional well-being. The high school principal called all parents on multiple occasions to check on families while the elementary principal worked to make sure the technology needs of each student were met. The school worked closely with Red River Communications to get Internet access to every family within the district and purchased Chromebooks for students who did not have the proper devices at home. High school teachers implemented an M&M Plan (Manageable and Meaningful) to make sure students were presented with the information that was most important to continue their academic growth. The school counselors and clinician were able to continue meeting with students virtually and our LD and ED departments continued special education services remotely. Our librarian held multiple “reading sessions” where she read children’s books. Ultimately, our school did what we could to remain in contact with families and continue student engagement until the last day of school, which was celebrated with a drive-through picnic.

Because of the efforts by the WPS staff, students were able to remain connected to our school and get a sense of normalcy. The transition back to in-person learning was much easier thanks to the steps taken in the Spring of 2020.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Parent communication and engagement has been made more difficult with the current pandemic. The shutdown of events placed an added challenge on how to keep families engaged, which was a focus of our school improvement process. Although these challenges did change how many of our usual events and activities looked, they did not result in cancelling all of them.

Because the pandemic changed many practices and procedures within our school, the school principals held meetings via Facebook Live to help address concerns of parents and to explain how the process for school

would look. The high school principal remained in contact with parents throughout virtual learning to make sure their needs were being met and paraprofessionals were utilized to deliver materials and also check in on families weekly. The elementary principal created informational videos and presentations to help parents navigate changes in the building from drop-off procedures to safety precautions within the building. Open House, a day that has been used for many years to bring our parents and staff together, was even completed in shifts with proper safety protocols in place.

Stakeholders were surveyed throughout the pandemic to help gauge technology and academic needs, as well as food needs. The kitchen staff worked to make take-home meals for families to pick up and local organizations continued providing baskets during holidays for families in need. The students of WPS participated in the Day of Caring, which helps complete various projects around the community for those who need it. In the elementary, art showcases and presentations were virtual with parents being able to connect through the school YouTube page. The same goes for athletic and other events, which are streamed using our Hudl Focus camera.

Although the pandemic has changed the way we engage families, it has not changed our commitment to giving families the opportunity to be part of their students academic lives. Covid-19 has actually forced us to embrace new technologies that we had been reluctant to use in the past, which ultimately resulted in a larger reach with our stakeholders. This will only help our school become stronger in this area as we begin our return to normalcy.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Teachers at Wyndmere School are encouraged to seek out leadership opportunities throughout the school. Many teachers have participated in the Teacher Leadership Academy through North Dakota State University, which awarded them their master's degrees in education while teaching leadership skills. These student teachers were tasked with providing new opportunities within the school, which resulted in the creation of a Makerspace Cart, extended professional development opportunities, and increased family engagement. Many teachers lead as coaches in athletic programs, advise student clubs, and mentor others. Teachers are also allocated funding to participate in professional development opportunities throughout the year. These opportunities have included sessions on grading practices, the science of reading, technology, and interventions.

During the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting closures, teacher mental health and support became a priority throughout the state. Building principals held virtual staff meetings and also checked in on staff individually to help provide as much support as possible. Teachers were an instrumental part in our ability to return to in-person learning by helping adopt safety procedures, create manuals, and come up with ways to keep students and staff as safe as possible. Input was given, and procedures were changed, even after the start of the year. Our return was truly a team effort and included everyone who works in our building.

As the year progressed, teachers indicated that they were struggling to keep up with the demands of in-person and virtual learning. Flex times were extended in the high school to provide more interventions for students and additional time for planning lessons. Early out professional development times were focused on reviewing plans, making changes, and teacher preparations for all of the variables they were facing. Sessions were held on Google Classroom, EduTech, QR Codes, and other technologies to help teachers navigate virtual learning. Funding was utilized to help purchase laptops for all staff members, which made a transition to teaching from home easier during the Governor's closure and staff self-isolations. Added technologies were also placed in classrooms through this funding. Despite the challenges, the staff of Wyndmere Public School has remained positive and resilient, which has benefited our students more than anything else. We continue to acknowledge our accomplishments and hard work, while remembering that we are not finished with the school year and remain dedicated to ensuring a safe and successful learning environment for everyone.

4. School Leadership:

To have an effective and high achieving school everyone must work together. Every job and position in the school is important to reach the ultimate goal of student achievement and growth. It is a continuous and never ending goal. Providing opportunities for growth, supporting staff, and allowing each staff person the resources necessary to do their jobs all contribute to a successful school.

One does not need a graduate degree in educational leadership to be a leader in a school. Leadership comes from those that are willing to lead, do what is right, and step forward and lead by example. People gravitate to those who are knowledgeable, hard-working and respectful. We are successful because you can say that of both our certified and non-certified staff. It starts with bus drivers picking up students and getting their day of right, to kitchen staff who are here bright and early preparing breakfast and lunch, and custodians who work at night and early mornings to have our school ready for the day. All lead in different ways.

In the Wyndmere Public School, all staff are encouraged to be leaders. In 2018, Wyndmere Public School, along with two neighboring school districts, became the first rural multi-district cohort in North Dakota to host a Masters Program in Educational Leadership in partnership with North Dakota State University. Approximately 1/3 of Wyndmere's teaching staff participated and graduated from this program. This program has allowed our school to grow and initiate new ideas and innovations in education.

During the Covid pandemic, the superintendent, high school principal, and elementary principal met every day for the first week and a half of the governor's closure of school. With input, and researched-based strategies, they developed plans for staff, students, and parents for a distance learning plan that was meaningful and manageable. Administration met weekly via Zoom with other local and statewide colleagues for support and innovative ideas. Each building principal held Zoom faculty meetings once every week to monitor the needs of the students and staff and to assess adequate progress. Principals observed virtual classes which assisted them in realizing the struggles of staff and students in an online atmosphere. Administration was able to address needs and change delivery systems because of the feedback and drop-ins. Again, when everyone works together, one is able to achieve much better results and our students are the benefactors.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Creating a culturally aware school and working to acknowledge and address the needs of students with a variety of backgrounds was made even more important with the onset of Covid-19. The pandemic had a ripple effect that went far beyond the learning of our students. At the same time, the school became a provider for much more than curriculum. We worked closely with community members to help ensure the socio-emotional needs of families were met, and this included food pick-up and Internet access as well. Staff members at the school went to work checking in with families, delivering materials needed for their education, creating videos to show how much we missed our students, and trying to be there for families who were struggling.

These struggles were even more magnified when the Bobcat plant in Gwinner, ND shut down operations. As a major employer for our area, families were suddenly without work and leaning on the schools and students to help with support. Lessons for high school students were pre-taped so students could go to work while continuing their education. The superintendent drove to multiple retail stores to purchase Chromebooks for students who needed them faster than an Internet order would provide. The high school principal made calls to families and was able to hear their struggles and offer what help he could. The schools S.O.W.I.N.G fund was also utilized to help students with various financial needs, which has been around for many years. The school has also worked closely with local organizations to help provide food for families in need

One group that was of great concern for the school was the seniors graduating in 2020. Many of their plans had been altered, families were not able to come together to celebrate their accomplishments, and in-person learning was abruptly ended with little fanfare. The high school principal went to work talking with stakeholders and students to figure out ways to make the

experience memorable for all involved. Administration worked with the city council to provide senior profile banners which were placed on light poles on Main Street. Graduation was moved outside due to social distancing concerns. The ceremony was live-streamed and broadcast over the radio, and a parade was held throughout town. These actions allowed the seniors to end their high school careers on a high note and give them closure for all the work they had put in over the years. It also gave families the chance to share in the joy of the event, which was sorely needed at the time.

Inside the walls of Wyndmere School, teachers make an effort to demonstrate how our students are part of a larger world. Our librarian has worked to provide students with more books on cultural diversity and social movements. Social studies classes hold discussions about current events and how they impact North Dakota. Teachers bring in various learning tools that introduce the traditions and beliefs of various cultures through stories. A collaborative project between our 5th graders and juniors focus on Native American cultures, which culminates in a presentation which is open to the public. Speakers from around the community have been utilized to talk about their experiences abroad, culturally diverse backgrounds, and family traditions. The ultimate goal is to create a culture of acceptance and inclusion among students and staff where everyone feels like a piece of the puzzle.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

If we were to narrow it down to the one practice, our intervention strategies are our greatest strength. All students are expected to learn the material. In grades 7-12 we provide an extra 27 minutes every day that focuses on catching students up and reteaching. We identify students with academic and behavioral concerns through formative and summative assessments, as well as cross-grade and cross-subject discussions with staff. We provided extensions for students who struggled getting their schoolwork turned in during our spring 2020 online only classes. We assigned paraprofessionals to students during the virtual only classes. We also hired a teacher in the summer to check in with families and students who were making up classes they were unable to finish during the spring virtual only classes. Our staff cares about every student and they take the time to get to know and understand their situations and life experiences. This caring environment provides for easy conversations and knowledge that helps everyone involved.

Our K-6 students also were provided supports. During our spring virtual only classes, teachers met with students who were struggling both individually as well as in small groups. Paraprofessionals were assigned students who required extra attention. There was a virtual K-6 summer school for those K-6 students who needed extra attention and supports.

In the Fall of 2020, all students were tested to gauge where they were at academically. Data teams met to discuss students' scores, and strategies and plans were developed to address the needs. Follow-up meetings, and additional assessments to progress monitor, help to ensure all of our students continue making adequate progress. If progress is slow or students are regressing, discussions are had regarding why this may be happening. Sometimes it is not for academic reasons but social-emotional or other circumstances involved that affect a student's performance in the classroom. Staff looked at the whole picture and alternative strategies, or additional supports are made and plans developed for our individual students. The relentlessness of our educators in regards to reaching every student was on full display during this pandemic.