

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

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

School Mailing Address 515 Granite Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Cloquet State MN Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 55720-1200

County Carlton County

Telephone (218) 879-3308 Fax (218) 879-7034

Web site/URL https://www.isd94.org/domain/15 E-mail dwangen@isd94.org

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Dr. Michael Cary E-mail mcary@isd94.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Cloquet Public School District Tel. (218) 879-6721

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

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

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

Date _____

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

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

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

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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

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

12. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

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

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

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

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 2 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 1 K-12 schools
- 5 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	53	49	102
1	32	22	54
2	35	37	72
3	31	37	68
4	29	41	70
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
Total Students	180	186	366

*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):
- 9.5 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 % Asian
 - 0.5 % Black or African American
 - 2.7 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 75.4 % White
 - 11.9 % 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: 8%

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	15
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	12
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	27
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	350
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.08
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	8

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

NA

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

0 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 40 %

Total number students who qualify: 146

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 28 %
104 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>5</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>7</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>12</u> Developmental Delay | <u>31</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>17</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>14</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>4</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: 24
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	17
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	13
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	14
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 21:1

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	92%	93%	95%	94%	94%
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.

Churchill Elementary School...Our Students Are Number One!

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

STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

It is the policy of Independent School District #94 to comply with federal and state law prohibiting discrimination and all requirements imposed by or pursuant to regulations issued thereto, to the end that no person in the school district shall on grounds of race, color, national origin, creed, religion, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, age, status with regard to public assistance, or disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any education program, or activity

for which the school district is responsible.

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

Churchill Elementary School was not named after Winston Churchill, but longtime Cloquet school superintendent Edwin Churchill. Churchill is one of two elementary schools in Cloquet, Minnesota, a rural part of Northeast Minnesota, abutting the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Reservation and the port of Lake Superior in Duluth, Minnesota. The Cloquet community serves 2,600 students, with 366 currently at Churchill Elementary. Twenty percent of our students identify as American Indian or two or more races.

Cloquet's deep roots connect to the time of the forest industry when blue-collar workers made a living in the north woods, which still holds true today. Our district mascot, the Lumberjack, represents our city's history and the hard-working people that define it. Our community continues to thrive on three major manufacturing companies, including Sappi, located on the banks of the St. Louis River. Since 1898 the Cloquet Mill has produced high-quality paper products. The current mill boasts the most modern pulp operation in the United States. Current mill production now consists of not only paper, but textiles. The United States Gypsum (USG) Corporation in Cloquet employs 350 people with an average length of service of close to 20 years. In addition to these mills, K1 Sportswear manufacturing is also nationally known. Thousands of hockey jerseys are shipped out of Cloquet annually, as they are the largest hockey uniform manufacturer in the U.S. The city of Cloquet will continue to thrive on the industries that bond the community together.

Churchill focuses on our district's mission, "Cloquet Schools, where caring for students is not just an idea, it's tradition." A tradition deeply rooted in value and compassion. Many staff at Churchill share a close bond with the city and school district. A large population of Churchill staff consists of Cloquet Public School graduates, multigeneration educators, and those who live in the community. This shows the level of worth and trust embedded in the culture of the school and the city. Many of our graduates choose to continue to make Cloquet their home and keep those profound traditions alive. Churchill staff annually give of themselves in many school and community-related events. For example, the Cloquet River Run, sponsored by the Churchill Partners in Education (PIE) parent group, is a yearly event bringing community and school together promoting healthy lifestyles. The River Run, established in 2007, has had approximately 4,500 runners cross the finish line. Fundraised dollars have supported multiple large initiatives, including a playground that sits within one of Cloquet's beautiful city parks. The Cloquet Holiday Expo is another prime example of how the community tradition has stayed alive. Fourteen years ago, two teachers had an idea to hold a fundraiser that has now become a regional shopping experience and is the kick-off to Cloquet's holiday season. Working together has provided years of outstanding community events and a lot of fun!

Churchill's code of conduct motto, "We Are Kind, We Work Hard, We Show Respect, and We All Belong," impacts our students socially, academically, and culturally. From the moment students enter kindergarten, they are immersed in a structured setting that teaches common values and language throughout their years of attending Churchill. Values and expectations are taught through classroom guidance lessons, a standard grade-level behavior matrix, and a principal-led presentation surrounding our core code. Our American Indian Education (AIE) program also works to strengthen the core values our communities share.

Churchill staff see the substantial value of establishing relationships with students and families, which are crucial to supporting student achievement. To foster these relationships, and start the school year off on the right foot, our traditional back-to-school conferences are held in the fall. We also extended the length of our parent-teacher conferences, to allow time for parent-teacher engagement to occur.

In closing, people will often say, "There is something special about this place." This is because the overwhelming culture of the building is solid. Every staff member takes pride in the school climate by involving themselves in many of the programs and day-to-day operations of the school. Whether supporting Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) rewards or the common theme of all belonging, Churchill staff is committed to Churchill students' overall well-being.

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:

As the first bell rings and a new school day has begun, Churchill Elementary students eagerly enter the school, ready to learn. Teachers and staff greet students warmly and make sure to connect with them. Churchill knows how important it is that our students feel welcome and cared for to develop their learning potential. We hold tightly to the philosophy that all students can learn and grow to be successful learners.

Teachers use a variety of instructional approaches to make learning engaging, memorable, and fun! Teachers use a tiered instruction model to ensure learners and grade levels can teach the learning standards to all students in different levels of complexity. These activities focus on quality over quantity.

A typical instructional approach that traverses over all curricula is to ensure that students are actively involved in the learning process of instruction. Students participate in lessons to demonstrate their understanding. Teachers have developed diverse strategies to ensure their students can connect and learn together. Students are actively engaged in the learning process through body motions and movements, vocalizations, and visual hand signals. These strategies allow teachers to make continual modifications in their lessons as they continually monitor and check for student understanding.

Explicit instruction is often a critical first step in learning new material in all curricular areas. Teacher modeling allows the students to hear and see content in action. Then, teachers build on that approach by having many types of learning activities ready to match the needs of all learners to develop that concept further.

Throughout the hallways of Churchill, you will see student work proudly displayed and shared with the entire school. Students take pride and joy in seeing their projects shown. They know they belong to an exceptional learning community.

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

Research-based instruction is essential for providing our students with outstanding opportunities to grow in the reading and language arts content area. Our current curriculum, Journeys, is designed to meet the needs of all students, from kindergarten through fourth grade. It aligns with the Minnesota State Standards and provides appropriate assessment, pacing, scope and sequence of a structured literacy program. In addition, the curriculum provides students with daily reading and writing opportunities in phonemic awareness, fluency, reading comprehension, vocabulary skills, spelling, and phonics. These components help build strong foundational skills for reading and writing beyond the academic years.

Along with our structured Journeys curriculum, staff development related to literacy is a high priority. Each year, staff development opportunities are provided to ensure we are updated on best practices. In addition, we are given time to learn and share during our Professional Learning Communities (PLC). Another part of our grade-level collaboration focuses on our unique data retreat process. The data retreat process organizes students into fluid ability groups. Because support and grouping are fluid, continuous reflection of data with colleagues drives student progress. Working collectively with colleagues, small group instruction, and our Journeys core curriculum enhances our ability to meet the needs of all students.

We must do everything to spark a love of reading in our students. Churchill Elementary provides opportunities for students to build this love through daily library checkout opportunities, author visits, library media lessons, the 40 Book Challenge, Battle of the Books, school-wide reading goals, reading buddies, family literacy nights, and Cloquet Public Library guests. These child-centered activities help enhance our literacy program at Churchill and foster our students' love of reading.

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

For over a decade, we have been using Everyday Math as our core curriculum. During this time, we have adopted an updated version and continue to see our students succeed with this spiral-designed method of teaching and learning. Our teachers have been trained in this program and can teach with a high level of expertise to meet student needs and state standards. Everyday Math incorporates exploration, hands-on, and whole-group lessons. Additionally, a family newsletter for each unit provides parents opportunities to support their child's learning.

Incorporating programs such as IXL, Math Seeds, Seesaw, Schoology, and other math-based applications provides additional support, enrichment, and a way to engage families in student learning. Students find these technology-based programs engaging, while teachers appreciate the ability to provide individualized instruction through technology.

In addition to our benchmark assessments, unit tests, along with teacher observations, are used to determine the math support our students need and to track growth. Students identified in need of extra support attend a daily math intervention. During the pull-out intervention, students remaining in the classroom are practicing previously taught math skills or participating in an enrichment activity. This is done through games, partner activities, whole group lessons, small group reteach, or online platforms.

Churchill offers an after-school support program called EXCEL. This program runs for several weeks in the winter. Students are invited to participate based on performance in the classroom and third-grade Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) results. This program is free for students to attend and includes bussing home.

Math Busters enrichment is an optional program for fourth-grade students. Students are presented with challenging math problems. They work through them individually, with a partner, and finally with the facilitator. Our facilitators are dedicated community volunteers and we typically have 30 students participate in this program weekly.

Building a strong foundation in mathematical understanding prepares our students for a successful future in advanced math learning. A solid core curriculum, support, enrichment, and additional after-school opportunities contribute to the success of our students.

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

Albert Einstein once said, "The important thing is never to stop questioning." Our Churchill students are encouraged to be curious learners by asking questions and fully immersing themselves in scientific discovery and learning.

At Churchill, students explore scientific concepts through active learning. Churchill uses the Full Option Science System (FOSS) as its core curriculum. FOSS has been a leader in research-based science for over forty years. Students are encouraged to discover and explore science through hands-on activities and investigation modules. Through observations and discoveries with living organisms, instilling a deep respect for various life cycles and interconnections of ecosystems, the students are not just studying science; they are truly living as scientists.

Kindergarten students immerse themselves in the world of a tropical rainforest. They research an animal and transform their classroom into the perfect rainforest habitat. First graders become "rock experts" as they explore different types of rocks through various experiments and activities. Second-grade students learn about weather through investigations and observational explorations. Third graders compare and contrast life cycles between other species of invertebrates. They also question, hypothesize and record detailed observations of how darkling beetles undergo metamorphosis. Fourth-grade students will continue to grow and develop their skills as active science learners through investigations of landforms which allows them to conduct and test soil samples.

FOSS gives the teachers and students a wide variety of opportunities for formative assessment. One essential assessment approach at Churchill is introducing and developing science notebooks. Students draw, question, record data, chart, make graphs and share what they have learned in their science notebooks. Notebooking skills are taught and developed at all grade levels to match the development of the learners. Notebooking is a critical formative assessment tool that can be adapted and differentiated to compare the strengths and needs of all our students.

Science is a favorite subject at Churchill Elementary because it allows all of our students a chance to succeed and grow as learners. Our students know they will be encouraged to wonder, explore and truly experience science as natural scientists.

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

The concepts of history, citizenship, government, economics, and geography are threads of yarn woven into the cloth of the learning experience at Churchill Elementary School. The foundations of social studies come to students through various integrated English language arts learning activities. Teachers warp and weft lessons about the world to their young learners engaging students in meaningful discussions braiding rich literature and writing experiences into the day. Background knowledge is weaved into the cloth using resources like BrainPop Jr., Scholastic News, place-based learning field trips, American Indian Education cultural lessons, art projects, guest speakers, puzzles, and games.

Students in kindergarten bring in concepts through thematic units, holidays, and seasonal celebrations. Weekly Scholastic News magazines are part of the routine in kindergarten as well. In addition, students receive exposure to nonfiction selections that help strengthen their content-area knowledge. In first grade, concepts of economics and timelines entwine into the Everyday Math curriculum. Students actively learn about civic life as they participate and work together in a classroom community. Voting, class jobs, classroom, and school expectations give them hands-on experiences in being responsible community members. In addition, the reading curriculum offers nonfiction stories about schools around the world and those from long ago. Scholastic News is brought back to learners in second grade. Nonfiction stories connect learners to the world around them, integrating learning concepts of how people and cultures have changed over time. In third grade, students work with a wide variety of nonfiction stories. In addition, students participate in a biography project learning about famous people who shaped history. When students come to fourth grade, they are ready to “read to learn” as they begin a social studies curriculum. Fourth graders alternate between science units and social studies units running approximately three weeks each. Social studies units include lessons on maps and the globe, the branches of the government, and the regions of the United States.

Social studies concepts are carefully woven into the learning experience at Churchill Elementary School. As a result, students leave Churchill with a rich knowledge of the world they live in and how they can be responsible citizens of this world.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Churchill students have been provided with a rich educational experience balancing “head and heart” for many years. Daily opportunities in visual arts, music, library media, and physical education are provided for our students and are uniquely scheduled on an eight-day block schedule.

All students participate in visual arts with a licensed art teacher. Each class has art for 50 minutes, once

every eight days. Students use creativity to problem solve, express ideas, and inspire others. They are introduced to various artists and art styles and experiment with different materials and techniques, from watercolor to weaving. In addition to having their artwork displayed around the school and in an online art gallery, students showcase their artwork in local galleries and community spaces.

Library media lessons for all students focus on skills such as digital citizenship, finding, evaluating, and using information, and developing a love of reading through exposure to a variety of genres and subjects. Lessons both supplement and extend the classroom curriculum. Students participate in literature appreciation activities as they listen to stories from different cultures, and points of view. Students have one 25 minute lesson with a library media specialist once every eight days.

Music lessons for all Churchill students occur 25 minutes a day, six out of the eight-day cycle except kindergarten, which is four out of eight days. Our licensed music specialist focuses on a variety of musical components. Students are exposed to music genres and instruments. In addition, music lessons include reading, listening, singing, moving, and playing instruments. Throughout the students' years at Churchill, they learn to play soprano and alto recorders, ukuleles, xylophones of various sizes, and every unpitched percussion instrument the school owns. Each student will have written a musical composition on their choice of instrument alone or in a group. Every student will perform in a recorded presentation and/or a live performance. Churchill students take in live professional operas, string groups, instrumental ensembles, and singers. Our students learn music from many countries, genres, and cultures. The students develop a love and appreciation for all types of music.

Physical education (PE) at Churchill in grades one through four is 25 minutes, six out of the eight-day cycle. Students also get one 50 minute session every eight days. Our kindergarten students' schedule is a little different. They have PE seven out of eight days for 25 minutes. In PE students participate in various locomotor, non-locomotor, and manipulative skills and physical activities that align with the Minnesota K-12 academic standards in physical education. They apply their knowledge of concepts, principles, strategies, and tactics while engaging in a partner, small group, and large group games with their peers. Students learn the skills necessary to participate in various lifetime activities and develop their physical literacy. Churchill students have the opportunity to participate in special events organized by our two licensed PE teachers. Each year we partner with the American Heart Association for the Kids Heart Challenge. Students learn tips to eat well, be physically active, and learn about the heart. We provide other opportunities with an in-house roller-skating unit, yo-yos, and cross country ski day for fourth grade. We have guest coaches introduce community sporting opportunities such as wrestling and lacrosse. Every May we host a school-wide track & field day along with an all-school picnic that families are invited to attend.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Teamwork is the name of the game at Churchill Elementary, and it shows as the whole staff enthusiastically supports the Response to Intervention (RTI) process. We have developed an intervention block schedule that ensures all students have access to regular classroom core instruction while giving small group or individualized instruction to students identified as needing additional academic support. Our Title I, American Indian Education, and special education programs provide this additional support. Identification of these students is done by analyzing student performance data during schoolwide meetings, referred to as data retreats. These retreats are held twice a year, in September and January.

The data analyzed during our retreats is collected using the following benchmark assessments: AimswebPLUS Early Literacy reading and Early Numeracy math assessments (kindergarten and first grades), AimswebPLUS Oral Reading Fluency (first through fourth grades), STAR Reading comprehension assessments (first through fourth grades), and STAR Math assessments (second through fourth grades). During data retreats, classroom, Title I, American Indian Education, and special education teachers review the data, which empowers them to identify individual student academic needs and determine appropriate intervention or enrichment group placement. Students in intervention groups are monitored bi-weekly to track academic growth, and adjustments to instruction occur when needed. Our staff reconvenes in data

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retreats in January to analyze midyear data and make adjustments based on student needs. These adjustments often include students moving out of support groups due to improved performance and moving into support groups when needed. At the end of the school year, we utilize the benchmark and Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments data to summarize students' yearly progress and prepare staff for the next school year.

Our Title I and American Indian Education programs provide reading and math interventions following our intervention block schedule in small group and individualized settings. This schedule ensures that students get the extra support they need while still participating in their classroom's reading and math instruction. Students performing below the 10th percentile are assigned to Title I instructional groups. Students performing below the 25th percentile or up to the 40th percentile are assigned to either a Title I group or an American Indian Education group, based on intervention availability, via our data retreat process.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Churchill's students who are performing above grade level are provided with a variety of opportunities to meet their learning needs. Our American Indian Education department offers literature circles in first through fourth grade. Our youngest readers participate in the Junior Great Books program. Second through fourth-grade students might be selected for our gifted and talented program. We offer makerspace opportunities for all grade levels and the integration of the International Society of Technology (ITSE) standards. Genius Hour takes place with students once in our eight-day rotation. Churchill's media specialist works with students individually in a self-directed and choice learning period. In addition, we also offer Battle of the Books, robotics, coding, and one-to-one device integration at all grade levels.

Classroom teachers utilize the daily block intervention schedule to deliver a wide variety of instruction to challenge the individual student. The block intervention schedule allows teachers to individualize instruction, promote problem-solving skills, and perfect skill areas. Expert community volunteers are used within the classroom setting to support the grade four Continental Math program held during the intervention schedule. The Continental Math program supports problem-solving and teamwork with the help of community expert volunteers. The Accelerated Reader program in grades one through four motivates our readers and provides opportunities for reading at student's performance levels with rigorous goals set for students to work towards.

3c. Special education:

Dedicated Churchill special education staff customize individual learning plans for identified students, including academic, speech/language, fine motor, social, emotional, and behavior supports. The team matches special education students' (SPED) needs with appropriate special education intervention groups following each benchmark period. Some of the academic intervention resources used are Voyager Passport, Reading Eggs, Math Seeds, Go Math, and VMath. When emotional or behavioral challenges impact SPED student learning, students may qualify for social skills groups. To support student growth in both interpersonal skills and regulation, interventions used include: building relationships, daily check-in and check-out systems, video modeling (Model Me Kids), direct instruction (Emotional ABCs, Gozen, Mind+Heart, Boys Town skills training), and repeated practice through role-playing, games, projects, and formative assessments. As students progress toward Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goals, classroom expectations and academic standard intervention adjustments occur for continued growth and maintenance.

SPED students with the most significant cognitive and physical challenges receive purposeful interventions and practice skill-building at their individualized levels in school and during weekly community outings.

The Child Study Team (CST) team weekly reviews special education student concerns, timelines, and new PST student referrals. The CST team includes all Problem Solving Team (PST) representatives and our special education staff. The team decides which special education testing measures the student needs, and once evaluated, the CST team determines appropriate special education placement for the students who qualify. Northern Lights Special Education Cooperative representatives are also available for consultation.

The additional support provided during our intervention block, and high-quality core instruction in the regular classroom are credited with helping us close the achievement gap. With an intentional focus on individual student needs, regular monitoring of progress, and high-quality instruction, our students make progress towards their learning goals leading to a shrinking of the achievement gap.

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

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

The Churchill Elementary community engages in multiple all-school celebrations and programming throughout the year. The Positive Behavior Interventions (PBIS) and Supports team meets monthly to plan and coordinate engaging activities and events. PBIS provides staff with support, foundation, and common language to encourage and educate all students. At the end of each trimester, a celebration is held to honor students' hard work and dedication to the Churchill code of conduct motto, "We Are Kind, We Work Hard, We Show Respect, and We all Belong."

Teachers, staff, and administrators meet annually to provide days and weeks packed full of fun and exciting events. Programming such as National Unity Day, kindness in chalk, I love to read month, and school spirit weeks are of mention, as they are special days to our Churchill students.

Churchill Elementary has a licensed school counselor dedicated to providing individual counseling lessons for students struggling with emotional and/or behavior concerns. The school counselor also does whole group guidance lessons in all general education classrooms. Lessons focus on numerous topics such as bullying and emotion identification. Small lunch groups are also conducted for students needing social skill support.

A unique space at Churchill is our remedy room. The remedy room was created as an intervention tool to support social-emotional learning. This setting offers support by a licensed school social worker for students who exhibit emotional and behavioral difficulties. The remedy room has helped decrease student violation and suspension numbers. It has also created another layer of care and positive intervention to help support students, staff, and families.

During Covid, Churchill worked to support students and families by staying connected and continuing to provide quality education. Educators and other school personnel engaged through Google meets daily to maintain contact with students and families. In addition, teachers created one-on-one times to support students both academically and emotionally.

Churchill hosts back-to-school conferences where parents and students are invited and welcomed into the building before the first day of classes. These conferences are designed to begin building relationships with families and students before the first day of school. This engagement helped lead to a 95 percent attendance rate at subsequent conferences.

Churchill staff have the opportunity to mentor a student identified with attendance concerns. Mentors meet with students to help build a caring and lasting one-on-one relationship and engage the student positively to help increase their engagement and subsequent attendance. Students who struggle in the mornings to be emotionally or physically ready for school can participate in our Morning Connections program. Morning Connections is open each morning for students to have breakfast, connect with a caring staff member, and when necessary, have their basic needs met. In addition, children who do not have access to food on the weekends are provided meals through our county backpack program. This program is funded with private donations and operates in cooperation with the Second Harvest Food Bank.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

At Churchill Elementary, families, community members, and businesses have many opportunities to be involved and support our school. A variety of events, programs, and activities helps us reach all of our families.

The Power Lunch program started over twenty years ago and currently serves 48 first and second-grade students. The program matches teacher-chosen students with community member volunteers to help build mentoring relationships and literacy skills during the school year. They meet weekly and spend one hour

together having lunch and reading books. The 52 volunteers are all part of our community. Many local businesses support the program with either financial support or encouraging their staff to volunteer.

Churchill also has a strong parent group that partners with the school and staff to provide a variety of activities, events, and opportunities for students and families to engage and support each other. The River Run is one of the most significant events. Parents, staff, and volunteers organize the 5k run. Last year, there were over 285 runners who helped raise over \$13,000 for Churchill! The fundraising helps cover the cost of activities, field trips, and supplies that classrooms need. Local businesses have also supported Churchill's fundraising efforts by coordinating "Dine to Donate" nights where families eat at a particular restaurant and the business donates a percentage of their total sales back to the school.

Our parent Facebook page has over 325 members and is updated daily with announcements, information, ideas, and school-related topics. Volunteer opportunities are posted along with upcoming events within our school and community. Pictures, with permission, are posted from events, and there are monthly engagement topics where parents and community members share their ideas, photos, and resources for a chance to win a small gift card from a local business.

Recently a team organized Family Literacy Nights to engage families in reading activities. Students played games, made crafts, read books, met local authors, and had fun! Local authors Chris Monroe and Katharine Johnson donated their time and skillsets to read and meet with students. In addition, local businesses sponsored these events with monetary gifts, snacks, supplies, and prizes. The last event was held at the local library and had approximately 250 people in attendance.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Creating a professional culture is an essential priority in our school and leads to teachers feeling valued and supported. District and school-level professional development opportunities are coordinated under our District Advisory Council's (DAC) guidance and aligned to our World's Best Workforce and district staff development goals. Building Leadership Teams (BLT), in coordination with building principals, identify staff development needs and coordinate opportunities for professional development. Teacher input and school improvement initiatives are prioritized when planning professional development. Our most recent focus has been on improving reading instruction by implementing the General Education Leadership Network (GELN) Essential Instructional Literacy Practices. Teachers engage in self-analysis, professional development, and implementation of the practices.

Having a common focus for professional development allows our staff to learn from one another and grow professionally, therefore building a culture of learning. In the fall of each school year, a professional development survey in the goal areas of curriculum, technology, and staff or student mental health is given to teachers. These staff development survey results are used to develop learning opportunities on district staff development days. In addition, teachers regularly work in Professional Learning Communities on our professional development and school-wide improvement initiatives. These initiatives expose our students to the identified best practices in all learning environments, improving student performance.

Before the distance learning shift, professional planning days were given to help the learning model transition. During our time spent in distance learning, many professional development training opportunities occurred on curriculum, technology, and the educational best practices needed to teach our students in a remote setting. In addition, a technology integration specialist supported teachers with curriculum and technology throughout the 2020-21 school year. Our district also provided students and teachers with the necessary devices and access to the internet needed to continue learning.

We recognize that creating a culture where teachers feel valued and supported goes beyond professional development. Our school recognizes that a healthy staff makes for a healthy school. We offer a wellness program that includes monthly challenges, prizes, and healthy recipes. Each week the "treat cart" driven by fourth-graders delivers a treat to all school employees. We offer fitness classes, meditation, yoga, and inspirational webinars on staff development days. Our Partners in Education group provides dinner for the staff on conference nights and recognition of teachers during Teacher Appreciation Week. A unique

opportunity during the pandemic occurred when inspirational t-shirts were made available to staff. It helped brighten difficult days!

4. School Leadership:

Churchill Elementary has a strong history of collaborative leadership systems in place. A building leadership team consisting of eight teachers and the building principal work cooperatively supporting building decision-making in the areas of benchmark testing, master scheduling, establishing professional learning community group norms, professional learning related to literacy and other state standards, technology integration, and decisions supporting district elementary curriculum adoptions.

Churchill building leaders and the principal work collectively to help design the yearly master and block schedules. The master building schedule is built to support the specialist rotation, including an eight-day cycle of music, physical education, library media, and art. Churchill students are very fortunate to have a rich history of 50 minutes of fine and or applied arts daily. The building block schedule has been designed to minimize daily classroom interruptions and maximize intervention and classroom learning. The block schedule includes eleven interventionists in Title I, American Indian education, and special education. This schedule works in conjunction with the building master schedule to provide a focused day that emphasizes student achievement through the building leadership team decisions. Central to the block schedule is a philosophy of scheduling all daily interventions through 25 and 50 minute blocks of time separate for each grade level.

Biannual data retreats are planned by the Title I staff in cooperation with the building principal. The data retreats include classroom and intervention teachers cooperatively reviewing assessment data for all K-4 students. Student intervention placement decisions are made through a review of the individual assessment data.

Since 2013, Churchill's social and emotional programs have been facilitated by the Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) Team. The Minnesota Department of Education grant-funded program was initiated to support our students' changing social and emotional needs. This is a team of administration, teachers, and paraprofessionals charged with supporting students' social and emotional well-being. The PBIS team has been instrumental in creating a building behavior matrix for nine school areas, school voice level charts, planning trimester building reward time, and staff training related to restorative practices as well as student and family trauma. In addition, the PBIS team has helped develop procedures and practices related to the Churchill remedy room. The remedy room is supported by a school social worker who is available to help students with positive behavior supports, remediation, and restorative practices. The remedy room social worker is responsible for tracking monthly student behavior data and communicating to the PBIS team potential adjustments to building practices. Student behavior incidents have dropped dramatically due to the teaching and preventative approach of the PBIS team.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

At Churchill, nine percent of our student population are American Indian, and 11 percent identify as two or more races. These demographics are composed primarily of the neighboring Fond du Lac Ojibwe Reservation. Our approach to culturally responsive teaching is steeped in the philosophy of relationship building and community collaboration. Our district works closely with representatives from the Fond du Lac Reservation and parents of students in our school through our Local Indian Education (LIEC) and Johnson O'Malley (JOM) committees composed of American Indian parents. These collaborations help shape and guide the direction of our diversity and equity work while ensuring that parents have a voice in the process. Through this work, the focus of our American Indian Education (AIE) program shifted away from a cultural program with academic components to an academic program with cultural components. Our parent committee work coincided with the opportunity to pilot the Response to Intervention process, which assisted Churchill in developing the intervention support block schedule.

Recognizing and addressing the achievement gap was the first step in attempting to close it. We believe our AIE program is unique in structure. The program is academically focused but weaves American Indian

culture and language into every student interaction and many of the lessons we teach. In an ongoing effort to provide opportunities for Native students to explore and celebrate culture, program teachers and staff teach cultural lessons in the regular classrooms on topics such as the Seven Grandfather Teachings. The program also hosts an after school cultural program that features traditional storytelling and language lessons. While we primarily serve American Indian students, many non-native students are in our intervention groups and attend our afterschool program, creating an environment where culture is shared and celebrated among all students. We believe this helps make our program successful.

Integrating our program into every essential intervention and school support system promotes equity and ensures cultural competency and advocacy. We have either a licensed teacher or a home school liaison attending IEP meetings for our American Indian students, Child Study Team meetings, Problem Solving Team meetings, and PBIS meetings. Parents are communicated with regularly on behavior, grades, attendance, and, most importantly, successes in and out of the classroom. We recognize the importance of having staff that reflects the community we serve. We have made a concerted effort to have American Indian teachers in the Indian Education room and general education classrooms. Our staff is visible in the community we serve. We attend Pow Wows and sporting and community events on the reservation. We help students get to school by providing a second-run van program that parents can access when their children miss the bus. Relationship building with students and families is at the heart of everything we do.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Churchill Elementary's support block model of intervention is the practice we feel has had the most influential impact on our school's success. Response to Intervention (RTI) emerged from the 2004 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In 2005 our local special education cooperative asked Churchill to be a pilot school for the implementation of an RTI model. As a result, representatives from administration, regular education, special education, Title I, and American Indian Education formed an RTI steering committee. They began the work of researching and designing a model that would meet the expectations of the law, fit into our educational structure, and ultimately increase the achievement of our students. Our support block model of intervention is the result of this work.

Churchill's support block has many moving parts. Our master schedule honors core classroom instruction while providing time for interventions and enrichment to occur daily. To design this master schedule each year, all stakeholders come together to lay out core instruction blocks, intervention blocks, and specialists blocks (PE, library media, music, art). Data retreats are organized to determine the placement of students in our intervention, regular education, or enrichment blocks. At these retreats, stakeholders analyze individual student performance and identify their needs. Standardized benchmark assessments and classroom performance data guide this decision-making process. Following data retreats, students participate in their assigned blocks, where evidence-based instruction is implemented. Student progress is monitored regularly, and collaboration occurs throughout the school year to meet student needs. Groups are flexible, meaning that when students no longer demonstrate a need for the identified academic interventions, changes are made, with the ultimate goal of students no longer needing support.

We credit our Response to Intervention support block model with significantly impacting our closing of the achievement gap and reducing the number of students tested for special education needs. Ensuring that all of our students receive high-quality classroom instruction, providing immediate support and intervention for the students who demonstrate a need, regularly monitoring progress, and making curricular adjustments improves student achievement. Our model provides us with the framework needed to make this happen.