

U.S. Department of Education
2022 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 2514 W. Hickory Grove Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Dunlap State IL Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 61525-9802

County Peoria

Telephone (309) 243-8711 Fax (309) 243-8772

Web site/URL https://www.dunlapcusd.net/hges E-mail jetnyre@dunlapcusd.net

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. Scott Dearman E-mail sdearman@dunlapcusd.net
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Dunlap Community Unit School District 323 Tel. (309) 243-8700

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 Dr. Abby Humbles
(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):
- 5 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 8 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	18	12	30
K	67	69	136
1	76	59	135
2	72	73	145
3	60	61	121
4	58	55	113
5	68	65	133
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	419	394	813

*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):
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 42.3 % Asian
 - 6.5 % Black or African American
 - 1.8 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0.3 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 47 % White
 - 1.1 % 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: 4%

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

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

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	24
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	11
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	35
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	806
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.04
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	4

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

Albanian-Gheg, Albanian-Tosk, Arabic, Bengali, Basque, Cantonese, French, German, Gujarati, Guyanese, Hindi, Ibo-Igbo, Japanese, Kannada, Konkani, Korean, Mandarin, Marathi, Oriya, Polish, Portuguese, Pushto, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Sindhi, Spanish, Tagalog, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, Vietnamese

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 13 %
105 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 10 %

Total number students who qualify: 84

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 16 %
133 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>10</u> Autism | <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>29</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>21</u> Developmental Delay | <u>10</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>5</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>62</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 10
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	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	33
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	15
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	16
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

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 25:1

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	98%	98%	96%	96%	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.

The Dunlap School Community empowers all students to reach their individual potential. Dunlap students will reach their individual potential as motivated life-long learners, creative critical thinkers, effective communicators, collaborative problem solvers, and responsible and culturally aware citizens.

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

https://boardpolicyonline.com/?b=dunlap_cusd_323&s=614896

https://boardpolicyonline.com/?b=dunlap_cusd_323&s=614980

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

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Hickory Grove Elementary School is located in Dunlap, Illinois. Our community is best described as fringe rural. There are endless farm fields to the north and expanding subdivisions from the south. We have the perfect mix in both location and diversity. Dunlap is centrally located and considered a regional suburb of the greater Peoria area.

The Dunlap School District includes five elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school. Education is highly valued by our school community. Many families rank school choice as the number one factor for moving into the area. The diversity of our student population is also attractive to families wanting a rich and inclusive experience for their children. We offer a range of special education programs with various levels of support as well as programs designed to support our English language learners. Families come from all around the world with over 30 different languages spoken in the home.

Hickory Grove is the newest school in the district constructed in 2012. It was designed to be a true neighborhood school. Students enjoy walking and riding their bikes. Hickory Grove is the largest of the five elementary schools. Enrollment has increased from 450 to 813 students over the last 10 years. There are five to six sections of K-5th grade. We also house the district's Bright Futures program that serves our most at-risk pre-K students.

Supporting strong relationships with our students and families is the key to our success. From the moment students arrive at school, teachers and staff intentionally connect and make everyone feel welcome and respected. Creative design and the use of grade level pods have allowed us to effectively manage a growing student population while maintaining a small school feel. The pods are used as an extension of the classroom for collaborative work and projects. Each grade level functions as a smaller school within the larger school environment. Students learn best when they feel safe, welcome, and supported.

At Hickory Grove, we believe in our students, not my students or your students. Our mission to empower students to reach their individual potential is embedded in all aspects of our school climate and culture. We utilize a collaborative and systematic multi-tiered level of support. Teachers meet weekly in PLCs (Professional Learning Communities). The focus of the meetings is on the four PLC questions: 1. What do we want students to know or be able to do? 2. How will we know if they have learned it? 3. What will we do if they have not learned it? and 4. What will we do if they already know it? As part of the process, assessment data is regularly reviewed to identify student strengths as well as areas for improvement. Specific and targeted intervention plans are developed for those students needing additional support through our RtI (Response to Intervention) team. Enrichment programming is also available for our students identified as gifted and talented.

In addition to academics, students are provided a comprehensive social-emotional curriculum. These lessons are reinforced and supported through small group instruction and individualized sessions with our school counselor. Students learn skills and strategies that build confidence, self-control, and determination. Learning is a complex process, and we recognize the path for success varies from one student to the next. The teachers and staff at Hickory Grove are committed to the whole child and continuous improvement for all students.

Hickory Grove offers a wide range of special classes and after-school programs to extend and enrich the learning experiences of our students. Students participate in daily PE as well as weekly art, music, library, and world language classes. Band and orchestra are elective courses offered at the 4th and 5th grade levels. Technology is integrated across the curriculum. We are in our third year of being a 1-to-1 school where all students have a Chromebook. Beyond the traditional school day, students may also join our after-school clubs (Running Club, Newspaper Club, Kindness Club, Green Team, and Gardening Club).

The school in partnership with our Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is developing an extensive Outdoor Learning Center. When completed, it will include a performance stage with amphitheater seating, outdoor art and music classrooms, science deck with a natural water feature, outdoor vegetable and flower gardens,

and large areas for gross motor play and climbing. Research is clear that outdoor learning promotes greater creativity, problem solving, and engagement. Our motto is “Not all classrooms have four walls.” We are excited to share this space with our entire school community. The project is being fully funded through grants and donations.

While the pandemic brought many unexpected challenges over the last few school years, our core beliefs remain steadfast. Relationships and expectations matter. This was especially true during times of remote learning when our students depended on us most. As we transitioned back to full in-person learning this year, we have placed a greater emphasis on flexibility and responsiveness. COVID-19 may have changed how schools look now and into the future, but our mission to empower all students to reach their individual potential remains constant and will carry us through whatever challenges we face ahead.

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:

Hickory Grove offers a comprehensive curriculum across all grade levels and subject areas. We recently transitioned to a standards based approach for curriculum, instruction, assessment, and reporting. This change has brought greater transparency and clarity to students, parents, and teachers on what is being taught and how students are performing in relation to our learning standards.

A critical step in this process was to identify the priority standards at each grade level as well as the progression of skills and strategies from one grade level to the next. Teachers have choice and autonomy to structure and design lessons that are clearly aligned to these standards. We believe when given the opportunity, teachers are able to craft and deliver content at a deeper, more rigorous level.

We respect that students learn in different ways and rates. Classroom instruction allows for a balance of shared, guided, and independent practice. Teachers provide opportunities for both remediation and enrichment through small groups and personalized learning experiences. Our resource staff works collaboratively with our classroom teachers to ensure students are provided extra support and accommodations to be successful.

We have a systematic approach to assessment that holds teachers and students accountable to the same standards for learning. Frequent formal and informal assessments are used to provide students with prompt and specific feedback. Students are also given the STAR reading and math benchmarks three times a year. Results are used to guide and improve instruction at the classroom and building level. Progress monitoring is done on a monthly basis to ensure individual student growth. Additional common assessments are in place to allow for consistency across grade levels. Teachers use well-defined success criteria to measure and report student learning.

The teachers and staff at Hickory Grove strive to be the best. We are collaborative in our work and are collectively committed to deliver the highest quality curriculum, instruction, and assessment to our students.

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

Our goal at Hickory Grove is to create a culture of passionate readers. Our school follows a balanced literacy approach aligned to the Illinois Learning Standards for ELA. Each grade level has an uninterrupted 90 minute block devoted to focused and explicit instruction of reading foundational skills, targeted whole group instruction, guided reading at instructional levels, and a variety of independent reading and writing activities.

Our reading block allows teachers to differentiate instruction while prioritizing students' time practicing skills independently and with peers. In this way, students are active participants in the learning process. Each day, students have the opportunity to work with their teacher in large and small groups, work with their peers in small instructional leveled groups, and work independently. In our primary classrooms, teachers explicitly teach phonemic awareness and phonics through Michael Heggerty and Foundations. These skills are reinforced during center activities while the teacher works with guided reading groups. In our intermediate classrooms, teachers use centers and small group instruction to engage students in rigorous learning aligned to specific skills. Our 4th and 5th grade students participate in Genius Hour as part of their literacy block, which is an inquiry-based, student-led independent project. Students set up their own timeline, research their project, and dive deeply into a topic they are passionate about. Through their project, they create a product or a presentation to share with their peers. Genius Hour promotes research, social skills, and collaboration.

Our teachers use a variety of resources to supplement reading and writing instruction. Kindergarten teachers use a weekly picture book with students where they focus on making predictions, retelling, making connections, and inferring. Older grades use mentor texts to introduce writing genres. This provides students with a model to study an author's craft that they can mirror in their own writing. Novel studies are used to supplement their core instruction in reading and writing. Hickory Grove also provides students with several online resources like Moby Max, RAZ kids, Freckle, and Epic which give our students access to countless books and articles to read at school and home. Our English language learners use the program Lexia to help them master foundational reading skills. These resources help Hickory Grove create a culture of passionate readers.

Students are benchmarked using the STAR assessment in the fall, winter, and spring. Teachers use the data from these assessments to plan and guide instruction. Students who fall below the 40th percentile receive additional instruction from our reading interventionists. Students receiving interventions are progress monitored biweekly or monthly, depending on their need. The ultimate goal is to have students bridge the learning gaps so they no longer require additional support and are scoring above the 40th percentile.

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

At Hickory Grove, our math goal is to create a culture of problem solvers. Teachers follow a clear scope and sequence aligned to the Illinois State Standards for mathematics building on skills and strategies from one grade level to the next. Along the way, we embed the practices of perseverance, precision, and modeling. Teachers utilize a variety of resources and teaching strategies to engage students in authentic learning experiences.

Whole group instruction is utilized to introduce new math standards in isolation. Lessons are focused on the priority standards. Instruction is clear, explicit, and meaningful. Students in the primary grades participate in math centers and guided math groups to reinforce and extend these concepts and skills. At the intermediate level, teachers use mixed ability math groups to supplement their instruction. These small groups allow students to have math discussions and explain concepts to other students as peer mentors. Students receive focused instruction from their teacher while being exposed to higher levels of learning. Inquiry based lessons for students demonstrating mastery of grade level content provide students with opportunities to strengthen their critical thinking and mathematical reasoning skills. Teachers are able to differentiate independent practice through online resources and programs like Freckle and Moby Max that target specific skills and adapt to each student's learning level.

At Hickory Grove, teachers use a balance of informal quick checks and common assessments to monitor and accelerate student learning. Students are benchmarked with the STAR assessment in the fall, winter, and spring. RtI math support is provided for students below the target score of the 40th percentile. Interventionists meet with these students for additional instruction outside the core math block. Tier II students receive two extra 30 minute sessions a week and sessions are increased to four times a week at the Tier III level. Ongoing assessment data is used to plan future instruction and interventions. At the weekly PLC meetings, teachers openly discuss best practices to ensure consistency and equity in math instruction.

Hickory Grove teachers pride themselves in creating memorable experiences that engage students when learning specific math skills throughout the year. Every tenth day in kindergarten, parents or community members disguise themselves as "Zero the Hero" and read a story to the students. Special emphasis is placed on the 50th day of school where students dress up and participate in 1950s themed activities. On the 100th day, students arrive at school dressed as secret agents seeking to save "Zero the Hero." These special days are designed to reinforce number sense and place value. Other grade levels create experiences like math Olympics and escape rooms to practice and review mathematical concepts in a fun way.

Math is an inclusive subject where all students can actively participate regardless of language or background. Hickory Grove's commitment and investment in high quality math instruction pays dividends to our diverse student body.

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

At Hickory Grove, our classrooms utilize the FOSS curriculum as well as Mystery Science to meet the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Students learn scientific concepts and principles through interactive lessons and hands-on experiments. Students are exposed to a wide range of topics in physical, earth, and life sciences. Teachers use formal and informal assessments to share out quarterly what students have learned and are able to do.

In kindergarten, teachers focus on building science skills through collaborative STEM activities. Students in 1st grade engage in a physics activity in which they invent a structure to safely transport an egg from the school's roof to the ground. All of the 1st grade watches with great anticipation as the principal drops their eggs. Along with learning about the life cycles of plants and animals, students in 2nd grade are able to witness firsthand the metamorphosis of butterflies. In 3rd grade, students learn about the properties of force through experiments with magnets. Fourth grade students participate in Agriculture in the Classroom. They learn about the role that agriculture plays in the quality of their lives through presentations with live farm animals. In 5th grade, students get the opportunity to visit the Challenger Learning Center in Bloomington, Illinois. Students are able to participate in an interactive simulation as astronauts on a mission to discover a comet. Fifth graders also build rockets to launch in the spring to culminate their space unit. The entire school as well as parents witness the launch which promotes excitement for the younger grades to someday experience the same. All of these experiences throughout their years at Hickory Grove allow our students to be successful on the 5th grade Illinois Science Assessment taken annually in the spring.

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

There are several components to the social studies curriculum at Hickory Grove. Civics is taught through partnering with Junior Achievement of Central Illinois. Members of the business community work with teachers to present topics from financial literacy, to the global market, and entrepreneurship through six different classroom lessons. In the younger grades, social studies topics are incorporated into the ELA curriculum. Teachers provide additional supplements and learning opportunities around relevant current events and topics. At Christmas time, kindergarten students volunteer to ring bells for the Salvation Army on the weekend. In 1st grade, students compare and contrast past schooling with present schooling which culminates with Pioneer Day. They also learn from parents as they are invited into the classrooms for Career Day. Second graders have a month-long Holidays Around the World unit in December. American history is covered across 3rd through 5th grade. Third grade students create Native American projects to display for their peers. To further engage the students within these given topics, teachers plan special days in which students simulate going back in time to experience what life was once like. Fourth grade students research a famous person and present their knowledge to the entire school in an assembly by dressing up as their person. In 5th grade, students get to experience the Roaring 20s by learning the common language used during that time period, creating false advertisements, and watching a silent film. Our school and community put on a Culture Fair every spring to celebrate our diversity. Parents volunteer to set up stations to showcase their family's culture including traditional clothing, crafts, and food. Students have the opportunity to share cultural dances and music by performing for the attendees.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

Hickory Grove has a blended pre-K Bright Futures classroom for at-risk children ages 3 to 5. The program is grant funded through the Illinois State Board of Education and is recognized as an award-winning Preschool for All and Prevention Initiative program. It aims to prepare young children for future school success while providing a community-centered support system for families to thrive. There are two half day sessions that meet five days a week for two and a half hours. The sessions are blended, so each session has five students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and 10 students who qualified through a screening process.

The pre-K program at Hickory Grove uses an approved, researched-based curriculum aligned to the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards (IELDS). Creative Curriculum is a child-centered resource that

features inquiry, exploration, and discovery as the foundation of learning. Second Step and Conscious Discipline are used to support social-emotional learning. The Second Step program teaches skills in four areas: skills for learning empathy, emotion management, friendship skills, and problem solving. Conscious Discipline is used in collaboration with Second Step to teach students to identify and regulate their emotions in a healthy way.

Individual curriculum and assessment portfolios are used to monitor and evaluate student growth and learning. During PLC, the pre-K and kindergarten teachers meet to review student progress and prepare for grade level transition. Kindergarten teachers also observe in the pre-K classroom to plan appropriate supports and accommodations for incoming students.

A child's first 5 years have been found to be a critical period in brain development, which is the foundation of behavior and learning. Research is showing that children who attend preschool arrive at kindergarten more intellectually and emotionally prepared than children who have not attended preschool. At Hickory Grove, we strive to make sure that our pre-K students are getting a strong foundation of pre-academics and social-emotional awareness, which will help them be more successful in primary grades.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Hickory Grove offers a wide range of non-core classes for all students. Students participate in daily physical education (PE) for 25 minutes. They also receive 50 minutes of art, music, and world language weekly. Band and orchestra are offered as elective courses in 4th and 5th grade. They meet twice weekly during the school day for individual lessons and small group sessions. These non-core classes are an irreplaceable component of a holistic and meaningful education.

Physical education prepares students for an active and healthy lifestyle. Students learn the importance of exercise, nutrition, sportsmanship, and safety through sports, physical assessments, and structured play. Students are tested twice per year through Fitnessgram in the areas of cardiovascular endurance, muscular endurance, muscular strength, and flexibility. Students participate in community outreach as they support St. Jude Children's Hospital and the American Heart Association. The students look forward to the annual events to raise funds for these special causes.

Hickory Grove is fortunate to offer a comprehensive art program beginning in kindergarten. Students experience a variety of media, artists, and artwork that align to Illinois Arts Learning Standards. Students are given freedom and responsibility to experiment with materials that express their individual creativity. With this freedom, they authentically develop fine motor skills, critical thinking, and decision-making skills. The halls of Hickory Grove proudly display artwork from all grade levels. Student artwork is also showcased through social media and a monthly newsletter for families to enjoy.

Hickory Grove's music program follows a clear scope and sequence that builds on knowledge and skills from one grade level to the next. Quaver Music, an online based curriculum, is utilized to meet the Illinois Arts Learning Standards. The curriculum contains culturally diverse and interactive resources. Students are exposed to a rich variety of animated songs with interactive scores and videos on musical elements and instruments. Students learn about historical eras and musical styles. Each year our students shine as they perform in a music program for their grade level. Students can audition for speaking parts, singing solos, and using props. These performances equip students with the skills and confidence for future careers that require public speaking or performing.

Hickory Grove uses a world language FLEX (foreign language exposure) program to introduce students to the Spanish language. The curriculum has been designed to meet the National World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages. Students are taught in both the target language and English. Thematic units prepare students to use the target language for interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational communication skills. The world language curriculum extends learning beyond that of language acquisition. Each grade level studies a different Spanish speaking country. Throughout the school year, students sharpen their skills in cultural and geographical awareness and appreciation as they explore each country's history and culture.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Hickory Grove has a systematic and comprehensive RtI program. Students are identified for extra support based on the STAR assessment and classroom performance. Students at the Tier II level receive two 30 minute sessions per week. Students at the Tier III level receive four 30 minute sessions per week. These supports are provided during the daily intervention block for their grade level. Students do not miss core instruction to receive RtI support.

The students are progress monitored monthly to ensure individual student growth. Students not making adequate progress are referred to our building RtI team for additional support. The team includes the parents, classroom teacher, resource teacher, interventionist, counselor, school social worker, school psychologist, and principal. Meetings are held every six to eight weeks to review and update the RtI plan.

The level of support and interventions provided are personalized to the student's specific learning needs. The process is flexible and responsive. Our goal for every student is to close the achievement gap as quickly as possible. Students demonstrating a need for long term support are evaluated for special education and related services.

Struggling students are supported in the regular education classroom with differentiation, reteaching, and small group instruction. Guided reading is used to support targeted reading instruction at a student's instructional reading level. The students below grade level expectations meet daily with the classroom teacher. Lessons are tailored to help students take their next step to becoming independent readers. Math centers engage students in hands-on learning. The students have an opportunity to practice and build skills and strategies independently and with peers. Teachers work one-on-one or with small groups to target missing skills. Teachers also make accommodations and modifications within their classrooms to set these students up for success.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Hickory Grove believes that while all children can learn, they learn at different rates and in different ways. For students performing above grade level in grades 3-5, Hickory Grove provides an after-school program called Enrichment Eagles. Students' cognitive abilities, academic achievement scores, and teacher recommendation are reviewed in order to identify students who score well above the local average.

Students meet weekly with the teacher sponsors to complete enrichment activities and projects including Makey Makey, robotics, STEM, littleBits, green screen, Breakout EDU, and scholastic bowl. In robotics, parent volunteers from Caterpillar create the challenges and mentor the students as they work collaboratively across grade levels to code a robot. Their robots must perform ten different challenges, and teams are scored based on their performance as well as teamwork. For Breakout EDU and STEM, students complete logic puzzles and design and test devices to meet specific challenges. For the green screen unit, students produce a movie from start to finish on a topic related to their classroom learning. They write a script, make props, choose backgrounds, and act out their film. The culminating activity for the year is a scholastic bowl tournament in which all EE students from the district come together and compete in quiz bowl trivia. The units are on a rotation so that students are exposed to new concepts across their three years in EE. Despite the changes COVID-19 brought, EE was still able to be provided remotely. Students picked up materials needed to complete their challenges and then worked each week on a video call with their sponsor and peers.

Students also receive differentiated instruction during HAWK Time (Helping All Students with Achieving Key Targets). Students are placed into groups according to their needs identified through the STAR assessments and classroom performance. Students have the opportunity to work in an enrichment group to expand their knowledge of classroom learning. These students research topics of their interest and create presentations to share with their peers.

3c. Special education:

Hickory Grove maintains the belief that all students are our students. The special education program is centered around the inclusion of all students regardless of their abilities or differences. Hickory Grove offers a full continuum of special education services that support the students in the regular education classroom. As often as possible, students receive services in their home school.

Hickory Grove has a fully staffed special education department. There are three full-time special education teachers assigned to our school. Caseloads are divided by grade levels K-3, and 4-5. Students are clustered in classrooms to provide our resource teachers with greater flexibility and time to devote to each student. We are fortunate to have a full-time social worker and school psychologist as well as two speech and language pathologists. Some of our students receive assistance with a classroom or one-on-one aide. The remainder of the support staff is shared across the district.

Every IEP is specific and unique. The level of support is based on individual needs. Special education services include resource, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, social work, counseling, and physical therapy. Some students only require push-in support while others are pulled out for reteaching and instruction.

The efforts made to align our curriculum, instruction, assessment, and reporting have especially benefited our students with IEPs. Goals are clear, specific, and written in relation to standards. Progress is monitored frequently and interventions are planned according to needs. This has allowed for a more targeted approach to closing achievement gaps in relation to the standards. Students, parents, and teachers have a clearer understanding of what is being taught, how it is being taught, and how progress will be monitored and reported.

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

Hickory Grove has a well-established English as a Second Language (ESL) program. The program's mission statement is to "Provide additive support in the areas of language development, culture, and academic subjects enabling each student to become successful in the mainstream classroom, school, and community."

The school's English language learner population is the largest in the Dunlap School District and is also the most diverse. There are over 30 different languages represented. Hickory Grove has 116 English language learners which make up 12.5% of our overall student body. Due to increasing numbers with Arabic and Telugu, Hickory Grove will be offering a TBE (Transitional Bilingual Education) program starting next school year. This will allow students who speak these languages to continue with the traditional ESL curriculum as well as additional teaching in their native language.

Hickory Grove has two full-time certified ESL teachers. Students who qualify for services receive 30 minutes of ESL instruction daily. The focus of the instruction is on listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In addition, the ESL teachers work collaboratively with classroom teachers to provide supplemental support of the core content. Teachers also provide accommodations such as extended time and modified assignments. The ESL teachers take into consideration each student's unique background and learning style.

Once a year, the students take the ACCESS test to measure their English language growth and to determine eligibility for ongoing ESL services. Over the last four years, Hickory Grove achieved the highest success rate amongst all Dunlap schools with 20% of the students exiting the program annually. As English language learners become confident in their skills they flourish in the classroom.

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Hickory Grove engages, motivates, and provides students with a positive environment in many ways. There are several clubs which students may join depending on their interests such as Gardening Club, Running Club, Speed Club, Newspaper Club, Band, Orchestra, Kindness Club, Green Team, Good News Club, and electives through the Right at School after-school program. As a way to encourage student growth both academically and socially, students may earn a Hawkeye Award which brings recognition both in school and in the community for their extra efforts, superior achievement, and outstanding citizenship.

During remote learning due to COVID-19, we were able to maintain student engagement despite the difficulties of being a divided school. Roughly half of our students were remote and the other half were in-person. Because of our high expectations for all students, our remote learners still felt as though they were part of our school community. Teachers carried on without skipping a beat to keep students learning the same curriculum at the same level as their in-person peers. One example of this is that remote 5th graders were still able to participate in the end of the year rocket launch. While they built their rockets at home, a special day was planned for students and parents to come to school for the launch. When reflecting back on the difficulties that COVID-19 brought us, teachers proved to be innovative in finding alternative ways that still engaged the students in meaningful learning and “normal” academic experiences.

Another way we build a positive environment for learning that keeps students engaged is through whole school activities. On World Read Aloud Day, grade levels transform their common area pods into story settings. Students divide into vertical groups and travel together from pod to pod to witness the teachers perform a dramatization of their chosen book. The rest of the day is spent on related literacy activities. The day concludes with a school-wide assembly where additional staff, principals, and district administrators perform on the stage. This vertical grouping helps students form relationships with teachers and students beyond their own classroom and engages and excites them for reading in a non-traditional way.

Students get to travel to a variety of field trips such as the fire station, Midwest Food Bank, Peoria Zoo, Wildlife Prairie Park, a minor league baseball game, Sommer Park, and the Abraham Lincoln Museum. Field trips allow teachers to provide students with life experiences outside of the walls of our classrooms. They expand students’ academic and social-emotional growth as well as expose them to various careers and resources within the community. During COVID-19, teachers were creative in finding virtual field trips to continue those supplemental learning opportunities that are so valuable to engaging students.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

At Hickory Grove, we believe in strong relationships with families and community members. Families are provided a variety of opportunities to be involved in the school community. With the support of our parent teacher organization, families engage in many enjoyable family events. These events include: Muffins with Moms, Donuts with Dad, Grandparents Day, Scholastic Book Fair, The Launch (our school carnival), Culture Fair, and classroom holiday parties. Many teachers also invite families into their classroom for special events and to provide extra support for students.

This year, Hickory Grove PTO is organizing a spring Fun Run to raise additional money for our Outdoor Learning Center. The Outdoor Learning Center committee involves a team of parents, staff, and community members. The entire project is being funded by grants and other donations.

Our school partners with many local businesses to enrich student learning. Junior Achievement is a program used in all of our classrooms that invites a volunteer community member into the classroom. This community worker introduces students to age appropriate economic topics over several weeks. Agriculture in the Classroom also visits 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade classrooms each month. This program engages students in hands-on activities that help them to understand the role of agriculture in their everyday lives. Ameren Illinois educates students on energy safety and efficiency. Each grade level goes on a field trip to the Hult

Center for Healthy Living. The students participate in sessions and activities that promote body awareness and health covering topics such as: Your Amazing Body, Super Kids, Healthy Adventure Series, Heart Adventure, and Growing up, Growing Strong.

Hickory Grove feels it is important to teach our students to give back to our community. Every November, students participate in Nets for Vets to raise money for the Veteran Honor Flight to Washington, D.C. Students also participate in a canned food drive for the Peoria Area Food Bank. In physical education, students enjoy participating in the Kids Heart Challenge to raise money for the American Heart Association. At the end of the year, students and staff compete in Laps for Life to raise money for St. Jude.

School information is provided to families through media apps such as Facebook, SeeSaw, and Class Dojo. Classroom teachers also connect with families through a weekly newsletter. A monthly parent bulletin is used to communicate upcoming school-wide events and announcements. These resources keep our families connected to the learning environment.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Hickory Grove administrators and teachers understand the need for exposure to the best methods of instruction in an ever-changing world. Staff meetings are often teacher-led with a focus on instructional strategies that have been successfully implemented in classrooms. Teachers regularly attend professional conferences and workshops to gain knowledge on best practices. These teachers are encouraged to share their experiences which support vertical implementation and collaboration between teams. Other staff meetings showcase instructional resources available to support 21st century learning through coding and STEAM. These meetings give teachers an opportunity to trial games, robots, and other technology that can be utilized with their students. Administrators at Hickory Grove value teacher leadership and opportunities for meaningful staff development.

Our kindergarten through 2nd grade teachers were recently trained on guided reading instruction. There was a shared commitment from the staff as 100% of the teachers participated by choice. The training involved weekly after-school sessions. The instructional coaches from the district provided ongoing support and follow-up throughout the year. We now have an extensive leveled library to support students' learning at all reading levels.

Prior to the start of distance learning, Hickory Grove teachers were given the opportunity to create a plan for virtual learning. School administrators and district technology coaches were available to support teachers as they navigated planning and implementation in a very short period of time. As the district quickly turned to distance learning, teachers used Canvas and Seesaw as their platforms to engage with students. Teachers became proficient in using digital resources such as Kami, Screencastify, and Flipgrid. This allowed students and teachers to continue to interact with one another on a daily basis. Virtual learning appointments with the technology coaches assisted with the successful implementation of these resources. Teachers were truly invested in not only delivering instruction but also continuing to build classroom relationships and community.

Throughout the remainder of the 2020 school year, Hickory Grove staff met virtually on a weekly basis to discuss successes and challenges throughout the week. These weekly meetings gave teachers an opportunity to collaborate with one another, and gave administrators an overview of how staff and students were responding to distance learning. In addition to weekly staff meetings, grade level teams met virtually on a weekly basis to share resources and strategies that were benefiting their students. Hickory Grove staff members worked together to make an unforeseen situation manageable for teachers, students, and parents alike.

4. School Leadership:

Hickory Grove's success is due in large part to a philosophy of collaboration, teamwork, and shared leadership amongst our stakeholders. Community members, administration, parents, staff, and students all play a vital role in helping us achieve and maintain high standards.

Leadership in our school begins with our students. Our Student Leadership Team (SLT) is led by our school counselor and is open to 5th grade students. The students meet weekly to plan initiatives for the betterment of our school and community. Students are able to provide input and feedback to the staff on improvements for our school. We have adopted student-led conferences in lieu of the traditional parent/teacher conferences. This allows all students to have an active voice in their education.

The Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) is composed of one teacher from each grade level whose role is to set and communicate direction for the school. This team is responsible for the creation of the School Improvement Plan. Our values and beliefs as well as assessment and climate data are used to identify priorities and set goals for our school. Indicators are established to measure our success and plan for future improvement. A conscious effort is made to align goals at the student, classroom, grade, and building levels.

Teachers from each grade level represent our school on the Curriculum Council (CC). This group is responsible for the review and alignment of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and reporting at the district level. They also facilitate the process to adopt new curriculum materials and resources. Release time is provided for teachers to complete this important work. A guaranteed and viable curriculum allows all students equal access to success in school.

Finally, the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) actively contributes to the success of our school. The PTO not only plans social events but also raises funds for special programs and projects for the students and teachers. The use of parent volunteers is commonplace in our classrooms. We are blessed to have an active and supportive PTO at Hickory Grove.

Hickory Grove is committed to continuous improvement. We have been fortunate to have a consistent and experienced administrative team since opening 10 years ago. Direction is clear and opportunities to provide feedback and input are frequent. Communication within the school and community is genuine and inclusive.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Hickory Grove is inclusive and respectful of all cultures. Students, families, and staff are not only allowed but also encouraged to observe and share about cultural and religious holidays and events.

Hickory Grove hosts a Culture Fair which provides families and the surrounding community with an opportunity to experience first hand the diversity of our school family. Our Culture Fair demonstrates cultural awareness which fosters respect and growth for our students and families as global citizens. At the Culture Fair, families and students have the opportunity to set up a display to teach others about their unique culture. Our students and their families represent countries from all around the world. They use the Culture Fair to showcase their country's traditional dress, holidays, languages, music, food, climate, geographical location, and more.

Students whose native language is other than English take part in our English as a second language (ESL) program to provide equal learning opportunities for core subjects. The achievements and progress our English learners make is a testament to the quality of instruction our ESL teachers provide while still honoring the cultural and language diversity of our students.

Hickory Grove uses a social-emotional curriculum to teach our students the traits they need to accept and respect others regardless of differences. In the past, Second Step has been used as a schoolwide curriculum. This year, we began using Quaver SEL and Character Strong. Both of these programs focus on building self-worth, acceptance, honesty, and dignity.

The school counselor and social worker at Hickory Grove provide teachers with social stories to support students. They observe individuals when requested and participate in the problem solving team. They provide small group lessons and individualized social-emotional minutes for students. In addition, the counselor provides bi-monthly classroom lessons and a monthly newsletter for all students. The counselor and social worker are able to connect families with outside resources to support students beyond the school

day.

Hickory Grove continues to address the effects of the COVID 19 pandemic through health and safety mitigation measures. We were excited to be selected as one of the first schools in the nation to pilot the use of a sanitation robot. After school hours, the robot is programmed to travel from room to room and uses a dry-mist disinfectant and ultraviolet light to thoroughly sanitize our school.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Providing opportunities for our students to make connections and forge relationships throughout the building has been significant to our school's success. At Hickory Grove we believe that strong relationships with our students truly enhance student motivation. When students feel supported, they are more engaged in learning and have positive social interactions.

Our students are greeted each morning by our two principals at each entrance to our building. Students begin their day in their classroom, and our administration visits each classroom every morning to personally wish each class a great day. Our students look forward to seeing their principals greet them each morning, and this daily visit provides our principals with the opportunity to interact with every student every day.

One activity we use to build a school community and foster the growth of relationships is buddy classrooms. Primary classrooms are paired with intermediate classrooms to build relationships and collaborate on a variety of activities. Within each classroom pairing, each student has a specific buddy that they are coupled with each time the classrooms meet. Students collaborate on a variety of academic and social-emotional activities. Some buddy classes focus on STEM activities where student teams collaborate on challenges. Through these activities, the students are busy building relationships. Some classes focus more on reading activities which align with our school goal of creating a culture of passionate readers. Students who are older, more capable readers, can be peer mentors for their reading buddies. Younger students have the opportunity to see what being a fluent reader looks like when their peer model demonstrates their acquired reading skills. Throughout our buddy classroom activities, older students develop their social-emotional skills like patience and empathy as they work with their younger buddy.

Our staff and students engage in several schoolwide activities throughout the year that promote strong relationships. On World Read Aloud Day, staff members transform grade level pods to depict a children's book. Students are mixed together and rotate throughout the grade level pods as teachers act out stories. As our culminating activity for the day, students gather together for a final read aloud by administration and support staff in our school gym. The students love seeing their principals dressed up in character, acting out books they know and love. On Global Play Day, students engage in imaginative play with one another. Buddy classrooms and grade level classrooms interact together, allowing students to work on problem solving skills and teamwork through play.

Hickory Grove has a Student Leadership Team composed of fifth grade students who are actively involved in student leadership roles within our school. The team focuses on collaboration, service, and modeling positive behavior throughout our school. They are our kindness greeters in the morning and serve as mentors for our pre-K students. The team has weekly meetings and participates in projects each month that focus on our social-emotional curriculum.