

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

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 435 Somerset Avenue  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Rockwood State PA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 15557-1030

County Somerset

Telephone (814) 926-4688 Fax (814) 926-4678

Web site/URL https://www.rockwoodschoools.org E-mail jhale@rockwoodschoools.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. Mark Bower E-mail mbower@rockwoodschoools.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Rockwood Area School District Tel. (814) 926-4688

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 Mr. Irvin Kimmel  
(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**

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

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

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

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

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

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

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 2 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	17	15	32
1	19	14	33
2	35	21	56
3	24	18	42
4	16	28	44
5	27	16	43
6	20	25	45
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	158	137	295

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 0 % Asian
  - 2 % Black or African American
  - 0.6 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 97.1 % White
  - 0.3 % 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: 15%

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

Our mobility rate is at 15 percent. In 2020-21 we had one family with 4 children move out of the District. We also had five families with 2 children move out. The incoming families were single child families.

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

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	12
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	35
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	47
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	307
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.15
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	15

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: 46 %

Total number students who qualify: 136

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 13 %  
37 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>3</u> Autism                  | <u>1</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>13</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>16</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>0</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: 13
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	18
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	8
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.	3

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 17:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017
Daily student attendance	94%	90%	94%	95%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2021.

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

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

Yes  No

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

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

The Mission of the Rockwood Area School District is to empower students to reach their full potential as well-rounded, lifelong learners and responsible members of society.

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

<https://go.boarddocs.com/pa/rock/Board.nsf/Public#>

103.1

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

## **PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW**

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The Rockwood Area Elementary School serves a rural community in Somerset County, Pennsylvania. The students of our school reside in the 147 square mile district and live in the small towns, villages, and farms located in the beautiful hills of the laurel highlands. The families of our community are blue collar Americans that live within their means. Middle class families served by the Rockwood Area Elementary School value hard work, education, and community. Family is very important within our community.

The Rockwood Area Elementary School focused on core subjects that meet Pennsylvania Core Standards in kindergarten through 6th grade. The administration, faculty, and support staff uses a Multi-Tiered System of Support to foster student academic growth in Reading. The Title I Reading Program serves students in kindergarten through 3rd grade. Grades 4 through 6 participate in a program known in our school as acceleration period. All students complete enrichment and remediation activities during acceleration period to move them forward academically.

The K-6 guidance counselor and school social worker work with the teachers and administration in supporting the “Leaders of Tomorrow” program. This program is a Positive Behavior Support initiative that focuses on appropriate social skills, anti-bullying, and a positive learning environment for all students. Students are rewarded for positive behaviors and exceptional actions that support our school environment through “Honor Citations.” Suite 360, an SEL program, is used in all grade levels. Our District has one of the lowest millage rates in the state and continues to provide an excellent education to the children of our community.

During COVID-19 closures, the elementary faculty was trained to implement virtual instruction through Google Classroom, Google Docs, and resource distribution. The Rockwood Area School District also implemented bus runs to distribute food and learning materials to our children and families. The materials were distributed by our administration, paraprofessionals, and a few teachers riding buses and delivering items to children's stops.

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

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

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

The Rockwood Elementary uses a Standards Aligned System approach in all subjects. The administration and faculty believes that the core subjects of Reading/ELA, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies should be taught at all grade levels. The Pennsylvania Department of Education's Standards Aligned System (SAS) is the framework for all curriculums. The administration and faculty then uses student data from standardizes assessments (PSSAs), benchmark assessments (DIBELS 8, DRA2, 4Sight), classroom assessments, and teacher observations to make adjustments to the instruction.

The Rockwood Area Elementary School (RAES) Title I and Multi-Tiered System of Support programs provide supplemental and tiered instruction in the areas of reading. Interventions are supplied for foundational reading skills through 30 to 60 additional minutes of instruction to students demonstrating needs through assessment. Progress monitoring is completed for students supported by these programs. The RAES has implemented a one to one device program with the implementation of Chromebooks. Instruction related to Google Suite, Google Classroom, and keyboarding have been implemented. A STEM program is facilitated in grades 4-6 by a common teacher for all grades. Career exploration and education has been supplied to all grade levels. Career days are held yearly with community members brought into classrooms to discuss their career choices and education requirements. The RAES faculty, staff, and administration, in collaboration with parents, continues to focus on meeting students at their level to close achievement gaps and build strengths within our students.

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

The RAES Reading/ELA curriculum is based on PDE's Standards Aligned System and the PA Core Standards. The Reading/ELA curriculum also uses resources from McGraw Hill. The RAES has a Title Program that supports kindergarten through third grade. The Multi-Tiered System of Support program provides tiered interventions to students in kindergarten through 3rd grade. Acceleration Period is used to provided tiered interventions for grades four through six. This period is thirty minutes in length. Students participate in enrichment and remediation activities.

Assessments used to evaluate student progress include DIBELS, DRA2s, 4Sight, and Classroom assessments. Student progress is evaluated by the classroom teachers, the MTSS Data Team, and administration. The MTSS/Instructional Support Team reviews data weekly. Grade level teachers meet with the data team every other week. All students are included in our reading curriculum, MTSS/IST programs, and progress monitoring. Special education students are identified using data from the MTSS program, benchmark assessments, classroom assessments, and teacher information. Special educators support students through inclusionary practices, itinerant supports, and resource periods.

Guided Reading is implemented in kindergarten through 2nd grade. Students read at their ability level and learn about text connections, foundational reading skills, context clues, phonemic awareness, and phonics. Teachers and paraprofessional provide active learning experiences for students grouped by ability. The Goal of the RAES is to meet students where they are and support growth in all subjects. The use of resources within the classroom are important. Teachers are supplied with needed textbooks, materials, and digital resources. Student growth is the focus of our tiny rural school.

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

The RAES focuses on the PA Core Standards and basic mathematics skills. Students are encouraged to develop fluency and competencies in basic mathematics operations. Kindergarten through 6th grade students participate in Math FX period that supports math fluency. Teachers challenge students through a

problem of the week. This problem solving task supports application of skills mastered. The RAES uses EasyCBM assessments to benchmark student progress and monitor student growth. Data is evaluated and instruction is tailored to the needs of students. Students are supplied with enrichment and remediation lessons within our schedule.

Within our school, students are supplied with instruction through grade level standards. Learning activities are connected to PDE Standards Aligned System and PA Core Standards. General education curriculums focus on multi-sensory instruction, building skills through manipulative use, and factual calculations. Application of skills and problem solving is supported through productive struggle. Students with disabilities are supported through general education, special education, and IEP accommodations and modifications.

Teachers from the RAES have focused on inclusion of parents on curriculum activities in all subjects. Mathematics is connected to career based activities. STEM learning has connected Mathematics, Reading/ELA, and scientific method within all grades. Students have applied skills from each subject to support their own growth. Connections made between subjects have supported students. Mathematics events are held for students, and a math carnival was held prior to COVID. Education with high standards has been the focus of students, teachers, and the administration. Teachers have integrated technology to support the Math and Science curriculums.

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

The Rockwood Area Elementary School focuses on connecting subjects and encouraging student exploration. Science is taught in all grades served by the RAES. Science resources are supplied to all grade levels. These resources include textbooks, manipulatives, and items connected to lessons. Teachers implement lessons that provide hands on and independent activities.

The implementation of a STEM program during the 2020-21 school district has supplied experiences for students based on the Scientific Method and Engineering practices. Fourth, 5th, and 6th grade meet with a STEM educator every other day to explore STEM activities. Students are challenged to use their knowledge from all subjects to solve problems. Teachers incorporate science content in Reading and Mathematics instruction. During COVID closure, students completed project based learning at the end of the 2019-20 school year. Science concepts were often the focus that students implemented in these projects. Integration of all subjects in these projects were evident and our school has benefited from student exploration of the subjects.

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

Rockwood Area Elementary School students experience Social Studies learning in every grade level. Community, career, and Social Emotional Learning opportunities are taught within all subjects. The K-6 Guidance Counselor and School Social Worker support social and emotional learning. Fourth grade implements PA History within it's daily schedule. Fifth and 6th grade incorporate US History and Civics within the schedule. Students gain an understanding of government prior to leaving 6th grade and going to our Jr./Sr. High School.

Career and College readiness is supported through RAES learning experiences. Social Studies incorporates community and Job exploration through resources. Teachers work collaboratively with the K-6 Guidance Counselor to implement Paws in Jobland, which allows for career exploration by students. This system is age appropriate for all grade levels. Students in 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th also participate in a job fair that showcases careers and jobs held by local community members. Members of the regional community including the immediate Rockwood Area are invited in to our school to share their job activities, creative experiences, and educational backgrounds.

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

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

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

The Rockwood Elementary supplies educational experiences for students in art, choral music, instrumental music, physical education, and library science weekly. Students participate in activities that meet grade level standards in each of these subjects. The RAES shares two music teachers, a physical education teacher, and librarian with the Rockwood Area Jr./Sr. High School.

The RAES art teacher provides learning experiences for all students using drawing, painting, ceramics, and other medias. The District P.E. teacher provides Health lessons to students in 5th and 6th grade. The District Nurse also support Health Ed. content. Third and 4th grade students have met with the Jr./Sr. High School Spanish and French teachers and students for introductory lessons in these foreign languages.

The intermediate grades (3, 4, 5, and 6) implement learning activities that focus on media and technology use. These grades explore the Google Suite resources and media use. Students use Google Docs, Slides, and work on keyboarding skills. The STEM program, mentioned above, incorporates learning from the Google Suite. STEM also focuses on coding, 3d printing, and robotics at the age appropriate level. Curriculum areas often overlap and make connections within our school. Teachers teach multiple subjects and can integrate learning standards to support these connections.

### **3. Academic Supports**

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

Our school prides itself on a kids come first approach. The RAES implements intervention practices through the Multi-Tiered System of Supports for Reading and Mathematics. Interventions are provided to all students demonstrating academic need through benchmark assessments and classroom instruction. Data-driven decision making is implemented in the classrooms to provide student supports. Learning gaps are targeted and curriculum is adjusted to meet the needs of students. Students data drives instruction and allows for targeted interventions. Our MTSS program is known as WINNERS (What I Need Now Enrichment, Remediation Support), and is a 1-hour period in grades K to 3. Students are provided with targeted interventions and Title I programs are also implemented at this time. If a child is performing below grade level they are known to our teachers, data team, and administration. Progress monitoring takes place weekly or bi-weekly within the MTSS system. Students that demonstrate low scores within assessments and classroom grades are considered for a multi-disciplinary evaluation after interventions do not demonstrate an appropriate rate of improvement over time.

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

Students performing at or above grade level are supported through classroom instruction and enrichment activities. Students are assessed in second grade using the COGAT to get a rough IQ score. Students that score near the gifted range on this assessment have their assessment history reviewed and could be evaluated for gifted services. Primary students are provided with enriching academic experiences through their classroom teacher. Extension activities are provided to students demonstrating academic strengths. WINNERS times are used to support enrichment activities for students at or above grade level. The use of Moby Max, a online educational program/tiered, supports all subjects and meets students at their academic levels. Teachers provide instruction and extension activities for students that finish classroom activities early as long as they are accurate and demonstrate mastery.

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

Students are identified through the Multi-Disciplinary Evaluation process. Student academic performance is reviewed through the MTSS/IST process. Students demonstrating academic needs are referred through the classroom teachers or data team. Data from assessments within the RAES are used to determine appropriate

academic supports. Special education students are supported through inclusionary practices within the regular education environment for a majority of students. These students are supported through co-teaching provided by general education and special education teachers. Services for pull out instruction are also provided if a student demonstrates a need. Pull out services focus on reading/ELA and mathematics supports. Direct Instruction Reading, 95% group reading, Freckle, and other methods are provided to students needing Special Education supports. Student needs are identified through the evaluation, assessments, and progress monitoring. Accommodations and modifications are supplied as appropriate through the student's IEP. Special education services are also individualized and focus on the least restrictive supports. Parents are an important part of the educational team. The focus is what is best for the child.

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

English Language Learners with a need for instruction have been few within the Rockwood Area School District. The RASD ELL curriculum is present within our school and reviewed regularly. The RAES principal serves as the district ELL liaison. Two teachers at the RAES are qualified to provide services. The district librarian provides assessment supports for the ELL program. The last ELL student serviced by the RASD was enrolled in 2016-17. The program provides English Language academic supports and lessons for students that demonstrate a need according to ACCESS assessments. Services are provided according to the level of need.

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

The Rockwood Area Elementary School Principal serves as the Homeless Liaison and Foster Care point of contact. The Rockwood Elementary faculty and staff are provided professional development yearly. The Rockwood Area School District currently serves three homeless students and three foster care placed students. Supports and resources are supplied to these students as appropriate. All school materials are provided to these students. The Homeless Liaison also serves as the Federal Programs Coordinator. This allows for coordination of funds to meet the needs of the students. Students are identified through multiple avenues. Enrollment forms contain residency information and homeless questions. Families are notified of homeless and foster care services each year. A resource closet is available for homeless, foster care, and students demonstrating a need. This closet includes toiletries, clothing items, and other resources that students need. Transportation is provided when needed. Students' best interests are evaluated and considered. Transportation to schools of origin is supplied often to support the child.

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

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

The Rockwood Area Elementary School (RAES) uses a Positive Behavior Support Plan that encourages students to engage in academics, social emotional learning, and developing a positive school culture. Teachers provide "Honor Citations" to students demonstrating exceptional work ethic, academic progress, social interactions, and supporting classroom behaviors. Students making progress are also rewarded. Grade levels are mentioned weekly for their progress. Students of the week are announced each week. Academic progress is celebrated at the end of each grading period and benchmark assessment. Students with perfect attendance are announced and celebrated monthly.

During COVID closures, teachers used ZOOM meetings to connect with students. The school held a read-a-thon for students, and the students read 10,000 books in over two months. The principal was pined in the face by his children to celebrate this reading level. The building principal released video updates on educational approaches, requirements, and school activities. Teachers contacted families via phone calls and digital media. Individual feedback was provided to students on their progress. Online resources were used as challenges and competitions to engage students in learning throughout the past three years. The focus of the Rockwood Area School District (RASD) has been to keep students in school for in-person instruction as allowed. Making connections with students is the most successful way to engage students in learning. Supporting them and providing caring support is essential to meeting student needs.

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

The Rockwood Area School District works with the local community to build our instructional approaches and systems. Community members, local business representatives, and parent have been used to develop the District Comprehensive Plan, the yearly Title I Schoolwide Plan, School and Family Compacts, and discussion, interpretation, and development of school programs. The Rockwood Area Elementary School implements stakeholder groups for the Title I Schoolwide Plan and Parent Advisory Committee. These two groups provide information from the involved stakeholder perspective.

Parents are a key component of each child's academic and social success. Family information related to online resources and educational support have been gathered by the district through surveys. Family engagement sessions related to grades/academic curriculums, kindergarten success, assessments/data, and reading and mathematics supports. These sessions support providing and gathering information from district families. Throughout the pandemic, family surveys were released for a number of reasons to gather information. Local businesses are contacted regarding academic programs and to provide experiences/visits with our children. Local companies and organizations also participate in yearly job fairs for elementary students.

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

After March 2020, teachers within the Rockwood Area Elementary School (RAES) participated in 15 days of District funded Google Classroom, Google Suite, and Google Apps training to support online/virtual education. These professional development sessions were selected by the Rockwood Area Elementary School (RAES) faculty. Teachers and administrators worked collaboratively to develop the instructional approach for COVID closure education.

The professional culture of the RAES is supportive. The use of an Act 48 Chair person and committee support the educational development of teachers and the shared needs. The Act 48 coordinator is a teacher and the committee is made up of teachers, administrators, and stakeholders. Teachers also serve as Curriculum Coordinators. These individuals work closely with the RAES administrator to improve instructional practices and align curriculum. These teachers work with their peers to identify successes and needs within each curriculum area. Teachers are student centered and support students of all ability levels. Teachers are the most important individuals when it comes to impacting the lives of students and learning.

Teacher input for the use of federal program funds are also very important. Class sizes and academic progress of students have been the focus of teachers and the administration. Standards aligned curriculum and data driven decision making professional development has been a focus as well. Teachers have requested these trainings.

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

The current RAES principal and staff are focused on students. Kids come first is the philosophy of our building and district. All decisions are made to benefit kids/students and their families. Our district mission and vision is to develop well-rounded lifelong learners.

The administrative structure of the RAES consists of a single Elementary Principal. The principal currently serves as the District Federal Programs Coordinator, Homeless Liaison, Foster Care Point of Contact, ELL Liaison, and School Assessment Coordinator. The Elementary Principal will enter his 14th year in the position during the 2022-23 school year. Administrative supports come from a K-6 Guidance Counselor, a District Social Worker (new 2021-22), and a District Special Education Coordinator.

Our District is a very rural school that is frugal with funds and budget expenditures. Teachers are the most important resource of our school. Great teachers provide educational opportunities that support student growth and meet the needs of all students. The Elementary Principal's children attend this school and it has been his effort to ensure that all students, no matter their ability, receive the education that his children should receive. All students can learn, grow and become a successful person within our community and society. School programs focus on academic, social and emotional growth.

The RAES is focused on students and family engagement. Our outreach has been successful during the COVID pandemic. Staff also follows policies, procedures, and recommendations of the district and building administration. Relationships are built through support and positive communication, and this applies to staff, students, and parents. Teachers communicate positive notes to parents and students through the "Leaders of Tomorrow Honor Citations." The structure of the staff has changed over time to better support students. Within the past 10 years, the K-6 Guidance Counselor, School Social Worker, and full time District School Psychologist have been added to the staff. These supports have improved services to students for social and emotional needs. These resources have also been a positive addition to support school climate and parent/family engagement.

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

The Rockwood Area Elementary School is a home for roughly 300 students. The school is small enough that the Elementary Principal can name each child. The implementation of the MTSS team/program, Elementary Student Assistance Program, and administrative support staff has supported a culture for learning, improved student outcomes, meets behavior needs, and creates supports for our school family. The administrative team supports each other, develops and implements SEL lessons related to behavior, expectations for student actions within areas of the school and buses. Expectations for student behavior and teacher supports for all students are communicated by the administration.

The RAES has positioned a teacher as the Parent Engagement Coordinator. Outreach sessions are provided in areas identified through parent and stakeholder surveys. Sessions have included social media awareness, academic content trainings, assessment, school program meetings, and general communication/parent-teacher conferences. Our staff supports all students. Diversity is minimal within our community, however, our district has implemented diversity trainings for all staff members, contractors, and transportation employees. Current events are connected to daily instruction. Homeroom teachers show news clips in the morning to all students 4th to 6th grade. Teachable moments are encouraged within the curriculum topics.

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

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The most successful strategy employed to support our schools academic success is the "Leaders of Tomorrow Program." This program celebrates students success in academic, behavior, social interactions, and kindness. The Leaders of Tomorrow program has been developed to encourage all students. This program will promote community and reward all students for their efforts towards becoming a productive member of the school and local community.

- 1: Grades – Students maintain A’s, B’s, E’s, and S’s in all subject areas within the academic classroom.
- 2: Homework Completion – The student completes 90% of homework assigned during the month. If a student is absent, the student will have the time allotted for completion as reflected in the student handbook.
- 3: Prepared for Class - The student is prepared for class on a daily basis. This includes books, pencils, and any other materials required for participation. The student enters the room and begins tasks in a timely manner as requested by the teacher.
- 4: Discipline Issues – The students conducts themselves in a manner that promotes learning and positive interactions with peers and adults within the school. Students who receive a discipline referral to the office will be excluded from the “Leaders of Tomorrow” program for that month.
- 5: Helps Peers in Class – The students demonstrates positive actions towards peers within the classroom. The student helps others when possible. They demonstrate teamwork during group activities. These actions should be modeled for the students.
- 6: Shows Respect to Adults – Students should show respect to adults within the school and community environments. Respect is defined as; a) An attitude of deference, admiration, or esteem; regard; b) The state of being honored or esteemed; c) Polite or kind regard; consideration of others achievements, emotions, differences, and feelings; d) Following/listening to directives/instructions supplied by authority figures without question, unless the directives/instructions are inappropriate or cause harm to the individual.
- 7: Shows Respect to Self and Peers – The students treats themselves as a valuable part of the school and community. They take pride in the achievements of themselves and others. The student focuses on developing knowledge of skills taught and positive social interactions. Self advocacy in situations related to instruction, problem solving, and conflict resolution. Student brings issues of conflict to the attention of adults within the school environment for peer mediation.
- 8: Demonstrates Respect for School Property and Environment – The student takes pride in the materials supplied to them for the purposes of learning and participating in school activities. They treat these materials and the school space as if it is their personal property. Students should keep the school environment neat and clean.
- 9: Attendance – Attendance is one of the most important indicators of student success. A student needs to attend school when possible. If a student is ill, please keep them at home. A doctor or parental excuse must be returned for each absence. Excuses must be submitted to the office within three days after the absence. Students will only be disqualified for the month if they have one unexcused or illegal absence for that month. This means that an excuse was not submitted to the office or the excuse does not meet the reasons for absence in the student handbook.

A safe and supportive environment fosters learning. academic risk taking and productive struggle is encouraged for students in the core subjects. This program is adjusted for students with needs. However, the true strength of our community school is the people that serve our students. Programs can not replace people. Our teachers, support staff, and other staff members are what make RAES a great place to learn.