

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

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

School Mailing Address 6001 Monforton School Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Bozeman State MT Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 59718-8136

County Gallatin County

Telephone (406) 586-1557 Fax (406) 587-5049

Web site/URL https://monfortonschool.org E-mail laxtman@monfortonshool.org

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Mr. Darren Strauch E-mail dstrauch@monfortonschool.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Monforton School District Tel. (406) 586-1557

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 Mrs. Amy Free
(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
 - 0 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 3 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. **Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not for the district.**)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)
- Suburban
- Rural

3. Number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	34	50	84
4	24	35	59
5	45	40	85
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	103	125	228

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 0 % Black or African American
 - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 91 % White
 - 2 % 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	9
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	8
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	17
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	201
(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):

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 6 %

Total number students who qualify: 14

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 7 %
15 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>1</u> Autism | <u>2</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>4</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>4</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>0</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 5
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	10
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	14
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	7
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	12

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 22:1

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

Required Information	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017
Daily student attendance	97%	96%	95%	95%	95%
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.

Monforton School is a nurturing, student-centered community where all are encouraged to believe in themselves as they are actively immersed in the process of learning in a safe, respectful environment.

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

<https://monfortonschool.org/home/title-ix/>

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

Monforton School is located 6 miles west of Bozeman, Montana. We are a small district with a big heart. The school is both physically and emotionally placed at the heart of this rural area. The Monforton School Community has one foot in the rich history of the State by being a traditional kindergarten through eighth-grade school. In fact, the original one-room school, built in 1886, can be seen as the interior of our current art building. We honor our past by maintaining a small school atmosphere that embraces each student and creates a learning environment that meets every child's unique needs.

We also are eager to jump into the wider world beyond the Big Sky State. We provide opportunities for individual students to excel and pursue interests that far exceed what a rural school can usually offer. Our students travel to Washington DC and New York City, even taking in a Broadway show. They participate in challenging writing and speaking events that often lead to taking on leadership roles. When our students graduate to the area high schools they take with them an awareness of endless possibilities waiting for them. They can be seen working toward college and career goals while also playing sports, joining clubs, writing for the school newspaper, and running for student government.

Our families live in close proximity to the school. It is a welcoming place to stop by. Even though our numbers are growing we still make sure we celebrate our community together through shared events such as the Art and Culture Fair, Monforton Miles community run, the Jog-a-Thon, community-based art projects, and Earth Day community clean up with guests from the Montana Conservation Corps. We joined the friendly competition with Montana State University against the University of Montana in the Annual "Can the Griz" food drive. We extend our classroom space to the outdoors in our courtyard garden area. Parents and volunteers can always be found running fundraisers, making copies for teachers, working as substitutes, and providing academic support with students one-on-one up and down our hallways.

With the support of our community, we offer students the extra learning that other smaller schools can only dream about. We maintain two fully equipped art rooms, two libraries, and two Gymnasiums. In addition, we speak Spanish, put on musical theater, and cheer together at the annual talent show. At the end of the year, we celebrate with a track and field day, even when it snows.

Through the Response to Intervention program, we monitor and support each child meeting in small groups and individually for instruction with a large and dedicated team of Para-Professionals. Because of our efforts internal aimswebPlus benchmark data shows that 87% of Monforton students read on benchmark and 86.7% are proficient in math. All grades use Indian Education For All, which is a program created by the State of Montana to recognize and honor the vital foundation Indigenous peoples represent in not only our history but also who we are today. We share guest Indigenous artists, academics, and performers through Montana State University. It is a core belief at Monforton School that we honor the equality of all people in both our curriculum and our practices.

We have an inclusive Special Education program that provides individualized instruction. Our dedicated staff build scaffolding of learning for each student's needs and train our paras and aides through the process. We also support our students with Speech intervention, occupational therapy, and a full counseling staff. Our counselors see children individually but also assist in the growth of all of the students by hosting friends' lunch gatherings, problem-solving meetings, and a class-by-class curriculum.

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:

In the Monforton School community, we believe that every student has the right and the ability to build their own future, based on their interests. Our curriculum approach reflects our beliefs in its complexity. We create curriculum guidelines and content on the advice and research of grass-roots committees that have detailed knowledge about the needs and the interests of our students. We incorporate experiential learning and cross-curricular integration based on Montana Content Standards. Our staff, working with the direction of our Curriculum Consortium, have created extensive yearlong curriculum maps. We ensure both the involvement of our students and their understanding of creating educational goals for themselves with the inclusion of individualized “I can” statements. To support the teaching staff we have adapted proficiency scales, lesson guidance, and standard-aligned assessments that aid in data collection and analysis. Our RTI director and her staff monitor student progress and provide direct continuous proactive intervention for students. Academic interventions are identified and reviewed every six weeks. Beyond student monitoring, Student Support Teams are formed whenever there is any concern about a student’s academic, behavioral, or emotional well-being. These teams consist of the adults most involved with the particular student along with their parents. This reflects our philosophy that we are a school community that values all of its members and includes parents and families as learning partners. Because we see ourselves as a whole inclusive group the complex pieces of designing and implementing academic and social content come together to create an inclusive community where we value one another.

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

In our reading and ELA programs, we provide a wide perspective of people and cultures with the invitation to understand and benefit from diversity. We believe in student initiated projects that embrace Montana Content Standards by bringing learning to life. Visit the 5th-grade Market Day where students make and sell their own products, the Science Fair, the State Report Open House, or our Student lead TEDX-Monforton to experience these student initiated projects.

Early intervention and support of foundational skills at the primary levels is a high priority for the district. As students progress, less support is needed due to the diligence of additional teacher supports, research-based interventions, and working to consistently improve student progress. The adoption of the American Reading Company Program (ARC) has helped to support our ELA goals by instilling a love of reading, daily foundational skill practice, high-level and high-interest text, daily writing practice, text choice, formative assessment, and conferencing. Each school year starts with a celebration of reading and the 100 Book Challenge. Teachers start the year by providing high-interest classwide reading, independent reading choices, and detailed tracking of student progress. In each classroom a community of peers who read and talk about books together begins to take shape. This is facilitated by a teacher who believes in their students as readers and supports them in developing reading skills. As part of the year-long reading process, students develop research skills through examining informational texts at their independent reading level then demonstrating their knowledge through writing.

Reading, writing and cross-curricular instruction are the foundation of our ELA instructional approach. Students are explicitly taught through literature labs and individual conferencing. This allows teachers to identify differentiation needs and supports for students. This leads students to the literature genre lab where they support their reading while constructing narratives within a grade-band chosen genre. Next, students also participate in a science integrated Informational Lab where they explore reading and writing informational text; science topics include marine life and weather in 3rd grade, animal adaptations in 4th grade, and ecosystems in 5th grade. Lastly, students study a Social Studies topic while developing the skills required for argumentative writing using research to support their opinion; social studies topics include American Historical Fiction, US States, and the American Revolution. Web-based resources are integrated

into daily instruction and intervention, including Epic, Guided Reading, Raz Kids, School Pace (ARC) and Heggerty phonological and phonemic awareness.

Monforton Elementary integrates district-wide aimswebPlus benchmark assessments in addition to an in-class Independent Reading Leveling Assessment, the IRLA. This assessment supports learners in growing as independent readers and building skills through small group intervention and teacher-student conferencing. Teachers use research-based instruction and practices to drive their teaching while integrating assistive technology, professional judgment, and differentiated lesson materials to meet the needs of individual students.

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

Monforton math instruction focuses on increasing student mathematical thinking and reasoning skills. Students become the experts and teachers develop the skills to provide high-level discussions about math, helping students develop strong independent thinking as it relates to math. Real world applications are at the heart of each lesson as students integrate listening, speaking, reading, and writing about mathematics. Yearlong context maps, instructional alignment to the Montana Math content, and the adoption of research-based curriculum builds the foundation for daily instruction at Monforton School. Assessment is incorporated into units of study in addition to benchmark assessments three times per year. At the start of each school year students participate in a Diagnostic Assessment, which helps students, teachers, and parents to envision the current level of understanding, set high--but achievable-- goals for growth, and provides computer adaptive interventions for all students. The Diagnostic data prepares teachers in meeting individual student needs, by delivering actionable learning plans.

The deep understanding of mathematics through individualized instruction and adaptive learning paths helps students apply knowledge and skills to various learning environments such as science, technology, and the arts (STEAM). The whole-group mathematically focused discussions are an integral part of Monforton's mathematics curriculum. As students participate in mathematical conversations they begin to expand vocabulary, see mistakes as part of the process, and explore connections between math and the real world. As students present evidence of their learning to the class through guided practice and presentations, they consider various strategies that they may not be familiar with while also practicing mastery of skills they feel most comfortable with. The integration of class-wide mathematical conversation is effective for all learners and provides students with different proficiency levels to be active participants in their own learning.

Resulting data from benchmark assessments is reviewed, analyzed and discussed by the classroom teachers daily, the RTI team no less than three times per year, and across vertically aligned teams yearly. Data helps to drive instruction and identify any gaps in student learning and to guide instructional approaches such as tiered instruction/support, differentiation, problem-based learning, explicit instruction, and computer adaptive learning. Throughout the school year, students at Monforton Elementary practice skills in the content areas of numbers and operations, algebra and algebraic thinking, measurement and data, and geometry.

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

Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) in conjunction with experiential learning drive Monforton School's science curriculum. Mystery Science is a resource our teachers use in their classrooms. Science concepts are integrated in addition to incorporating STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) activities into instruction. Students also engage in hands-on experiential learning activities that include water study at a nearby spring-fed pond, investigation of a nature/biome as they learn about scientific observation, an examination of macro-invertebrates in our local Gallatin River. Snow-studies are conducted while students participate in a day of Cross-Country Skiing. Technology integration both in our Technology Lab and with 1 to 1 devices helps students to learn to code robots and design 3D printer projects. Through this multi-layered approach our students gain real world understanding of how science and engineering are a part of our everyday lives.

Students leave with a deep understanding and appreciation for the magnificent and complex ecosystems, both natural and social, that we are a part of. Students have often said that it was because of a Monforton project that they discovered their life passion. We are proud to watch our students go on to study engineering, law, medicine, serve our country, or start their own businesses all striving to serve our community.

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

In recent years, Montana has integrated Indian Education for All (IEFA) into the Montana social studies standards. Our teachers integrate IEFA materials from this program into every subject area. Our third graders visit a local buffalo jump to experience first hand the lives and traditions of Indigenous people of our area. They are guided on the tour by a Native American community member. The incorporation of IEFA is also a vital part of our Civic education. All grade levels emphasize the importance of civic learning and contributing to the greater community and by hosting Indigenous motivational speakers (Supaman) and special events including onsite Pow-wow activities.

Our literacy program, American Reading Company, infuses social studies topics cross curricular by teaching reading, writing, and social studies units like “American Historical Fiction”, “The U.S. States”, and the “American Revolution & New Nation”. This integrated curriculum supports students in making connections across subject areas and taking a deep dive into the curriculum. A U.S. states project is a culmination of independent study for our 4th grade students as they study a state of choice then make final projects to display in a school-wide parade of states.

Our 5th grade economics curriculum is a yearlong activity all students participate in as they write a resume, are hired for a “job” within the district/classroom, earn a monthly paycheck, and pay rent. This classroom economy is a favorite among our students. Bi-annually students participate in a Market Day where they provide a service or goods to sell to other classmates, staff, and community members. Students earn money throughout the school year to spend at the Market Day event; community members purchase fake money to buy goods. All of the profits from the day are donated toward a local charity that the students vote on.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Our elective classes support the learning of each student as they attend weekly 1-hour classes that include art, health enhancement, technology, library, Spanish, music, and 8-week counseling units. A daily integration of these courses helps to educate the whole student and support them in being a creative, active, savvy citizen. All grades K-8 participate in our elective courses.

Monforton is one of the only elementary schools in our community with a full-time Art program that spans grades K-8. Students engage in art for 1-hour per week where they participate in projects that oftentimes align with social studies curriculum or in-class projects. Fourth-grade students are introduced to an integration of IEFA and art through a project where they create a buffalo skin project as they studied Native American history.

Our Health Enhancement program combines learning about the health needs of our bodies as students investigate nutrition and living an active lifestyle. Students in grades 3-8 participate in downhill skiing at a local ski resort and an off-site visit to a cross country skiing resort one time per year. All elementary students have the additional opportunity to participate and engage in activities students can enjoy for a lifetime like on-site cross-country skiing on our football field as the weather allows and golf.

Library at Monforton is unique in its inclusion of both the inquiry process and STEAM into its weekly 1-hour lessons for all students. Age-appropriate maker-space projects support the learning community in the library as students learn to have a love of reading and investigate their interests through STEAM activities of their choice. Our community has supported the purchase and use of one-to-one technology. We embed the wise and literate use of information technology into every subject. Our Technology and Library Media programs work together to provide in-depth experiences with the information inquiry process, digital citizenship, and the role technology plays in our society today. We partner with our public library to provide wide access to unlimited fiction, information, and databases.

The technology lab integrates computer based technology as students learn about the internal and external parts of a computer, Typesy (an interactive application) to work on typing form and accuracy, coding, 3D printing, and robotics. Each week students participate in 1-hour of technology class.

Our counseling program integrates whole-class support with relevant character building topics for each grade level, individual counseling to support students with immediate needs, and small group support in the form of lunch and friend groups to support students as they navigate through friendship challenges and connect with other students who have similar home lives. In addition, our counselors help to provide warm clothing through local community supports for any child who needs winter wear. Arrangements are also provided for students who need food for the weekend with a partnership with the school cafeteria as well as the Gallatin Valley Food Bank.

Our music program is offered to all students in two 30-minute sessions per week. Students participate in learning how to read music by playing the recorder and ukulele. Additional opportunities are provided as students are invited to join an optional choir group where they spend their own time learning and performing outside of school hours or during their free times. Band is required for all fifth-grade students, giving everyone an opportunity to learn how to play an instrument.

Beginning in grade 5, students start receiving instruction in Spanish language acquisition.

A unique offering at Monforton School District is our all-inclusive sports program that starts students in sports like track and field, volleyball, basketball, football at grade 5. All students are invited to play and participate in the activities in an effort to build our team-like atmosphere and build sportsmanship amongst our student population.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Addressing students' needs and providing individualized plans of instruction is how Monforton stands out as a model school in our community. Standards based instruction and adoption of research-based curriculum help teachers to guide students in their learning. We believe in providing paraprofessional staff to all classrooms as one intervention in supporting our students' individual needs. AIMSwebPlus benchmark assessments are conducted three times each year to identify students who have areas of instructional need. Progress monitoring is provided to students who are being monitored as our RTI Department collects data and provides interventions as needed. Student Support Team Meetings are conducted every 6 weeks and include a family member, school administrator, school counselor, RTI Director, and at times our School Psychologist. As a unified team we address concerns, make plans, and adjust as we provide effective support to students who are in academic need.

Supports for those performing below-grade level are offered through our Title I Intervention which involves in-class and pull-out supports that focus on Tier 2 and Tier 3 instruction. Small group or 1:1 activities are provided in these settings and are aligned with learning targets identified in the SST meetings or through the Benchmark assessments. Our Reading Specialist provides in-class support to build early literacy skills using the Heggerty program daily in grades K-2 and individualized support for older students. Additional diagnostic testing and support are integrated into our math (iReady- MyPath) and ELA (American Reading

Company- IRLA) programs to ensure extra support is provided to all students on an as needed and individualized basis.

Summer School is offered to all students and encouraged for those who are not meeting academic benchmark targets. Our onsite 4 week Summer School program provides extended practice of core skill knowledge in the areas of Math, Reading, Art/HE, and Social Skill building in an effort to lessen the Summer learning loss.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Students performing above grade level are also identified through our MTSS (Multi-tiered systems of support) process and are provided opportunities to qualify for our Gifted and Talented (GT) program. Our Gifted and Talented students participate in weekly activities provided by our GT onsite teacher. In addition to specific interventions provided through the GT classroom students, who are performing above grade level also benefit from our MyPath Math intervention, which is a Computer Adaptive Learning platform and the workshop model in our ELA in class program. Enrichment reading groups are provided by our certified Librarian, who is also a Reading Specialist to provide opportunities for excelling students to participate in more robust projects and book studies.

3c. Special education:

Students who qualify for Special Education are provided with the support of a Special Education teacher and additional support as needed by a paraprofessional. Depending on the individual student, other support services are provided include Speech and Language Pathologist (SLP), Occupational Therapist (OT), Physical Therapist (PT) and School Psychologist, based on the district's membership in the Gallatin-Madison Special Education Cooperative. In addition, we do our best to hire skilled para professionals to provide support for our students with needs at all levels. This team of experts work together to develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) that identifies and addresses specific areas of deficit. Our Special Education staff are often observed pushing into classrooms to provide the most effective Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) for all students in the general educational setting. Collaboration with teaching staff helps to provide individualized instruction and support at the student's grade level. We modify schedules, assignments, and support based on student need and give accommodations to provide students the greatest opportunity for success in the school setting.

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

We do not have a specific or intervention program for our English Language Learners. Currently we are in the development stage of composing a teacher-support manual for ELL students. In addition, we collaborate as needed with a larger local school district who does employ a full-time ELL Coordinator.

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

While we do not have the population that would support a specific program or intervention for our migrant and homeless population, we do partner with the local Food Bank, Churches, and transportation systems to provide the supports these populations may benefit. Often times, with the support of our community, we are able to reach beyond students who qualify as homeless and disadvantaged and offer these support programs to any family in need. This includes warm clothing (coats, snow boots, snow pants, gloves, etc) for any student who may not have proper attire for our cold winters. In addition, any family that requests has access to weekly food bags to help support needs over the weekends and is granted these each Friday. All students have access to snacks throughout the day that are donated from a local church. We partner throughout the year with our community members, local businesses, and church groups who generously support families over the holidays with food baskets, grocery gift cards, and gifts.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

The faculty and staff at Monforton Elementary engage, motivate, and provide students with a positive and supportive environment. We support students academically, socially, and emotionally, and help to develop their readiness for their future. Monforton has an active MTSS program. As a part of the MTSS program the school encourages students to be what we refer to as ROAR Leaders- this means students demonstrate themselves with Respect, Organization, a great Attitude, and are Responsible. The school focuses each month on one ROAR Attribute where we help students to find the leader within themselves. Often times you will find our students doing the right thing, even when no one is looking. As the year closes we invite local leaders such as the local martial arts community to be the guests at our assembly and model leadership within our community. This type of school-wide initiative provides a positive environment that supports the whole child.

During the pandemic we did our best to continue to provide the things that make Monforton great. We had great success, starting March 2020, when school closures were mandated engaging our learners in the online environment. All students who needed computers or had technology needs were able to check them out from our school. Students had daily instruction from a live teacher, interactions and communications through Seesaw, math support using the iReady math program, and individual supports as needed through our counselor or para professionals.

We returned onsite fall 2020 offering a hybrid instructional option allowing for remote and onsite learning. Students had the option to be onsite or offsite as needed based on quarantines, illness, or family choice and still were able to participate with their class in many activities. Knowing the uncertainty of COVID at the start of this year we continued to offer the option for students to enroll in our remote program with a dedicated remote instructor or to be onsite. About 95% of our families chose to start the year onsite and many returned throughout the year as vaccinations and the COVID situation changed.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

We are a neighborhood school that is family oriented. Our parents are always welcome and are formally invited to volunteer in any way they can. As a result we have parents reading with children, planning classroom events, and sharing their expertise with students. We encourage parent involvement on district committees in a variety of areas also, either through focus groups or formal committees. Some of the events that are routinely offered have been sponsored by the PTO (PAWS - Parent and Wildcat Supporters) and have included monthly offerings for community activities. They co-sponsor activities with the district like Movie Nights, Dodgeball Night, and school plays. One of the most recent additions to this has been last year's Dr. Seuss Reading and Bingo Night held in conjunction with Read Across America Week. Parents and local professionals are invited to come in and read their favorite children's book to classes in Grades K-5. Our district also partners with Gallatin Valley Farm to School to offer periodic cooking classes, Harvest of the Month lessons, and farm field trips. There are adult education offerings held at least twice each year that cover a wide range of topics. The district partners with local law enforcement to bring in workshops about keeping students safe (internet safety, etc.). We also have strong parent involvement and business partnerships through activities and events like Monforton Miles (5K Race), Art Fair, Friends of Music, Wellness, Jog-a-thon as well as the more formal participation with PAWS and the Monforton School Foundation.

As the Monforton community grows and evolves we have done our best to hold on to the rural atmosphere and continue to provide the best individualized education for our children. Programs are loved and supported by our school community. Local businesses help by providing donations for our yearly Art Auction that supplies funding for the continuation of the program. A local coffee company helps to supply coffee for our district-wide fundraiser to build funds to consistently maintain and improve our performing arts program.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

The Monforton School Professional Culture is one that is built on mutual respect and support for our staff. As we persevered through the COVID Pandemic our staff never gave up even when things swiftly changed day to day. At the start of the school year we did everything possible to return to a normal functioning school. Some actions worked and others did not. The staff had endured the previous year supporting our cohort operational model and began this with more normalcy, but certainly still challenges. The administrative team continued to move forward with providing professional development and growth opportunities and did our best to balance that work with supporting the mental health of our staff.

When possible the administrative team included professional development that researched new ELA curriculums. Through a 6 month process the ELA Leadership Committee researched, met with companies, and recommended the adoption of the American Reading Company (ARC) to the Superintendent and School Board. Once it was approved and adopted professional development was provided in a whole group setting in addition to a side-by-side model as the year progressed. Due to the professional development in how teachers should use the program with fidelity we have had great academic achievement increases with the recent adoption.

Other programs have been adopted and supported with continued professional development in the area of Math (iReady) and Reading Intervention Support (Heggerty). The continued push to provide professional development has provided our teachers with the knowledge and confidence to roll out the programs successfully and with consistency across the district. Our behavior management program PAX Good Behavior Game was introduced and continues to be implemented across the school and is successful due to the professional development and teacher support of the program. The teachers and administrators were trained in the program and then shifted areas that did not work well to develop a program with a strong leadership emphasis for students.

Professional development is aligned with the needs of the teachers and the district. Mission and vision is taken into consideration as the administrators strive toward academic excellence. Staff meetings are often times when professional development is shared. As a district we continue to work toward the slow roll out and implementation of Standards Based Grading. Professional book studies are enjoyed and attended by many staff members who want to focus on a specific increase in skill. This book study is led by our school librarian and includes discussion and investigation of professional articles as part of the process.

4. School Leadership:

Our principal believes that academic success is built first by providing a foundation of safety and student support. Learning is a top priority, but cannot happen without the willingness to want to learn. By supplying students with an engaging learning environment filled with encouragement and the necessary support, high levels of learning will occur. Our school day starts with a welcoming smile and hello from the school leadership team. Check in's from administration with students are a regular part of the school day, whether that be to check in on a behavior concern, to motivate a learner, or to be a listening ear of support. Communication and collaboration with families and staff is vital to our functioning and working cohesively as a team.

Our principal believes that when teachers are given the opportunity to be leaders and drive their own experiences they become stronger and more confident in their abilities and craft. She is often seen being the support of the teachers in what they want to see in their own classrooms and school, but is rarely the person driving the experience. She believes in building her staff to find their passion and the leader within themselves as we strive to make Monforton student achievement levels the best they can be.

Students are encouraged to be leaders as well. Several years ago the school was in search of a schoolwide behavior program. Staff participated in the PAX Good Behavior Game Training then took the time to adapt the program to meet the needs of the school. It eventually developed into a leadership program for students where they are instilled with leadership qualities that match with the acronym ROAR (Responsibility, Organization, Attitude, and Respect). All members of the school community work to help support our young

leaders to be ROAR Leaders.

These beliefs of our school principal help to keep structure in the school, promote optimism and positivity, ensure student academic success, and models that when a will to learn is developed the skill will follow. Monforton Administrators are the rock-solid core for Monforton School's ability to teach with both high academic and societal expectations. Every teacher and staff member recognizes the unique situation we are gifted with at Monforton. It is their unwavering support, concern, and involvement that has helped this school to thrive under the adverse conditions that our nation has experienced in the last two years. They not only take care of all of the behind the scenes necessities of keeping a school running, they are also ready to step into the classroom wherever, whenever they are needed. The neediest students can find refuge in their offices at all times. It is this final concept that makes Monforton School so outstandingly successful for our children. Yes, we work diligently to provide the very best academic education that we can but it is the sense of inclusiveness, of welcoming, of sanctuary that makes Monforton School the heart of this Montana community.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

From a distance Monforton school may appear to be homogeneous but we know that each of our students' families are a complex conglomeration of cultures, beliefs, and experiences. In our practice we understand the existence of implicit bias and constantly reflect on our own practices to make awareness a habitual behavior. We have adopted and designed curriculums with an awareness of diversity in mind. In particular, our ARC reading curriculum is serving as an opening to create opportunities to increase culturally responsive instruction that helps our students to become aware and familiar with cultures within and without their immediate environment.

Our staff is dedicated to honoring the unique culture every student brings with them by encouraging teachers to be intentional in their pedagogy to support students by focusing on their individual perceptions and to help them to build on them. We incorporate a shared understanding and respect for racial, religious, ethnic, gender, and socio-economic, blended and adoption cultures. Teachers are trained to practice drawing from their students' languages, culture, and life experiences to build a curriculum that resonates with their class on a deeper level. From the foundation of the students' own cultures the overarching school climate encourages knowledge and acceptance of diverse cultures for our students to ensure their positive citizenship in the wider world. We work to be aware of the various cultures that our students come to school with. In the classroom teachers and support staff commit to being inclusive and to recognizing children's experiences.

Teachers work to build learning communities where each child can feel comfortable with who they are. We celebrate various cultural traditions with informational sharing and celebrations to acknowledge students' backgrounds. We use the personal experiences of our students, not just during Black and Latino recognition months, but throughout the year by continuously inviting students and their families to share their personal experiences with the class to create understanding.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Our one practice that is our greatest strength is the work and care we put into creating community. So much of our time and energy is given to the question of how we can create, maintain, and improve the whole beings of our children from the moment they walk into the building every morning. All of us spend a great many hours of our lives here. It must offer sanctuary. It is not easy to meet the multiple needs of the people we serve. There are so many aspects to be considered. But Monforton School has the strong foundation of providing for this community for 126 years. More than one hundred years ago the families in our area came together to build a one-room school for their children. They recognized and valued what it means to be educated. We have grown and the world has become a much more complex place. We grapple with issues related to diversity, drugs, abuse, neglect, poverty, homelessness, and hunger. But our roots are deep and strong.

We know that before a child can begin to learn they must be fed and warm. They must know, beyond a doubt, that they are safe and in the care of adults that they can trust. They must be continuously assured that at school they are with people who will love them, and put their welfare first. We recognize that the care and sense of sanctuary must be extended to the adults who come to work each day. They must be constantly cared for and supported through their own life trials and stresses. Before we can love and care for our children, we ourselves must be safe and cared for. Even when we have no control over events outside of our school, in the country and in the world, we can turn to each other and pledge that we will continue to try, we will continue to care. It is because of this commitment that we are strong in our community even when members are angry or ready to blame. We have done so for more than one hundred years and we will continue for another one hundred.

We knew we were on the right path when the parent of a new student shared that it was so hard seeing her child walk toward the building that first day. But then, she said, it was like she could see little roots sprouting out of her son's boots and she just knew her son was going to a place where he belonged.