

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. Philip Schappler
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

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

School Mailing Address 55 Old Bedford Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Bedford State NH Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 03110-5929

County Hillsborough County

Telephone (603) 627-1776 Fax (603) 644-5122

Web site/URL
<https://sites.google.com/bedfordnhk12.net/mem/home> E-mail schapplerph@bedfordnhk12.net

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Mr. Michael Fournier E-mail fournierm@sau25.net
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Bedford School District Tel. (603) 472-3755

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. Bill Foote
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

Date _____

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

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

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

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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

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

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

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

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 6 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not the district.)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)
 Suburban
 Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2020 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	31	20	51
K	25	27	52
1	32	37	69
2	56	24	80
3	33	37	70
4	44	39	83
5	0	0	0
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	221	184	405

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 7 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 3 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 81 % White
 - 8 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2019 - 2020 school year: 7%

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	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	12
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	31
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	420
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.07
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	7

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

Turkish, Spanish, Nepali, Chinese, Ukrainian, Russian

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

8 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 11 %

Total number students who qualify: 43

8. Students receiving special education services: 23 %
94 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>6</u> Autism | <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>10</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>30</u> Developmental Delay | <u>15</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>46</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</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: 4
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	24
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	12
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	38
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	21

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 17:1

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%	97%	97%	97%	97%
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. 2012

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

Our mission is to develop a community of learners who are intellectually curious, resourceful, and respectful of self and others. Academic achievement, through constantly improving standards, is the district's highest priority.

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.

During the 2020-2021 school year our preschool students have been attending school in-person 2, 3, 4, or 5 days per week. Our K-4 grade students began with a small percentage choosing Remote Learning and the majority of our student in-person in a Hybrid model of 2-3 days in-person per week and 2-3 days of Distance-Learning.

As of March 8, 2021 our Hybrid K-4 students began coming to school for in-person learning 5 days per week.

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

Memorial School is one of three elementary schools in Bedford, New Hampshire, with a population of approximately 400 children, preschool through grade 4. Bedford is an expanding and thriving community with a strong commitment to education. Many families choose to relocate to Bedford so their children can attend the schools. Typically, Memorial School welcomes as many as 40 to 50 new students each year. Parents and students often give positive feedback related to our welcoming, inclusive school environment and our excellent communication and connection with families. Students at Memorial have a strong sense of belonging and security, allowing tremendous opportunities for educational success.

Memorial School was honored to receive the National Blue Ribbon Award in 2012. Our entire community celebrated. The recognition of educational excellence provided strong affirmation and motivation. We were identified as having exceptional outcomes for students and also acknowledged that change and progress would be a necessary challenge moving forward. We were promoting a growth mindset for both our students and for our school community as a whole. Like every school we have experienced many positive changes since 2012. What has not changed; however, is our continued commitment to recognize the whole child and provide an exceptional educational experience.

New reading and math curriculums have been adopted across all grade levels. Writing units have been continuously improved and science lessons have been aligned to the Next Generation Standards. In addition to curriculum changes, goals have been adjusted to include anxiety awareness and mindfulness. Teaching teams at all grade levels have changed, and Memorial has had the addition of a new principal and assistant principal. The influx of new passionate teachers, educational tools, and a supportive leadership team continue to support the success of all students at Memorial School.

Along with adopting curriculum based on well-researched best practices, we are strongly committed to early education intervention. Our Child Team conducts ongoing checks of academic, behavioral, and social development. Striving to promote the potential of all our students, a team approach is used. Memorial School is proud to provide education services to all students, as needed, even without special education identification. Our students receive specific targeted instruction in addition to regular direct teaching of all curriculum areas within their classrooms. This is referred to as our “Team Instruction” approach. Memorial offers Title One math and reading services and a wide range of enrichment opportunities. Academics at Memorial School are very much enhanced by our community of learners.

There is a community spirit at Memorial School that encourages and supports childrens’ academic, emotional, and social growth. In any other calendar year, our schedule is chock-full of community events, parents volunteering in our building daily, classroom collaborations, and schoolwide thematic units. Our school earns recognition every year for the hours parents spend supporting learning in a volunteer capacity. All School Meetings celebrate and reinforce expectations. Student input is actively collected and considered. This past year, however, has been like no other. As a result of the incredible school community we have at Memorial, we continued to achieve our school mission statement “to develop a community of learners who are intellectually curious, resourceful, and respectful of self and others.”

Everything we have built related to community spirit, academic practice, and teaching collaboration allowed us to persevere and continue to provide the best possible education to students during COVID. We transitioned from a hybrid model now back to 100%. Students and families trusted in the process of learning while at home and in school. Teachers were able to effectively support the continued growth of each student, continue with the curriculum and make sure each student had a social and emotional connection to school and peers so they could feel secure and successful. The family connections established with the school provided a foundation in which students could participate in full days of school from home and at school.

Our ongoing commitment to using technology for the enhancement of student learning allowed teaching teams and students to utilize platforms with which they were already very familiar. It also provided an opportunity to think forward about our use of technology. Students continue to participate in synchronous learning when they are not able to attend school in person. School beyond COVID at Memorial will not be

the same, but it will be better in terms of how we can best meet the educational needs of all students. Graduating Bedford High School students will once again visit this June with cheers and tears as we recognize the value and achievement of Memorial Elementary School.

Memorial is a school where students are happy and thriving. Families are involved and supported. We will continue to strive to build a strong community for all of our students and families. We care about individual and collective growth as well as the social and emotional development of each student. As a school we are rooted in friendship as we grow our knowledge.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

The core curriculum at Memorial School challenges and inspires all students to maintain high learning standards as they acquire foundational skills.

Reading/English Language Arts

Aligning with current reading research and best practices, effective reading instruction at Memorial School includes phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Taught through direct, systematic instruction using a research-based reading series, McGraw-Hill's Wonders in grades K-4, students are provided with instruction that includes flexible small grouping, developed by teachers to meet all needs. Small group instruction provides opportunities to practice reading skills, target instruction, and extend the reading/writing connection through close reading. Additionally, small groups give the teacher ongoing informal assessment of skills that guide instruction and assessment.

Early intervention is critical and acquisition of reading skills is continuously monitored using a variety of standardized and informal assessments. Students who require support participate in flexible intervention models that balance instruction. Higher-performing readers participate in an enrichment readers' group to extend skills.

Writing instruction blends craft with application. Students develop their skill through the Writer's Workshop model, focusing on the writing process and craft. Students also regularly respond to text through evidence-based writing and through reading-response journals.

In March 2020 we moved to a remote learning model, and in August we switched to a hybrid schedule. During hybrid instruction students received direct instruction of literacy skills on their in-person school days. On their distance-learning days students used a combination of take-home materials, specialized software, and a variety of online platforms which were assigned through Google Classroom. As of March 2, 2021, all students were back in the classroom full time.

Assessments were completed on students' in-person school days. Fully remote students picked up assessment materials at school or had testing materials mailed to their home. These students had their assessments administered during a Google Meet with a Title 1 reading support staff member.

Mathematics

During the 2019/2020 school year our core program for instruction was Everyday Mathematics. In the spring of 2020 the district adopted the Big Ideas Math program, and its implementation began in August. This curriculum challenges students to think deeply and solve problems, many of which relate to real life situations. Reteach, extra practice, and extension activities are provided for each lesson, allowing for all student needs to be met. Teachers enhance this program's effectiveness by also utilizing strategies they have previously taught. This helped bridge the gap between the previous math program and our current one, which was necessary as we transitioned from remote learning last spring to a hybrid model in the fall.

During hybrid instruction, students participated in focused math lessons during their in-person school days. On distance-learning days, students were responsible for practicing the previous day's content and basic math facts to build automaticity and accuracy.

Formative Acadience assessments help determine which students may benefit from math support. In grades K-4 intervention includes small-group and/or individual skill reinforcement. Students work with math support personnel to solidify foundational skills and practice new concepts. The groups are flexible and require teachers and math support staff to collaborate in order to meet the needs of students. Special educators work with students who require more targeted and intensive intervention and often help make abstract concepts more meaningful and concrete through the use of manipulatives.

Students who demonstrate a solid understanding of concepts are provided opportunities to advance their knowledge with more challenging activities. These students participate in Math Apps, a weekly group facilitated by the enrichment teacher that focuses on deeper levels of math thinking.

Science:

The K-4 science curriculum is designed using an inquiry model and is aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards framework. Students develop and practice critical thinking skills and an understanding of the scientific method. They take on an active role as researchers and use age-appropriate resources, including technology, to study topics such as animal habitats, biodiversity, weather, and energy. Students learn by participating in hands-on activities, completing controlled experiments, and observing phenomena to guide their learning. Leveled texts allow them to apply close-reading strategies and deepen their understanding of science content. The science curriculum aims to engage and inspire students to view themselves as scientists who yearn to explore and question the world around them.

Social Studies

Social Studies fosters an understanding of geography, culture, economics, government, history, and citizenship. Fourth graders participate in an Ellis Island unit, where they are immersed in learning about their ancestral history. The culminating activity is a reenactment of immigrating to America at the turn of the century. Third and fourth graders experience democracy in action as they campaign to join the Principal's Council, which works closely with administrators to be school decision-makers. Digital citizenship is also taught through the safe use of iPads and Chromebooks. Lastly, the Responsive Classroom philosophy, which allows students to be productive and caring members of our school community, interweaves civic responsibility throughout the school through conflict resolution, acceptance of differences, and cooperative learning.

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

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

Memorial School has the privilege of housing the Bedford School District's preschool program, known as the Bedford Early Education Program or BEEP. It provides students and families their first experience within our district. As students transition to elementary school, educators are sensitive to their developmental needs and their families' adjustment to a public school environment. Some of our youngest students with delays in their development are transitioning from early intervention services which often occur within their homes from a young age. Other students are identified through the Child Find process or parent referrals. The team also welcomes students to enroll for their regular education Preschool Program.

As our preschool students participate in their first educational experiences, we engage families through conversations during parent dropoff and pickup, coordinate play dates outside of school, provide weekly communication, and share resources when appropriate.

The preschool program implements a play-based curriculum that encompasses all areas of development. BEEP teachers, specialists, and paraprofessionals strive to help all children be successful participants in the classroom and school setting. Being a part of Memorial School allows preschool students to learn what it means to be part of a school community. During the Covid pandemic preschool students participated in learning activities at home, provided by their teachers. The teachers and therapists were able to engage with families on a deeper level and have meaningful conversations to support learning. Preschool students returned to in-person learning in the Fall of 2020, and the program has adapted to ensure safety and uphold the principles on which the program was built.

BEEP provides a cohesive educational program for our preschoolers. The instructional skills include a wide

variety of strategies and manipulatives to meet the student's needs. Going above and beyond standard expectations makes experiences meaningful and relevant. Activities that build a foundational understanding of literacy, numeracy concepts, and social/emotional development are researched and developed. As children exit the preschool program and move on to kindergarten, the team collaborates with the receiving teachers to help ensure a successful transition.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

At Memorial School, students in grades 1-4 participate in Integrated Arts four times weekly. Classes include Art, Music, Library, and Physical Education. We offer weekly Enrichment classes for students in grades 2-4 who demonstrate high achievement in reading, writing and math, and grade-wide enrichment units and activities for every student. Technology classes happen throughout the year, with our Digital Learning Specialist dropping into classes to teach coding, robotics, and digital citizenship.

The integrated arts at Memorial focus on the acquisition of essential skills and knowledge. Each discipline utilizes our social-emotional learning curriculum to reinforce the language and habits of being safe, responsible, and respectful community members. Academically, we communicate with grade levels to build on what is being taught in their curriculum. For example, fourth graders choose a topic to research for a writing project, and are guided through finding and citing sources during their library classes.

Our classes let students explore other interests, show their talents, and use their creativity to express their individuality. Students are encouraged to formulate their own opinions, and we teach them appropriate ways to express those opinions, such as in music, where in March students create a bracket to determine which songs they prefer and discuss why they like those songs. As a team, part of our mission is to strengthen the community at Memorial. We do this by being active in school initiatives such as the 4th grade play, Thanksgiving food drive, Kids Heart Challenge, Artist in Residence program, and recycling and composting in the cafeteria.

During remote learning in spring 2020, we focused on building this sense of community in a remote setting. We incorporated digital learning tools such as FlipGrid so students could interact, held virtual chorus lessons, created a virtual art gallery, and hosted a virtual field day. Additionally, we organized a staff lip-sync video for Memorial families to show how much we missed them during this time.

During the hybrid learning phase of the 20-21 school year, specialists adapted instruction to deliver a quality educational experience to all students. Enrichment groups met on distance learning days, utilizing Google Meet and other digital tools. Grade-wide lessons occurred in small groups, and culminating events like Ellis Island Day and Invention Convention were tailored to meet safety precautions while still creating a memorable experience for in-person and remote students. In P.E., we made our traditional Halloween obstacle course COVID compliant by adapting the class into a mini-golf course that allowed for social distancing, and using individual equipment kits. In the library, students are typically able to search for books independently. Instead, our librarian and assistant searched each students' reading history and pulled a variety of books of interest that students could choose from.

The integrated arts team goals are to allow students to be successful no matter their academic level, show students that what they learn in their core subjects actually extends beyond the walls of their classroom, and strengthen our school community. We are grateful for the opportunity to do this through the arts, physical education, and STEM.

3. Academic Supports:

Memorial School has a dedicated staff of educators and specialists who collaborate to support the needs of all students. Classroom teachers differentiate instruction in the classroom and are also able to obtain additional resources in the school if needed. Students are able to access targeted instruction at their individual levels whether it be enrichment, reinforcement, remediation, and/or support for English Language Learners.

Standardized screenings are completed with each child at the beginning of each school year. These assessments are nationally normed and help to capture baseline data for each student's literacy and math skills. This data helps to determine which students are working at grade level, are above grade level, or are in need of intervention services. Additionally, ESOL home surveys are completed and qualifying students are given the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA). The ESOL staff determines levels of ELL support needed for each student based on the results of the assessments and feedback from families and educators.

Targeted small group instruction is available for specific students with advanced skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. Participation is determined through high levels of success on standardized academic assessments, current performance, and teacher recommendations. Students are able to enter enrichment programming throughout the school year as they demonstrate ability, motivation, and preparedness. In the area of reading, classes are conducted in a separate setting for students to deepen their appreciation and understanding of literature. Our Writer's Group targets students in grades 3 and 4 who demonstrate above average writing skills, creativity, and a high level of commitment to work on writing projects of their own choice. For math enrichment students are eligible for varied levels of instruction which extend and challenge participating students in the area of mathematics. They explore problem-solving techniques, visual-spatial activities, and logical reasoning, and they participate in the Continental Math League (CML) Competition. Whole group enrichment experiences are provided in second through fourth grade.

Due to Memorial's free and reduced lunch population, our student community benefits from Title I support in the areas of reading and math. Memorial has a targeted Title I Program, meaning it is designed to meet the needs of eligible students in grades K-4 using small group instruction with tutors under the direction of our reading specialist. In addition, our families benefit from school-wide Title I events such as Math and Literacy Night. Students and their families are able to come and participate in a variety of diverse activities which integrate academics and provide engaging experiences with Memorial educators.

The Team Instruction model provides support in literacy and mathematics to students who may need more intensive intervention beyond Title I. As part of the Response to Intervention model certified special educators provide intervention to any student in need of support. During instructional portions of the day, a special educator may be working alongside and in conjunction with classroom teachers. This model allows the flexibility for special educators to work with students in small groups or individually as needed. Typically, both teachers will work within the classroom, but instruction may take place in a small group setting in a quiet environment outside the classroom. Together these teachers bring a broad range of expertise in all subject areas to the classroom.

Memorial School has a professional and dedicated staff who are able to adapt to the needs of all students. With available programming and support all students' needs can be addressed in a comprehensive manner to foster their continued growth and development.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Memorial staff members pride themselves on collaborating with one another to meet the needs of all students. One hallmark of our school's climate and culture is that we educate the whole child through a Responsive Classroom approach. All students are viewed as valued members of their classroom community and the school community.

Staff members are compassionate and work diligently to establish positive relationships with students. They get to know them as learners and as human beings. Students feel cared about and valued. It is common for staff members to spend time with students in a nonacademic capacity to foster their interests, hobbies, and curiosity. This dedication to establishing personal relationships keeps students motivated and eager to learn.

Teachers are skilled at differentiating lessons and assignments to keep students engaged and challenged. Through academic choice activities, students are often able to determine how they can best demonstrate their knowledge of a skill or concept. This allows students to nurture their strengths if they choose or take a risk by pushing themselves out of their comfort zone. Perseverance is instilled in our students from a young age. Students are not only celebrated for their final product, but for their learning process.

Students in all grades have access to a variety of technology platforms they can use to learn new material, practice previously learned content, and/or demonstrate their understanding of skills. These were especially crucial during our remote instruction in the spring of 2020 and the distance-learning days that were part of our hybrid model during the 2020-2021 school year. Utilizing Google Meets and concurrent learning also helped keep our students engaged when they were learning from home.

During lessons students are given opportunities to participate in discussions with peers. They learn to respect and acknowledge other opinions while practicing social etiquette. In-school presentations, either live or through video conferences, are other ways we provide students with enriching experiences in which they may not otherwise have the opportunity to engage.

Our students often have a shared role in a variety of responsibilities. For example, students can volunteer to be tutors for children in younger grades, and third and fourth-grade students serving on Principal's Council brainstorm creative ways to help make our school an even more special place.

Guests to our school often comment that Memorial feels warm and inviting. This atmosphere is built by a collaborative and dedicated staff that has created a student centered, positive, and engaging environment in which students can reach their full potential.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Memorial School prides itself on being a "Community of Learners" with imagery that depicts various age groups of learners. This belief is taken to heart as we're driven to engage students, educators, parents, and community members. We aim to "Put Children First"; within this pedagogy we also embrace our students' learning by engaging their families and our greater community. Our administrators, teachers, and staff understand that through our collaboration, we are educating a whole child, whose learning is influenced by factors inside and outside of our school. We also understand that our school benefits from the support of our constituents who we seek to involve in educational opportunities, classroom and school celebrations, as well as school and community events.

Educators at Memorial School engage families through weekly blogs, individualized positive notes, pictures, and videos, and they encourage social opportunities. Our families receive a weekly newsletter from the principal with helpful information about school happenings, parent group opportunities, and upcoming events. During COVID-19, these communications continued and our teachers, specialists and interventionists increased communication to students and families by offering daily lessons, meetings and

academic support virtually. Our families also began to receive a weekly Wellness Newsletter to reinforce our monthly themes and provide resources, videos, and quizzes to encourage self-discovery, growth and self-care. The Wellness Team looks to provide information to support learners as well as resources within the community to support families.

Our families and community members are engaged through classroom level and school-wide celebrations. Each month, our school gets together for an “All School Meeting” to celebrate the monthly theme, class presentations, and group and individual student efforts for charitable giving or volunteering, as well as acting, choral, and instrumental performances.

Our students celebrate holidays by including the community, such as our traditional Halloween Costume Walk through a local long-term care facility, our “Stuff the Turkey” food drive, “Adopt a Family” during the holiday season, and our Memorial Day tribute, in which each student places a flag at our local cemetery to commemorate our namesake. The Bedford Food Pantry provides intervention for members of our school community by providing Memorial families with food each week and during the holiday season as well as a holiday support and a COVID relief fund.

In addition to the opportunities and celebrations listed above, Memorial School also welcomes family and community members to participate in important traditions such as Senior Citizens Day, Tall/Small Dance, Kindergarten Love Bug Brunch, and Math/Literacy Night. We recognize that we may not have traditional families, but have made efforts to make all families and community members feel valued, respected and part of an inclusive environment for all of our families and community members.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Memorial School supports teachers in many different ways. Professional staff members feel valued through a school culture in which teachers are respected and trusted.

This culture didn’t just happen. It was created by intention. The Memorial staff mindset is one in which we all succeed together. This is accomplished by creating an environment of trust and mutual respect. Our staff believes and holds the expectation that “together we are better,” and examples of this are seen every day.

What stands out in Memorial’s professional culture is the willingness of staff to assist each other when support is needed. The staff see students as “our students”, not “yours” or “mine”. Staff will lend a hand to help each other professionally and personally. They share materials, ideas, and encouragement in an open and generous manner. Strengths are celebrated with other staff members. Administrators in our building openly listen and help solve problems as they arise, which makes the staff feel supported.

Broadening knowledge through a variety of professional development opportunities is a strong component of our culture. Staff are encouraged to learn and grow through workshops, graduate courses, and independent study. Teachers are encouraged to visit other classrooms and learn from peers. Our school culture has created an environment that supports the sharing of strengths. This is possible because we have created a safe and non judgemental environment. Many workshops are provided by staff members who freely share their knowledge with others. Staff will frequently provide learning opportunities for others at staff meetings and child team meetings. The staff see colleagues as knowledgeable, educated, and experienced resources in the building.

Memorial’s collaborative culture was evident during our transition to remote learning in March 2020. Staff were offered professional development opportunities with new technology. Teams of professional staff met weekly to share, problem solve, and collaborate. Specialists and administrators would continuously ask what staff members needed and how they could provide support during remote learning. Grade-level teams worked together to divide curriculum areas in order to decrease the workload. Teachers created Google drives to share lessons, activities, and assignments with one another. Although we were all working remotely, our strong connection and relationships with one another created a remote culture in which staff members felt camaraderie during the difficult transition to virtual learning.

Memorial School has an environment in which all staff members feel valued, supported, and respected.

4. School Leadership:

At Memorial School our fundamental belief regarding leadership is that it is a shared effort. “We, Our, and Us” are three words that support this philosophy. We have a belief that no achievement is a result of a singular person’s effort but instead is indicative of all of us. We are all equally responsible. Our teachers are empowered to share ideas, try new strategies, and have their voice heard in order to move our students forward academically and socially.

Systems are in place for teachers to be active participants in what is best for our students. Our Child Team, Faculty Council, Wellness Team, and administration's “open door policy” are examples of avenues for sharing and collaborating.

The Memorial School Leadership Team is composed of curriculum leaders, specialists and facilitators - teachers, reading specialist, guidance counselor, assistant principal/special education facilitator, and principal.

The principal and assistant principal value the wisdom, experience, and vision staff members have to offer. As an example of this practice, the school administration was approached about an idea of sharing strategies and resources with colleagues during monthly faculty meetings. As a result, at each meeting teachers had the opportunity to share successful stories and examples of implemented activities. Each person possessed a particular strength and passion in the area in which he/she presented. Since the culture in our school is to communicate and collaborate, teachers did not hesitate to volunteer their successes at meetings.

During the COVID pandemic our daily operations needed to change. Teachers and administrators met together to formulate a plan so that students could continue to thrive. Administration met weekly with each team during remote instruction to check in, offer support, and let them know we were in this together. Weekly video messages from administration to families were done to continue our quest to build community. Monthly Spirit Days continued, positive family activities were provided, and an end of the year “Honk-Out” took place to celebrate achievements. The role of administration became one of support and encouragement during trying times.

Collaborative leadership, a shared vision of student success, and a strong sense of community are hallmarks of Memorial School’s culture and drive our practices, programs and policies.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Student diversity of backgrounds is a recognized and celebrated advantage for Memorial Elementary. It is the contribution each student adds to our learning community and a committed response to recognize that student diversity which impacts the school experience for each student and staff member. There is a continued conversation of how responsive we are and how we recognize and celebrate differences while promoting a deep sense of belonging and common purpose as a learning community. Being respected and accepted allows our young students to thrive at Memorial.

The strength of our school community is amplified by the strong recognition that no student at Memorial has the exact same combination of religion, family structure, race, or level of economic security. The language, literature, and activities in the classroom and school are selected or created in response to the common learning goals and diverse needs and backgrounds of our student collective. Within our school community each student has access to supplies, materials, and food. All students have access to snacks, winter clothing, and school supplies. Our staff and families provide gifts during the holidays and we are extremely proud to be recognized as a top

donor to our local food pantry.

Families, teachers, staff, and students plan and enjoy inclusive school activities that bring together home and school. Seniors Day, Small and Tall Dance, Veterans' Memorial Wall, Family Learning Night, and the Love Bug Brunch are just some of the community events that our Memorial staff wants to highlight. Family participation is tremendous and allows us to get to know and develop meaningful connections with students and their families. The diversity of families is appreciated and respected as indicated by the very titles of these celebrated annual events.

Memorial School actively addresses the diverse needs and backgrounds of students. Students are valued and their voices are heard. A student recently wrote, "In every class at Memorial School there is a kind teacher that helps with problems and makes people feel special in every way." Another student commented, "I love school because I feel like I belong here." This sentiment is fostered through small class discussions and large events such as the Ellis Island simulation. Quality literature addressing diversity is a staple in our school. We welcome families to share traditions and volunteer at school. Despite Covid, traditions continue in a modified way. We are planning our annual walk to the nearby cemetery on Memorial Day to plant American flags. We are truly an inclusive community at Memorial School.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The Team Instruction model provides academic support services to students who are at risk of failure or who are already identified through special education. At the time of school closure in March 2020, the Team Instruction model had to adapt quickly in order to meet the needs of these diverse learners at each grade level.

Adapting to a remote model required materials to be compiled for home use, an adapted service delivery model, and a new service schedule since many families had to manage their children's schooling and working from home simultaneously.

Individualized intervention kits were developed for each student. Staff collaborated and created kits complete with literacy and math materials, manipulatives, and a chromebook for each student. The kits were available for pickup within a few days of the school closure. Teachers and administrators dropped off materials to any families who were unable to pick them up at school.

Instruction shifted to a combination of live virtual and prerecorded lessons. With this shift came a reduction in group sizes; therefore all available staff were utilized to support students in need. Students attended Google Meets with special educators, paraprofessionals, the reading specialist, and/or related service providers.. All at-risk students were also given access to live online support weekly. The frequency of services was dependent on each student's unique needs.

In August of 2020, the district switched to a hybrid model, where students attended school in person 2-3 days per week. The Team Instruction model ensured consistent daily services for at-risk and special education students. The special education staff and the reading specialist provided in-person lessons on days when students were in school, as well as online instruction on distance learning days. This model allowed for more consistency and support within the curriculum and tailored instruction to meet students' needs. Duplicate materials were sent home with students, and a schedule was developed to allow for more in-person days or a full closure.

In February 2021 we shifted back to an in-person phase of reopening. The Team Instruction model also shifted back to an in-person model. Students in quarantine affected by COVID-19 received daily tutorial services and concurrent learning opportunities from special educators, their classroom teachers, and paraeducators.

This past year has been a year of growth, collaboration, and change. New challenges came and were overcome with each phase of the pandemic. Every step of the way, through the Team Instructed model, the Memorial staff has been able to meet the needs of struggling learners.