

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

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

School Mailing Address 1024 Magnolia Lane
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Naperville State IL Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 60540-7543

County DuPage County

Telephone (630) 420-6341 Fax (630) 637-7348

Web site/URL https://www.naperville203.org/elmwood E-mail mlanges@naperville203.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.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent* Mr. Dan Bridges E-mail dbridges@Naperville203.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Naperville Community Unit School District 203 Tel. (630) 420-6300

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.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Mrs. Kristin Fitzgerald
(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.

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

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):
- 14 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 5 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 2 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 21 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	51	49	100
1	74	56	130
2	71	58	129
3	49	36	85
4	47	72	119
5	61	46	107
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	353	317	670

*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):
- 0.2 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 7.2 % Asian
 - 6.7 % Black or African American
 - 13.6 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0.1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 64.6 % White
 - 7.6 % 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: 10%

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	31
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	41
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	72
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	697
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.10
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	10

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

Albanian/Tosk (Albania), Arabic, Bulgarian, Cantonese (Chinese), Farsi (Persian), French, Greek, Gujarati, Italian, Korean, Lithuanian, Malay, Malayalam, Mandarin (Chinese), Pilipino (Tagalog), Polish, Slovak, Spanish, Swahili, Tamil, Thai, Urdu, Yoruba

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 10 %
67 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 9 %

Total number students who qualify: 59

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 17 %
116 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>8</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>38</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>8</u> Developmental Delay | <u>19</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>4</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>11</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>2</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>3</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 2
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	28
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	26
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	18
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	7

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 24:1

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	97%	97%	96%	97%	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.

Elmwood’s purpose is to cultivate and sustain an equitable and rigorous learning community which nurtures critical thinkers where all are valued and celebrated. The mission of Naperville 203 District is to produce students who are self-directed learners, collaborative workers, complex thinkers, quality producers, and community contributors.

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

Equal Employment Opportunity and Minority Recruitment Policy:

<https://boardpolicyonline.com/?b=naperville&s=94475>

Equal Educational Opportunities Policy: <https://boardpolicyonline.com/?b=naperville&s=94587>

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

Welcome to Elmwood Elementary School! We are a collaborative learning community serving 688 students from eight different neighborhoods in the center of Naperville. Elmwood was built in 1960 and for the past 62 years, hundreds of staff members have poured their hearts and souls into creating warm and innovative learning environments for thousands of children. Elmwood is grounded in its strong foundation of connections; amongst students, staff, families, and community members. Like the roots of a tree, our connections grow deep, intertwining with one another to give strength and support to our school in many ways. This support system may not always be seen, but it is felt and keeps us grounded during difficult times.

When Elmwood was built, it did not have the sprawling footprint it has today. It initially only had 15 classrooms of students in Kindergarten through 5th grade. In 2010, 200 new students were lucky to call Elmwood their home as the district rezoned and acquired families from new neighborhoods. In 2012, Elmwood became one of the first schools in District 203 to house the Dual Language program, where native Spanish and native English speakers came together in a kindergarten classroom. This original group graduated together in 5th grade and went off to junior high as bilingual and bi-literate young adults. Elmwood currently sits strong with 28 classroom sections and a dual language classroom at every grade level.

Over the past two years, our school mottos have been “You Make A Difference” and “You Belong!” Our staff work to create an atmosphere where students feel meaningfully connected to one another and as a result, they want to come to school and try new and challenging things. The motto of You Belong runs deep, as we have dozens of families and staff members who are considered Elmwood legacies. Summarizing why adults choose to return to Elmwood to raise their children is easy- it is a place where students feel valued and connected. A key strategy our staff implements daily is working to ensure all students feel a sense of connection. This is reflected in teachers meeting with students at before and after school clubs such as Student Council, Boys Only Book Club, Run Club, Lego League, Coding Club, Battle of the Books, and a group dedicated to promoting positivity among girls called Club FLARE (Friends Learning And Respecting Everyone). During lunch and recess, teachers spend their own time eating with students, getting to know their hobbies and interests, or using the time to review homework when a student struggles. Students mentor one another through Safety Patrol, which helps reinforce the school expectations during arrival and dismissal. When Elmwood transitioned to virtual learning as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, staff were quick to improvise and find ways to keep that connection alive even though we were not physically in person with our students anymore.

When classrooms shifted to eLearning (remote learning), our teachers and staff sought new ways to keep the connections alive among classrooms. Emotional connections were forged through sending video messages, conducting virtual read alouds while students ate their lunches at home, administration recording daily video morning announcements for all students to watch as a start to the day, and paraprofessionals holding office hours for students to pop in for extra help or just to say ‘hello’ and ‘I miss you!’ Connections were also forged as teachers worked to identify families who needed a more reliable internet connection and helped get them set up with district devices and internet portals. Additionally, teachers worked after hours to deliver school supplies, materials, food, and extra books to students along with participating in birthday drive-bys and garage greetings with their socially distant students. Emotional connections are strong among the Elmwood community, which lays a solid foundation for a learning community-driven for success.

Finally, the connections forged amongst our teachers and staff are a cornerstone of Elmwood’s values. Adults at Elmwood are lifelong learners, continually seeking new learning opportunities through staff development, taking additional college-level courses, and observing their colleagues. Staff meets weekly in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), reviewing the essential standards for their grade levels and creating common assessments to help gauge the learning of all students. The staff support and motivate one another, trying creative new ideas to engage their students. Teacher-led book clubs, data discussions, and observations of one another help foster the culture of continual growth, in a manner that is trusting and supportive.

Elmwood School embodies the school spirit of belonging and connection. The roots of our tree are strengthened by the students, staff, and families who give their all, day in and day out, to create a school community that feels like home.

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:

Elmwood teachers work to develop a curriculum across subject areas that meet the needs of all learners and abilities. District resources include research-based programs, small group supports, and technology components that allow for differentiation and personalized learning.

Elmwood teachers utilize a variety of instructional approaches to serve our students needing interventions and extension challenges through a Multi-Tiered-System-of-Supports (MTSS) structure. During PLCs, teachers, specialists and coaches review common formative assessments to determine which students have mastered essential learning standards and which students have not. For students who mastered standards, the team works to co-plan rigorous extensions to push student learning forward. For students who have not mastered essential standards, teachers collaborate to deliver and monitor additional supports from a specialist or classroom teacher. Tiered instruction can occur in a small group setting, in the classroom, or one-on-one depending on the learner's needs.

Elmwood is at the forefront of creating a Master Instructional Schedule where each grade level is committed to a 90-minute English Language Arts (ELA) and a 90-minute Math block. The schedule is intentionally designed to avoid overlap between grade levels to maximize reading/mathematics specialist and coach support. This reduced ratio provides more adults to administer interventions and extensions to help close achievement gaps. Technology is seamlessly integrated into our everyday classroom instruction. Students regularly complete work on digital platforms such as iXL and Google. Teachers utilize built-in digital assessments to assess student growth and identify opportunities for reteaching or enrichment.

Throughout the last two years, teachers pivoted from traditional classroom instruction to meet the changing landscape due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Classroom teachers intentionally built social and emotional lessons intended to help students manage feelings about the shifts from in-person, to hybrid, to the re-entry in buildings with widespread mitigations in place. Core subject lessons were digitized for hybrid instruction, simultaneous at-home and in-person learning. Paper based assignments were created in digital form using TeacherMade to ensure an equal and engaging learning experience. Our overarching philosophy remains true to our core mission, enabling our students to experience learning and lessons that help us reach level standards.

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

Elmwood Elementary is focused on implementing a guaranteed and viable literacy curriculum to ensure students meet or exceed the Illinois Learning Standards. Our balanced literacy approach is delivered within a reading and writing workshop model. We focus on the five pillars of literacy put forth by the National Reading Panel: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Elmwood students frequently interact with complex texts to deepen their understanding of literacy. Paired with Lucy Caulkin's writing curriculum, students develop reading strategies through rigorous writing instruction.

As a district, teacher-led curriculum teams determined the resources we utilize and identified literacy reporting standards. At Elmwood, we unpack the standards to identify essential standards and determine through PLCs how we will know when students have met the standards. Once that is established, we focus on planning for students who do not meet standards, as well as enriching students that do. Common Formative Assessments (CFAs) and rubrics are created among grade level teams to assess student progress toward the standards and inter-rater reliability is established at PLCs by sharing and discussing examples of student work. CFAs, NWEA MAP Growth testing, benchmark assessments, and anecdotal data is collected, shared, and discussed during PLCs to determine the type of tiered support students may need. We use an MTSS structure to identify present levels of student performance and to help them achieve personal

academic goals. Goal setting is a collaborative effort between students, teachers, and parents. We believe that providing students ownership of their learning goals gives students opportunities to be accountable for their learning.

Professional practices are guided by current research with proven large effect sizes. We have studied John Hattie's work and created three focus areas at Elmwood: deliver quality guided reading, utilize mini-lessons, and promote active student engagement. Teachers keep students actively engaged by providing specific and immediate feedback, teaching to a limited number of learning objectives, and monitoring and adjusting instruction based on students' responses. We keep the mini-lesson concise by limiting teacher talk time and by utilizing a flipped classroom where students view lessons online. Staff collaborate and work together to deliver guided reading using a "Flood Model" where instructional assistants, classroom teachers, reading specialists, and enrollment assistants simultaneously deliver guided reading instruction four times a week at scheduled times within kindergarten and first grade classrooms. Lessons are explicit and responsive to the needs of the students. Providing constructive feedback with clarity is a top priority.

During virtual learning, we utilized Zoom for synchronous literacy instruction. Zoom breakout rooms were used to deliver small group instruction. In addition, applications such as SeeSaw and Canvas were used and students digitally submitted their written work and videos to show their thinking. Teachers monitored the level of understanding and provided feedback to each student digitally and via Zoom conversations. To support students at home and over the summer, summer learning bags with books, ideas to promote literacy at home, and games are sent home with our most at risk students.

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

Elmwood School supports a balanced approach to mathematics, which emphasizes conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and application to support math proficiency for all students.

Our comprehensive mathematics instruction includes: numeracy routines, core lessons, tasks, small group lessons, independent practice/games, and assessment. The classroom teacher weaves mathematics strands together through daily instruction, differentiation to meet the needs of all students, and collaboration with colleagues to help students achieve success.

We utilize formative, summative, diagnostic and standardized assessments to inform instruction and support student learning. Students complete digital diagnostic assessments through our mathematics resource, Ready. These assessments monitor student achievement and growth of grade level standards. Based on the iReady diagnostic, teachers can differentiate instruction by assigning targeted and specific lessons for individuals or small groups of students. We administer the NWEA MAP assessment three times a year to collect schoolwide data and measure student learning against national norms. Analysis of NWEA MAP data also provides school-wide areas of strength and opportunities for growth that support grade-level instructional planning.

We use the PLC model for teachers and specialists to collaborate on math data. Teachers utilize a variety of assessments to identify instructional needs for all students. Teams focus on the four questions from the teaching and assessing cycle: "What do we want students to know and be able to do?", "How will we know if they learned it?", "How will we respond when some students do not learn?", and "How will we extend the learning of students who are already proficient?". Teams utilize these questions to reflect on students' progress, strategically plan to improve standards mastery, and deliver targeted small group instruction to address gaps in student learning or extension activities.

Our math intervention model utilizes pull-out and push-in instruction. Interventions are delivered collaboratively by classroom teachers and math specialists. Math Specialists assist through co-teaching and small group instruction within the classroom. Specialists also provide explicit instruction on lagging skills during the MTSS intervention block. Collaboration between classroom teachers and mathematics specialists supports increased student achievement and provides instructional support for all students.

During the pandemic, our school participated in full day synchronous learning using the Zoom platform to

meet with students. Math instruction consisted of Zoom-based core lessons, small group breakout sessions for differentiated and intervention instruction, pre-recorded instructional numeracy lessons, digital manipulatives, and live manipulatives on screen. Additionally, teachers provided differentiated digital choice boards for all students to support independent math practice. The components of Ready were crucial to engage and monitor student growth during virtual learning. All of these tools provided individualized learning paths allowing student instruction to be engaging and targeted. Specially designed math kits were provided to extend learning during summer.

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

Elmwood’s science curriculum follows the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). A comprehensive team of district teachers, including many of our Elmwood teachers, participated on the curriculum writing team to develop a hands-on and engaging curriculum. Each grade level intertwines the Science and Engineering Practices with the Disciplinary Core Ideas and Cross-Cutting Concepts.

Science lessons are carefully planned, crafted, and executed following the 5E structure: engage, explore, explain, elaborate, and evaluate. Our teachers lead lessons with a focus on phenomena and the nature of science. Teachers take on a facilitator role as they guide students to understand scientific concepts behind a phenomenon. This structure of learning maximizes student inquiry and curiosity; two traits we know come naturally to our youngest learners.

Elmwood’s emerging scientists strengthen their understanding of the world around them through writing. The Claim-Evidence-Reasoning (CER) structure is used to help students learn how to rely on scientific facts, make a claim, and explain their reasoning. Students make connections through observations, wondering, and discoveries. This writing structure is used across academic subjects to provide consistent expectations.

During remote learning, teachers continued using inquiry and curiosity to fuel lessons. Teachers used digital resources to show videos of phenomena. Science was hands-on as teachers organized take-home materials and demonstrated experiments through Zoom. Students were still able to participate in the experiment in real-time. Students synthesized and make sense of their science experiments with peers in breakout rooms and through student-led discussions.

Formative assessment is embedded throughout science lessons to ensure students master NGSS Concepts. Teachers have narrowed their focus on essential standards and created assessments with rubrics that allow students to clearly understand what they are expected to know and be able to do. Our science instructional approach creates curious and informed citizens ready to take community action.

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

Elmwood teachers expose learners to a rigorous social studies curriculum. The program provides an integrated study of social studies to prepare responsible citizens. Our curriculum incorporates the five perspectives of Social Science (historical, economic, political, geographic, and behavioral sciences) and builds upon itself as skills are broadened with each new grade level. Content is organized to help students make connections and apply this information to better understand the world around them.

Social studies lessons are created to hook students in with an “umbrella question.” Umbrella questions are presented in student-friendly language to help learners connect new information with the world around them. Students continually return to the umbrella question during a unit of study as they add new information to their schema. Students interact with the curriculum through a variety of artifacts: photographs, biographies, historical fiction text, maps, graphic organizers, and digital media.

Our teachers make connections between social studies and language arts. Students learn how to read for information and make sense of captions and other nonfiction text features. Teachers integrate novel studies in literacy with social science to increase student engagement and understanding. Lessons often connect a specific concept of history to a guiding question, which offers opportunities for lively class discussions.

Teachers also connect social studies to our Social and Emotional Learning curriculum. Students are asked to think critically about historical decisions made, consider different perspectives and viewpoints, and imagine what could have happened differently. Our teachers also challenge students to grow as global citizens and strengthen their cultural competency. We not only expose students to a wide variety of cultures, ideas and religions but ask them to find and celebrate the benefits that a multicultural world provides to us. This message of interconnectedness directly aligns with Elmwood's motto of "You Belong!"

1f. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Arts (visual and/or performing)

Grades K-5 collaborates once per week for visual arts. Through inquiry into the origins, traditions, and processes of art, students become more art literate. They learn about art concepts, cultures, our contemporary society, and the progress of civilizations. This promotes 21st-century skills, including critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, and adaptability.

Grades K-5 also studies performing arts/music once per week. We believe all students should have equitable access to a comprehensive, cohesive, and rigorous program of study that develops music literacy and instills a lifelong love, enjoyment, understanding, and respect for music. The music program provides opportunities for creating, performing, responding, and connecting to music independently and collaboratively while engaging in authentic, developmentally appropriate experiences. It prepares students to explore, experience, and perform music from a variety of genres and styles and deepens the understanding of music as a common language that bridges cultures and history.

Physical education/health/nutrition

Grades K-5 students participate in 50-60 minutes per week in Physical Education (PE). PE prepares students to live healthy, productive, and physically active lives for the 21st Century. Students are provided with challenges that contribute to their physical, cognitive, and affective well-being. Students build a foundation for making informed decisions that will empower them to achieve and maintain a healthy lifestyle. PE is a lifelong process, which is the primary responsibility of the student, shared by home, school, and community.

Technology/library/media

Grades K-5 learn once per week in the Learning Commons (LC). The LC is a responsive and interactive learning environment at the heart of the building. Students drive the learning experience by engaging in opportunities for innovation and creation, communication and collaboration, inquiry and research, and activities that promote lifelong growth in literacy. The Elmwood LC Directors recently purchased more diverse texts to provide mirrors and doors for individual students to explore. Learning experiences promote critical thinking, self-directed learning, the pursuit of individual student interests, and students' need for exploration. The LC supports collaboration and shared responsibility to achieve school improvement goals among school staff, parents, and the community. The LC offers exploration and discovery through coding, robotics, 3D design and printing, and design theory. It creates the opportunity to investigate and showcase curiosities in the pursuit of lifelong learning. These experiences enhance student engagement and improve student achievement while facilitating collaborative engagement and empowering a community of learners. The LC aims to extend and support classroom experiences in providing a collection of resources to meet diverse learning needs. It also encourages innovation and the use of current and diverse resources that extend beyond the school's walls.

Other curriculum programs (Social Emotional Learning)

Elmwood strives to cultivate resourceful and resilient life-long learners through our social-emotional learning (SEL) curriculum. SEL skills are explicitly and intentionally integrated into daily lessons.

During morning meetings and SEL lessons, all K-5 students have an opportunity to connect with peers, build empathy, and relate to shared experiences. Our teaching staff was certified to implement Restorative Practices with all students. These practices help students reflect on their feelings, how actions impact others, and how conflicts can be resolved in a meaningful way.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Elmwood's MTSS utilizes assessment data to tailor instruction and interventions to meet academic needs. Teachers and specialists engage in robust, data-driven discussions during PLC meetings to differentiate core instruction, identify students needing additional support through re-teaching or intervention, and monitor student progress. Academic interventions are provided by reading/math specialists, special education staff, classroom teachers, and instructional assistants. Elmwood's building schedule is conducive to providing targeted interventions while still allowing students to receive core instruction. Interventions are delivered one-on-one, in small groups, within the classroom, in alternate settings outside of the classroom, through co-teaching, and through the use of computer programs and applications. Interventions utilize evidence-based strategies to teach specific academic skills. Progress monitoring data is collected and analyzed to determine if students are making progress towards identified goals.

If students are not demonstrating adequate academic progress, team members and guardians meet to develop an Instructional Support Team Plan to identify the student's achievement level and determine how to intensify interventions and educational supports. The school team collaborates with families to share instructional strategies and resources for reinforcing academic skills at home. During remote learning, classroom teachers and interventionists continued to provide students performing below grade level with interventions and supports to address their academic needs by adjusting their service delivery to a virtual setting. Students were provided with tools and manipulatives to use at home to pair with virtual instruction.

Elmwood has three demographic groups, African-American/Black, economically disadvantaged, and students with disabilities that have historically demonstrated achievement gaps relative to peers. Our NWEA MAP Growth results, CFA data, and teacher observations are used to identify individual students in these subgroups that need additional academic, social, and emotional support. A comprehensive data analysis allows school staff to identify global opportunities for growth within these subgroups and tailor instruction to address these specific learning gaps.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Elmwood's teachers work proactively using formative assessments to identify specific advanced skills for individual students. Teachers collaborate during PLCs and prepare additional tools for the advancement of students. The gifted education (GE) teacher at Elmwood is an additional resource for teachers to collaborate across grades two through five. The GE teacher offers unique and challenging strategies for students requiring advancement. Students are also grouped across classrooms to efficiently extend learning throughout a unit.

Elmwood utilizes the GE teacher to instruct five classes of gifted education; these include honors math and literacy classes for grades three through five. These classes focus on inquiry-based learning for academically talented students.

Honors reading classes are for academically talented students who demonstrate advanced reading comprehension. Qualified students can demonstrate knowledge of complex vocabulary, critically analyze a

variety of texts, understand and evaluate varying perspectives, use evidence to develop coherent arguments, and make connections across disciplines. Students in this program are challenged to comprehend, synthesize, and analyze complex texts and apply this information in creative and unique ways.

Honors mathematics courses are to offer qualified students an opportunity to progress through the critical objectives of the Common Core Standards at an accelerated rate. Students in honors mathematics engage in complex problems that require students to identify patterns and relationships, think flexibly and creatively, and apply concepts across subject areas.

Both literacy and math courses at these levels offer opportunities for students to demonstrate exemplary work and to achieve success in goal setting and success with a rigorous curriculum.

During virtual learning, the GE teacher offered ways to individually cultivate accelerated student growth. These methods included analyzing the data from diagnostic tests and individually assigning specific lessons to benefit student learning paths. A summer student book club was also offered for two consecutive summers, at student request, to continue reading growth with fifth grade students.

An enrichment program was designed to support a cohort of diverse second grade students to enhance their learning and increase opportunities for this cohort for future gifted programs. Discrepant students who are part of at-risk subgroups were prioritized for this instruction to increase diverse representation in honors tracks and close achievement gaps.

3c. Special education:

Elmwood believes that “all students are our students,” and the school team takes an “all in” approach to meeting the needs of students with disabilities. Elmwood utilizes an inclusion model and has many students with a wide range of disabilities, such as learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities, twice exceptional, emotional disabilities, and Autism Spectrum Disorder, who are meaningfully included within the general education setting. This is accomplished through strong collaboration between the classroom teacher, special education staff members, and families. For students with intensive needs, the school team meets regularly to modify instruction and assessments, review data, and adjust educational programming.

Elmwood strives to meet the needs of the whole child to enable the student to access the curriculum and demonstrate academic progress. The school team provides families with resources for internet access, connects children with private counselors to address social-emotional needs impacting academic progress, and assists families in accessing vision care to benefit students with vision barriers in learning. Elmwood has a team of highly qualified related service providers who address deficits impacting a student’s education. Special education supports are delivered both within and outside of the general education setting, depending upon a student’s needs. This may include special education and general education teachers co-teaching, as well as related service providers co-treating. During remote learning, special education team members were creative in conducting evaluations and assessments and providing services virtually or in-person for students with the highest needs.

Elmwood aims to maintain strong home-school partnerships. Elmwood utilizes a Facilitated Individualized Education Plan (IEP) model for all special education meetings to allow families to be meaningful participants in their child’s education. The team utilizes this parent-centered format to assist parents in understanding their child’s present levels of performance and educational plan/goals, as well as how to support their child and reinforce skills at home.

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

At Elmwood, we have made it a core value to keep our ratio of English Learner (EL) students to EL teachers as low as possible. During the 2021-2022 school year, 51 students were identified as EL students. Elmwood has 11 EL-certified teachers to support these students on their English proficiency journey. Out of those 11 EL teachers, eight also hold a bilingual certification. Studies show the combination of EL and Bilingual certificates is an optimal combination to help EL students achieve and grow.

Our small student-to-teacher ratio provides EL students the opportunity to remain in their class setting to receive co-taught instruction with their classroom teacher. Our EL students and teachers have observed many benefits by shifting the instructional model from pulling out to co-teaching in general education. About 80 percent of EL services are currently provided through push-in instruction. As a result, we have seen EL teachers become knowledgeable on the classroom environment, its dynamics, and the District 203 curriculum maps. EL students have benefited from more exposure to core lessons and have helped our EL students better see themselves as part of their classroom.

In order to empower learners who are meeting the challenges of a new language and culture, Elmwood staff supports ELs as they develop social, cultural, and academic competence by creating a learning environment that expects students to meet high academic standards, facilitates effective communication in English through reading, writing, speaking, and listening, and encourages risk-taking and inquiry.

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

Elmwood’s message of “You Belong” truly extends to our entire community. As a Title I school, it is our privilege to plan and implement strategies to strengthen our school and the local community. Elmwood School is fortunate to have a team that is committed to making a difference and includes all stakeholders in school events.

Our support staff works tirelessly to provide needed resources and support for our students and their families. Each year, we have students qualify for support under the McKinney-Vento Act. As a school, we partner with District 203 and local community agencies to provide valuable resources to students and families. Key among these partnerships is our connection with the Naperville Education Foundation (NEF). The Elmwood team requests NEF Grants for these students and their families to provide necessary therapies, supplies, and services. Our team also closely collaborates with the local Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) to provide vouchers for students who require after-school care. These generous grants address family needs allowing students to fully engage with daily instruction.

Over the past years, Elmwood has formed a number of school-community partnerships to meet the diverse needs of our population. A partnership with Naperville’s Loaves & Fishes, a community service operation committed to providing healthful foods to all, has provided nutritious snacks to all. Every morning students come to the front office to select healthful snacks for their classmates. These nourishing snacks are critical to the physical and emotional well-being of our students.

At Elmwood, we celebrate a variety of holidays and community events. As an inclusive school community, we strive to create opportunities for all students to participate in these events. Our social work team connects with the staff, parents, and local business communities to provide all students with the opportunity to celebrate holidays and traditions that reflect the diverse backgrounds at Elmwood.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Elmwood teachers are continuously engaging, motivating, and providing students with a positive environment. Teacher credibility is established by our teachers having a plethora of knowledge in the art of teaching. Jigsaw method, micro-teaching, rich classroom discourse, peer teaching, using manipulatives, creating graphic organizers, and leveled questioning techniques are just a few of the strategies used to keep our students engaged in high-quality learning. We believe that the best teachers are experts in their field, and Elmwood teachers are truly expert level educators.

Showing Safety, Ownership, Acceptance, and Respect (S.O.A.R.) is our school-wide expectation for all students. Since we are the Elmwood Eagles, we teach our students how to S.O.A.R. As teachers build classroom rules and expectations for K-5, we use common language that relates back to these four attributes. This helps our students understand, learn, internalize, and apply these important values. We also support our students through a schoolwide positive reinforcement system called Eagle Bucks. All staff members use Eagle Bucks to deliver positive praise to all students. We believe that it is imperative to hold students to high expectations, both behaviorally and academically, and we celebrate students for meeting those expectations constantly.

Elmwood teachers are masters at creating positive relationships with their students, which is another key way that we keep our students engaged and motivated. Staff members work to learn the names of our learners, what is important to them, and how they learn best. We use this information to make our students feel safe and comfortable in their physical learning environment, whether that be in the classroom or at home on a device. Throughout virtual learning, our teachers took the time to communicate with students and families on a regular basis through emails, phone calls, and Zoom meetings. Teachers offered students the option to create a background in their Zoom meetings to encourage creativity and provide students an alternative to showing their home environment. Breakout rooms were created where students were able to connect with their peers and participate in rich discourse in a small group setting.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Our school engages closely with numerous community stakeholders. The Elmwood Home and School Association (H&S) is crucial to maintaining a strong connection between Elmwood families and our school staff. H&S is composed of parents and guardians who collaborate closely with our teachers and administrators to creatively meet the needs of our diverse population. The Elmwood H&S sponsors a number of community events, volunteer opportunities, and fundraising activities that directly benefit our students and staff. All of their efforts and fundraising go directly into projects and opportunities that benefit our students.

The most popular event our H&S promotes is the annual Dave Cleveland Fun Run. This school-wide event is named after a retired Elmwood teacher who always encouraged students to be resilient and put forth maximum effort in all of their endeavors. All of our students have the opportunity to run and walk at their own pace for a great cause of supporting their school. Parents from the community support this event by volunteering to set up the course, promoting the event with posters, donating water, and providing snacks. The run culminates with a 5th grade “color run” providing lifelong memories of the incredible times they had at Elmwood.

In addition to the Fun Run, the Elmwood H&S association facilitates multiple school climate events. The Dads of Great Students (WATCH D.O.G.S.) program is coordinated by our H&S committee leads. This program allows father figures to volunteer and serve at the school as positive male role models and have a positive impact on Elmwood's culture. Although District 203 was limited with the volunteers during the pandemic, we were still able to have WATCH D.O.G.S come to Elmwood during arrival and dismissal to positively greet students and staff members. Other events coordinated by our H&S include classroom parties, maintaining the Elmwood garden, hosting assemblies, collecting box tops, and many more events.

The Elmwood staff also firmly believes in supporting the development of future educators. Elmwood staff have continuously partnered with local colleges and high schools to host and mentor practicum and student teachers. This school year, Elmwood formed a close partnership with North Central College (NCC). This NCC student-teacher program helps the five young educators grow in their understanding of equitable instructional practices. Mentor teachers are also supported through professional development in anti-racist teaching practices, particularly in providing students with equitable opportunities for classroom discourse. The skills developed by student and mentor teachers will benefit our local community and the lives of countless children.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

All Elmwood staff members have an integral part in creating the professional culture in our building. One of the most important ways we do this is through a commitment to an ‘all-in’ model. This means we value shared leadership and teacher input in all major school decisions. Teachers are routinely asked for their feedback, opinions, and ideas in a variety of ways. For example, a ‘pulse’ question in our principal’s weekly newsletter and feedback from various committees (leadership and MTSS), and weekly PLC meetings. Since our teachers are regularly tapped into as professionals and experts, our staff members consistently rise to the occasion and present as true professionals for their colleagues and our students. For example, our reading specialist led the Newbery Book Club to support teachers in their own awareness of high-quality texts so they can be challenging their students and coaching students as they self-select books.

Professional development is delivered through the same ‘all-in’ model. Our staff meetings and professional development days are never run solely by administrators. We regularly see reading specialists, math specialists, special education teams, classroom teachers, and instructional coaches presenting professional learning. Frequently, we partner with outside experts to push our practices forward. We believe that it truly takes a village to support our diverse student population.

Through this ‘all-in’ model, we are constantly building teacher capacity as new teachers learn from veteran teachers, and our veteran teachers learn from our new teachers. All experience is valued and shared, no matter how many years of professional experience.

In terms of additional teacher support, our administration team and instructional coaches collaborate on a weekly basis to determine ways to support teachers and build capacity. This includes individual coaching cycles, modeling, and observing master teachers. Through PLCs and professional meetings, staff analyze data and reflect on professional practice.

The Elmwood team adapted our learning culture during the virtual phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. With the support of video conferencing technology, our staff continued professional development and learning around self-care, equity, and multi-tiered systems of systems. A key emphasis from the administration team was maintaining staff morale through many team-building activities and self-care activities. The staff has the opportunity to build relationships with colleagues through team-building activities.

4. School Leadership:

Elmwood utilizes a tiered structure of leadership grounded in innovation and team development. The administration team is composed of one principal and one assistant principal. The administration believes strongly in community-minded, shared leadership. Administration partners with teachers, district officials, parents, and students to foster an inclusive, rigorous learning environment. This partnership leads to strategic thinking which will better prepare students for college and career readiness.

The Elmwood Leadership Team (ELT) meets regularly to celebrate school successes, fine-tune current processes, and plan for future learning opportunities. The ELT consists of the principal, assistant principal, learning support coaches (LSC), student services coach (SSC), and a representative from each grade level and specialist department. ELT implements district initiatives and plans for engaging staff learning. Throughout the pandemic, ELT embarked on a mission to “Renovate Elmwood.” This process was

designed to review past and current practices and update our structures to meet present-day student needs.

The professional learning experiences designed by ELT are directly related to Elmwood's School Improvement Plan (SIP). Generated from data trends, the SIP includes goal areas in math, literacy, and social-emotional learning. The ELT and all staff members are required to stay abreast of current data analysis and best practices to accelerate learning. ELT members lead by example by being vulnerable, identifying strengths, and proposing solutions for any growth opportunities.

To meet our ambitious SIP goals, we utilize our staff's expertise to take shared ownership in designing and administering building-level professional learning. Integral to that is this growth is our coaching team. Composed of two LSCs and one SSC, the coaching team leads certified staff, paraprofessionals, and administration on how to implement innovative strategies to push student and staff learning forward. This learning is supplemented by using a committee-based professional learning approach. Each of Elmwood's certified staff members sign up for a committee (mathematics, literacy, equity, and social-emotional learning) that aligns with their interests. Elmwood committees regularly met to deepen their knowledge base and provide professional learning for our staff. The work completed by these committees directly aligned to the SIP goals.

Along with our staff, our students demonstrate leadership for their peers. Elmwood Student Council supports a variety of activities to improve culture and climate. The Student Council creates video announcements to promote spirit weeks and motivate their peers' participation. In addition to Student Council, our students take on an active leadership role through Safety Patrol, Kindergarten bus helpers, community reading with our 5th grade dual language students, and peer buddy programs. This student leadership is passed down through generations sustaining the Elmwood culture of servant leadership.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Elmwood has a committed Deep Equity Team of educators who elected to participate in an intensive professional development opportunity through the district. Additionally, the team has completed book studies based on the work of Zaretta Hammond, Gholdy Mohammed, and Sarah K. Ahmed. The team aims at producing deep personal, professional, and organizational transformations that are necessary to create equitable places of learning for all students. Supporting school and district efforts through a systemic change lens requires strategic planning for equity work.

Our team began our journey towards cultural competence by building tone and trust amongst staff members. The Deep Equity team then created a pathway designed to deepen the work of personal growth toward cultural competence, building a culture of tone and trust among staff, and the creation of grade-level lessons that highlight and celebrate differences along multiple intersectionalities. Further work has been done in our committed approach to equitable practice with training and implementation of Restorative Practices.

For the last five years, the Learning Commons director has intentionally sought recommendations for books that are not only good literature but also represent diverse intersectionalities in a positive light. Outdated books have been replaced with literature that centers voices of people of color, indigenous people, LGBTQ+, differently-abled students, and characters working through mental health concerns. Diverse texts are now being included in classroom libraries to provide access for all learners.

Over the past two years, Elmwood staff has partnered with district and community leaders to support staff and community understanding of creating an equitable learning environment. Presentations around supporting LGBTQ+ students from Lurie's Children's Hospital and presentations from Dr. Maria de Lourdes Ferrer have greatly benefited our students and staff members. We look forward to continued collaboration with equity leaders to drive our practices forward.

Elmwood uses PLC time to analyze data on NWEA MAP Growth and Illinois Assessment of Readiness scores. We specifically look at subgroups of learners to consider trend lines indicating specific needs for these populations. Guided by our SIP goals in steady achievement and Elmwood's culture will promote a positive school climate that will accelerate academic and social-emotional learning.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Elmwood Elementary applies a variety of educational strategies to cultivate and sustain an equitable and rigorous learning community that nurtures critical thinkers and values and celebrates all students. To reach our vision, the community actively engages in cycles of continuous improvement. As mentioned throughout this nomination application, our drive to continuously improve practice is driven by the MTSS program. The MTSS process is integrated into every aspect of our academic and SEL curriculum. Our staff members collaborate through the weekly PLC process to celebrate student successes and identify opportunities for improvement. The work is grounded in identified essential standards, common formative assessments, and providing intervention or extension.

With the diverse needs at Elmwood, completing these continuous improvement cycles requires collective efficacy among our staff and parent community. Our staff strategically organizes building and team structures to implement MTSS supports effectively and with fidelity. Our building master schedule allows for specialists to collaborate with general education teachers and address student needs. One of the true highlights of our schedule is the ability to provide “flooding” reading support for our Kindergarten and first grade students. Using our team of professional staff members, we can provide early intervention and extension to help students meet or exceed grade-level standards.

Our staff used innovative instructional strategies to address educational needs during the global pandemic. During remote learning, our staff began generating solutions on continuing high levels of communication. Our staff members found new ways to collaborate and were able to create shared slide decks, lessons, assessments, and interventions to continue our MTSS approach. When students returned to in-person learning, our teams carried over many of these collaborative practices to further improve our instructional approach. The team also adapted to new academic and social-emotional needs by strategically grouping students across grade levels. Maintaining a collaborative, innovative approach during the uncertainty of a global pandemic truly exemplified Elmwood’s “all-in” mindset.

The central reason Elmwood can sustain a culture of continuous improvement is our highly qualified staff members. Elmwood teachers, specialists, assistants, and administrators come to school with a growth mindset dedicated to pushing student learning forward. Even in the face of an unprecedented school landscape, our staff bonded together to meet the needs of each student. Our staffs’ expertise and drive to improve student learning will continue creating generations of compassionate, critical thinkers ready to engage in the 21st century world.