

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

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 234 Schuurman Road  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Castleton-on-Hudson State NY Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 12033-3221

County Rensselaer County

Telephone (518) 207-2640 Fax (518) 479-7954

Web site/URL https://egcsd.org/green-meadow-elementary/ E-mail garabda@egcsd.org

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. Jeffrey Simons E-mail simonsje@egcsd.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name East Greenbush Central School District Tel. (518) 207-2500

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. Michael Buono  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

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

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

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

## **PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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

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

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

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

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 5 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 7 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	37	25	62
1	31	29	60
2	25	35	60
3	35	20	55
4	27	46	73
5	33	36	69
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	188	191	379

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 5 % Asian
  - 2.4 % Black or African American
  - 6.9 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 77.5 % White
  - 8.2 % 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: 6%

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

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

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	10
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	13
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	23
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	380
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.06
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	6

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

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

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

Total number students who qualify: 71

8. Students receiving special education services: 16 %  
60 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>10</u> Autism                 | <u>2</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>19</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>0</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>10</u> Emotional Disturbance  | <u>9</u> Speech or Language Impairment         |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>9</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: 8
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	20
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	15
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	16
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 19:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

<b>Required Information</b>	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Daily student attendance	97%	96%	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.

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

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

Yes  No

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

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

To provide all students a safe learning environment that affords academic excellence and work in partnership with families and the community to prepare all students for success.

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.

The Green Meadow School opened the 2020-2021 school year giving parents the option to choose either a full remote model or a hybrid model. Students enrolled in the hybrid model attend in-person two days per week, engage in independent remote instruction two days per week, and live virtual instruction one day per week. In March 2021, a decision was made to bring back our students in kindergarten through second grades as well as students with disabilities and other high-risk students five days per week. Furthermore, the virtual instruction day was recently eliminated to allow for a third day of in-person instruction every other week. A full remote plan remains an option.

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

## **PART III - SUMMARY**

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As an essential part of our community, Green Meadow School upholds the strong traditions of excellence as reflected by the East Greenbush Central School District. Our students are caring and hard working, children who feel a strong attachment to their school community and attend school eager to learn. Our motto, “It’s All in the Attitude,” created in 1991, represents the cooperative effort, responsibility, and role that all members play to provide all students with an educational experience that fosters full development of their potential. It is this core belief that creates an environment that inspires a desire for lifelong learning, fosters mutual respect, and instills positive values about the worth of participatory citizenship.

These values and practices are evident in every classroom throughout our school. In addition to traditional grade level classes, Green Meadow School also hosts specialized learning programs for students with disabilities. Our transitions program was developed to support students with social, emotional, and behavioral needs. The language concepts program supports students with developmental and speech needs. Students in these programs benefit from individualized learning, related services and a small student to staff ratio which allows the support needed for each child to succeed. We focus on inclusive opportunities with the ultimate goal of integration into the mainstream setting with their typical grade level peers. These classes participate in weekly pet therapy sessions with therapy dogs, Maggie and MacGee. The dogs have become a special treat that the students look forward to each week. Students are able to read to the dogs or simply pet and be comforted by them. All staff working at Green Meadow School understand the impact of childhood trauma and have received training on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES). Staff in our specialized programs also participate in annual training in de-escalation techniques.

The Green Meadow School community works closely with the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) and interfaces with local businesses, organizations, and families. There are countless examples of these interactions such as: home visits conducted by the social worker to our most vulnerable students/families; community members and parents who volunteer their time and expertise; the local dentist who speaks on the importance of dental health; the scientist father who conducts Science Technology Engineering Math (STEM) activities with intermediate classes; students visiting the local police department to deliver treats and small tokens of their appreciation; the local fire department coming to present fire safety information to the student body; the owner of a local martial arts studio presenting at a Character Education assembly on the value of respect to self and others, and the creation of meal train donations to families that have faced various tragedies.

The Green Meadow School community has always embraced diversity within our school and our surrounding neighborhoods. Our demographics have continued to change and evolve over time. With these changes, we have fortified our belief that each individual is unique, and have increased our efforts to promote equality, fairness, and respect. We utilize our Character Education program to teach our student body that our differences provide an opportunity for us to learn and grow. The school television program, Green Meadow Television (GMTV) provides educational content specific to cultural/racial/gender/socio-economic differences on a weekly basis. GMTV also provides opportunities for students and staff to share their unique cultures and backgrounds. Examples include: staff presenting on the meaning of Hanukkah and the dreidel game and creating a marketplace to prepare and share foods from different cultural backgrounds. This may include Armenian and Mexican food and student presentations to highlight their racial/cultural family heritage. In addition, this year the school social worker provided a presentation to intermediate classes on gender related issues. The presentation created a safe environment to explore differences, pose questions, provide an opportunity for self-reflection, and uphold the values of respect and self-determination.

Green Meadow School acknowledges our students’ achievements in all areas of our curriculum from academic, to athletic, artistic, musical, and digital. These acknowledgments are in line with our belief that every student is entitled to a safe, empowering learning environment. This has been especially evident during the pandemic and our district’s hybrid learning model. Green Meadow School continues to strive to provide academic excellence in all its programs, provide dedicated and supportive staff, and work in partnership with families and the community to prepare all students for success.





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

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

Over the last decade, our staff has been instrumental in the creation of the K-5 district curriculum maps for English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. This includes a teacher created curriculum resource center called the K-5 Curriculum Corner for easy access to all staff members. This resource is updated and aligned with the current standards. The flexibility of our staff in meeting the standards during the pandemic and hybrid model has been challenging, but we have risen to the challenge and our students have been successful as evident from individual student personal growth with the use of both formative and summative assessments. It is also the result of our targeted instruction and student centered activities that meet the diverse needs of our students.

English Language Arts (ELA) at Green Meadow School has always focused on the development of being proficient and enthusiastic readers, writers and communicators. In grades K-2, the instruction of reading and writing occurs with authentic literature for early literacy skills. The use of authentic literature continues in grades 3 through 5. An example of our continuum of literacy instruction is exemplified with our buddy reading that occurred within the school prior to the pandemic. The excitement of fourth grade students sharing their love of reading with a first grade student is truly remarkable to see. The pandemic has not allowed for buddy reading, but we have adapted our literacy instruction by providing engaging literature at all grade levels with the use of online texts that are diverse, interest based and engaging to students while also addressing cross curricular standards. We continue to read aloud daily both in person and virtually to engage students in texts at all grade levels. This year, however, the teacher is walking around a classroom of socially distanced desks instead of sitting with students on a carpet.

In mathematics, we continue to follow our teacher created curriculum maps aligned to the standards; however, we have adapted our instruction by focusing on the critical concepts in order to target instruction at each grade level. We have made the necessary adjustments to curriculum and instruction to teach critical mathematical concepts. Our lessons are planned to include class discussions, socially distanced partner activities, and group work to provide students with multiple opportunities to engage in mathematical discourse. The use of manipulatives at all grade levels continues because it is the most exciting part of math for our students and keeps them engaged at all grade levels. Manipulatives allow our students to explore the mathematical relationships, concepts, and skills to better understand the real life applications of mathematics and problem solving. During the pandemic, teachers have adapted their mathematical instruction as part of a hybrid model of instruction. Staff have created virtual opportunities for group work, take home manipulative packages, digital lessons, as well as practice activities to support the curriculum.

Science education at Green Meadow School has transformed since the adoption and implementation of the New York State Science Learning Standards (NYSSLS). This current school year we continue to scaffold and provide opportunities for both virtual and in-person learning. Students are developing habits of thinking that science is all encompassing in the world by investigating phenomena that surrounds them and are explaining science through discovery and experimentation. We use our makerspace (STEM) lab that was created by staff and community members in our school building. Our kindergarten students used the makerspace classroom to construct traps to catch a leprechaun with materials from the lab. Our students in the upper grade levels say that STEM Friday is their favorite day of the week. They are measuring, collecting data, identifying patterns, finding cause and effect relationships, and constructing claims with evidence. Students are applying this evolved way of learning science with our current hybrid schedule. Teachers can easily target instruction based on formative assessments of the scientific experience. At Green Meadow School we are teaching students to be problem solvers, leading to a generation of science thinkers.

The staff at Green Meadow School continue with a comprehensive program aligned to the social studies framework. Our instruction promotes citizenship and global awareness through a consistent emphasis on historical thinking skills in order to prepare students for college, careers and civic life. Our curriculum offers diverse trade books, digital resources, vocabulary, video links, cross-curricular assessments, and more. Our Green Meadow School staff has been instrumental in the creation of inquiry based units of study for economics, culture, and geography. Every unit includes primary sources and activities to create inquiry-

based lessons and to help students develop critical-thinking skills. One example is our unit on Native Americans where our students build model longhouses and then visit a museum to learn more about the history of Native Americans.

Green Meadow School teachers and staff work collaboratively to create a curriculum that promotes engagement, skill building, knowledge building, deeper learning, and preparation for the kinds of rigorous work expected in higher education, careers, and life. During the pandemic, we focused on the critical concepts in both fun and engaging ways for student understanding. We continue to monitor student achievement with our goal to provide students with experiences and skills to perform with proficiency.

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

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

**2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

At Green Meadow School, our special curriculum areas support excellence in our students and function as an extension of the core curriculum as they practice essential skills to acquire new knowledge. Each week all students, in grades kindergarten through grade five, engage with our art, music, physical education, and library programs to nurture their creativity, curiosity, enthusiasm and overall wellness.

Our physical education program strives to promote maximum physical, emotional, and social growth of every student. A favorite extracurricular activity that supplements our physical education program is the Green Meadow Running Club where approximately 100 of our students meet three times a week for an hour before school to stretch, run, and socialize with their peers in an effort to promote wellness. Many of our students and family members participate in our annual Color Run. This event draws more than 300 participants which includes staff members, students, and families. Our runners also have an opportunity to participate in the Hudson Mohawk “Just Run” regional track meet in both the fall and spring.

Our library program creates excitement for reading and research. As a school, we are focused on acquiring and promoting diverse library materials. Our inclusive library fosters creativity and freedom to explore personal interests while practicing essential skills like source evaluation and effective strategies for finding information. Our students have participated in a national read-a-thon, raising more than \$3,500 for a local charity. Additionally, Green Meadow School students have had the opportunity to participate in the annual Literacy Fair. This typically coincides with a yearly author visit.

Our art department offers hands-on activities that allow students to express themselves while problem solving and thinking critically. Students are exposed to diverse cultures and artists with projects based on historical and contemporary themes in our community and beyond. One of our favorite art events is our districtwide Art Show every spring. In recent years, Green Meadow School has featured the work of 45 students in the show.

Music helps strengthen our students’ growth throughout their time in elementary school. Through general music classes, students are taught the basics of music performance as well as how to incorporate music into their everyday lives. Students continue their musical education with playing instruments as well as singing in chorus. Our fourth and fifth grade students showcase their talents twice a year at schoolwide performances. The skills learned while participating in these activities help students perform better in core subjects. Our annual Veteran’s Day assembly is another instance where students are able to show their musical talents. Our children enjoy singing patriotic songs during this special gathering.

Our special curriculum area classes are a wonderful avenue for students to experience new and exciting

experiences while expanding on concepts from their core classes. These classes give students the opportunity to build on their personal interests and gain new experiences.

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

Academic and social emotional support is an essential component of the educational development for all students at Green Meadow School. Each student participates in the academic support program at varying levels under the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) model. The goal is to meet the diverse individual needs of our student population.

Our students receive quality differentiated instruction. Our assessments are both formative and summative to determine academic strengths and weaknesses during the school year. Our teacher created assessments, aligned to the New York State Next Generation Learning Standards, have been instrumental in targeting instruction during the pandemic. Universal screening and progress monitoring occurs as part of the MTSS framework to identify those students at risk both academically and behaviorally. We continue with our periodic and systematic review of data. We have a Building Data Team (BDT) at each grade level to ensure data driven decisions. The BDT provides the opportunity for staff to work collaboratively to determine how to target instruction with varying intensity and researched based practices. After review of multiple formative and summative data points, a plan is created to target any student with an achievement gap of ten or more percentage points in any subgroup. The use of research based practices that are highly targeted to individual student needs is a critical component to our success in closing achievement gaps in our school.

The movement of students among the tiers of intensity is both flexible and fluid and is not dictated by a diagnosed disability. This includes, but is not limited to, students with Individualized Education Plans (IEP) and 504 plans, economically disadvantaged students, and students that may perform below expectations. After a time period of targeting instruction and progress monitoring, a student's plan may be changed with further intensified instruction. It is commonplace at Green Meadow School to see special education teachers providing their expertise and instructional services to at-risk students. The same is true of reading specialists working with students with disabilities. The Green Meadow School philosophy is to always do what is best for our students and to extend beyond the lines of our instructional responsibility.

During this unprecedented time, Green Meadow School staff continues to rise to the challenge of meeting the needs of diverse learners during full remote and hybrid learning. To reach more students on their remote and virtual learning days, teaching assistants provide academic and social support at our offsite community childcare settings. The goal is to offer full time, in person instruction to all students, while still adhering to Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines.

Our intent is to provide all students with a high quality educational experience to improve individual outcomes for students at risk. Staff working collaboratively ensures that current instructional practices can be adjusted to meet the needs of students. The result is improved outcomes for the diverse needs of individual students in our elementary school, both academically and social emotionally.

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

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

Green Meadow School is a nurturing, supportive school environment where all students are encouraged to reach their full potential. Our motto, “It’s All in the Attitude,” not only reflects the positive, dedicated mindset and professionalism of our staff, but the sincere effort that students put forth in their academic and personal growth. This core belief permeates our interactions among staff, students, and families.

Green Meadow School staff is passionate about educating the whole child and providing programs and experiences that address the academic, social, emotional, and physical well-being of students. Strategies for approaching student development in the areas of empowerment, collaboration, honesty, trustworthiness, respect and responsibility are modeled and employed by staff, support services, and programs throughout the building. One program that embodies and reflects our commitment to student growth and development is our Character Education program. This program includes monthly assemblies, formally recognizing students and classrooms of character, weekly broadcast of important announcements, student anchors, and guest speakers on GMTV as well as the Best of the Bus program that promotes positive, appropriate, and safe bus behaviors. Students are motivated by the possibility of being recognized at an assembly or with a special award for positive behavior. The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) assisted with maintaining student engagement during a period of closure due to the pandemic. Monthly contests where students tried to guess the number of items in a small jar, submitted drawings of their favorite books, or made signs showing why they love Green Meadow School so much were held. We have also invited virtual speakers including a presentation with reptiles and other exotic animals to keep students excited about learning. Our students and staff even hosted a virtual talent show to boost spirits during the school closure.

The GMTV program was a critical link to our Green Meadow School community during the school closure due to COVID-19. During the period of March 2020-June 2020, staff created several inspirational, supportive videos for students and their families to reassure them that the challenges of coping with the virus and the closure would be faced together. The videos reminded students and their families that although the building was closed, they were still connected to Green Meadow School. In April 2020, staff organized and executed a school parade to reinforce the message of caring and school community. Teachers also created class newsletters, held daily morning meetings, and provided fun, engaging hands-on activities. This helped students feel connected to their classroom community and engaged in learning. In September 2020, staff brainstormed the idea of creating a time capsule with students to reflect this period in history and the unique challenges and experiences that we have faced as a school community; this project is still in process.

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

We are fortunate to have an extremely active and supportive Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) at Green Meadow School. Our PTO sponsors many school-wide events for students and families. Some of these activities include: reading to support Ronald McDonald House, the annual Science and Literacy Fairs, the annual Color Run, the Winter Carnival, and the after school enrichment program.

During academic events such as the Science Fair and Literacy Fair, families visit Green Meadow School to explore curriculum areas that they might not be familiar with or to discover new resources to use at home. Prior to COVID-19 restrictions, staff from a local children’s museum and the community library would come visit school and make educational presentations to students during the events.

Students are offered several extracurricular activities through the enrichment program. Parents and Green Meadow School staff volunteer to coordinate weekly activities after school. Some examples of enrichment opportunities include: Chess Club, Cooking Club, Yoga, Coding Club, Recycling Club, Art Club, Magic Club, Lego Club, Scrapbook Club, Bead/Jewelry Making Club, Slime Making, etc.

The Green Meadow School Student Council coordinates events throughout the year. These activities include: a school wide food collection that benefits local community organizations, annual Soup-a-Bowl

collection for a local food pantry, school spirit days to build our sense of community within our school, and more! In addition, Green Meadow School recognizes and supports national awareness days throughout the school year.

In conjunction with staff members, our PTO helped to initiate and create a food backpack program for students/families who are at risk of food instability. This program has been expanded throughout the pandemic to reach those students and families who have experienced job loss, financial instability, and homelessness. To date, the program provides food to eighteen families on a weekly basis. This includes students participating in full remote learning. A variety of local businesses have generously contributed to the backpack program. Prior to COVID-19 restrictions, staff members met monthly as a school community to acknowledge both professional and personal accomplishments and events. With current limitations, we are beginning a monthly shout-out program whereby staff members may acknowledge one another for their professional efforts, as well as collegial behavior.

This year, parent teacher conferences were held virtually. Teachers and staff regularly communicate with parents regarding academic achievements and challenges through emails, phone calls, text messages, Remind apps, and home visits. On-line and hard copy class newsletters, Google classrooms, and class slideshows/videos, are also used to maintain contact. This year, the first grade team encouraged students and their families to put together “All About Me” bags to share with their classmates. They also have continued promoting ‘Birthday Books,’ whereby parents can video or virtually read a story to the class instead of visiting in person when it is their child’s birthday.

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

Green Meadow School has a dynamic Professional Learning Community (PLC), that was created by a National Board Certified teacher who recognized a need for ongoing education and collaboration. This PLC was first established in 2012 and has continued to meet every school year. Through this community, staff members have had the opportunity to participate in professional learning discussions and multiple book studies. To date, the following topics have been chosen for study: building emotional intelligence, educating the whole child, mindfulness in education, cultivating emotional resilience in educators, and reading and social emotional learning. In addition, a social emotional learning library was established to benefit teachers and students.

Through this program, staff members were able to learn, explore, and then teach the various strategies, techniques, and methods related to the PLC topic. Teachers have embraced the ideology that emotional wellness is paramount to the learning process. Staff members are now able to directly teach and incorporate practices including the following: mindful minute, Brain Gym, positive visualization, motivational mantras, breathing techniques, and intentional movement. Students are encouraged to utilize these practices to better prepare for learning. These practices also help students with problem-solving, interpersonal interactions and relationships, conflict resolution, and self-regulation.

The Green Meadow School team has grown and learned many valuable lessons while using a hybrid model. The staff has taken advantage of numerous professional development opportunities that have leveraged the increased understanding of the value of technology to support teaching and learning. Teachers are currently involved in a partnership with the University at Albany to implement the Interactive Strategies Approach (ISA) to teach reading.

The collaborative environment at Green Meadow School is strong. Teachers are seen helping one another each and every day. This could be as small as teaching a colleague how to use a Bitmoji classroom, or as monumental as working together to figure out how to best adapt to the change in schedules that go along with bringing more students into the building. There has always been a special camaraderie among Green Meadow School staff; however, this year it has continued to grow with our empathy towards each other during this challenging academic school year.

As the staff at Green Meadow School made the transition to the current hybrid model, we have had the opportunity to enjoy many special moments. The Education Foundation treated the staff to ice cream

sundaes in the spring. Our kitchen manager began providing lunches for the staff on our virtual instruction days. The district celebrated the staff by purchasing shakes for each member of the Green Meadow School team. Staff members have organized boxed lunch days as well as bagel breakfasts. Our PTO provided our staff and students with Green Meadow Strong t-shirts. As we move through these uncharted waters, all of these special moments remind us of how lucky we are to be part of the Green Meadow School environment.

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

The leadership philosophy at Green Meadow School is based on a feeling of mutual respect among students, staff, parents and the community. This philosophy allows the school community, as a whole, to set consistent high expectations for academic achievement and social emotional support for all. We all follow our Green Meadow School motto, "It's All in the Attitude," as highlighted in our gymnasium and on our Green Meadow School apparel worn by so many in our school community.

The Green Meadow School principal has been a member of the school district community his entire life. As a former student, elementary teacher, parent, and now principal, he is clearly able to view issues through multiple lenses. The principal fully recognizes that the teachers and staff make the most positive difference for students both academically and social emotionally.

The principal is a listener, communicator, and problem solver. He is always available for his staff both during the school day and all days and hours beyond the typical school schedule. This has been highly evident during the pandemic. He readily responds to a text, an email, or a phone call to support a staff member for either a professional or personal matter. He encourages teachers to be leaders. He has encouraged many teachers to take on leadership roles, such as district wide grade level curriculum specialists and committee chairs. Student leaders are also fostered through our Student Council, morning announcements, and character education programs. He provides staff and students with the tools they need to be successful.

Our school has long been a warm and caring place where our staff enjoys coming to work to foster student academic achievement. The principal's approach, and that of our team, continues to be that of collaboration rather than competition among staff. The principal continues to emphasize collaboration with staff, fellow building principals, and central administration to effectively function with flexibility during our current academic climate. He is an active member of the districtwide reopening task force. In addition, he formed a task force tailored specifically for Green Meadow School to include staff leaders and community stakeholders. As a result, Green Meadow School was able to provide virtual learning in the spring of 2020 and to open safely under the hybrid model in September of 2020.

The school leadership is one of inclusivity so students and staff achieve their own success as learners and instructors in a safe environment. By doing this, we maintain a high level of academic achievement while enjoying our students engaged in differentiated learning. We do it with a positive attitude and flexibility to best meet students' individual needs both academically and social emotionally during these unprecedented times.

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

At Green Meadow School, all staff are committed to fostering and promoting diversity, acceptance, and understanding. This year staff has put forth major effort to thinking beyond what was once considered standard inclusive curriculum. This has involved participation in a voluntary self-reflection survey as well as a school climate survey specific to race. The goal is to stretch personal comfort zones, as well as typical teaching practices. Staff are challenged to reach beyond holidays, well known heroes, and Black History month to a more expansive view and approach for a diverse education. Staff is well aware that changes will evolve over time.

Multiple staff members participate in the districtwide committee to promote global education. In addition, these staff members are currently participating in a book study, with *The Inner Work of*

Racial Justice, by Rhonda V. Magee. The ideas, resources, and recommendations put forth by the Global Education Committee help to guide practice at the building level and in individual classrooms. These practices not only directly benefit staff through professional development and personal growth but ultimately impact students and the school community. One recent example is the creation of Global Awareness Ambassadors at each school. Ambassadors are selected students and families who welcome new families to the school community.

GMTV is used to highlight different countries, cultures, and their customs. For example, on Tasty Tuesdays, students research and prepare food from a specific country. Students and staff appear regularly to inform the school about a specific tradition and custom from their culture. The Green Meadow School library curriculum also promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion. Recently, twenty-eight multicultural books were added to the Green Meadow School library. These books can serve as resources to be used in classrooms and library lessons as well as for students to borrow and read. Further, the school librarian worked with library colleagues throughout the district to create and launch a website (<https://sites.google.com/egcsd.org/conversationstarters/home?authuser=0>) intended to promote social justice and inclusivity. Our students continue to learn about diversity and have recently studied the artist Aminah Robinson, an African American folk artist. The students read some of her letters learning about Sojourner Truth and Rosa Parks. The presence of a Peace Pole on school grounds serves as a visual reminder of the importance of cultural sensitivity. The school has planned to host a school-wide multicultural fair once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.

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

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Social emotional learning and wellness are instrumental to student success at Green Meadow School. Along with this, a strong sense of community runs deep. Many of our Green Meadow School families have been a part of our community for generations and are strongly connected to our traditions and values. It is this connection that reinforces the importance of social emotional learning and helped sustain our “It’s All in the Attitude” motto for our students, staff, and families throughout the closure and hybrid model of learning. The relationships among staff and students, the principal and staff, students and their peers, and the school with the community are the foundation of Green Meadow School. As a result of the nurturing, caring, and empathetic culture that exists at Green Meadow School, students, families, and staff were able to count on one another for support during the pandemic.

The support from the building principal, district superintendent, and the Board of Education, helps to set a caring and trusting tone throughout the building. This climate allows teachers to try new things, take risks, and teach to their strengths. It fosters the opportunity for teachers to collaborate, plan, and expand on their professional knowledge. Students come to realize that they are in a safe, nurturing place where they can reflect on their experiences, foster relationships with their teachers and peers, and learn in a manner that best suits them. Students come to think of their teachers and classmates as members of an extended family. They know that their basic needs will be met and that they will have the opportunity to learn and try new things. The importance of wellness and social emotional learning directly relates to academic success because students learn better when they feel safe.

This year, our PTO purchased Green Meadow Strong t-shirts for every student and staff member. These shirts have come to represent the enhanced solidarity and support that has been felt since the beginning of the pandemic. The shirts combined with the regular GMTV segments and special videos, the Character Education (virtual) assemblies, and the continued implementation of the PLC, have all contributed to strengthening the relationships at Green Meadow School and show our strength and resilience as a school community,

The implementation of social emotional learning both prior to and during the pandemic, has been the most instrumental practice in our school. Supporting the emotional wellness of our students, staff, and entire community has enabled us to continue with academic achievements. If our students feel safe and connected to their teachers, staff members, and peers they will have a stronger foundation for successful learning in school.