

U.S. Department of Education
2022 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 Mrs Genie O'Grady
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

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

School Mailing Address 707 Sharp Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Glenwood State IA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 51534-1641

County Mills County

Telephone (712) 527-4886 Fax (712) 527-5486

Web site/URL https://www.glenwoodschoools.org E-mail ogradyg@glenwoodschoools.org

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Mr Devin Embray E-mail embrayd@glenwoodschoools.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Glenwood Community School District Tel. (712) 527-9034

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 Curt Becker
(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 signatures 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 2016 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 or 2021.
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. The nominated school has, or is subject to, a nondiscrimination policy (provide either a link to the policy or submit a text of the policy), is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff consistent with applicable law and does not have any outstanding findings of unlawful discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s nomination and/or rescind a school’s award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

12. 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.

The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if one of these eligibility requirements is later discovered to have not been met or otherwise been violated.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the current school year (2021-2022) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools. For charter schools: If a charter school is part of the public school system, information should be provided for the public school district. If a charter school is considered its own district or part of a charter district, the information provided should reflect that.)

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

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. **Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not for 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 in the school as of October 1, 2021 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	86	67	153
4	79	70	149
5	78	69	147
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	243	206	449

*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):
- 0.9 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0.2 % Asian
 - 1.8 % Black or African American
 - 1.5 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0.2 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 95.4 % White
 - 0 % 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 2020 - 2021 school year: 3%

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, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	7
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	7
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	14
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	425
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.03
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

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

Spanish

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %

4 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 39 %

Total number students who qualify: 174

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 13 %
60 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. All students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504 should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>0</u> Autism | <u>5</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>3</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>43</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>7</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 9
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.	20
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	11
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.	2

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 23:1

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

Required Information	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017
Daily student attendance	96%	94%	95%	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 2021.

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.

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

West Elementary School faculty and staff are committed to helping our students grow both academically and socially.

16. Provide a URL link to or text of the school’s nondiscrimination policy.

<http://glenwoodcsd.isfis.net/content/104-equal-opportunity-and-non-discrimination-non-harassment-non-retaliation>

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

Students are not chosen to attend our school.

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Located in the rolling Loess Hills of southwest Iowa, Glenwood is approximately 20 miles southeast of the Omaha/Council Bluffs metropolitan area with a population of roughly 5,600. Our location provides us with a unique fusion of both growth-oriented suburban and stable small-town identities. The Glenwood School District is proud to have five attendance center campuses that unite the families and educational services for approximately 2,000 students across the communities of Glenwood, Mineola, Silver City, and Pacific Junction. West Elementary is the district's attendance center for 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students. Our school is nestled in an older, residential part of our town. Our school playground is well-used in off-school hours as a welcoming and accessible site for children to gather and play. Many neighborhood children boast that they learned to ride a bike on the West playground.

The construction of several new subdivisions within our district have pushed the geographic and economic boundaries of our community. Despite this positive growth trend, we have a number of students living below the poverty level, with 39% of our families qualifying for free or reduced lunch. Our low mobility allows us to build and maintain strong and positive connections with students and families across grades and attendance centers. Our faculty and staff work hard to meet the needs of students from varying economic backgrounds, family structures, and life aspirations.

At West Elementary, our “Ram Pride” is evidenced in many ways. It is a schoolwide expectation that all students and staff work together to maintain a healthy atmosphere for learning that includes mutual respect, kindness, responsibility, and physical and emotional safety. These schoolwide expectations are intentionally supported through our Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) implementation plan. All students receive core support in their classrooms, while some students receive additional tiered support from our social-emotional liaison (SEL), school counselor, and principal, all working directly with teachers and students to support positive emotional/behavioral growth. Our teachers have built intentional brain breaks into the day, which include mindful minutes and active movement opportunities. Teachers also hold weekly class meetings in order to build the sort of learning community where students feel safe, respected, and included. We believe that it is critical to view each child as an integrated whole, rather than through the simple lens of academic needs.

As a standards-based school district, each student is given the quality curriculum and educational support needed to reach their maximum learning potential and attain Iowa Core Standards. We consider ‘time’ to be a critical variable in maximizing students’ learning. Through the provision of intentional cycles of reteaching and practice, our students are given the time necessary to accomplish each grade levels’ learning outcomes. Extensive time has been given by all West teachers, in collaboration with district Subject Area Committees (SAC), to align each grade levels' curriculum to Iowa Core Standards, and to identify the tiered resources and instructional practices that best support learner diversity. Our instructional goal is for students to acquire multiple strategies for deep conceptual understanding of grade level curriculum/learning outcomes.

At West Elementary, we have implemented “What I Need” (WIN) time in the areas of reading and math. WIN time was first conceived and organized when our state testing results fell below acceptable proficiency levels, specifically within the IEP subgroup. The learning gaps for these students were widening rather than narrowing. The purpose of WIN time is to improve the skill level of every student, regardless of whether the student needs intervention or extensions to core instruction. Our grade level teams collaborate during Professional Learning Communities (PLC) to analyze data and discuss student placement within WIN groupings in order to ensure that all students' needs are met.

West Elementary is proactive in working to create a positive environment for students regardless of circumstances. When our local river community was affected by the Missouri River flooding in the spring of 2019 and the pandemic of 2020, the academic performance of many students hung in the balance of these two natural disasters. Our teachers, along with a full-time SEL and school guidance counselor aggressively ramped up their collaborations to ensure that academic and social and emotional needs of our students - and each other - were addressed.

To ensure that students and families felt well-supported and had equitable access to instruction and learning opportunities during the COVID closure, we delivered laptops and internet hotspots to students' homes. Students checked in with their teachers daily while engaging in meaningful learning opportunities. Our SEL and the school counselor added additional tiers of support by meeting virtually with individual students or in small groups. When and if it appeared to a teacher that certain students were not actively participating in the virtual learning opportunities, the principal made supportive home visits. We returned to in-person learning in 2020-2021, while continuing to offer online learning to those with health concerns.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

1a. Overall approach, which may include overarching philosophy or approaches common across subject areas:

Our district's school improvement process allows grade-level teachers, special education teachers, and special area teachers to work together to ensure the curriculum we teach is both guaranteed and viable. Our focus has shifted from "what's been taught" to "what's been learned, and by whom." We have become more results-oriented, and we have refined our skills in systematically using data to make strong decisions about academic, social-emotional, and behavioral support for students. Our curriculum, instruction, and assessment work are guided by the systematic use of the Curriculum Learning Institute model.

We believe that no one person can meet the needs of every child, and we therefore prioritize teacher collaboration time. Our SACs are tasked with the responsibility of unpacking and aligning curriculum to Iowa Core Standards in all subject areas. K-5 representatives work on horizontal and vertical alignment, review and recommend primary resources for instruction, and develop common assessments to ensure all learning outcomes are assessed within and across grade levels. Assessments are brought to grade-level PLCs, and teachers use a validation process to establish whether each assessment reliably measures what is expected to be learned. Teachers use PLCs to ensure that every teacher understands what is to be taught and how to determine if and when it has been learned. The validation process allows teams to finalize assessments after ensuring that the proper verbs and content are being assessed at the appropriate depth of knowledge.

Teachers analyze student performance data from common assessments and use that information to help create flexible WIN groups across classrooms for differentiated instruction. The teacher-to-student ratio for each WIN group depends on the nature of the intervention and the intensity of the student needs. Our Title I teacher participates to accomplish smaller group sizes for those with the most intensive needs. Our Talented and Gifted (TAG) teacher also provides our high-performing students with opportunities for accelerated learning during WIN time. Meeting the needs of all students requires a coherent master schedule, creative thinking, and excellent teaching. We take great pride in our collective determination to accomplish all three.

1b. Reading/English language arts curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

One fundamental belief we hold is that how we teach matters as much as what we teach. Our primary resources for instruction in reading and writing are the evidence-based programs developed by the Center for the Collaborative Classroom (CCC). The use of CCC's Making Meaning and Being a Writer help our students to develop as readers and writers, to appreciate the ideas and opinions of others, to learn to agree and disagree respectfully, to think critically about big ideas, and to become responsible and productive members of their classroom and school communities. The professional development provided by the CCC as well as West's instructional coaches have helped our teachers, over several years, to refine their instructional practices in ways that have led to increases in volume of reading, authentic and effective writing, effective teacher/student dialogue, as well as growth in speaking and listening skills. By providing our students with more individual choice in book selection and writing topics, we have helped our students to take greater ownership of their reading and writing learning opportunities, and to approach reading and writing with greater enthusiasm and confidence.

We are becoming better collectors and consumers of student performance data, with a few highlighted examples that follow. Our PLC facilitators and instructional coaches have helped teachers learn how to use formative and summative assessment data to determine what to teach, how to teach, and how to best organize students for instruction. Our instructional coaches have provided training in how to create rubrics for scoring 'on-demand' writing as well as summative writing pieces. Teachers bring writing samples to their PLC and work together to group them in ways that illuminate common focus areas for instruction and practice. This analysis of students' writing allows teachers to form groups and work on skills that need

further instruction during WIN times. Instructional coaches provide ongoing support for helping teachers think about how to provide differentiated instruction during WIN times.

An important milestone in our data journey took place in 2018 when we began to collect and use screening and progress monitoring data sources, in addition to our summative assessment tools. The Diagnostic Decoding Survey by Really Great Reading (RGR) and FastBridge (a universal screener and progress monitoring tool) pointed us toward explicit phonics instruction as a specific and critical area of need, even at the intermediate level. Because our students' demand for phonics instruction was so high, all teachers were trained in how to implement Really Great Reading methods and materials in order to enhance all students' word-solving skills. Since this implementation, special education teachers have also added Specialized Program Individualizing Reading Excellence (SPIRE) to their arsenal of differentiated resources for students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) who require a more intensive approach to phonics instruction.

Instruction within our English Language Arts (ELA) classes is enhanced and supplemented by the use of student laptops and web-based programs and resources. Freckle, for example, provides students with reading and writing extension activities. The use of laptops builds students' keyboarding and on-demand writing skills. Authentic writing tasks using keyboard technology better equip our students with the experiences and skills they need to perform well on our statewide standardized assessment. The use of technology provides a learning bridge between school and home, allowing students access at home for additional practice, learning extensions, or for student/parent interactions.

1c. Mathematics curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

At the same time our curricula alignment work began (2018), our school was designated as a School In Need of Assistance (SINA) due to widening gaps between our IEP subgroup and their non-IEP peers in the area of math. During our guided school improvement work with the Iowa Department of Education and Green Hills Area Education Agency, a small group of teachers representing each grade level at West began to look closely at our data in math and then make plans for improving these learning outcomes. This team became known as our Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) team. During the ESSA action planning process, we found that teachers' knowledge and conceptual constructs in math were lacking.

The ESSA team sought out professional development for our 3rd-5th grade teachers. Online professional development through Building Math Minds (BMM) by Christina Tondevold, was selected as the yearlong learning focus for teachers. This new learning, along with our prior study of the Standards of Mathematical Practices, supported teachers' learning about the early math concepts that are foundational to students' success with later math learning. All 3rd-5th grade teachers, including both general and special educators, completed the BMM course in 2020. Our school selected The Math Learning Center's Bridges in Mathematics, as our primary core resource for math instruction. Professional development around this resource has allowed teachers to deliver problem-based lessons that deepen students' critical thinking about numbers in order to increase their basic number sense, as well as their understanding of more advanced mathematical constructs.

In 2018 West teachers also began using universal screening assessments to measure the health of our core instruction for all students. Based on screener results, teachers decide which students need deeper diagnostic assessment work. A variety of assessment tools are used to illuminate students' learning gaps, and to help teachers make decisions about what should occur during intervention blocks of time. Examples of these assessments include Bridges Intervention Placement Assessment, Assessing Math Concepts by Kathy Richardson, and aimswebPlus. In addition, our teacher-developed formative and summative assessments help us ensure that the instruction at our school aligns with the Iowa Core Standards and that our students are progressing toward mastery.

Our student laptop initiative allows teachers to assign work that is problem-based or that helps students to become fluent in their knowledge of math facts. Students report that this is a fun and motivating way to practice the skills they are learning in class. We use this technology in our classrooms, and our families continue to have access to the online programs just as they did during our brief virtual learning model in the spring of 2020. We have made solid strides in helping students and parents to view learning as a 24/7

endeavor, not simply something that happens at school.

All of this work has supported our teachers in helping all students make significant progress over the last three years. It helped our school to be identified as “High Performing” by the Iowa Department of Education in 2020 and 2021.

1d. Science curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

West’s science curriculum is aligned to the Iowa Core Science Standards, which built upon our previous study of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Our standards’ focused science instruction reflects our state’s focus on giving students real-life knowledge and understanding. Science lessons are inquiry-based, allowing students to think critically and learn their role in the process. The students learn to observe, pose questions, identify problems, and design solutions. Our lessons provide students a high level of engagement with teacher-facilitated discussions while students are doing science, not just reading about science.

Our teachers believe that science extends beyond the classroom walls. Therefore, grade levels will often reach out to local professionals to develop conceptual applications beyond the classroom. Professionals are invited into our school to share their expertise. Our third grade participates in the Farm to Table program, where students learn about local products, how they are produced, and the benefits of shopping local. Fourth-grade students visit a local apple farm where they learn how an apple changes from a seed to a product, such as apple cider. Students learn about the history of Arbor Day and its importance in their lives. West Elementary partners with Iowa State University/Mills County Extension Office each year to provide Outdoor Science Camp for fifth-grade youth. The students experience science in our natural environment and apply their learning through hands-on, educational activities. The camp is sponsored by a variety of local businesses, individual community members, and the Mills County Farm Bureau Federation’s Ag in the Classroom program. The camp’s goal is to engage students in learning about their environment and the Loess Hills and to gain respect for their natural surroundings. Students rotate through several learning sessions throughout the two-day camp. Including community members in this learning has provided powerful learning extensions for our students.

1e. Social studies/history/civic learning curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Alignment of our social studies curriculum to the Iowa Core Social Studies Standards was the thoughtful and purposeful work of our Social Studies SAC. Our curriculum includes instruction in behavior sciences, civics, government, economics, financial literacy, geography, and history. Standards are interwoven, and allow students to learn about the past, relate it to the present, and consider implications for the future. Lessons start with students generating a compelling question. Students seek to find answers to that question by analyzing primary sources of information, asking additional questions, thinking critically, making inferences, and interpreting events of the past and present.

In third grade, the focus is on immigration. Students hear stories from immigrants about their reasons for immigrating and what their experiences have been. Fourth-grade students focus on ways in which society has changed and stayed the same over time. Students learn about how the transcontinental railroad impacted the progression of our society and think critically about whether those impacts were always for the better. In fifth grade, the focus is on the rights and responsibilities of being a United States citizen. Students use primary source documents to make observations and build curiosity about events and people of the past.

Financial literacy is embedded within our social studies curriculum. Our partnership with a local bank allows students to participate in an online class that builds competency around credit and debt in a unique and engaging manner, making these abstract concepts easily understood by students.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

West Elementary offers several additional curricular learning opportunities for our students, including art, music, physical education, library, and guidance. Special area teachers interact regularly in K-12 PLCs of like contents. These teams work collaboratively to vertically align the curriculum taught and build students' academic performance at all levels.

Our students participate in a 40-minute art class once in every six-day cycle. Each grade level interacts with a variety of media such as printmaking, ceramics, drawing, mixed media, and painting to create personal artwork. The art teacher guides students through each lesson while allowing them to experiment and design with various materials safely and responsibly while teaching the elements of art.

Our students attend 35-minute general music classes twice in each six-day cycle. Students focus on essential skills of musical creation, performance, and expression. Each year, all students perform in one grade-level music program with solo opportunities, such as speaking parts, movement, and singing solos.

In physical education class, students receive 35-minute classes twice in each six-day cycle. The teacher builds teamwork skills through non-competitive games. These games build skills that culminate in our end-of-year Olympic Days. Students compete as a class in teamwork games against other classes. West Elementary integrates health and nutrition into each grade levels' science and physical education curriculum.

Our school's library associate meets with students once per six-day cycle. This allows the students access to reading materials of different genres, additional media resources, and recommendations for titles of personal interest. In addition, the library associate works closely with classroom teachers to provide resources for research projects and to enhance each curriculum area. The library associate involves students in many engaging activities centered around reading new and unfamiliar titles. For example, a March Madness book bracket is created each year to expose students to award-winning authors. Student votes advance books through the brackets.

West students participate in a guidance class led by the school counselor once per six-day cycle. Lessons are built around our guidance curriculum which includes outcomes that support students' academic, career, and social/emotional development. In the academic area, for example, the focus is on emotional and mental preparation for various tests. Xello is a computer-based program that gives students opportunities to explore different careers by identifying their skills, strengths, and interests. Guidance time is also spent focusing on the social/emotional needs of the intermediate-aged student. The counselor works with students and teachers to carry over skills practiced within guidance. Some students are also given the opportunity to participate in a small group or one-on-one time with the counselor to provide additional social-emotional learning support.

Within and across all special area subjects, our teachers facilitate and enhance children's skills in other subject areas such as reading, comprehension, reasoning, and communication. In addition to providing hands-on learning environments that build life-long skills of teamwork and personal reflection, our special area teachers create supportive relationships with students in their daily classes.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

To meet the needs of students who perform below grade-level expectations, many aspects are considered when planning and preparing instruction. Instructional coaches support teachers through professional development around formative assessment writing. Through the training, teachers have learned how to build quality formative assessments to determine areas in which students may need more support before moving toward the summative assessment. In addition to formative assessments, grade-level teams look at

summative assessments results to group students across their grade level based on their needs in reading and math. Using a screening assessment measure (FastBridge: aReading, aMath), we evaluate the “health” of West’s entire student body in reading and math. The results of these assessments help determine the need for further diagnostic assessment, which in turn allows for the formation of homogenous groups for WIN time intervention instruction.

All students receive an additional 30 minutes of reading instruction and 30 minutes of math instruction during WIN time beyond the core requirements. Students who are not proficient are placed in groups of smaller sizes for more intensive instruction. These fluid groups change based on student needs. Through reteaching and reassessing, West teachers believe that all students can learn at high levels. This belief is part of a policy that is upheld by our district at all levels. This philosophy has supported teachers to ensure that students are mastering the skills being taught. When learning expectations are not met, students are retaught and given time to reassess.

For our students who need additional support along the way, we know that our teachers benefit from collaborative planning with peers. Through the Teacher Assistance Team (TAT), teachers may request to meet with a team of teachers, coaches, principal, and school psychologist to brainstorm ideas to scaffold learning supports for individual students who are not making adequate progress. Performance data is collected to determine if the short-term interventions are making a difference for the student. The TAT then reconvenes to continue decision-making based on the data collected. If results are not positive, an initial evaluation for more specialized services may be needed. This work is a team effort to ensure the learning of all students!

3b. Students performing above grade level:

In 2018 West was designated as a School in Need of Assistance (SINA) school. This designation required a close look at data for all sub-groups of students. Although West was targeted specifically for our special education subgroup, it was noticed that other subgroups were not progressing as much as was expected. This included students who were considered to be performing above grade level. This prompted a closer look at how to best serve this population during WIN time. Just as with below-level students, several pieces of evidence were used to make instructional decisions about the needs of above-level students.

Classroom teachers administer the CogAT to 2nd and 5th-grade students every spring. This data is triangulated with classroom data and parent questionnaires to qualify students for the Talented and Gifted (TAG) pull-out program. Students who have already been identified as TAG learners are served during WIN time by the TAG teacher. The TAG program compacts curriculum and provides enrichment in reading, math, and Science Technology Engineering Math (STEM). The FastBridge, RGR screener data, and formative and summative outcome assessment data are also used to place students in appropriate extension WIN groups. The TAG teacher helps classroom teachers find proper resources to supplement and deepen student learning during WIN time. The extension groups are also fluid, except those served in the TAG program. Again, it is a belief that it takes all of us working together to enhance the learning of every student.

3c. Special education:

West Elementary uses the TAT model to determine if a student needs more intensive, specially designed instruction. In most cases, general education teachers will refer a student to the TAT team when the teacher has academic or behavioral concerns for a student. The team will meet to discuss a plan and create a goal for each student based on their individual needs. Classroom intervention plans are monitored for six to eight weeks. If the student does not meet expectations or make growth towards the plan/goal after the six to eight weeks, adjustments are made to the intervention instruction. Through this recursive cycle of monitoring results, a student may also be referred to and evaluated for Special Education services.

If a student qualifies for additional specialized services, an IEP is written based on the student's needs. Because West Elementary strives for every student, regardless of needs, to be well-served in the general classroom setting, a co-teaching approach is used to support students with individualized learning plans. All students with academic or behavioral IEPs are placed in co-taught classrooms. Co-taught classrooms are set

up with a special education teacher and a general education teacher who work together to co-plan and instruct. Co-taught classrooms are heterogeneous and include students of all learning abilities, from higher-level thinkers to discrepant learners. This allows all students in the classroom to consider and learn from the thinking and learning processes of peers at every level. In addition to receiving core instruction within the co-taught classroom, students with individual learning needs receive more direct and specialized instruction in small group settings. These students are grouped for WIN time so that skill practice can be tailored to individual needs. Using WIN time to provide students with specially designed instruction has been a way to minimize stigmatization related to special education services. Again, the prevailing student mindset at West Elementary is that “I will get time for what I need.”

3d. English Language Learners, if a special program or intervention is offered:

3e. Other populations (e.g., migrant, homeless), if a special program or intervention is offered:

Students living in poverty represent the largest subgroup of students served at West Elementary. Thirty-nine percent of students at West qualify for free or reduced lunches. West staff members work tirelessly with individual families on areas that impact students’ success and foster caring relationships with students and families. The staff assists with details that make families feel cared for, respected, and valued. Our teachers also understand the importance of communicating with and asking for help from our SEL or school counselor, when needed.

We reach out to and collaborate with other entities for additional support for students and families. In 2020 our counselor and SEL worked with a local counseling agency to arrange for students who need therapeutic services. Many students who need this level of support are not covered by private insurance, and may not have the transportation means to access this level of service. Therefore, we partner with an agency that accepts most insurance plans, including Medicaid. This agency provides therapeutic services to students in person and during the school day. By arranging for these in-school services, we are helping many students to receive the necessary and consistent mental health services that they need.

The counselor, SEL, and principal spend many hours each week assisting families. Examples of how we collaborate include attending to students’ health and hygiene needs, counseling students with incarcerated family members, and assisting students and parents in home foster care settings. The SEL, counselor, and principal are tireless in their outreach and home visits to support physical and mental health care referrals. West Elementary staff knows that meeting the basic and fundamental needs of students and their families is the first step to ensuring that students can focus on learning. As necessary, they also work to find community and public health support for ALL students - regardless of socioeconomic status - to get what they need to succeed both in and out of the school setting.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

West Elementary spends a great deal of time focusing on our school climate and culture. The PBIS team meets regularly to give and receive feedback on the overall school climate. Using the information gathered, decisions are made about which of our four school-wide expectations requires more focus and how to go about increasing awareness for students and staff.

Within our PBIS system, students are rewarded individually and by classrooms. Peers may nominate classmates who are positive models of our PBIS expectations. Students are rewarded once or twice monthly for applying common school-wide behavior expectations with things such as an extra recess, bingo, popcorn or cookie parties, cookie decorating, movies in the auditorium, and brag tags (tags for necklaces). More significant incentives are offered where appropriate, and include bowling, going to a local theater for a movie and popcorn, being principal for the day, and taking field trips.

Our PBIS program includes “RAM Pride” lunches. Teachers nominate students who make growth within our PBIS focus areas. Students who are selected eat lunch with the principal, and also receive a certificate to take home with a paragraph written by their teacher that explains the reason for the nomination.

Other activities used to engage and motivate students are guest speakers that have included authors, mentor coordinators, and speakers with programs that focus on our positive behavior expectations. “Lunch with Last Year’s Teacher” is another popular activity for both students and teachers.

During the summer of 2018, the staff at West spent time bringing teacher-driven “bookmobiles” into targeted neighborhoods. Once each week, a neighborhood of higher socioeconomic need was chosen as the designated location for the bookmobile. A school van was driven to that area where sack lunches and free books were handed out, but the most moving part of the experience was students, teachers and the principal reconnecting over the summer months!

During our remote learning in 2020, the West faculty and staff spent a great deal of time trying to stay connected with students. A video was created and emailed to students that provided positive messages of encouragement from the West staff. In addition, our food service provided our students with free lunches each day. Staff signed up to help with drive-up distribution of meals. In order to provide our students and families with some degree of closure to this challenging school year, our staff gathered each student’s personal supplies and lined the front of the building with posters of encouragement as families drove up to pick up their belongings.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

West Elementary is very fortunate to be a part of the strong Glenwood community. School pride and support flow into our school from beyond our school walls. Local businesses are eager to support our students’ success and participate actively in school programs and events. A few of West Elementary’s community partnerships include the Teammates Mentoring program, K-Kids, Watchdog Dads, and Ram Bank.

Our in-school mentoring program matches up students with adults in the community who meet with them for 30 minutes each week. The Teammates’ goal is for each mentor-mentee relationship to remain intact through each student’s senior year of high school. Informal mentoring by high school students is also encouraged by our district. On many Fridays, high school athletes engage as role models for our intermediate students. High school athletes who participate in the current season’s extracurricular sports come to West to mingle with the students before classes begin for the day. Periodically, even our school district mascot, Tuffy, will appear to spend time with our students, giving out high fives and hugs.

K-Kids is an after-school program sponsored by the Kiwanis Club of Glenwood. Participating students meet once a month at West to work on projects that build on their communication and public service skills.

Watchdog Dads is a program in which fathers/uncles/grandfathers of our students sign up and spend up to a half-day each month at West. These “Dads” spend the day helping students individually, in small groups, or in the classroom. They eat lunch with their child and sometimes spend time with students at recess.

The “Ram Bank” was established at West Elementary more than 20 years ago. Students who have parent permission may open an authentic bank account through West’s RAM Bank. Only deposits are allowed! Once weekly, the bank is open for business, and students may deposit money into their account. Student bank tellers are then responsible for counting and balancing the deposits they have received. Employees of a local bank spend time during the summer training students to be bank tellers. This is a unique opportunity to foster financial literacy for our young students.

West Elementary participates in our district “RAMILY Matters” program because our families matter! Ram+Family=Ramily Matters! This district-wide program focuses on bringing families from across the community together for events that support positive learning and interactions among family members. Each month our SELs plan an evening activity for family members of all ages, with a meal served. Parents and their children attend and participate in highly-engaging evenings of interactive games, crafts, and guest speakers.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

The professional culture of our school has been cultivated through an environment where teachers and staff are intentionally shown respect and provided with ongoing opportunities for both personal and collective growth and learning. Previous years of familiarity with the use of laptops for online learning helped our teachers and students to transition to online learning as the primary instructional delivery format as it became necessary. Instructional coaches support teachers in creating instructional videos for student learning, collaborate with teachers to plan lessons, and attend virtual team meetings to provide on-the-spot support.

Professional development is ongoing in our school. Professional book studies, training by knowledgeable and skilled facilitators, PLC collaborations, and developing healthy self-care habits have been primary learning vehicles for our staff. Teach Skills and Break Habits: Growth Mindsets for Better Behavior in the Classroom by Dan St. Romain is an example of one book that was used for collective study following two years of professional development that focused on understanding, learning, and implementing trauma-informed practices across the entire school environment and 180 Days of Self-Care for Busy Educators by Tina Boogren helped us to direct our cultural focus toward teachers and their wellness. Teacher autonomy is valued at West Elementary. We respect each other as high-performing individuals, and we strive to leverage individual talents and strengths through formal and informal teacher collaboration. Teachers often ask for specific professional learning opportunities, with one example being how to effectively use the read aloud strategy to boost students’ learning. We contracted with a professional author who provided instruction for teachers and visited with students in classrooms. Making read alouds come to life has been highly successful in fostering an observable love for reading in our students. Teachers receive ongoing training for implementing new curricular resources with students. Understanding the organizational layout of primary resource materials has helped teachers to develop essential skills and concepts and to deepen students’ thinking. Finally, Building Math Minds and Really Great Reading professional development have deepened our collective understanding and professional confidence in the areas of math and phonics (fluent word solving) instruction.

West has many other built-in supports. Associate/paraprofessional support is provided at each grade level. Our associates provide approximately 30 minutes of extra support to every classroom each day. This benefits students’ learning in direct and tangible ways. The Sunshine Committee uses funds to uplift teacher spirits with coffee and treats staff once per month, and a coffee cart was created to deliver them right to the teachers’ doors. During parent-teacher conferences, meals are provided by our PTA one night, and on the next night, our principal provides dinner to honor our professional efforts and impactful results.

4. School Leadership:

Leadership plays a vital role in fulfilling the mission of West Elementary. Our collective belief is that all students at our school should be respectful, responsible, safe, and kind. Each week, students and staff are recognized for demonstrating these traits through the use of Staff Shoutouts, Ram Pride nominations, Tuffy Tokens, and Spirit Days. Staff Shoutouts let staff recognize and appreciate their peers for following PBIS expectations. Ram Pride nominations, on the other hand, allow teachers to recognize students for following PBIS expectations. Tuffy Tokens are given to students by staff members and their peers for on-the-spot recognition of positive and productive behaviors.

Our administrative school leader has been the principal at West Elementary for nine years. She believes strongly in the collaborative leadership of teacher-leaders for important decision-making and across a variety of leadership team structures. She consistently demonstrates high expectations for self, students and staff both academically and behaviorally. She can be found participating actively in roles throughout the school, including orderly dismissal, lunch supervision, recess supervision, one-on-one behavior coaching, substituting for teachers, sitting on many school and district committees, supervising high school sporting events, and making home visits. She meets regularly with PLC teams, leadership teams, the PBIS team, the Guiding Coalition team, and the district Curriculum Coordinating Council. Our principal values staff development. Teachers are provided opportunities and encouraged to grow as professionals and enhance learning to benefit student growth in measurable ways. She has worked creatively to appropriate time within the school day to release teachers to perform the critical work of analyzing student assessment/performance data, to observe in the classrooms of Model/Mentor teachers, and meet with instructional coaches for professional dialogue and instructional planning.

We are fortunate to have numerous teachers in leadership roles in our school. Iowa's Teacher Leadership Compensation (TLC) has propelled our district to provide many opportunities for staff to grow and lead professionally. This funding source has allowed for teachers to fulfill specific leadership roles which include Instructional Coach, PLC Facilitator, Technology Integration Coach, and Model Teacher. These TLC leaders provide their peers with strong classroom-based support for effective curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices. Teacher leaders support teachers' professional learning cycles and provide safe and supportive coaching and feedback to peers through relationships of collegial respect and trust. The shared leadership structures at West are driven by a large group of engaged, motivated educators who are determined to ensure that all students and teachers are successful!

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

In 2019, one community within our district found itself underwater from a breach in the Missouri River levee. The floodwaters significantly impacted the safety and livelihood of the entire Glenwood Schools community. Several West families lost their homes and belongings and had to find lodging with friends, family, or in area motels. We made sure our students felt safe and knew we were working to help them regain a sense of normalcy as their families worked to rebuild their lives. A toy drive was organized for impacted students and a shopping spree was facilitated at our "West Toy Store." Several local churches and businesses provided flow-in support for our families. One source of supportive comfort came in the form of quilts, giving students a sense of security that was compromised by flood waters. In order to mitigate the chaos caused by this natural disaster, great teacher efforts went into ensuring that students could experience the normalcy of safe and predictable routines during the school day. Because our community was asked to ration the city water supply, we relied on bottled water donations from surrounding communities, and the National Guard who provided mobile water tanks so that our food service could continue to provide meals in a safe and sanitary manner. For many weeks, our staff and students used portable restrooms. Despite all of this, our students and teachers continued to learn and find new ways to support each other. The outpouring of support from within and beyond our community was both overwhelming and empowering!

On the tail end of the floodwaters came the pandemic, and we tackled new opportunities and challenges with the statewide shutdown of schools in March of 2020. We developed an entirely new set of virtual skills for delivering instruction and engaging students in their learning. And before returning to in-person learning, learned how to develop protocols and procedures for keeping students and staff safe. It was critically important for us that all students and staff felt safe and supported while gradually returning to more normal patterns of interaction and connectedness. Because Iowa mandated a shorter period of virtual learning than NBRS 2022

many other states, our teachers pivoted quickly to plan and prepare for a return to “in-person” learning. The pace of individual and collective work was fast and furious. Many heads and hands were needed to ensure safe work and learning environments for all, and once again we found ourselves on an even higher plane of flexibility, resilience, and collective efficacy. We are changed in positive and encouraging ways.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

West Elementary maintains a laser-like focus on intervening for students who are not meeting academic expectations while simultaneously ensuring that students who are working at or above grade level are continually challenged. Professional development is centered around academic content in reading and math. Teachers and administration work to build schedules that allow students to receive the appropriate instruction that they need every day. Making every minute count, along with powerful instruction during core, intervention, and extension time is essential to the success of every West student.

Teachers have struggled historically with the age-old question, “What curriculum should a student miss in order to receive appropriate interventions in reading or math?” In addition, teachers have traditionally struggled with the idea that supporting individual and/or small group needs must come at the expense of other students in the classroom. It took several years and much trial and error for teachers and administration to fine-tune what a day should look like at West Elementary. Our WIN model has proven to be one of the viable solutions to these historical struggles with master schedules, time management, and provision of a guaranteed and viable curriculum for every student. Days that allow for intervention/remediation/extension to occur and for all students to be engaged in learning is a priority that drives how classroom schedules are created and how teachers do business.

Our ESSA team attended a state conference during the summer and deepened our understanding of how to systematically build a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) for our students. This new structure has proven to be a positive approach to work on grade level content as well as above-and below-level skills. This was our successful first step to ensure that students could be grouped by academic need without taking them out of core instruction, and that all students could participate in meaningful and multi-tiered “get what I need” cycles of instruction.

Fine-tuning our intervention time continues to be a work in progress. The ESSA team’s training has shown us that there are many efficient and effective ways for all grade levels to improve the three tiers of instruction included in the MTSS model. Our ongoing attention has shined a light on places that can be improved in our current system. Our collective passion for supporting students in all areas, our belief that all students can and will learn at high levels, and the professional commitment of our staff make West an amazing school! Teamwork can be summed up in 5 short words: We believe in each other!