

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

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

School Mailing Address 30301 Wolf Road  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Bay Village State OH Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 44140-1621

County Cuyahoga County

Telephone (440) 617-7550 Fax (440) 617-7551

Web site/URL https://www.bayvillageschools.com/ E-mail char.shryock@bayschoolsohio.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\* Mrs. Char Shryock E-mail char.shryock@bayschoolsohio.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Bay Village City School District Tel. (440) 617-7300

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 Mrs. Lisa Priemer  
(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):
- 2 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 4 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	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	84	77	161
4	96	86	182
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
<b>Total Students</b>	180	163	343

\*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
  - 2 % Asian
  - 1 % Black or African American
  - 3 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 91 % White
  - 3 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2019 - 2020 school year: 4%

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

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

<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	4
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	11
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	15
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	355
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.04
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	4

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

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

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

Total number students who qualify: 25

8. Students receiving special education services: 10 %  
35 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>3</u> Autism                  | <u>2</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>13</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>4</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>13</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 13
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.	21
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	8
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	11
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	5

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.

<b>Required Information</b>	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.

<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. 2015

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

Westerly's highly qualified staff intentionally and collaboratively support the varying needs of all students. Our students succeed in a caring, nurturing, and safe environment.

16. Briefly describe how your school has been operating during the current 2020-2021 school year (e.g., open as usual, online only, a hybrid model, etc.)? If different grade levels in your building operate in different ways, include this. If the school began with one model and switched to another partially through the year, include this as well.

Westerly started the year in a hybrid model for one week. Half the students (In-person and eLearners) came to school the first two days, the other half came the next two days. All in-class and eLearners came together on Friday, well prepared and ready for the start of the school year. Having half the student population for two days out of the week allowed teachers, support personnel and administration the opportunity to review and walk through the arrival and dismissal plan, restroom expectations, safety protocols, and classroom procedures with smaller groups of students. This ensured safety, success, and understanding among all stakeholders. The chance to meet in person benefited staff and students. We were intentional and clear with all expectations and prepared for a great year.

All families had the opportunity to choose eLearning or In-person learning, but needed to make this commitment quarterly. With the hiring of five additional certified teachers and three classified staff, we reduced class sizes to 16/17, implemented mitigation strategies, which included six feet social distancing, catch cubbies, regular and often hand washing, and mandatory masks. Westerly has been in-person 80% of the school year.

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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Bay Village, Ohio is a beautiful, residential community nestled along five miles of Lake Erie's wooded, southern shore. With a population of about 15,000, Bay Village is 20 miles west of Cleveland. With its coastal charm and convenience to Fortune 500 companies and world-class medical facilities, the town is home to many C-suite executives and first responders. Bay Village City School District is the city's largest employer with more than 400 faculty and staff members. Many Bay Villagers return home to raise their own families. Whether they moved here for the quality schools and lakefront, or are lifetime residents, community is key, and families are involved, motivated, and high achieving.

Westerly School opened in 1955 as a K-5 neighborhood elementary school. In 2005, Westerly celebrated its 50th birthday, honoring past students and staff with a birthday celebration. In 2010, Westerly led the school district's involvement in the community celebration of the City of Bay Village's bicentennial. Westerly faculty and staff are engaged and inspired, and recognize how important it is for students to create lifelong connections with their school and community. In fact, in a recent Humanex survey, Westerly faculty and staff ranked highest in their "commitment to the success of our school," scoring 4.84/5.0!

Teaching the whole child is essential to the Bay Village culture. High academic excellence is based on the foundation of strong mental health support. The district has established a multiple-tiered support system of tier one instruction in mindfulness techniques. Counselors and teachers model and teach students how to calm their emotions by being aware of their feelings, and then respond with breathing techniques. Furthermore, positive behavior supports teaching about respect, responsibility for actions, and care for one another. This program teaches students expectations and creates a culture of kindness, acceptance, and perseverance. At tier two, students who benefit from more targeted support are invited to "Worry Warrior" groups that address how to manage anxiety and focus on modifying thoughts. This group ensures students are able to discuss their feelings and to not hide from worries, but address them. Lastly, students in crisis are supported by a child psychologist who teaches strategies, partners with private counselors, and provides wrap-around services for families. Mental wellness is essential to Westerly students being successful in the classroom and beyond.

Each year, certified and classified staff work with small groups of students in preparation for the rigorous Ohio State Tests. Although all students would benefit from this opportunity, teachers identify and recommend students based on classroom data, DIBELS data, previous state testing data, and anecdotal records. There are currently 50 students participating in the Extended Day Opportunity at Westerly. Westerly has been offering an extended-day program for many years, and is well ahead of the governor's suggested plan this year to implement intervention due to COVID-19. The Extended Day Opportunity intervention program, which runs for 10-12 weeks after school, provides third- and fourth-graders with the opportunity to participate in small-group reading and writing intervention and math support at no cost to families. Transportation is even provided for students involved in afterschool care programs.

Working during a pandemic has only highlighted Westerly's cohesive environment and its care and compassion for one another as a learning family. Certified and classified staff have grown stronger in confidence, and have learned to lean on one another for guidance, encouragement, and support within the classroom. Our slogan, OneRocketNation, shines through. A boots-on-the-ground tech support model lets teachers keep their focus on educating students, knowing there was immediate tech support available to both teachers and families at home. Our virtual Rocket Family eAcademy provided opportunities for parents to stay informed during the onset of COVID-19, and to participate in live and streamed parent/student development activities. Teachers participated in self-directed professional development around best practices during eLearning. Our district used a mini-conference model with choice boards and Bitmoji classrooms to share resources. Students demonstrated independence and the ability to become technology troubleshooters, sharing what they learned with their peers and their teachers.

During a pandemic year, our goal was to continue to provide students with high-quality learning and opportunities for growth and resilience, while meeting the academic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs of all levels of learners. Westerly will continue to utilize and carry forward our ongoing job-embedded

professional learning, continuing tech support, and spotlighting of innovation outside a pandemic year. Teachers will continue to have opportunities to work across classrooms in co-teaching settings from two different physical spaces, while providing whole class instruction and/or small classroom settings through breakout rooms for enrichment and intervention.

Westerly was recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School in 2015. As a prior recipient of this prestigious award, we have continued to demonstrate the highest quality of teaching and learning. Our recognition highlights and reinforces to our families the supports we wrap around children academically, socially, and emotionally each year. Our prior recognition also demonstrates to families what a strong, cohesive staff we have working collaboratively in the best interest of children. Having earned the trust and confidence of families prior to a pandemic year allowed us to develop an educational and safety plan families fully embraced.

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

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

At the end of May of 2021, Westerly School will have been in-building 80 percent of the 2020-21 school year. Although one of the only districts in our region to embrace an “all in” model, we had confidence in: our robust reopening plan, our multi-layered safety protocols that were in place, and a faculty and staff willing to dare greatly. Below, we share our core curriculum information and how we adapted that to our current instructional model.

Westerly School’s core curriculum is anchored in the Ohio Learning Standards for grades 3 and 4 across all subject areas. The Major work of the Grade in grades 3 and 4 is multiplication and division and fractions. The English Language Arts content emphasizes the ability to synthesize information from 2 texts, using informational texts or literary texts. Student writers are building skills in figurative language, writing multiple paragraph essays and organizing their writing to include topic sentences and supporting details. In Social Studies, students in grades 3 and 4 focus on Ohio history as it relates to U.S. history, pre-historic and historic Native American cultures, and state government. Science continues to build on force and motion, ecosystems, and fossils as evidence of past life. Teachers work in collaborative teams within and across grade levels to ensure alignment and to build cohesive instructional plans. These teams have been a strength for the school throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Flexibility in planning led to four iterations of the instructional model, each one building on the strengths and lessons learned from the past.

Beginning in March of 2020, as the Bay Village City School District shifted to emergency remote learning, the Westerly staff was ready to go with three weeks of standards-based, theme-driven asynchronous learning. These activities integrated math, science, social studies, and English language arts. In addition, these family-oriented lessons incorporated fine arts and social emotional learning. This first iteration allowed the teacher teams time to distribute instructional materials and Chromebooks to all students, adapt lesson materials to work in a virtual environment, and grow their own understanding of effective eLearning strategies. Simultaneously, the strong relationships that had been built with students allowed all learners to continue to feel supported as they adjusted to life during a stay-at-home order.

The second iteration in April of 2020, continued to provide asynchronous instruction, giving families who were also adapting to “the new normal” a chance to flex the student learning day to fit within their own work schedules. Teachers scheduled frequent, real-time class conversations -- along with using Google Classroom -- to organize and provide feedback around lessons and activities. Screencastify became an essential tool for teachers to record instruction. The library team developed a read-aloud protocol for volunteer readers to use as a way to record audio books to make them accessible to all students. Collaboration around instructional planning capitalized on the teachers’ content-area strengths. Team members focused on weaving core content into theme-based units, which included activities that addressed the social emotional needs of the students.

The staff persevered through the summer of 2020, voluntarily participating in Zoom training, Screencastify training, and professional development around eLearning strategies. Learning to be intentional was vital to success during the third iteration of instruction in August of 2020. By utilizing district-wide, one-to-one Chromebook distribution, along with the investment in teacher laptops and document cameras, the staff was able to provide real-time eLearning instruction for 5 ½ hours, five days a week to all students. The teacher teams collaborated to identify essential learning/skills students needed to move forward, and then created laser-focused lesson activities within the adopted district curriculum.

Beginning the 2020-21 school year in eLearning had hidden benefits. Both students and staff developed resilience and problem-solving skills. As confidence grew, teachers worked together with paraprofessionals in the building to engage with students in whole groups and small groups, using breakout rooms on Zoom. Opportunities to incorporate more project-based learning, co-teaching across classrooms, and multi-tiered systems of support became frequent. Student-teacher connections grew stronger as show and tell turned into tours of houses, time with pets, and inclusion of parents and siblings during class time. And learning continued. Teachers became adept at using formative assessment tools through Zoom, including the “thumbs

up” participation icon, to check on student progress in the moment. Jamboards and collaboration through Google Docs and Slides, and Flipgrids opened space for students to share their own thinking and questions, while providing feedback to their peers. Students performed Readers’ Theater by creating Google Slides, and used Screencastify Submit to bring voices to their work.

By September 14, 2020, the district was able to safely transition to the next iteration -- daily, In-building instruction with real-time eLearners. This was the most challenging iteration, as educators learned to teach with one foot in the classroom and one foot on Zoom -- integrating not only math, science, English language arts, and social studies -- but also managing students joining the class via Zoom and those in-person, who were sitting behind plexiglass catch-cubbies in masks. All of the learning, the perseverance, the intentionality of planning, and the cohesiveness that developed over the prior months, allowed this final iteration to succeed. By the end of this school year, we are proud to say that teachers and students have been In-building 80 percent of the time -- a feat unlike any other district in our region!

The use of Acadience (Dibels) to monitor literacy progress, along with NWEA Map testing, unit assessments, and ongoing formative assessments, provided teachers with data needed to make informed instructional decisions and a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS). Intervention specialists, speech therapists, and reading specialists pushed into classrooms, and used Zoom breakout rooms to provide individualized intervention. John Hattie’s research indicates that Teacher Efficacy has a significant impact on student success. The Westerly team has high expectations for themselves and all their students. By approaching the COVID-19 pandemic through an asset lens rather than a deficit lens, the team has been able to provide consistent, high-quality, standards-based instruction to all students throughout the entire pandemic.

**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:**

Bay Village City Schools strives to provide a well-rounded education for all students, including offering visual art, music, physical education, and technology at Westerly School. This year, students attend each of these “Specials” classes for one hour each week. Our curriculum is based on the Ohio Education Standards established by the Ohio Legislature. The Specials team teaches both In-building and eLearners simultaneously through the use of a document camera and Zoom to keep us engaged with all students, while maintaining social distancing in the classroom. All supplies needed have been provided to eLearning students.

In physical education, students have participated in a variety of activities, including pre-sport skills, jump rope, juggling, dance, fitness exploration, and nutrition education. We also incorporate the LU Interactive Playground as a supplement to instruction. This is a projector system that allows the instructor to present both visual and verbal content to differentiate instruction to all students.

The visual arts program has created a new theme this year entitled “Joyful Expressions,” where students create artworks that reflect feelings of positivity amid the pandemic. Students use a variety of tools and techniques throughout the creative process. Elements and principles of design and art vocabulary are taught through class critiques and discussions. While the pandemic has been challenging, our students have continued to grow in their artistic and creative skills, while expressing feelings of joy and hope in their artwork.

Technology instruction has been an integral part of the 2020-21 school year, teaching students lifelong skills that enhance learning. The skills that students have developed and continue to grow during technology class

are applied throughout the school year within the general education classroom. Students are also educated on the importance and awareness of online safety, and pledge to follow the Westerly Digital Driver's License, agreeing to make good choices online and to care for their school-issued Chromebook. Students were unable to check out school library books this year, but learned how to access eBooks through online resources, giving them access to thousands of books -- including Accelerated Reader titles -- to continue to develop their love of reading.

In music, we have had to creatively teach the Standards without singing, sharing instruments, or folk dancing together. The students have learned the Screencastify Submit program, providing them with the ability to record themselves performing music at home, and we then play the recordings for the class. In lieu of a regular concert, the students have learned some American Sign Language, and recorded a Signing Concert to present to families. Students also made homemade instruments from household items and brought them in to present, play, and share with the class.

All third- and fourth-grade Westerly students participate in the Mindful Life program and 7 Mindsets curriculum through monthly lessons with the school counselor. Many teachers also use this program on a daily basis to teach essential skills to assist students with the ability to regulate their emotions. The curriculum teaches students self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

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

Westerly School is committed to high standards of learning and meeting the needs of every child. Teachers at Westerly are consistently working as a team to ensure that every student is achieving to their fullest potential. General education teachers, intervention specialists, and paraprofessionals work closely to best serve the whole child. Teachers and staff use a variety of assessments to identify students that are below grade-level curriculum and considered at risk. These research-based assessments include: DIBELS Next, Accelerated Reader, STAR comprehension test, and NWEA MAP assessment. From there, meetings are held for individual students with a team of staff and parents to develop a plan to get them back on track. The guidance counselor facilitates the meetings, keeps data, and conducts observations to make sure all aspects are being considered. Our guidance counselor also acts as a liaison in between schools to ensure students have a smooth transition into and out of Westerly.

During the pandemic, teachers have continued to provide services online through breakout rooms, individualized schedules, and by challenging students through project-based learning. Students with unique needs who require more life-based skills were permitted to be In-building during eLearning periods. Students feeling upset or experiencing anxiety were able to reach our guidance counselor through a Google form, and she connected with them live via Zoom.

Teachers are continually educating themselves on instructing all types of learners. All general education teachers are being certified as gifted providers to add extensions to general education curriculum. Teachers are trained in the Mindful Life Program to address mental health concerns and learn strategies to use with students on a daily basis. Intervention specialists are trained in programs geared toward tactile learners, and are constantly looking for ways to close the gap. Special education teachers work closely with general education teachers to ensure inclusion.

Programs offered for students who are below grade level include Reading Club and the Extended Day Opportunity intervention program. Reading Club is an extension of language arts built in to the school day, and addresses fluency, comprehension, and writing needs. The Extended Day Opportunity program offers students the chance to stay after school for extra support in areas of need, as identified by teachers. Conversely, we extend higher level thinking and creativity through Destination Imagination, STEM camp and the virtual Iteridod experience.

Individualized services are provided for any student at Westerly who may need them, including our ELL population and students experiencing family situations that affect their education. Some services that we provide include district grants to supply students with basic needs, the use of counseling services outside of school staff, and support for community partnerships to provide wrap-around services to families. All of these supports are in place to provide all Westerly students the opportunity to be successful as lifelong learners.

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

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

Westerly School strives to create a family feeling within our culture, and makes significant connections with every student, even during a pandemic. Whether In-building or eLearning, students are engaged, included, and encouraged to reach their potential with the support of administrators, teachers, staff, and peers.

We are proud to have offered In-building learning for 80 percent of the 2020-21 school year, and a robust eLearning alternative to families who chose it or needed it throughout the year. We found creative solutions to bring our “Roomies” and our “Zoomies” together through Zoom breakout rooms, creating small-group opportunities to complete projects, develop presentations using the Google Platform, and showcasing work to the entire class. Our eLearners are with their classes for the full day, and even participate in remote physical education with their class.

After weighing options for this unusual school year, the district chose to keep eLearners in their classes with In-building students. We made this decision to help develop strong teacher bonds throughout the year, to ensure consistency and to provide all students with a family atmosphere and safe space. Lunch and recess offer additional opportunities to strengthen bonds within the classroom. Students eat in the classroom with their teachers, and the whole group goes outside for recess. This is a different approach than a typical year, and has enabled teachers and students to bond during downtime.

It’s natural for third- and fourth-graders to experience anxiety, especially this year. We offer programs that provide individual and small-group support, and our concern about students’ mental health has been heightened this year. We partner with parents, teachers, and our school counselor to identify students needing additional support, and offer small group and individual weekly sessions. One example is Worry Warriors, consisting of small student groups sharing their concerns, fears, and coping techniques with the school counselor.

Throughout this unique school year, we have found creative ways to expose students to events taking place beyond our district. We’ve taken virtual field trips, watched online presentations, and tracked the Presidential election. Through use of the 7 Mindsets and Mindful Life curriculum, we have encouraged perseverance and resilience. Students have found they can manage themselves and have become critical thinkers. They contribute to problem-solving, and are comfortable making a mistake because teachers are also comfortable making a mistake. Most importantly, students are now empowered to be partners in the classroom.

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

Parent and community partnerships have contributed to the successful implementation of Westerly School’s COVID-19 instructional plans over the past year. Westerly has been recognized by the Ohio Parent Teachers Association as a School of Excellence. Having a successful start to the year was important. The PTA and the building principal coordinated the creation of a video that included a small group of students and teachers to model what the safe restart would look and feel like within the building. Members of the PTA have also served as co-hosts of virtual coffee chats with parents and the superintendent, providing opportunities for parent questions, ideas, and feedback to be heard and addressed.

The district leadership team presented a series of family eAcademies and Virtual Town Halls on topics important to parents, including managing stress during the pandemic, strategies for reinforcing literacy skills, resiliency, and tech tools 101. Community partnerships with MetroHealth System and Lakewood Collaborative opened the door to a range of wrap-around mental health and financial support for families in crisis during the pandemic. Art and music have also been an important part of the community connection to Westerly. The building was not able to host the annual spring art show and dance party, so students focused their creative energy around participating in the PTA’s national Reflection Competition. The theme, “I matter because…” inspired a record number of participants that resulted in 17 State qualifiers across

multiple categories, including literature, photography, music, dance, and multimedia works.

Westerly utilized a multi-pronged approach to communication, recognizing the need to present crucial information on the complex plans needed to safely educate children across multiple platforms in tight timeframes. The building administrator used a weekly newsletter to share with families important dates and times for the coming week, and to highlight classroom success stories. The district's director of communications partnered with the building administrator to share accurate information on social media and through SchoolMessenger via text alerts and emails. A monthly, digital newsletter was also rolled out.

Throughout the year, Zoom was used as the platform for hosting Open House and parent teacher conferences. This enabled parents to feel connected to their teachers while maintaining COVID-19 safety protocols. Maintaining staff morale during the pandemic was challenging. The PTA provided special breakfasts and lunches throughout the year to support the staff. PTA funds were used to purchase canopies, and these along with a donation from a local family to provide portable seating, have allowed students and teachers to take advantage of outdoor learning spaces.

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

Providing teachers and classified staff members the feeling of being valued takes place over many years, and we are pleased that in a recent Humanex survey, 94 percent of Westerly School faculty and staff shared they "would like to work at our school long term."

A strong collaboration and trust among the Bay Teachers Association and administration is key to a successful and supportive environment, where teachers and administration work together with the students' best interests in mind. Creating a leadership structure where teacher teams are partners in the decision-making process also builds trust and leads to inclusion. Administration must work hard to ensure teachers are well-supported and most importantly, appreciated. This happens by openly recognizing others, sharing letters of appreciation, celebrating successes of all sizes, listening, demonstrating trust, and embracing honesty. These are all components of a valued and supportive learning environment. Westerly possesses these characteristics, which has allowed us to implement and develop a high-quality, In-building and eLearning environment during the pandemic.

Working during a pandemic has only highlighted Westerly's cohesiveness, and its care and compassion for one another as a learning family. Certified and classified staff have grown stronger in confidence, and have learned to lean on one another for guidance, encouragement, and support within the classroom. Our district human resources director and district COVID-19 coordinator have held live, weekly Monday Minute sessions for faculty and staff to discuss COVID-19 updates/trends, and to review our district data dashboard, Rocket Safety Pledge, and resiliency circles. Westerly staff was also invited to participate in the district's strategic plan process, which rolls out this summer. Our slogan, OneRocketNation, again shines through.

Our virtual Rocket Family eAcademy provided opportunities for parents to stay informed during the onset of COVID-19, and to participate in live and streamed parent/student development activities such as Google classroom, Zoom, counseling resources, and virtual counseling office hours. Teachers participated in self-directed professional development around best practices during eLearning. Our district used a mini-conference model with choice boards and Bitmoji classrooms to share resources. Choice boards included an overview of eLearning tech tools: tiered IPEVO camera sessions, use of a Visualizer, Screencastify, Google Classroom, and Zoom. While confidently embracing new technology, our staff has still taken great comfort in the support of our technology team, with a member onsite as needed, and a real-time help desk solution for our eLearners.

The district utilizes a professional development model that has a heavy emphasis on job-embedded, professional learning opportunities. Professional development centers around the district's goals. During a pandemic year, our goal was to continue to provide students with high-quality learning and opportunities for growth and resilience, while meeting the academic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs of all levels of learners. Westerly will continue to utilize and carry forward our ongoing job-embedded professional learning, continuing tech support, and spotlighting innovation outside a pandemic year. Teachers will

continue to have opportunities to work across classrooms in co-teaching settings from two different physical spaces, while providing whole class instruction and/or small classroom settings through breakout rooms for enrichment and intervention.

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

The leadership philosophy at Westerly School is one of trust, openness, respect, and collaboration. Our welcoming, nurturing, supportive, and challenging learning environment is one we take great pride in. In fact, 96 percent of Westerly staff members say they “feel great pride in the work they do,” as shared in a recent Humanex survey.

Westerly’s team consists of a principal, administrative assistant, attendance secretary, school counselor, head custodian, grade level chairs, content team leaders, security aide, safety and security team, COVID-19 building leadership team, and school nurse. It is vital during a pandemic that each leadership role is empowered to make decisions that are in the best interest of students, staff, and families.

Westerly’s grade level chair positions provide an additional layer of leadership, consistency, and communication among staff. Monthly meetings with the principal enable discussions around planning building needs, classroom instruction, and student growth across curriculum. Respective smaller team meetings allow for collaboration to support curricular needs, building initiatives, collecting and analyzing student data, and managing team business.

The district’s approach to developing a Safe School Reopening Plan, implemented in August of 2020, empowered each building principal to work with their team to develop the most effective model within the broad guidance provided by district leaders, including the roles of classified staff, cleaning and safety protocols, arrival/dismissal plans, staff assignments, and special education services. The principal shifted to an almost exclusive facilitator role, supporting a variety of teams focused on improving student achievement during a pandemic. Examples include: weekly meetings with the school counselor to monitor student mental health and wellness, monthly meetings with special education and classified staff to support services and IEP goals during periods of eLearning, COVID-19 building leadership team meetings, positive behavior supports (PBIS) team, and PTSA meetings. The principal, grade level chairs, and content team leaders serve as liaisons to district level teams and committees.

Westerly’s COVID-19 leadership team, made up of the principal and teacher leaders, collaborated on the implementation of a revised master schedule, hiring of additional staff to decrease class sizes, and best use of classroom spaces. This was possible due to the trust the staff has in each other and their leadership team. Staff members were selfless and flexible, and this allowed our In-building and real-time eLearning model to flourish while maintaining a safe, nurturing environment where students felt like an essential member of a classroom family. The time spent by all members of the leadership team to develop clear processes, common expectations, and communication pathways led to a successful academic year, being In-building 80 percent of the school year as of the end of May of 2021.

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

Westerly School is dedicated to being a fair and equitable school that welcomes all learners. As a whole school, Westerly has put the PBIS system in place as a way to create a positive and inclusive school culture. Students earn “Rocket Bucks” when demonstrating an identified character trait in an effort to earn their classroom reward. A friendly, grade-level competition, pajama day, or even a class movie are examples of PBIS rewards. Our school celebrates “Start with Hello Week” at the beginning of each school year, and despite the pandemic, this tradition continued in September of 2020. The purpose of this week is to help all students feel connected to one another and our school community by highlighting ways students can create positive connections.

Westerly is fortunate and proud to have a dedicated school counselor who works collaboratively

with students, staff, and families. The school counselor works with students individually and in small groups based on needs identified by teachers, parents, and student self-referrals. Our school counselor also teaches monthly lessons in each classroom from the 7 Mindset Curriculum to promote a culture of empathy, accountability, positive connections, and positive thinking. Our school works collaboratively with the district's We Care Team to identify family needs, and connect families with additional resources through a collaboration with MetroHeath, Lakewood Collaborative, our district care coordinator, and the Bay Village Police Department.

Our art and music programs introduce students to different cultures through songs, dance, sculpture, and paintings. Western art students take an imaginary tour around the world as they examine art from various cultures. In our music classes, we discuss and listen to music of various cultures, including traditional Kwanza, Hanukkah, and Christmas music at the holidays. During Black History Month, we studied the history of American music and the black musicians that were and are a major influence in what we listen to today. For St. Patrick's Day, we learned about Irish music and dance, and in May we will be studying American music and the songs of our country. Through the study of art and music inspired by traditions, our students develop an appreciation and respect for the people and cultures that created it.

As a district, Bay Village has taken the initiative to encourage families to learn more about various cultures through activities such as the Black History Month Challenge. Twenty-eight different activities were provided for students and their families to participate in to learn more about Black History and how it is important to each of us. Faculty, staff, students, and families completed activities to earn a digital diversity badge. These initiatives are embedded in our district strategic plan, and for the 2020-21 school year, the district saw the creation of an internal Diversity and Equity Committee, as well as a Diversity Champion Certificate Program that faculty and staff can earn through the partnership of Cuyahoga Community College's Corporate College.

General education teachers get to know the needs of each student, and they implement specific strategies within their classrooms to ensure all the diverse needs of students are met. In our classroom libraries and school library, you will find a variety of books that represent students from different backgrounds and cultures. We understand it is important for every child to see themselves represented in books, whether that be how the characters look or the obstacles they have had to overcome. Literature opens up new experiences and places to students who may have never had those opportunities. Reading diverse books gives teachers the opportunity to discuss "big world problems" in kid-friendly terms.

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

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Success begins with the belief that success is possible. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the Westerly School team intentionally approached each new challenge through an asset-based approach, using the power of their collaborative culture to continuously reimagine what education for all students can look and sound like. That intentionality, and the willingness to work together to develop integrated instructional units as a way to maximize reduced class time, opened doors to rich classroom discussions and invited students to make connections between the skills and knowledge they were building and the world around them.

That same intentionality allowed the leadership team to make decisive budget decisions, using ESSER and local funding to provide Chromebooks and access to technology to all students and all teachers. Having the right tools in place broadened the scope of what form instruction could take, and was the solid base that a full-day, eLearning and In-building instructional model could be built upon. This technology-supported instructional model has moved through a number of iterations since March of 2020. It went from a theme-based, family-supported asynchronous learning model to a teacher-led, weekly asynchronous eLearning plan; then to a 5 ½ hour, 5-day-a-week streaming instruction eLearning model; and finally to an all-student, 5-day-a-week, In-building model with real-time streaming instruction to dedicated eLearners.

Intentional use of staffing has supported each of these instructional models and has led to ongoing student engagement and learning success. Paraprofessionals played an integral role in providing small-group supports, both through Zoom breakout rooms and In-building small groups. The addition of grade level teachers dropped class sizes down from 22-24 to 15-17 students. This in turn, created smaller learning communities within the school and allowed strong bonds to form between students and their classroom teachers.

The Specials team faced the additional challenge of adapting hands-on, materials-driven activities to eLearning and an In-building model. The result: sign language concerts, individual student artwork, and movement activities -- all happening regularly -- added to the resilience of the students and staff. Finally, the assets-based approach relied on intentionally mapping out a professional learning plan that provided just the right learning everyone needed through thoughtful collaboration between the teacher leaders and the administrators. A mixture of real-time webinars, one-on-one modeling, and self-directed learning through choice boards resulted in a staff who felt confident in its ability to provide high-quality learning experiences through eLearning, In-building learning and ultimately, the combination in real-time of both instructional models. What Westerly School has done as a building during COVID-19 is unique and exceptional!