

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

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 1756 64th Street Southwest  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Byron Center State MI Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 49315-8694

County Kent

Telephone (616) 878-6300 Fax (616) 345-1925

Web site/URL https://www.bcpsk12.net/marshall/ E-mail jwierzbicki@bcpsk12.net;  
kvydareny@bcpsk12.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.

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

Name of Superintendent\* Dr. Kevin Macina E-mail kmacina@bcpsk12.net  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Byron Center Public School District Tel. (616) 878-6100

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 Mr. Marty Phelan  
(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**

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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

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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):
- 4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 6 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	12	8	20
K	57	55	112
1	49	44	93
2	50	49	99
3	54	55	109
4	55	49	104
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	277	260	537

\*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 8 % Asian
  - 6 % Black or African American
  - 5 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 81 % White
  - 0 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2020 - 2021 school year: 9%

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

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

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	30
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	17
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	47
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	537
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.09
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	9

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

Kinyarwanda, Burmese, Chinese, Spanish, Vietnamese, undetermined

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 4 %  
24 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 23 %

Total number students who qualify: 125

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 12 %  
63 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>6</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>15</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>1</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>5</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>28</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>5</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: 0
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	22
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	10
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	21
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	8

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.

<b>Required Information</b>	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017
Daily student attendance	91%	95%	96%	94%	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.

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

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

Yes  No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2016

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

We achieve success in all areas. We believe in developing the whole child. We are a community of learners.

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

PO.2260 - NONDISCRIMINATION AND ACCESS TO EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Any form of discrimination or harassment can be devastating to an individual's academic progress, social relationship and/or personal sense of self-worth.

As such, the Board of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including sexual orientation or transgender identity), disability, age (except as authorized by law), religion, military status, ancestry, or genetic information (collectively, "Protected Classes") in its educational programs or activities.

The Board also does not discriminate on the basis of Protected Classes in its employment policies and practices as they relate to students, and does not tolerate harassment of any kind.

Equal educational opportunities shall be available to all students, without regard to the Protected Classes, age (unless age is a factor necessary to the normal operation or the achievement of any legitimate objective of the program/activity), place of residence within the boundaries of the District, or social or economic background, to learn through the curriculum offered in this District. Educational programs shall be designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

<http://go.boarddocs.com/mi/byron/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=C23JGZ4D2C3D>

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**

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Marshall Elementary is a school focused on student learning, while creating an environment that includes parents and community members. Marshall prides itself as a school that welcomes high parental involvement through parent teacher conferences and various types of classroom support. Parents are highly engaged in extracurricular activities such as Running Club, field trips, and parent family nights. Through school improvement surveys, it is evident both parents and students greatly enjoy attending Marshall Elementary.

Marshall uses a variety of strategies within the school that encourages and challenges all students to develop their full potential academically, emotionally, physically, socially, and culturally. Academically, Marshall utilizes the PLC (Professional Learning Community) process to drive the reflection of current practices and also highlight the need for future professional learning. Within the PLC process, Marshall uses the RTI (Response to Intervention) process to provide a tiered level of support for students both academically and behaviorally for students who require additional support. Marshall has numerous supports in place for our students' social and emotional needs. Marshall systematically implements the Leader in Me program in all grade levels to explicitly teach and reinforce leadership skills throughout the year. Marshall is fortunate to have the support of a behavioral interventionist, a school psychologist, a social worker, and counselor who teach in small groups and also support behavior interventions throughout the day. Physically, students who are at Marshall are given the opportunity to participate in activities such as Running Club and Jump Rope for Heart. Third and fourth grade students at Marshall have the opportunity to participate in Student Council, which allows them to be involved in creating change for the betterment of Marshall.

Marshall has always used data and research based best practices that focus on creative and innovative techniques or programs throughout the school. Academically, we utilize the RTI process to provide our students with what we call "Super Switch." Super switch takes place twice per day for thirty minutes, and is separate from tier one instruction. This allows for the staff at Marshall to utilize ELA and math data and provide extra time and support for students struggling to master grade level essential standards. These groups are flexible and are led by both teachers and paraprofessional educators. In regards to addressing our students' social and emotional needs, we have implemented the program Leader In Me in all grades. Leader In Me provides students with direct instruction on how to become strong leaders both at school and at home. At Marshall, we have support from all our social emotional staff, such as the behavioral interventionist, school psychologist, school social worker, and school counselor to lead small group learning and provide behavioral interventions. At Marshall, we have shown the drive to practice continuous learning through the PLC process. This allows the staff at Marshall to analyze data and reflect on areas of improvement. From here, we look for best practices to address these gaps through book clubs, online learning, and other types of professional development.

The COVID-19 shutdown and restrictions provided Marshall an opportunity to be creative with the way we ensured all students' academic and social emotional learning was minimally interrupted. Throughout COVID-19, Marshall provided all students with access to a one-to-one chromebook and/or iPad. Wi-Fi hotspots were set up throughout the district to ensure students who did not have internet access were able to login and be a part of the class' academic and social emotional learning. Teachers utilized new professional learning by becoming Google certified and applying that new learning to maintain and use Google Classroom to effectively teach students while they were learning outside of the school building. Marshall also utilized COVID-19 funds to implement a summer book giveaway program and summer school to struggling students. Additionally, Marshall continued to provide free breakfast and lunches to all students during this time. It was also very important to the staff of Marshall that, during this time, the staff was maintaining the relationship with students they work so hard to create throughout the school year. Staff members did online read-alouds each day and created an innovative parade for the last day of school.

As a previous recipient of a National Blue Ribbon School award in 2016, we have used this recognition to drive our continuous learning and development. The enrollment for Marshall and Byron Center in general has continued to grow, such that we will be opening a new building in 2024, and possibly another one shortly thereafter. Marshall takes great pride in the National Blue Ribbon School recognition and uses it as a

force for continuous improvement and learning with the goal of closing achievement gaps. Parents and the community have great trust in this process and form great relationships with staff, with all students' success at heart.

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

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

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

The staff at Marshall Elementary School located in Byron Center, Michigan strongly believe in providing students with a core curriculum that is meaningful, engaging, and purposeful, and that encourages students to become life-long critical thinkers and problem solvers. Marshall Elementary School uses the workshop model for teaching, which includes a lesson, time for students to apply the skill(s) taught in an authentic and differentiated way during independent and small group time, and a debrief or “share” to consolidate and extend thinking at the end of the workshop.

Our curriculum aligns with the Common Core State Standards, and within the Common Core State Standards, each grade level at Marshall Elementary School has adopted essential standards. These essential standards are the non-negotiable standards that are taught through our high-quality tier 1 instruction. We expect every student to achieve mastery of the essential standards by the end of each school year. As such, we use the RTI (Response to Intervention) and PLC (Professional Learning Community) process to identify students needing support to achieve mastery of the essential standards. We use formative and summative assessment data to analyze student progress of the essential standards, and provide tiered interventions when needed. This is an ongoing, fluid, cyclical, and year-long process.

As a result of online learning for a brief portion of the 2020-2021 school year, we have incorporated technology into our curriculum approach through the use of one-to-one technology with Chromebooks and iPads. These approaches may include teacher lessons and presentations utilizing technology, students completing assignments through the use of Google Classroom or Seesaw, and the use of online programs such as IXL for math and Raz-Kids for Reading/English Language Arts.

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

Marshall uses a core curriculum, while also providing room for data driven and research based decisions that allow our ELA instruction, including formative assessments, interventions and enrichment, to meet the needs of all of our students. At the tier 1 level, Marshall systematically uses Lucy Calkins Units of Study for our explicit instruction in both reading and writing. This curriculum allows Marshall’s teachers to utilize the workshop model to differentiate instruction through individual conferring, small group instruction, and choice (book choice and writing topic) so that each student is receiving the instruction that they need in a highly engaging format. Having a consistent tier 1 core curriculum in Lucy allows Marshall’s teachers at every grade level to use data from formative and summative assessments to identify learning gaps within the curriculum. While Lucy Calkins aligns with most essential standards, we’ve found that it is necessary to utilize other research based practices to fill in essential learning gaps. For example, in kindergarten through second grade, teachers have supplemented the Lucy Calkins Units of Study with explicit phonics and phonemic awareness instruction. These skills follow a specific scope and sequence with set formative assessments in each grade level. In third and fourth grade, teachers have used data to implement research based comprehension instruction alongside the Lucy Calkins lessons. In addition to the Lucy Calkins Units of Study, teachers utilize a variety of technology components to enrich and supplement instruction. These include IXL, Raz Kids, Reading Eggs, Seesaw, and Epic.

Marshall teachers utilize data from a variety of both formative and summative assessments. In grades K-4, we use Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System to determine the reading level of each student. Grades K-4 also give the NWEA MAP test three times a year. Grades K-2 utilize a phonics screener and progress monitoring assessment to specifically identify gaps in phonics understanding. In grades 2-4, teachers use the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI), SRI foundational skills, fluency checks and, if needed, the phonics screener. This data is then used to determine students who are below grade level, and their specific reading gap. These students then receive intervention through Leveled Literacy Interventions by

Fountas and Pinnell along with other more skill specific focused activities that address their need.

In writing, teachers use the on-demand assessments at the end of every Lucy Calkins unit. These assessments are used to identify the transfer of skills from a shared writing piece, to an individually worked on writing piece. Teachers use the data from these assessments to plan for future instruction on missed topics, as well as specific individual or small group conferring times.

Data is telling teachers at Marshall that due to the pandemic and various shut downs, students in the K-2 grades are struggling with foundational reading and writing skills. This has led all teachers to put a focus on the assessment and intervention of such skills throughout the ELA block, with the hope of closing these gaps and providing more opportunities for success for all students.

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

Marshall Elementary School uses a core tier 1 curriculum, while also providing room for data-driven, research-based decisions that allow our mathematics instruction, including formative assessments, interventions, and enrichment, to meet the needs of all of our students. At the tier 1 level, Marshall Elementary School uses Math Expressions to guide our mathematics instruction. This curriculum allows teachers at Marshall to utilize the workshop model (lesson, workshop time, debrief/share) to differentiate instruction through the use of individual conferring, small group instruction, and choice (choice examples include, but are not limited to, math tasks, math games, math manipulatives, etc.) so each student is receiving the specific instruction they need in a highly engaging and motivating format. Having a consistent tier 1 core curriculum allows for vertical alignment of the curriculum, and ensures the teachers in every grade level at Marshall Elementary use both formative and summative assessments to identify and fill learning gaps within the curriculum.

We have found a need for students to have a strong sense of numbers and how they interact with each other, and have implemented the use of research based practices such as Number Talks and other opening routines. The use of Number Talks and opening routines have allowed our students to build their number sense by engaging in mental math tasks that are interesting and unique, all while building a classroom community of mathematical thinkers that engage in a high level of discourse. Students learn to share the thought processes and strategies used to problem solve, which leads to a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts. We've seen students transfer the skills practiced and developed during Number Talks and opening routines to their everyday math lives, instruction, and workshop time. Additionally, teachers at Marshall Elementary have utilized technology components to enrich and supplement instruction. These include IXL, Xtra Math, Khan Academy, and Prodigy.

Marshall Elementary teachers utilize data from both formative and summative assessments to inform instruction. Grades K-4 use district created unit (summative) tests, as well as grade level created formative assessments to drive instruction. Another method of assessment used in grades K-4 is the NWEA MAP test, which is given three times per year. The data from these assessments is used to determine which students need additional support in mathematics instruction, along with the specific area of need intervention is necessary for. These students then receive skill specific intervention on a tier 2 and/or tier 3 level, in addition to the high quality tier 1 instruction they are receiving within the classroom.

The data is telling the teachers at Marshall Elementary that due to the pandemic and various school shutdowns, students are struggling with foundational math skills, which has led all teachers to put a focus on the assessment and intervention of such skills throughout our math instruction block, with the hope of closing these gaps and providing more opportunities for success for all students.

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

At Marshall Elementary, the staff values the importance of science instruction being embedded into our academic learning day. Not only do staff understand the value of science instruction, students are extremely engaged during these learning experiences. Marshall utilizes the Mystery Science curriculum as our primary resource for science instruction. This curriculum provides staff and students with highly engaging lessons

surrounding essential learning targets in science. Mystery Science starts each lesson with a video depicting and demonstrating the target for the lesson. These videos allow students to see the real world connections to the learning target in ways that the classroom teacher can not. After the video, there is a detailed lesson plan that gives students an authentic, problem based and hands on learning experiment to test out and further deepen their understanding of the science learning target. Students usually work in pairs during these investigations, asking questions and working together to solve authentic tasks. Throughout each Mystery Science lesson and unit, the teacher is very intentional about incorporating meaningful vocabulary instruction. Because this vocabulary instruction is done in the science context, and done in conjunction with an authentic learning task, students are more likely to be engaged in the learning of these new words, and also more likely to transfer this learning to other reading and writing opportunities. The research is also clear that when reading and writing essential standards are embedded in other content areas such as science, their growth on those standards increases greatly. The staff at Marshall are aware of this and routinely supplement Mystery Science with related reading and writing activities that not only deepens the students' understanding of the science content, but also increase their mastery of the ELA essential standards.

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

At Marshall Elementary, the staff values the importance of social studies instruction embedded into our academic learning day. Not only do staff understand the value of social studies instruction, students are extremely engaged during these learning experiences. At Marshall, we use a variety of instructional resources such as Time for Kids and National Geographic for Kids. We utilize these resources to make sure we are engaging students in meaningful learning around the social studies standards for each grade level. Teachers also make sure to include authentic videos and learning tasks associated with the standards. Students engaged in numerous learning activities that tie to the standards including a wax museum of famous people, field trips to the State of Michigan capitol building/history museum, black history month learning, and much more. Throughout each social studies lesson and unit, teachers are very intentional about incorporating meaningful vocabulary instruction. Because this vocabulary instruction is done in the social studies context, and done in conjunction with an authentic learning task, students are more likely to be engaged in the learning of these new words, and also more likely to transfer this learning to other reading and writing opportunities. The research is also clear that when reading and writing essential standards are embedded in other content areas such as social studies, their growth with these standards increases greatly. The staff at Marshall are aware of this and routinely supplement our social studies learning with related reading and writing activities that not only deepen the students' understanding of the social studies content, but also increases their mastery of the ELA essential standards.

#### **1f. For secondary schools:**

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

### **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

Marshall Elementary School offers additional curriculum in the areas of visual arts, performing arts, physical education, library, and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics). All students in grades DK-4 attend these classes for the following amounts of time: Visual arts - 60 minutes per week, Performing arts - 60 minutes per week, Physical education - 60 minutes per week, STEM - 40 minutes per week, Library - 35 minutes per week.

In the area of visual arts, students are introduced to a variety of two-dimensional and three-dimensional art techniques, and use different mediums (watercolor, pastels, chalk, charcoal, clay, and so on) to create their masterpieces. Students learn about artists of different races and cultures and discuss their contributions to the art community at large. Additionally, art projects are tied to literature, historical figures, and current events in the school, community, and world.

In the area of performing arts, students are engaged in singing, playing instruments, moving to music, learning to read and create music, and listening to and analyzing musical performances. A singing concert is performed by 3rd and 4th grade students in the spring. Third and fourth grade students have the opportunity to take part in choir class as an extracurricular activity if they wish. This class is held before school, twice per week.

In the area of physical education, the ultimate goal is to encourage students to develop a lifelong love of physical activity and health. Students develop their motor skills, fitness levels, knowledge of sports, social skills, and learn healthy eating habits through our physical education program. Each year, our school participates in the Kids Heart Challenge to raise money for the American Heart Association.

In library class, students notice and learn the joys of reading above all else. Students are introduced to a wide variety of texts through read alouds, and develop comprehension skills through the use of book talks before, during, and after read alouds. Students are encouraged to select a book to check out based on their personal interests, which promotes self-selected book choice.

In STEM class, students participate in hands-on, inquiry-based, and project-based learning in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Students develop lifelong skills in the areas of reasoning, teamwork, creativity, and critical thinking skills as a result of their inquiries in these four subject areas in the STEM framework.

Recently, Marshall Elementary became a “Leader In Me” school. The Leader In Me is a comprehensive program that builds leadership skills in students by learning The 7 Habits of Happy Kids: Be Proactive, Begin With the End in Mind, Put First Things First, Think Win-Win, Seek First to Understand Then to Be Understood, Synergize, and Sharpen the Saw. Students are building their character, independence, and leadership and social skills through the use of these habits, and will be able to utilize these skills throughout their lives.

### **3. Academic Supports**

#### **3a. Students performing below grade level:**

At Marshall Elementary, we tailor instruction, intervention, and assessments to meet the needs of all students. Students performing below grade level are given access to grade level content and essential standards through tier 1 instruction. This includes both the Lucy Calkins and Math Expressions lessons being taught, as well as small group or one on one conferring. We then use summative and formative assessments to diagnose specific learning gaps and skills. When giving those assessments, we use accommodations as needed to make sure we are getting accurate data. For example, when looking for gaps in math, the test questions will be read to the student to eliminate reading interfering with math ability.

We then take this data and use it through the PLC process to drive research based interventions that meet the student where they are. These interventions are timely, progress monitored, have a scope and sequence, and are based on the specific skills the students need. Interventions occur in 30 minute sessions, 5 days per week, and take place outside of core instruction time. Each grade level receives 2 intervention slots per day. One slot is specific to reading. The other can be used for reading, math, or both, depending on the needs of the students. Reading interventions include phonics and decoding, fluency, Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention, and comprehension. Math interventions include current curriculum practice as well as previous standards that impede students’ ability to master current content. Progress monitoring occurs every 2 to 3 weeks. That data, coupled with summative and formative assessments, determines if a student continues the current intervention, moves on to the next skill, or is exited from the intervention. This cycle runs the duration of the school year.

#### **3b. Students performing above grade level:**

At Marshall Elementary, we tailor instruction, intervention, and assessments to meet the needs of all students. Our students that are performing above grade level are given access to grade level content through tier I instruction. This includes both the Lucy Calkins Units of Study and Math Expressions lessons being taught and small group conferring. The quality of the teachers here at Marshall allows for higher level questioning and discussion to be had during tier I instruction. This lends itself nicely to keeping high level students engaged and challenged. This dialogue is had during both whole group instruction and during conferring time.

We also use summative and formative assessments to guide enrichment opportunities. For reading, the students have the opportunity to choose what books they are reading at their grade level. Enrichment in reading comes in the form of book clubs, readers theater, and the use of technology programs like IXL, Reading Eggs, and Raz-Kids. In math, students join higher grade levels to learn more challenging content. They also use technology programs such as IXL, Prodigy, Xtra Math, and Khan Academy. Another way in which these students are given enrichment is project based learning.

Students performing above grade level are also leaders in the classroom. Oftentimes, they are paired with a lower student to help facilitate discussion during workshop learning. They are then paired with other students performing above grade level for book discussion to challenge and push one another for deeper thinking and understanding. We have found that this benefits all student learning.

### **3c. Special education:**

At Marshall Elementary, we tailor instruction, intervention, and assessments to meet the needs of all students. Students that are a part of our special education program are given access to grade level content and essential standards through tier 1 instruction. This includes both the Lucy Calkins and Math Expressions lessons being taught, as well as small group or one on one conferring. We then use summative and formative assessments along with students' IEP goals to diagnose the specific learning gaps and skills. When giving those assessments, we use accommodations as needed to make sure we are getting accurate data. For example, when looking for gaps in math, the test questions will be read to the student to eliminate reading interfering with math ability.

We take this data and use it through the PLC process to drive research based interventions that meet the student where they are. These interventions are timely, progress monitored, have a scope and sequence, and are based on the specific skills students need. Reading interventions include phonics and decoding, fluency, Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention, and comprehension. Math interventions include current curriculum practice as well as previous standards that impede students' ability to master current content. Progress monitoring occurs every 2 to 3 weeks. That data coupled with the summative and formative assessments determines if a student continues the current intervention, moves on to the next skill, or is exited from the intervention. This cycle runs the duration of the school year.

Above and beyond the tier 2 intervention, these students meet with the Special Education teacher to work on subjects identified in their IEP. Here they work on the specific goals outlined in their plan. Progress monitoring is done against their individual goals and adjustments to goals are made at their IEP reevaluations.

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

At Marshall Elementary we tailor our instruction, intervention, and assessments to meet the needs of all of our students. This includes our English Language Learners. We have ELL specialists and interventions that come in weekly to work with these students. Our students in the ELL program receive the necessary accommodations and support on summative and formative assessments to ensure the correct skills are being assessed. This includes, but is not limited to, text to speech, translation, and small group testing.

As needed, based on the data collected, English Language Learners receive tier 2 instruction during non-instructional times to ensure grade level success is being achieved. These interventions are timely, progress monitored, have a scope and sequence, and are based on the specific skills the students need. Reading

interventions include phonics and decoding, fluency, Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention, and comprehension. Math interventions include current curriculum practice as well as previous standards that impede students' ability to master current content. Progress monitoring occurs every 2 to 3 weeks. That data, coupled with summative and formative assessments, determines if a student continues the current intervention, moves on to the next skill, or is exited from the intervention. This cycle runs the duration of the school year.

At Marshall, we have found that the pairing of English Language Learner intervention with tier 2 support has helped all these students find success.

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

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

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

Marshall Elementary values and takes very seriously the cultivation of a school culture and climate that engages, motivates, and provides students with a positive environment that supports their academic, social and emotional growth. Academically, the staff at Marshall provides students with field trips that are connected to essential learning standards. This creates an authentic connection between what students are learning in the classroom to the real world. Students are also given numerous opportunities for hands-on project based learning through a wax museum, lighthouse learning and creation, and a market day where students create items for sale and are connected to the economics of real life.

Marshall Elementary also provides students with support and motivations to continue to grow socially as well. The staff implements the Leader in Me leadership program systematically K-4 throughout the school, which explicitly teaches students different ways that they can show leadership at school and at home. The staff also follows PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) in which staff encourages students to show positive behaviors throughout the school. The staff also is committed to restorative practices in which behaviors are addressed from an asset based lens instead of a punitive one. The staff works hard to understand the underlying causes of behavior and understands that the child is not bad, they just made a bad decision.

The school district supports Marshall and the engagement of our students in many ways as well. One example is that on Fridays, student athletes from the high school return to Marshall, where they went to elementary school, to not only get students excited about the upcoming game, but they read a story to the students and talk about the importance of literacy. Students are then able to see role models in the district and how they stress the importance of academics and how much it means to them.

To maintain student engagement during the COVID-19 closures/remote learning, the staff made sure to use google classroom as place for synchronous and asynchronous learning. Staff created daily read-alouds and also made a special end of year send off where they made signs and were able to connect with students via a car parade.

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

Marshall Elementary takes great pride in working with families, the community, and local businesses to ensure the success of all students. The parents at Marshall are very involved with the success of all students. Parents are volunteering in the classroom regularly throughout the year. They work with students on completing projects, extra practice in reading, writing, and math, and other items that allow students to be successful with classroom activities. Parents are also involved in parent teacher conferences, as there continues to be a high percentage of parents who attend both the fall and spring conference. By connecting with parents, staff are able to create trust and form plans for continued success of all students.

The community is involved in the success of Marshall in many ways as well. Each year, Marshall holds a Walk-a-Thon in which students gather donations from family and local businesses. The students then participate in a fun walking obstacle course. Local businesses who donate get their logo on the yearly Walk-a-Thon shirt, and also get to be involved in giving valuable resources to Marshall, which are used for buying new classroom books, other classroom materials, and much more.

There are a few non-profit organizations that also play a role in the success of Marshall. One such non-profit is called Hand 2 Hand. This organization supplies food and other necessary household supplies to students from lower economic backgrounds. Providing this food security for our neediest students allows students to form another great relationship with Marshall. Another non-profit organization that is involved with students is Kids Hope Mentors. This program is organized by a local church and creates an opportunity for its members to mentor a student at Marshall. Students are selected out of a need for a positive role model in their life. Students and mentors meet once a week to work on school assignments, play games, or simply

chat with one another. These connections oftentimes follow a student from kindergarten all the way through fourth grade. Students look forward to these meetings, as they provide a positive adult role model in their life to help model what it means to be successful in school and as a person.

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

Marshall Elementary understands that in order for our students to learn at high levels, our staff must also learn at high levels. When staff are able to take part in meaningful and connected professional learning, they are able to transfer that learning directly to their students in ways that allow numerous pathways to the mastery of the essential standards.

The basis for all professional learning at Marshall is centered around the PLC (Professional Learning Community) process. Through the analysis of data and reflection of our tiered systems of support, staff are able to give administrators direct feedback about what particular professional learning should take place in order to close achievement gaps. Through this process, staff have been able to attend Teachers College Summer Institutes for training in Lucy Calkins Units of Study, the PLC Institute, and a local program through our local ISD called MichMe, which allows for new learning around best practices in math. In addition to these learning opportunities, teachers participate in district provided professional development. Oftentimes this is staff led new learning, and is always connected to the school's mission and vision. Another aspect of professional learning stems from teacher driven book studies. Teachers have sought out and together read numerous books spanning multiple academic disciplines. Some of these books include Steven Covey's "The Seven Habits of Healthy People", Brene Brown's "Dare to Lead", and Ibram Kendi's, "How to be Anti Racist".

Staff also feel valued and supported through various committees, in which decision making and expertise are spread to all staff. In these committees staff work together in various areas such as school improvement, Response to Intervention, and March is Reading Month, to name a few. New staff at Marshall are also given mentors with the intent on providing extra support with day to day activities of the school, like conferences, and also provide support with academics and curriculum. These check-ins provide a structured meeting protocol so the time used is of value, is supportive, and resourceful.

With the transition to remote learning, Marshall provided staff with professional learning around Google Classroom and best practices for learning online. This support helped ease the transition from our traditional teaching methods to remote learning methods. This ensured that all of our students received quality instruction.

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

The leadership team at Marshall Elementary consists of the principal, School Improvement Team, Response to Intervention Team, and Behavior Intervention Team. All staff that play a leadership role in the building value open and honest communication, the use of data and research based practices to drive instruction and interventions, and making decisions based on our school's mission and vision. They are accepting of all students as one of our own (regardless of grade level and homeroom classroom teacher), and are open to being vulnerable by reflecting on their own practices and how they can be improved.

The principal of Marshall Elementary listens to and builds consensus among staff to make decisions based on what is best for students and to ensure all students are achieving at high levels. The principal is the lead learner in the building, modeling how to participate in professional learning to better themselves as an educator. They hold staff members accountable to abiding by the school mission and vision, support staff with parent communication and behavior management, ensure the school environment is safe for all students and staff, and help all staff members achieve their maximum potential.

The School Improvement Team consists of two co-chairs and five grade-level leaders. As a group, the team analyzes school-wide data to determine gaps in learning and how to address them in a systematic and systemic manner. Another role the School Improvement Team ensures K-4 alignment in curriculum, assessments, and interventions. Additionally, the School Improvement Team creates Professional Learning

Community (PLC) meeting agendas, leads PLC meetings, and communicates school improvement matters with all stakeholders in the building.

The Response to Intervention (RTI) consists of the RTI Coordinator, the Academic Support Instructor, the school psychologist, the speech and language pathologist, the resource room teacher, and the principal. The Behavior Intervention Team (BIT) consists of the school counselor, school social worker, school psychologist, and the behavior interventionist. These teams meet to discuss academic and behavioral interventions that are currently in place, evaluate their effectiveness, and determine if additional support or testing is needed for students.

These leadership positions are a necessary and important part of the Marshall Elementary School climate and culture and ensures that our policies and programs are focused on high student achievement.

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

Marshall Elementary School values and takes very seriously the diverse needs and backgrounds of students, families, and staff. The staff understands that valuing everyone is the only way to ensure that each student has equitable access to all the essential standards.

When it comes to the diverse backgrounds of Marshall's students, the staff ground everything in the relationships that they build with each student. Coupled with explicit instruction in Leader In Me, students are able to highlight their diverse strengths and see how they all fit together to make each classroom and Marshall better together. The staff understands that in order to fully incorporate the diverse backgrounds of all students, they must also complete learning around current diversity practices. This new learning gives staff members a different lens to look through when connecting with diverse students and their families. In the classroom, staff members are intentional about incorporating culturally responsive read alouds that highlight famous people from diverse backgrounds and themes around diversity, equity, and inclusion. Staff members also take part in the Capturing Kids' Hearts professional learning that centers around building deep, trusting relationships with all students. The specials teachers at Marshall also make sure to highlight diverse authors, artists, and musicians in their core curriculum.

Marshall Elementary is also very dedicated to providing academic equity through the systems and structures we have in place. For example, our Response to Intervention systems ensures that all students will have extra time and resources if needed to master grade level essential academic and behavior standards. Through other programs such as summer school and summer book gifting, students who also need extra time and support are able to receive it.

Marshall Elementary and their staff are aware of current events and work together to bring these events into the classroom with the support of families and administrators. The staff understands that these topics need to be handled delicately and are planned in an age appropriate way that allows students access to these complex topics in a neutral way. Through age appropriate videos and activities, students are able to explore these current events and engage in dialogue with their peers and teachers.

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

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While Marshall has many important things that contribute to our students' academic success, the thing that has been most instrumental has been the Response to Intervention process.

During each school day, every grade level has two 30 minute time frames dedicated to tier 2 intervention, which is completely separate from all tier 1 instruction. One block is specific to reading, and the other can be used for math, reading, or both, depending on the needs of the students. We use common formative and summative assessments aligned to the essential standards for ELA and math to help determine which students need intervention. The analysis of this data leads to targeted, specific, and research based interventions aimed at improving student learning.

Classroom teachers and paraprofessionals work together to target the students most in need across a grade level, and then give them the extra time and/or support needed to master grade level essential standards. Intervention groups are formed with the intention of them being flexible and fluid based on student progress. The frequent collaboration between classroom teachers and the paraprofessional support team ensure that the interventions are effective. Progress monitoring is used to gauge the effectiveness of the interventions and to determine if students are able to move on to the next skill. If intervention is not successful, we reflect on the intervention itself as well as if we are actively targeting the correct skill.

When all of the appropriate interventions are in place and have been tried, we occasionally have students that are still struggling. These students are then brought to the RTI team where we discuss additional supports that may need to be put in place, or to determine if testing that could be done. This team meets monthly to help determine the next course of action. If a student is tested and is determined to have a learning disability then additional support comes by way of tier 3 instruction in the resource room. If a student does not qualify for tier 3 support, additional tier 2 supports are put in place. These supports include additional practice of foundational skills in a one-to-one teaching structure or in small groups with students working on the same skills.

The Response to Intervention process helps ensure students find success at all levels.