

***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) [X] Title I [ ] Charter [ ] Magnet [ ] Choice

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

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

School Mailing Address 19197 State Route 664 South  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Logan State OH Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 43138-9536

County Hocking County

Telephone (740) 385-7071 Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Web site/URL  
<http://www.loganhocking.k12.oh.us/index.php?scho>  
ol=20 E-mail kdille@lhsd.k12.oh.us

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\* Mr. Monte Bainter II E-mail mbainter@lhsd.k12.oh.us  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Logan-Hocking Local School District Tel. (740) 385-8517

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. Betty Amnah  
(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	10	5	15
K	12	13	25
1	8	10	18
2	15	11	26
3	10	17	27
4	12	13	25
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>	67	69	136

\*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
  - 0 % Asian
  - 1.8 % Black or African American
  - 3.5 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 90.3 % White
  - 4.4 % 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: 8%

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	3
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	9
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	12
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	143
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.08
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	8

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: 100 %

Total number students who qualify: 136

8. Students receiving special education services: 21 %  
29 Total number of students served

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

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>1</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>5</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>5</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>10</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>6</u> Speech or Language Impairment         |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>2</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: 2
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.	8
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	2
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	4
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

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	95%	93%	94%	95%	95%
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 engage students through education that empowers them to succeed. Engage, Educate, Empower, Succeed.

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.

Hocking Hills Elementary has been conducting instruction face to face with students since the beginning of the school year. Our school district did increase digital enrollment for all grade levels and access to remote learning for those families who preferred a digital learning option. We did have a brief remote instruction and learning period for the month of December and returned to five day in-building learning when we returned to school in January.

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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Hocking Hills Elementary is located exactly as its name indicates, right in the middle of the famous Hocking Hills. Just off of State Route 664, you will find the smallest of the five elementary schools in the Logan Hocking Local School District. Our average daily enrollment is 130-140 students in any given year. We are less than two miles away from the largest and most recognized natural feature in Hocking County; Old Man's Cave. Our building is the most remote from the City of Logan. Our setting is rural and as such we have the largest space for outdoor activities and recess. We have a small grassland biome with bird feeders directly next to the building and the back of Hocking Hills Elementary property is adjacent to State Park lands. This leads to hikers being spotted during our recess, physical education, or other outdoor education opportunities. We are blessed with a daily assigned School Resource Officer and are visited regularly by the Officers from the Ohio Department of Natural resources(ODNR).

Most years between three and four million visitors come to Hocking County to visit our state parks and natural resources. Many of our parents work in the service and tourist industry due to the loss of manufacturing and other large scale hourly wage jobs. 2020 was a particularly hard year as state parks were closed for months during the peak season due to Covid-19 restrictions. Those who do not work directly in our community commute to other urban areas such as Lancaster, Columbus, Zanesville, and Newark. Logan Hocking Local Schools is the single largest employer in Hocking County. Poverty is a yearly known obstacle for some of our families. We receive school supply donations from several individuals and organizations from our community. Hocking Hills staff also contributes to our pool of supplies for students. No child goes without while attending Hocking Hills. Every day we provide free breakfast and free lunch for every student. We see to the physical, social-emotional, and academic needs of our students every day.

Hocking Hills students are spread over a large geographic area and arrive at school from five separate bus routes. The principal and custodian greet each student from the buses by name and wish them a wonderful day. We also screen students at this time for sleepiness, any reported illnesses or injuries, and mood changes. We can intervene quickly if we see any need first thing in the morning. Parent transported students are greeted by our School Resource Officer and a teacher each morning and they get the same personal greeting as the bus transported students. Three teachers greet each student at the breakfast pickup and encourage them to make use of the food provided. Again, these teachers are encouraging and screen students for any needs they might have before we start the day.

In addition to the normal daily curriculum and instructional best practices implemented and monitored by teachers, the students at Hocking Hills Elementary are supported by an outstanding Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). If any need arises, our PTO jumps in and will support learning with resources. In addition, our PTO holds two book fairs annually and one of those is a buy one get one free book fair. The PTO purchases a free book for every student. They greatly support our literacy every year. We offer before and after care services to those parents who work long hours away from the area so that students can be dropped off at 6:30am and be picked up at 5:30pm. We also provide afternoon bus transportation for after care. Students get additional snacks, recess, and tutoring services during before and after care times. Chess Club and the Good News Club operate as after school clubs that meet periodically. Each year we hold a Parent Literacy Night in conjunction with Halloween dubbed, "Trunk or Treat." Parents visit and see a presentation on Title Services that are offered at the school and are given access to the fall book fair. Students are dressed in their costumes of choice and can get treats from the trunks of local business representatives as they leave for the evening. We conduct Veteran's Day activities with community members who have served and we also have our Student Council pick one service activity each year.

Hocking Hills academically screens each student at the beginning of the year, monitors progress data through local and normed assessment, and provides Tier II and Tier III services for those students who are not successful in the Tier I setting alone.

Hocking Hills Elementary has had a structured Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) system in place for quite a few years, but are currently adding components to address chronic absenteeism as identified by our Building Leadership Team data focus. New and additional incentives will be added around

attendance to try and disrupt the small group of students who are chronically absent as defined by our State. Our goal is to provide motivation and support for those students who miss school the most.

We Make Every Day a Great Day to Learn at Hocking Hills.



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

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

The Hocking Hills Elementary staff is highly qualified and has a high average years of experience as well. While student mobility is high, the same is not true of staff mobility. Almost all teachers at Hocking Hills have been in the building since it opened in 2005. Proper training, stability, plus experience are a strong combination that helps to guarantee the best instruction for students. Teachers are focused and observant on academic and social-emotional well being of our students. The Ohio Revised Learning Standards (A very close amalgam to Common Core) are taught in each of our five elementary schools. In addition, common pacing guides were developed in order to address transient students who move from school to school yearly and are seeing the same learning standards at the same time. The expectation is that each elementary and grade level be within one week of each other so that students have a more seamless transfer into a new school within our district. All textbook purchases and curriculum resources are vetted through our Supervisor of Curriculum and must meet the highest level of critical analysis and be aligned directly to our State Standards. Teachers are always involved in the new adoption process and given a voice in the selection of curricular materials.

All students are screened at the beginning of the year using the Renaissance platform STAR Early Literacy (EL) and STAR Reading to measure their Reading Level and Language Arts (ELA) aptitude. Additional Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) is done to identify early Tier II candidates who will receive Title I and tutoring services. The STAR screens begin our initial data and progress monitoring for the year, and as students progress through the ELA curriculum teachers employ varied and effective formative and summative assessments to know at exactly what level of mastery each student is attaining. Students are instructed in flexible grouping pods that can provide differentiated instruction easily and without the identification of a lower, middle, or higher group. Since those groups can change so often, no student feels relegated to one group or level. The level of fidelity of implementation of flexible group instruction is 100%. We offer a well balanced offering of information and literary text and have rewards for growth and progress toward individual literacy goals.

The ELA program is robust and consists of multiple Tier I, II and III interventions. All students take part in STAR screeners, Lexia Learning, Heggerty and the board approved curriculum of Scott Foresman Reading Street. (Logan-Hocking will adopt a new curriculum for the 2021-2022 school year.). A guided reading framework is in place while the Science of Reading is taught using the hallmark instructional tools of Phonics, Phonemic Awareness, Fluency, Vocabulary, Text Comprehension, Written Expression, Spelling and Handwriting. Students are immersed in ELA via whole group and small group instruction. ELA is taught a minimum of 120 minutes per day while also being integrated into Science and Social Studies Instruction. Over the last 15 year, four of the district buildings have been chosen as one of two National ESEA, (Title I) buildings of the year being recognized at the national convention. Hocking Hills Elementary received this honor in 2016. Each of our five district elementary buildings are considered school-wide with each employing between one and three Title I teachers. Tier II interventions are in place with Wilson Foundations and Leveled Literacy Intervention used to meet the needs of struggling readers. As per the Ohio Department of Education, screeners are in place in order for Reading Intervention Plans (RIMPS) to be implemented as per the Third Grade Guarantee. These plans are written for students not on level in grades K-3 and services for these students come from their classroom, Title I and Intervention teachers. The previous two years percentage passing rate on the Ohio State Assessment for passing for grade three were 79% and 72%. The same years' score percentages for fourth grade were 81% and 86%.

We have a well established Response to Intervention (RtI) system in place. The school Psychologist works in conjunction with teachers and the school principal to monitor and identify those students who have not responded to Tier I and Tier II instruction with success. If those students continue to struggle with direct academic support, then they are considered for assessment. We do our best to find a way for every student to be successful.

Math is taught daily for 90 minutes per grade level. Students are screened and progress monitored with local and normed assessments to monitor their progress. The same flexible grouping exists for Math as English

Language Arts. Again the level of fidelity of implementation of flexible grouping is 100%. The concepts are taught cumulatively with the philosophy that strong building blocks and number sense will allow students to be fluent in calculation and more in depth concepts in later grades. The Pre Kindergarten through Grade Two curriculum is cumulative but circular with concepts that are introduced and reintroduced so that students have a chance to really master the foundational skills in Math. Problem solving is also included as the students encounter new concepts. In grades Three and Four students are introduced to even more problem solving and deeper concepts in Math. The overarching philosophy is to teach multiple ways for each problem to be solved so that there is more than one conceptual way to rationalize a problem and arrive at a rational and reasonable answer. The ability to explain the answer is more important than the answer. A numerical answer only is rarely desired. A verbal or written explanation is more powerful. Our performance in Math on State Standardized testing has been quite successful due in large part to these philosophies. We do not accept that some students are not good at Math. We find the way that they best can understand and prove Math proficiency. Our previous two years' score percentages for passing the grade three assessment were 91% and 87% respectively and the fourth grade posted percentages of 96% and 100% respectively. Everyday Math has been the chosen resource to meet curricular needs, but we are updating to McGraw-Hill Reveal Math for the upcoming 2021-2022 school year.

Science and Social Studies are often linked with ELA to make available more time to combine learning standards. We think of it as an economy of curriculum. We utilize informational but engaging text to teach Science and Social Studies concepts while also sharpening ELA skills and standards. We employ classroom magazines to add a current and real world component to Science and Social Studies. These magazines contain information that is relevant to the students' world and important for their development. Besides the informational instruction based around text we also have facilities on our campus footprint to allow for outdoor and hands on education. Teachers often ask for permission to have an outside activity for Science and experiment with elementary safe tools and materials. Weather study, biome study, life cycle study, and physics/physical study are easily accommodated on our campus. In 2019, the district adopted SAVVAS (formerly Pearson) myWorld Interactive Social Studies Program for grades K-5. The curriculum encourages active inquiry while introducing civics, economics, geography and history. The program was chosen by teachers due to its strong ELA instructional piece. Social Studies and Science are taught by units, alternating between instruction of one or the other. Civic engagement is also an important component of our social studies curriculum. Each year our student council chooses a community service project and donates time or resources to that project. They learn kindness and service in a real setting and get to enjoy the recognition for engaging in such a project. Last year we donated almost \$300 to Habitat for Humanity and we got to deliver the check personally at a new house site in our district. The students truly felt a sense of accomplishment and purpose. They also knew a family with children their own ages would be moving into the home and we got to tour when delivering our donation.

Every Hocking Hills student can be successful and gain a rich access to Science and Social Studies.

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

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

Hocking Hills Elementary houses one Special Education PreSchool unit classroom. This is a mixed classroom of students with disabilities and regular education peers. Our PreSchool has been given a five star rating on the Step up to Quality Standards. This is a rigorous set of expectations for PreSchool classrooms administered and overseen by the State of Ohio. Students who are attendees of our PreSchool met curricular expectations and are well prepared for Kindergarten. Our PreSchool Intervention Specialist tracks learning standards and takes the students beyond expectations and improves the development of student readiness for the following year. As important as academic standards are the behavioral and social expectations are just as important. Again, the Specialist is adept at setting comfortable levels of expectation without creating frustration for the students.

**2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

Students at Hocking Hills Elementary in grades K-4 receive Unified Arts instruction daily for 42 minutes in Music, Art, Physical Education, and Technology. For this school year, fine arts were on a three week rotation at each elementary school in our district. In a typical year without Covid-19 guidelines, students participate in each fine art weekly. Teachers follow the State of Ohio standards for these areas. The teachers are passionate about their specialties and we recognize that the students love to engage in their lessons. Students sense the teachers' passion and respect their expertise. They also enjoy the different structure offered in these specialties. As we consider the whole child, a love for the arts is integral to full development. We value those who may have talents in the arts but not be as comfortable in the traditional academic classroom. We also have opportunities for students to participate in social-emotional curriculums purchased by the school district to develop the whole child and include learning around social settings and interpersonal peer relationships. The PATHS curriculum and Second Step curriculum are both taught during the school day by district hired specialists. Our school Social Worker leads the Second Step curriculum as whole group instruction. This curriculum focuses on situation based scenarios viewed on video, then students are asked the best choice or next step, then shown one correct response to the scenario. It is engaging and level appropriate.

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

Our PBIS system is fully implemented and currently being strengthened for the purpose of supporting instruction and student engagement. We offer incentives for Reaching individual STAR Reading goals, Lexia goals, MobyMax goals, and for meeting our personal behavioral goals. Students are screened at the beginning of the school year through the STAR Reading program and periodic goals are set from that first screening. Those goals are individualized and increase as the student grows. Each student can have a different goal based on their initial screen and then their progress. Students enjoy reading with a goal in mind and are rewarded when they meet their goals. Around 80% or more of students meet their goals for each nine weeks. All students meet at least their initial goal before the end of the year. Behavioral goals are set yearly as well and we hold behavior celebrations for those students who meet their goals each nine weeks. We have an extremely small percentage of students who do not participate in the behavior rewards. They do not like to miss reward day, so they self-monitor extremely well. Next year we are going to add a personal goal for attendance for each student. This is an initiative to try and interrupt chronic absenteeism that we see with a small percentage of students in our building. We will also offer small and large incentives to provide an incentive for reaching attendance goals.

Besides the beginning of year screening and normal progress monitoring, we also have a fully implemented response to intervention (RtI) system in place. Through daily, weekly, and quarterly monitoring teachers identify those students who are not making adequate progress in the general curriculum. Once those students are identified, they are referred to our RtI team for Tier II intervention and monitoring. From there students can have two likely outcomes. Some students begin to make progress with those extra interventions and assistance, and they remain on the monitoring path for at least two months. Those students who do not respond to the Tier II interventions are referred for additional support services that are appropriate for their needs or they are referred for psychometric testing.

Our Tier II services include Title I services with a Reading Specialist, a daily tutor who works with those students who need Math assistance or don't quite qualify for Title I services, access to the Intervention Specialist during inclusion time in the regular education classroom setting, and tutoring sessions after school during our aftercare program. Many students are able to be successful with these supports.

If a student is assessed through a multi-factored evaluation and the team agrees they qualify for special education we have Tier III support from an intervention specialist. We endeavor to utilize inclusion as much as possible for instruction. In this way the students receiving special education

services are still a part of the regular curriculum and with their peers. When small group instruction is needed those students do receive pull-out instruction but some Tier II regular education students will join those small group pull-out sessions. This eases the labeling of special education to services rather than students. In addition to academic intervention Hocking Hills also has access to weekly physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech services. Those specialists visit their students weekly with specially designed activities to assist growth in the needed areas. Many students meet their goals and are able to discontinue services due to mastering their developmental goals. It is very pleasing to see students develop in this way and is another reason we can meet obstacles like poverty and lack of social experience and at least partially overcome them.

Hocking Hills Elementary conducts gifted screening at the second grade level then again at the fourth grade level. At the district level, we have a supervisor of gifted and talented services who oversees assessment and classroom plan implementations. Students in grades three and four are clustered and receive enrichment through their classroom Written Education Plans. These plans document advanced content standards and depth of learning activities. Often, students who are clustered work toward and with the next year's grade level standards. For students who show advanced tendencies in grade levels before gifted screening, teachers also increase depth of understanding activities and introduce content standards beyond the students' enrolled grade.

Even though Hocking Hills Elementary has been conducting instruction face to face with students since the beginning of the school year, our school district did increase digital enrollment for all grade levels and access to remote learning for those families who preferred a digital learning option. Regular education teachers were given the option to transfer to digital teaching for the influx of students into the digital academy. Intervention specialists were also hired to provide education services to students with disabilities (SWD) who chose to be enrolled in our online learning platform. Individualized Education Plans (IEP) were all kept up to date and progress monitoring has occurred while the students are learning virtually.

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

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

First and foremost, Hocking Hills teachers are highly qualified and they are experienced professionals who take their craft and training seriously. This ensures the best instruction is going on in each classroom. A few years ago, the teachers decided to have an extremely structured approach to literacy instruction and assessment. This was district wide and shared across all five elementary schools. The level of fidelity in implementation is still well above 90% of the chosen high impact strategies to use. All teachers masterfully manage daily reading and math flexible grouping. Differentiation occurs naturally due to this type of grouping and is not easily identifiable to students. The stigma of the low group is removed. Students also switch groups as their growth or mastery develops and shifts. The most remarkable observation is how much student ownership is shared even in the younger grade levels. The teachers employ guided groups, independent student work, and technology grouping at the same time. To witness first grade students working independently with word sorts, language study, vocabulary, and writing tasks is a sight to behold. Because they are not taught direct instruction 100% percent of the time and their tasks vary, the students are engaged at a high level and feel a supported sense of independence.

HockingHills PBIS Structure also reinforces student engagement. We partner with local businesses who donate their goods and time to our students. We offer those goods as prizes for reaching behavioral and academic goals. The students are excited any time they are recognized for doing well and they work to reach their goals.

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

Hocking Hills Elementary may be the smallest elementary school in our district but we have an excellent and supportive PTO. Our PTO holds semi-monthly meetings and sponsors our Student of the Month awards. Our PTO supports literacy with two full book fairs yearly, fund-raising activities that are used to support education directly in our building. The PTO is composed of vested and interested parents who support every initiative we begin. We invite the families to PTO meetings and honor our Students of the Month there. Each PTO meeting has become a family event with photo ops at the end of the meeting. Hocking Hills holds veteran and grandparent recognition days. We had to do virtual appreciation videos this year, but hope to bring those celebrations back into the building next year. Hocking Hills hosts a Family Literacy Night each fall and we usually get 100% turn out. Due to Covid-19 restrictions we were not able to host such a large event this year but again hope to reinstate the Family Night for next year. High school students visit our school building to assist with opening day greetings, fall PTO fundraisers, and enrichment activities for our students. Some are former students who want to visit their old school and even see siblings who are currently enrolled here. Once Hocking Hills, always Hocking Hills! All Logan Hocking Local schools enjoy media coverage from two local newspapers and our local radio station. All schools have access to submit stories and be interviewed for upcoming highlights. Hocking Hills Elementary utilizes Twitter, Facebook (partnered with our PTO as page managers), our school website, and a whole school communication platform to reach parents with news, upcoming events, and celebrations of achievement.

We partner with the Hocking Valley Community Hospital to provide health lessons for all students in the building. Healthcare professionals visit classrooms with pertinent health habit information for students and families. Five local businesses provide all of our incentives for the PBIS system we have in place. Those goods are donated yearly and our students are motivated to win those prizes.

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

The entire teaching staff is the Hocking Hills Building Leadership Team (BLT). Decisions are shared with all staff as a consensus. Our team is self-critical and always looks for improvement in what we are doing. We learn from past plans and better them yearly. Our meetings could seem chaotic or highly spirited to an outside observer. We are comfortable with offering and taking criticism and always know that the end goal will be to provide the best for our students through this critical process. Our BLT always ends with smiles

and laughter even if we have been passionately supporting our ideas. We behave as a family and support each other daily. We have official BLT meetings every other week, but have impromptu meetings almost daily in the form of the daily decompress/reflect after bus duty.

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

Hocking Hills Elementary is unique as it has such a small, everyday staff. The core, everyday staff consists of just nine teachers and one principal. (There are other staff members on various days including speech, specialists, counselor, etc.). Due to this small size, our building leadership team is OUR staff. We don't break out for separate BLT versus staff meetings as we are one working leadership team. We hold official meetings but also those informal meetings during mornings, at lunch and after school when the buses pull away. We are always communicating with each other and are in constant planning mode in deciding what's best for our students. This on-going leadership model works well for Hocking Hills making for a family of adults caring for the students.

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

The Logan-Hocking School District isn't considered diverse in the traditional sense of ethnicity. However, the district and specifically Hocking Hills Elementary has to be culturally responsive due to high needs of students of poverty and those with disabilities. Hocking Hills has an 80% poverty rate with many children being raised by grandparents, great-grandparents and in single parent homes. Over the last five years, the district homeless population has risen from five total to 177 in 2019. Our IEP population number is always between 20-24%. One of the biggest challenges we have faced in the disparity of levels that our Kindergarten students enter with each year. We seemed to have "lost our middle" with K teachers having students reading or ready to read in August and other students not recognizing any letters. The way we respond to these needs are through our varied screeners and intervention programs, our before and after school programs via our 21st Century Grant and with our Title I services. We also offer public preschool, trying to get as many students as possible enrolled. Our intervention process includes giving screeners of DRAs and STAR tests, writing and implementing reading plans, using our Title I teacher's expertise, utilizing Heggerty, Wilson Foundations and LLI and staying in constant communication with families to ensure students are receiving their best education. We have embedded services with a weekly school social worker and a partnership with outside mental health services through a local health facility. A counselor comes every Monday and has a caseload of students to see weekly. We pride ourselves on meeting both the academic and social emotional needs of students.

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

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Hocking Hills is a small rural building with a high poverty population. Every day our students are greeted with a smile and called by name as they enter the building. We have obstacles in our path but nothing that can stop us. We choose to educate the whole child with every resource that we have available to us. Our district has blessed us with access to many resources to address the needs of our children. We will continue to strive to overcome early learning gaps and prepare students for their future learning needs.

All teachers monitor their students through nationally normed assessments and local tests and activities. They can discuss progress with a parent at any given moment with specifics on student ability. Each student is introduced to goal oriented learning and progress measuring from Preschool through fourth grade. A culture of constant growth is instilled early on. Fidelity of implementation of best practices will be measured by ourselves and at this point remains high (above 90%). This ensures that students have the highest level of instruction available to them. The level of fidelity in the other elementary buildings is high as well. This and our shared district pacing guides ensures even transient students will be able to be successful. When a student or family moves from one building to another in our district, they are comfortable in the curriculum and will have a less burdensome transition.

Hocking Hills connects students with social emotional resources in addition to the academic resources we have available. We have weekly lessons covering social situations through the Second Step curriculum. Our school Social Worker leads these lessons and sees all students weekly. We contract with Hopewell Health to provide weekly counseling to those students who have been referred by teachers, parents, or other school personnel. We have educational specialists who introduce students to the PATHS curriculum and lead small groups in the Eager program. At least 40% of our student population receives services from school embedded partners inside our building.

We look forward to becoming one to one with technology devices in the 2021-2022 school year. ESSER III funds will be utilized to purchase chrome books for every student in grades K-4 at the elementary school level. Because of the need to prepare for remote learning, teachers increased their toolbox immensely and were prepared to implement virtual learning at the start of the school year this year. This took place at summer training for full implementation of Google Classroom tools. Even though we have been face to face for most of the year, classrooms are still employing technology daily. This has been a welcome side effect of the necessity to prepare. Students are still taught traditionally but have access to their learning resources electronically daily through Google Classroom. We are also adopting a new curriculum in Math and Language Arts for the coming school year. These resources will both be directly integrated into our Google Classroom platform and students can access their lesson materials at any time.

New to the 2021-2022 school year will be the adoption of the McGraw Hill Reveal Math curriculum to be taught in grades K-5. This curriculum will not only give our teachers and students a new way of looking at math but will provide a robust online curriculum that can be used in the regular school setting and should we go remote, provide students and teachers with a seamless transition of learning from the classroom to home. The curriculum was chosen not only for the aforementioned reasons but because of its strong commitment to differentiation. Our math committee knew that in a district with so many children in academic need, differentiated instruction was crucial in choosing a new textbook. Included with the math curriculum is McGraw Hill's screener called ALEKS which shows each students' progress and helps determine strengths and weaknesses in each math skill being assessed.

A new language arts program is being purchased this year as well and will serve our K-6 students. The decision is still being made as to which curriculum will be chosen. Like the math, the ELA curriculum will be purchased in print and digital form and will work fully in our Google Classroom format. The new curriculum is vetted in the Science of Reading but yet focuses on intervention strategies as well. It was important, given this year of education during COVID that our students and teachers have the most up to date curriculum with full online capabilities.

In order to close gaps, all Logan-Hocking students are being given the opportunity to take part in a 4-6 week

summer school program. During June 2021, students will have the option of attending a three day a week, 9:00-12:00 closing the gap math and reading program. It will be taught by our own certified teachers with students being able to track their progress. A specialized summer bridge the gap program is being purchased through SAVVAS Learning and comes with print and digital materials. Students will also be invited to participate in a 12:00-3:00 program which will focus on the arts, physical education and STEM related activities. Students will be provided with breakfast, lunch, weekly and cumulative incentives, transportation and school supplies for fall 2021.

We know that next year we will have students returning to our building from the Chieftain Digital Academy. These students may be well prepared to meet curricular needs with their devices but they will also need support reintegrating into the face to face instructional setting. Our opening week is always slowly paced to help students adjust from the summer break. Hocking Hills spends time to refresh our PBIS expectations with all students before we expect individual goal setting to take place. Extra care will be given to monitor how well the returning students adjust. If they need a slower pace to start, it can be provided. Mastery and proficiency are preferred for student access to curriculum.

Although our school wide attendance is high, Hocking Hills Elementary is focusing on those students who are chronically absent from school in the upcoming year. We know the best place for students to be daily is at school with us. We can provide free breakfast and lunch with high quality instruction. When any student misses those for a day, they are impacted. Our BLT has already identified chronic absence as the focus for improvement next year and has begun the action plan for how to interrupt these absences and provide daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly incentives for coming to school. Individual attendance goals will be added to our academic and behavioral goal setting at the beginning of the year. The students will succeed.