

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 162 East Dark Hollow Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Pipersville State PA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 18947-9369

County Bucks

Telephone (610) 847-5131 Fax (610) 294-9182

Web site/URL https://tm.palisd.org/ E-mail jlink@palisd.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* Dr. Bridget O'Connell E-mail boconnell@palisd.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Palisades School District Tel. (610) 847-5131

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Mr. Robert Musantry
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

Date _____

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

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

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

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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

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

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

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

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 3 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 5 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	10	10	20
1	14	8	22
2	13	6	19
3	15	16	31
4	21	7	28
5	17	14	31
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	90	61	151

*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):
- 0.8 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 % Asian
 - 0.8 % Black or African American
 - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 90.4 % White
 - 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: 2%

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	2
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	2
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	4
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	172
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.02
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

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

No non-English languages represented in the school

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 28 %

Total number students who qualify: 43

8. Students receiving special education services: 29 %
44 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>4</u> Autism | <u>8</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>1</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>16</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>26</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 8
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	9
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	6
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	7
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.

Required Information	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Daily student attendance	95%	96%	96%	95%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2020.

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

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

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2000

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

Tinicum Elementary School is governed by the mission of the Palisades School District, which is as follows: Palisades School District is a community of learners. Working collaboratively, we will provide a safe, enriching environment wherein all students can achieve college and career readiness and demonstrate leadership.

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

During the 2020/21 school year, beginning on August 31, 2020, Tinicum Elementary students in grades K-5 participate in either full-time 5-day-per-week face-to-face instruction, or in full-time 5-day-per-week district Elementary Cyber Academy instruction, based on parent preference. If space is available, parents may request a switch from face-to-face to cyber, or vice-versa, during the school year. Currently, 83% of Tinicum students are being educated face-to-face at Tinicum, 12% through the Elementary Cyber Academy, taught by Palisades teachers, and 5% (our students with multiple disabilities who live in a residential facility) through face-to-face instruction or virtual instruction provided by our intermediate unit teacher at their facility.

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

Tinicum Elementary is a small, high-performing, child-centered, K-5 rural elementary school that functions as the center of a diverse community. Our students' families are diverse in structure, income, and educational background. We have students living in single parent, traditional, and multi-generational households, as well as in residential institutions. Family income varies greatly as well, ranging from economically disadvantaged to affluent. The educational level of our parents is diverse, varying from those without high school diplomas to those with advanced professional degrees. About half of our parents were raised within the school district, while the others were attracted here by the natural beauty of the area and the high quality schools. We are within 1 ½ hours of both New York City and Philadelphia, and, pre-COVID, the majority of our parents commuted to work outside of the school district. Our students come from all of these backgrounds.

Like all successful schools, we bring together our assets of people, programs and instruction, and resources in a unique way to support and challenge all students to meet their potential. The asset of our people is not to be underestimated. Our students are curious, hard-working, kind, and respectful, and their families are involved and engaged. We are supported by a community that invests in our school not only monetarily, but also through sharing time, talents, and knowledge with our students. Our school board and district administration are forward-thinking and responsive. Our staff members have a high degree of expertise, are committed to ongoing professional growth, are collaborative, and are ultimately committed to the success of each student. The building principal is experienced, knowledgeable, and inclusive, and is able to use data and research to lead the school toward enhanced practice while building a supportive, child-centered culture.

Our rigorous academic curriculum and instruction, focused on the Pennsylvania Core Standards, are centered on research-based programs and techniques while incorporating differentiation, tiered intervention, opportunities for enrichment, and extended learning opportunities. Our curriculum is also strong in culture and the arts, with each child participating in systematic instruction in art, music, library, health, wellness, and Spanish. Additional extra-curricular opportunities are available for students to explore their areas of interest. Programs and instruction in social/emotional development, School Wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support, and trauma-informed practices help all of our students develop socially and emotionally, and contribute to our school culture which values responsibility, respect, and safety.

We are fortunate to have the resources needed to provide the facility, program, personnel, and learning materials that will best support student well-being and academic growth. Even during economically challenging times, resources were added to the school to provide full-day kindergarten, update the science curriculum and materials, and obtain the Chromebooks necessary to get our school to a 1-1 device ratio. A full-time counselor as well as a part-time SAP counselor were made available in the school to support the increasing emotional needs of students.

There are also several factors that make our school unique. While we provide rigorous standards-based instruction comparable to that offered in high-powered large suburban districts, our small student-focused nature allows us to personalize and differentiate that instruction to engage all students. Each of our students is known as an individual learner and is nurtured as a valued member of this intimate learning community. We live in an artistic community, and as such, offer strong visual and performing arts programs, having been recognized as a Best Community for Music Education as well as an Outstanding Visual Arts Community. Our rural, environmentally-focused community is also core to the unique education provided to our students. We have worked with a local agency to install a "pocket meadow" on site, which includes plants native to Pennsylvania and is used as a teaching resource for our students, and partnered with an environmental agency to install a Monarch Waystation, allowing our students to participate in observing and documenting the annual migration of these beautiful creatures. These programs combine to make our students not only outstanding scholars, but also respectful and responsible citizens who have an understanding and appreciation of our natural environment, and who can serve as stewards of it in the future.

As COVID-19 hit our country, our district quickly pivoted in order to continue to educate our students. Our schools closed on March 13, 2020, and we rapidly worked to study our program, staff expertise, and

resources to plan elementary remote instruction using Google classroom, then provided staff development and distributed learning materials, including devices and hot spots as needed, to support participation of all students. Students began 5-day-a-week remote asynchronous instruction on March 30, 2020, and continued in that format until the last day of school in June. Summer was used to evaluate the remote program, develop an elementary cyber academy, and prepare our school to open face-to-face with health and safety protocols in place. We polled parents for preferred mode of education, hired instructors for our cyber academy, and began providing full-time, 5-day-per-week instruction in the mode selected by the parent at the end of August 2020. Our students have been going to school, face-to-face or virtual, full time since that day.

Twenty years ago, Tincum Elementary was honored by being designated as a National Blue Ribbon School. Those who were part of the school at that time recall the pride and feeling of accomplishment the award engendered in the school and community. Many staff members from the year 2000 have since retired, school leadership has changed, curriculum has been upgraded to support the challenging PA Core Standards, technology has been incorporated in the school, and our community has become more economically diverse. Still, Tincum has evolved and advanced with the times to continue to be a high-performing, rural elementary school, working as a community to focus not only on academic achievement, but also the social/emotional, physical, and creative development of each individual child. Our community still takes great pride in our school, perhaps even more so this year, as we have found a way to continue to effectively educate our students during the pandemic.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

Our curriculum is based on the rigorous Pennsylvania Core Academic Standards, with our full-day kindergarten curriculum being aligned to the PA Early Learning Standards. Curriculum materials are selected based on their alignment with the standards, strong research base, built-in opportunities for differentiation, incorporation of developmentally appropriate instructional practices, and a strong online component.

Students participate in Reading/ELA instruction for 2 hours per day, using K-5 Tier I programs including Benchmark Reading (which focuses heavily on teaching comprehension skills and strategies then practicing these skills through the reading and discussion of leveled readers), and Lucy Calkins Writing Units of Study (an apprenticeship approach to writing), as well as Foundations and Heggerty instruction for our K-2 students to ensure the development of phonemic awareness and phonetic decoding skills. These programs are supplemented with grammar and handwriting instruction, and a district-developed program that teaches students to construct written responses to literature through an apprenticeship approach.

Students receive 80 minutes of mathematics instruction each school day. Everyday Math 4, a conceptually-based math program with daily built-in opportunities for reinforcement and enrichment, serves as our Tier I program, supplemented by two on-line programs, Xtra math to help students build fact fluency, and Khan Academy to provide further differentiation. A school-created mathematical problem solving curriculum, based on the work of Jo Boaler and focused on important grade level math concepts, rounds out our math program.

Our K-5 science instruction, which is provided for 45 minutes for 90 school days, incorporates the Amplify science program, which focuses on the Next Generation Science Standards. Students engage in two to three in-depth science units each year, depending upon grade level. These units incorporate hands-on investigations, literature resources, and interactive digital tools, and are focused on scientific thinking, reading, writing, and discussion.

Our current social studies program, which is provided for 45 minutes for 90 school days, focuses on instructing students in the Pennsylvania standards of history, geography, and civics, and incorporates publisher's print and geography materials. Students learn about the world through a proximal-distal approach incorporating readings, discussion, videos, and projects. The program is being updated to include project-based assessments, greater study of diversity, and the use of trade books to develop knowledge.

We are dedicated to delivering this same curriculum in our COVID-19 face-to-face setting. Individual manipulatives have been purchased for each student eliminating the need to share, small group differentiated instruction is being carried out in creative, socially-distanced ways, and student Chromebooks and the Google Classroom platform are employed as an additional means of differentiating and completing assignments. Our pacing is similar to that of previous years, and the spiral nature of our curriculum is allowing us to fill gaps that may have been created during the spring of remote instruction. Our newly-developed elementary cyber academy uses this same curriculum and materials, with the curriculum delivered through a series of whole-class live Google classroom lessons, small group lessons, and differentiated assignments. Our cyber teachers are becoming familiar with using various technology applications to make learning come alive in these virtual classrooms.

Our comprehensive assessment program incorporates universal screening, as well as formative, summative, nationally normed, and state assessments. Universal screening tools include the reading and math DIBELS in grades K-2, Developmental Reading Assessment in Grades K-5, the NWEA Measure of Academic Progress in reading and math administered 3 times per year in grades K-5, and CogAT ability screening in grade 2. Teachers utilize subject-specific formative assessments and techniques to measure learning on a daily basis and provide ongoing differentiated instruction. Summative unit assessments in all academic subject areas are administered to our students, with each item linked to a state standard, and are entered into our assessment management system, which directly feeds our quarterly standards-based report cards. The

Pennsylvania State System of Assessment tests in English Language Arts and Math are administered in grades 3, 4 and 5, and Science in Grade 4. A sophisticated data management system, principal leadership, staff expertise, and building processes ensure that data is used to enhance student achievement. Universal screeners, summative assessments, and MAP assessment results are used at monthly meetings of grade-level data teams to monitor student growth, assign students to WIN (What I Need) time groups and Tier II instructional programs, and allocate resources to classrooms and programs. The entire faculty engages in studying the results of the state assessment each year, identifies global areas of need that should be addressed, and feeds these to the Academic Excellence Team. This team, chaired by the principal and meeting monthly, considers all summative and standardized assessment data trends to develop, implement, and monitor an annual improvement plan, including designing building level staff development to support the plan. With no state assessment scores to study this year, comparing results from the Winter 2020 and Fall 2020 administration of the MAP assessment and studying Fall 2020 universal screener results has enabled us to identify students who experienced significant learning loss during COVID, and to develop and implement plans to address this loss. We have found ways to adapt delivery models as needed to offer these same assessments to students in our cyber academy, particularly through converting summative measures to on-line testing, with the results used for the same purposes.

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:

As one of three elementary schools in our district, Tincum has robust visual and performing arts, health and wellness, foreign language (Spanish), and technology/media programs delivered by subject area specialists who travel throughout our district on a 6-day rotating schedule. Curriculum in these areas is designed to support student attainment of the PA Core Standards, as well as national standards tied to each specific discipline. Each class, grades K-5, is provided with 45 minutes of instruction in each area one time per cycle, with health/wellness being provided two times per cycle. Additionally, students are provided with instruction in our research-based social skills program, Second Step, for 30 minutes per cycle, which is co-delivered by our school counselor and classroom teachers. Students in grades 3 through 5 have the opportunity to participate in small group instrumental lessons one time per cycle. Each discipline is also supported by a dedicated classroom space designed to facilitate the teaching of the specialized curriculum. Performance assessments are used to measure student attainment of the standards in these classes, and achievement is reflected on the quarterly report card. Performance/sharing opportunities in these areas are offered via a series of galleries, shows, concerts, and competitions.

Our visual arts program provides students with instruction and experiences in art elements and principles and the mediums of drawing, painting, design, and sculpture. Our general music program focuses on the elements of melody, rhythm, expression, form, instruments, and harmony, and it provides instruction through listening, describing, creating, moving, and performing. There are also strong musical theory and history components. The wellness/fitness program involves students in a variety of physical activities to develop, reinforce, and enhance the basic concepts of total body fitness and lead-up skills to lifetime physical activities. It also provides students with the knowledge and skills they need to develop, maintain, and enjoy healthy lifestyles, incorporating physical health and social/emotional well-being. The foreign language program, centering on Spanish, is presented as a foreign language exposure experience, focusing on oral language and the standards of communications, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities. Our library/media/technology program provides students with experiences in using the library and technology based sources and equipment as learning tools and resources. The school library holds a large collection of print materials in an inviting space, and in addition to regular library/technology classes, the librarian and assistant work closely with teachers to provide the resources to support curriculum-based projects. As each child has a school-provided Chromebook, much of the technology instruction centers on

using the Google platform as a learning and presentation tool, as well as introductory coding, robotics, and 3-D printing experiences.

Continuing to provide high-quality instruction in these curricular areas has been one of our greatest challenges in both our socially distanced face-to-face environment as well as our cyber academy. Enhanced hygiene procedures and social distancing have required each student to have their own set of supplies in each of these areas, and led us to make these activities “cart based” for the year, with specialists traveling to the regular classroom to deliver 30 minutes of instruction in each area over the 6 day cycle. This has been especially challenging in the areas of art and health/wellness. As these same teachers are also responsible for providing instruction in these areas to our cyber academy students, their lessons have needed to be provided in a recorded lesson format. We are pleased that we have been able to deliver our full Second Step social/emotional curriculum in its entirety live to both our face-to-face and cyber academy students.

3. Academic Supports:

Tinicum Elementary School employs a tiered approach to provide academic support and enrichment. In addition to incorporating differentiated instruction within the classroom based on assessment results, we also utilize a model called WIN (What I Need) to provide Tier II instruction to qualifying students. Through WIN, we deliver our targeted intervention Title I Reading Program (grades K-5), reading enrichment (Grades 1 - 5), and math support or enrichment (Grades 1-5). WIN provides each grade with a daily 30-minute period to deliver systematic differentiated instruction, incorporating both classroom and academic support teachers, to provide for individual needs in reading and math for all students. Tier II reading programs include Seeing Stars, Wilson Fluency, Leveled Literacy, and Just Words. Math interventions include Pinpoint Math, Fast Math, and Khan Academy.

Students with academic needs which cannot be met through classroom differentiated instruction and Tier II interventions are referred to our Student Support Team (SST), through which additional intervention plans are developed, implemented, and monitored for an 8-week period. If these interventions are unsuccessful, students may be referred for a multi-disciplinary evaluation to determine eligibility for special education. Many of these students then qualify for speech or learning support services. Speech/language services are delivered in individual or small group settings. Students with learning disabilities access special education programs and participate in Tier III instructional programs. For those with low level needs, support may be provided in the regular education classroom to allow continued participation in the Tier I program, while Tier III interventions may supplement instruction during WIN. Students with a high level of need may engage in replacement instruction using an alternate program during the instructional block. Tier III reading programs include Wilson Reading, SRA Reading Mastery, and Lindemood-Bell, with Saxon Math being used for those needing a different approach to math. All students with IEPs engage in rigorous progress monitoring to ensure that interventions are effective in helping close achievement gaps.

SST and evaluation processes are also used in supporting students with social-emotional needs. Students identified as having these needs participate in the regular academic classroom while their social/emotional needs are addressed through behavior plans, social skills instruction, and counseling services, supported by the appropriate professionals.

Our school is also home to a classroom of children with multiple disabilities. Intermediate unit programming for these students incorporates highly individualized instruction and therapies focused on helping students gain proficiency to meet the PA Alternate Eligible Content Standards for the elementary grades.

Our gifted students access enrichment programs in reading, math, research, and problem-solving.

Programs in reading and math enrichment are accelerations and extensions of our regular education curriculum, while the research and problem solving programs are gifted program based. Students receive these services in a pull-out program aligned to the subject area blocks, as well as through the WIN block.

The population of English Language Learners within our school is very small. Due to the low incidence, students with this need are assigned to our most centrally located elementary school as their home school so that these services can be most efficiently delivered.

For the past several years we have worked to narrow the achievement gap between our entire student population and our historically underperforming subgroup, which includes both students with IEPs and economically disadvantaged learners. The gap in both reading and math has narrowed to 12 percentage points as of the last administration of our state assessment in spring 2019. Factors instrumental to closing this gap have been changing the primary Tier III reading program to the research-based SRA Reading Mastery program, making use of the WIN block for systematic delivery of both Tier II and Tier III intervention programs, and assigning adult mentors to each of our struggling third grade readers. We are currently in our fourth year of delivering a full-day kindergarten program to all of our 5 year-olds, which will also support closing this achievement gap.

During this COVID-19 impacted year, we are continuing to provide tiered intervention in our face-to-face program, and are creatively using Google Meets and live streaming to provide these supports to cyber students. Students with IEPs who have chosen our cyber academy participate in live-streamed instruction with their special education teachers and therapists. Unfortunately, our students in the IU multi-disabilities classroom are medically fragile, and have not left their residential facility. Based on the risk level, instruction is delivered by IU teachers either at the facility, or through live stream.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Our positive school environment supports not only the academic, social, and emotional growth of students, but also their physical well-being and safety, which is especially critical during this time of COVID. In order to engage in learning, students need to feel both physically and emotionally safe. This is achieved through our certified School Wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support Program, which sets and teaches the expectations that will make our students successful and safe. Our three over-arching principles (ABC's) are act responsibly, be respectful, and choose to be safe. These behaviors are modeled, taught, and reinforced in each school setting, and students are recognized for demonstrating these behaviors. This year, we also moved on to Tier II of SWPBIS offering an internalizing/externalizing screener to all of our students, and providing interventions of targeted counseling groups and a check in-check out system for those who need more support. These programs are provided to both our face-to-face and virtual students, with the safety rules being updated to include masking, social distancing, and hand washing during this period of COVID-19.

All students K-5 participate in a social/emotional development program, Second Step, in grades K-5. Additionally, for the past two years, we have worked toward becoming a trauma-informed school, making sure that staff understand the signs of trauma and know how to best meet the needs of students impacted by trauma. All students and staff have also been taught self-regulating techniques, which contributes to our positive environment. In addition, we provide school-based counseling, as well as SAP counseling and social work services to students, as needed. The pandemic has caused additional trauma to children, and these programs have been instrumental in supporting our students at this difficult time.

Also contributing to our positive environment is our schoolwide use of responsive classroom and restorative practice techniques. These programs help our students feel valued and accepted and are focused on building positive relationships and a sense of belonging within the school. Morning meetings are held in both our face-to-face and virtual classrooms each day, as students reenter the community, greet one another, share experiences, and set the tone for the day. Responsive classroom techniques are also used to set the routines for the classroom and to offer student choice and opportunities to take responsibility for learning. Restorative practices, in which all of our staff members are trained, help us maintain relationships while working out issues of concern, which supports the positive environment.

Effective differentiated instruction, with additional supports/enrichment opportunities provided as needed, is another important tool in keeping students engaged in learning. Our teachers use a mix of whole class, small group, and individual instruction to engage students, varying modalities and materials, including the use of manipulatives throughout the grades as indicated to make instruction hands on-minds on. Technology devices, including instructional projection systems and 1-1 Chromebooks, are also important tools that contribute to student engagement. Students are recognized and celebrated for achieving academic milestones at our monthly school-wide assemblies, now held virtually.

Student engagement is enhanced by schoolwide traditions and events, such as assemblies, celebrations, extra-curricular clubs and activities, and performances which bring us all together as a community. This year, our schoolwide assemblies and performances have gone virtual, and include both virtual and face-to-face students. We have found ways to have special seasonal events to draw us all together, such as a holiday door decorating contest, where students created and voted for their favorite doors with pennies, with the proceeds benefitting a local children's hospital. We have many of our elective clubs up and running, again incorporating students from both programs. Our annual talent show was also held this year- this time with recorded performances, and a family watch night premiere, complete with popcorn. We are preparing to carry out more spring events in a COVID-safe format. It is in these ways that we have continued to provide an environment that keeps our students safe, motivated, and engaged.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Engagement of families and the community, based on the National PTA Standards for Family School Partnerships, is integral to the success of our school. We welcome and include all families in our school through providing tours, orientations, information, flexible meeting times, respectful interactions, and meaningful opportunities for family involvement. We strive to keep an on-going flow of two-way communication through surveys, weekly newsletters, phone calls, emails, meetings, and applications such as Class Dojo and Remind.

We are highly focused on the types of parent engagement that increase student achievement, providing on-going opportunities for parents to participate within the school, including not only conferences and interactive back to school nights (97% and 80% participation respectively) but also volunteer opportunities, literacy celebrations, art shows, concerts, classroom project sharing, family curriculum nights, and an after school activity program. We also offer family/parent learning opportunities on broad initiatives, such as our “Strengthening Families” series, as well as more specific topics such as enhancing literacy development and teaching children self-regulation skills. We engage parents as partners in our SST and IEP processes, working as a team to ensure the success of each student, again with a near 100% parent participation rate. Opportunities for parents to gain knowledge of our curriculum are provided through not only Back-to-School Nights, handbooks, and websites, but also through intentional outreach by our staff, most recently completing a series of presentations at our PTA meetings focused on specific areas of the curriculum. Parents participate in shared decision making on building level committees, the superintendent’s parent liaison council, an active PTA that is intertwined with the committee system of the school, and the comprehensive planning process.

Over the past several years, we have also focused on forming community partnerships. We currently partner with 18 community agencies/businesses, which support our school in a variety of ways that enhance the education of our students. Activities have included assisting us with learning about and installing a wildflower pocket meadow, serving as reading tutors, providing a summer meal program for our students, serving as guest speakers on many curricular topics, and facilitating after school clubhouses. We support them in kind by volunteering at their events, sharing our facilities for meetings, partnering for summer literacy programs, and sharing resources.

COVID-19 has greatly impacted this area, as our schools are closed to visitors and volunteers. Our Back-to-School Night and parent-teacher conferences have been conducted virtually, although still with great participation. All meetings and workshops have gone virtual but are still garnering a high level of participation as we continue to work together to support the success of each student. Not allowing parents to physically enter the school has been very difficult, but our PTA has still found ways to provide experiences and traditions to support and enhance the curriculum such as the annual yearbook, assemblies, and book fairs. Also, while not physically permitted to enter the building, our community partners are still supporting us. We are working on a grant with our local CSA to get our vegetable beds replanted, and provide produce tastings for our students. Our hospital partner supported Read Across America Week by providing videos of doctors reading aloud. Many community partners have reached out to help provide for our families that have been economically impacted during COVID-19. While COVID-19 has changed many things, we have worked hard to maintain parent and community engagement in our school!

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Tinicum Elementary is home to a supportive, inquisitive, professional, and inclusive community of educators. Practices already in place to develop and support this culture have been especially important as we transitioned to distance learning during the spring of 2020, then socially-distanced face-to-face and cyber options for the 2020/21 school year.

Professional development plays an important role. This year, we adjusted the allotment of our annual 10 days of professional development to support identified needs as we pivoted to the COVID-19 world, focusing on virtual learning, socially distanced classroom instruction, and trauma. Additional days were also classified as Act 80 staff development days to allow departments and teams to work together in an ongoing manner to develop and strengthen practice in these areas. When we needed to suspend face-to-face instruction for a few days surrounding the holiday breaks to prevent spread of COVID, we were also well-

prepared for our face-to-face teachers to provide synchronous instruction in a Google classroom format.

Teachers new to the district are supported through a multi-year mentoring program, and are paired with a formal teacher mentor who shares specific content and experiences, as well as familiarizes them with the school and district. Teachers are also supported through our supervision and evaluation process, which includes both clinical and differentiated modes. The clinical mode not only provides for a mentoring process and frequent opportunities for deep conversation regarding teaching practice between the administrator and the teacher, but it also provides a venue for a teacher to choose and explore a growth area for the year. In the differentiated mode, teachers are able to select a mode of study for the year, and engage as individuals or groups to enhance practice, explore leadership, or gain and share knowledge in a specific area. This system has enabled teachers to participate in supportive cross-building study groups around topics such as delivery of our cyber program, enhancing Google Classroom instruction, and addressing student mental health needs. Similarly, administrators get to select areas of study each year, engaging in leading efforts to enhance practice in chosen areas. This year, the building administrator is focused on developing a district-wide trauma plan and co-developing and supporting our new elementary cyber academy, again providing support to teachers in facing this year's challenges.

Within the building, we work cooperatively to support our continued growth in addressing student needs, as well as supporting one another. Our academic improvement plan brings us all together as learners to enhance practice in order to achieve our goals. After our time in remote instruction, we have been utilizing intervention strategies to address learning loss, supporting trauma-impacted students, and implementing Tier II of SWPBIS. Building staff development days, as well as faculty meetings, are used to support this learning. Grade levels are provided with daily common planning time and monthly grade level data team meetings to monitor student progress and share strategies for addressing student needs. The district cyber academy teachers also participate in these grade level meetings, as well as weekly cyber academy meetings. Each staff member is also an integral member of one of the building committees which perform an essential function for the school. The function of many of these committees has changed slightly this year to support our COVID needs. For instance, our safety and emergency preparedness committee is now actively monitoring the implementation of COVID health and safety protocols at the school.

This year has brought additional stress to all of our staff. Face-to-face teaching in a socially distanced setting is new to all of us, and virtual instruction is new to most of us. Experienced teachers share that in many ways they feel like first year teachers. In an effort to support our teachers, additional staff was hired to staff the cyber program so that regular education teachers are able to focus on either F2F or virtual instruction. The district has offered stress reduction workshops for staff, and also provides emotional health resources through our employee assistance program. In faculty meetings, we identify areas in which we feel successful, and areas in which we are seeking strategies. It is amazing to hear the expertise among us! Through ongoing surveys, we have been able to identify areas in which our staff feels extra support is needed and then have engaged in open and honest Google discussions to identify ways in which this support can be provided. We continue to stay connected and interact socially as a staff through events such as our Friday Google community lunches, and meeting at the tiger paw in our center hall after we have dismissed students to the buses each day just to informally re-connect with one another before heading home.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership style and philosophy employed by the Tinicum principal could best be described as “democratic” or “participatory.” As the sole administrator in this small school, the principal is supported by the SST teacher in carrying out and tracking universal screenings and assigning students to tiered interventions, and by the counselor in co-leading the SWPBIS system. Participation in carrying out policies and programs, forming strong relationships, and enhancing student achievement is accomplished through a committee and teaming system within the school. Each staff member belongs to a building committee, with committees including academic excellence, wellness, safety and emergency procedures, activities and engagement, SWPBIS, and principal’s advisory. Each of these committees has a defined role within the building, meeting monthly at a minimum, working to make decisions through consensus, and using the entire faculty for input and feedback. The principal chairs some of these committees, while others are chaired by teachers. For example, the work done by the Academic Excellence Team begins with a summer

study of data facilitated by the principal with participation by all faculty members to determine areas in which the school is doing well in meeting student needs, particularly academic needs, and areas in which more focus is needed. The Academic Excellence Team, facilitated by the principal, then devises a plan to based on the areas of identified need, including action steps, on-going data gathering, the assignment of resources, and aligned staff development. The plan is then presented to the entire staff for review and revision before being finalized, with everyone understanding their role in carrying out the plan. While the process was somewhat truncated this year, it was through this process that it was identified that a particular group of students fell far behind (learning loss) during our spring of remote learning, and a plan was formed to provide additional supports to these children to help them enhance their growth. Staff reached out to parents to make sure home supports and connectivity were covered, and the principal made plans for staff development to enhance virtual instruction techniques to meet these needs if such instruction was again required.

Classroom, special education, and support teachers are also formed into grade- level data teams, with each grade-level team meeting monthly with the principal to monitor instruction and student achievement. In these meetings, students are assigned to tiered interventions, and professionals brainstorm around common needs and how they might best be addressed. A recent example of how this process has benefitted our students was that the third-grade team took a deeper dive into a few of our third grade students receiving Tier II reading interventions, but still making minimal progress. Through discussion, motivation was suggested as a factor holding these students back, and mentoring was identified as an intervention. Five staff reading mentors were quickly recruited and matched with students, and began working with their students on a weekly basis. These students are now growing at a faster rate!

In this most unusual year, another responsibility assigned to the principal was the implementation of the district COVID-19 health and safety plan at the building level. Much work was accomplished by the principal over the summer, supported by the building custodian and the secretary, with resources supplied at the district level, in laying out socially-distanced classrooms, obtaining and packaging individual student manipulatives, setting up socially-distanced dining spaces, hiring additional teachers to support our elementary cyber academy, devising socially-distanced protocols for all processes of the school, and communicating all of the changes to staff, students, and families. The committee system mentioned above then became instrumental in incorporating all of these new changes into our continued work to create a safe, healthy, and inclusive school environment while providing motivating and effective instruction for our students during the 20/21 school year.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Tinicum Elementary is dedicated to modeling and teaching respect, exploring and honoring cultural diversity, and ensuring equity for our students, families, and staff. While our community is not as diverse as many, teaching our students to understand and respect the experiences and beliefs of others is a primary goal of our school.

Respect is one of the three values on which our SWPBIS program is centered. It is modeled, taught, and reinforced in every school setting, emphasizing using kind words and actions when relating to others. Respect also goes deeper than that, with teaching students to honor the rights, thoughts, feelings, and traditions of others. Students' understanding of this is accomplished through our Second Step social/emotional curriculum, which includes exploring what makes us the same/different, accepting and respecting similarities and differences, and learning how to respect and accept different perspectives. Also, through Responsive Classroom and Restorative Practices, staff focus on treating one another, all students, and all parents with respect. In a recent comprehensive plan survey, we were proud to see that 100% of our school's parent respondents affirmed that their child was treated respectfully at school! During these fractious political times, we have been careful to honor family differences in this regard, and have focused instead on using literature to expose children to the injustice of discrimination through the stories of Martin Luther King Jr., Ruby Bridges, and Rosie the Riveter, as well as teaching the concept of voting through

apolitical, age-appropriate choices which require student input at school. We are emphasizing the concepts of voting thoughtfully, respecting other's thoughts and decisions, and upholding and honoring the outcome of the process. This was most recently done with students creating and entering covers for our yearbook, for which all students were allowed to vote.

Cultural awareness is embedded in our school curriculum, traditions, and practices. While limited in racial diversity, our community does have a broader base of ethnic diversity based on religion and family origins. Through daily morning meetings, students have the opportunity to share family events and celebrations, broadening our understanding of one another's cultures and traditions. In pre-COVID days, parents/guardians also joined us in the school setting to share family traditions and culture with their child's class. Our Spanish curriculum is heavily focused on the cultures and traditions of Mexico and Latin America, and our music and art curriculums engage children in exploring and learning about many cultures. Representation of multi-culturalism is a factor considered in the selection of library and curriculum materials. In choosing assemblies, we strive to expose students to culturally-diverse experiences and presenters. As our school is in such a small, rural community, we ensure that, through elementary class trips, children get broader cultural experiences through visiting cities such as Allentown, Philadelphia, and New York.

We are dedicated to providing an environment where all families and staff members are valued and supported, and all students have equal opportunity to learn and achieve at high levels. We provide tiered instruction, extended learning opportunities, extra-curricular activities, and field trips for all students; food and clothing for any child/family in need of such; and one-to-one and small group counseling for students as needed. One-one devices (and hot spots as requested) have been provided so that all can participate in remote instruction if necessary. Meetings with parents can be scheduled for early morning, lunchtime, or late afternoon, at the parent's preference, and, if required, an interpreter is provided. A recent study of the school completed by the principal using the MAEC Equity Audit indicated some areas requiring additional focus. These included factors impacting the achievement of students who are economically disadvantaged, specifically their ability to participate in extra-curricular activities and extended learning opportunities beyond the school day if district transportation is not provided. We also need to study the proportionality of different subgroups of students in our instructional tiers, and provide professional development focused on implicit bias and equity awareness. We look forward to continued growth in this area in order to best serve our students.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

It was difficult to identify just one primary strategy that has been most instrumental to our ability to successfully educate and support students during this most unusual year, but we reached consensus on that practice. It is our ability to work collaboratively to continue to move forward, especially to ensure that our rigorous academic program and curriculum were delivered to students this year, and that this would not be a “lost year” for our children.

Within one week after our school “closed” on March 13, 2020, we were already meeting virtually with our teachers and providing professional development to get Google Classroom up and running for each class, simultaneously organizing learning materials and Chromebook pick-up for our students so that remote learning could begin on March 30. This involved the coordinated efforts of all- teachers, administrators, curriculum coordinators, tech support, parents- to get our students back to learning in a mostly asynchronous model, but still incorporating curriculum materials, and a bit of “live” instruction, particularly for students with Tier II support and students with IEPs. We even held virtual spring conferences with more than 95% of our parents in April 2020 to strengthen our partnership in this new way of educating their children. This was a heavy lift, but by working together, we made it happen, and we completed the 2019/20 school year in this mode. In our staff development days throughout the spring and in mid-June, we used parent surveys and our own reflections to determine what was going well in our Google classrooms, and what we needed to improve upon if we needed to continue in this mode, and began to incorporate these improvements.

When it became evident that schools would not be opening normally in September, as a district we determined that all students would be educated full-time 5 days per week in either a face-to-face or cyber option based on parent preference. We then recruited 9 elementary teachers district-wide to instruct in our Cyber Academy, which was built to teach the same curriculum and use pedagogy, including daily live instruction, as similar to our face-to-face classrooms as possible in order to keep all students growing and learning together. This also included devising ways to remotely offer universal screening and curriculum-based assessment, so that students could receive the same tiered interventions as students in our face-to-face program. These cyber teachers were housed across the district in empty rooms in our elementary schools, and became integral members of our grade level teams, as well as working as a cyber team to learn together and support growth. Of course, the teachers continuing in socially-distanced face-to-face instruction also needed to work together to solve issues such as how to provide socially-distanced small group and individual instruction, how to run socially-distanced center activities, how to provide movement breaks to students who essentially needed to remain in the proximity of their desks, and how to teach children to be stronger users of Google Classroom in the event that schools would need to close.

We have been educating all of our students, full-time, 5 days a week, since August 31. We did need to build in a few remote instruction days around holiday periods to prevent spreading the virus in our schools, and these days were quite successful in keeping students learning through their Google classrooms. We also discovered that students under COVID quarantine, mostly due to family exposure, would miss many days of instruction in our face-to-face program, so teachers learned how to use cameras to live stream these students into the classroom when they were absent so that they would not lose out on learning. Now, in April of 2021, we continue to have students smoothly shifting from our cyber academy to face-to-face instruction as adults get vaccinated. We are continuing to work through a few issues of running face-to-face and cyber schools parallel, mostly revolving around the scheduling of our special education teachers and reading specialists, who need to serve students in both modes. We are impressed not only with the academic progress of our students, but also their social/emotional growth and their pleasure at being part of the school community with routines and traditions that we have worked so hard to continue, and are proud that we have worked together in these unusual circumstances to provide a year of growth for our students!