

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

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Fort Barton School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 99 Lawton Avenue  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Tiverton State RI Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 02878-4631

County Rhode Island

Telephone (401) 624-6114 Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Web site/URL https://www.tivertonschools.org/o/fbes E-mail adonnelyroche@tivertonschools.org

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

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

Name of Superintendent\* Dr. Peter Sanchioni E-mail psanchioni@tivertonschools.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Tiverton School District Tel. (401) 624-8475

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

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

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Dr. Jerome Larkin M.D.  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

## **PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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

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

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

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

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

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

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 3 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 5 TOTAL

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

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

- Urban (city or town)
- Suburban
- Rural

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

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	22	17	39
1	16	18	34
2	17	27	44
3	20	20	40
4	24	18	42
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	99	100	199

\*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
  - 1.5 % Asian
  - 1.5 % Black or African American
  - 3.5 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 88 % White
  - 5.5 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

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

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

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

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

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	5
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	15
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	20
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	219
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.09
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	9

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

Spanish

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %  
2 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 19 %

Total number students who qualify: 37

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 15 %  
30 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. All students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504 should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>6</u> Autism                  | <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>1</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>6</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>7</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>6</u> Speech or Language Impairment         |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>3</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

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

	<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.	10
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.	10
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

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 20:1

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	92%	93%	92%	92%	92%
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. 2014

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

Our mission is to establish a community of learners and learning, through relationships, relevance, and rigor. We are here to educate each of the students we serve through high-quality instruction and positive relationships.

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

<http://tivertonschools.org/common/pages/DisplayFile.aspx?itemId=9662840>

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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Fort Barton Elementary School in Tiverton, Rhode Island is a school community in which equity, inclusion, respect, kindness, personalized instruction, and community-building are valued. Our values are woven into our curricula, school procedures, school activities, and the language we use.

Named after Colonel William Barton, our school sits next to our town hall near the Fort Barton Revolutionary War redoubt, a network of earthen fortifications remaining from the Battle of Rhode Island in 1778. Students reference with pride how their parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents once attended their school. Our town is steeped in history, and the families we serve are proud to have their children enrolled at Fort Barton.

Tiverton is a small coastal town in Newport County, situated just sixty miles south of the city of Boston. Families reside here for generations, and while they may farm, they also access Newport, Providence, and Boston for work and recreation. Many of our faculty and staff members are residents of Tiverton and Newport County, so we are interconnected with one another.

Fort Barton and the Tiverton School Department are part of a collaborative for special education that serves our district and two neighboring districts. Elementary students from all three districts who have significant and complex support needs are included at Fort Barton. Our staff members are proud to educate learners with complex communication, language, and learning support needs. We work in teams to ensure that these students, and all the learners we serve receive personalized instruction.

Children are greeted by name when they arrive at school, as our faculty and staff members know our students well. As a former National Blue Ribbon School, Fort Barton is held in high regard and the families we serve are glad to have their children enrolled here. Our faculty are honored to be public servants who provide engaging and robust instruction within a strong school community, with a reputation and history of excellence. We aim to live up to the honor of having been a National Blue Ribbon School, striving for continual improvement.

Faculty recognize children for acts of kindness, and engage in activities to explicitly practice and teach the spirit of giving. Schoolwide, there is scheduled time for daily morning meetings so teachers get to know children well both socially and academically. We also have scheduled What I Need Time for small group acceleration and/or intervention activities based on frequent progress monitoring and achievement data. Our school implements positive behavioral supports, and restorative practices are used to support and teach children when conflicts arise.

Like most schools, our instruction went remote from April- June, 2020. However, since August 2020, Fort Barton has offered full-day in-person instruction. We had school five days per week for all of our students throughout both the 2020-21 and 2021-22 school years. We are proud to have provided our students full-day in-person instruction, with the option of distance learning.

Intensive professional learning regarding how to teach well via blended learning was provided in the spring of 2019 and expanded throughout the 2020-21 school year. This professional learning afforded Fort Barton teachers a deep dive into how to teach learners at school and at home concurrently. Teachers at Fort Barton worked hard to ensure that all of the children we supported had meaningful ways to participate whether they were learning face to face or remotely.

Regardless of their parents' decision about the location where learning occurred, every Fort Barton student had daily live & direct instruction throughout the 2020-21 and 2021-22 school years. Together as a faculty we committed to this model of teaching learners concurrently.

Our principal had a focus on accelerating student learning from the start of our 2020-21 school year which was also the start of her tenure here at Fort Barton School. When the Principal met with faculty in August of 2020 she said, "Fort Barton educators will focus on and teach current grade- level standards using our high



quality curricula. Certainly, teachers will work in teams to conduct screenings and undergo an instructional gap analysis. We will all be clear on what standards were /weren't secured during our remote months of instruction, and use curriculum compacting if needed. What we will not do is start the school year with a review. We will not start slowly and spend months backfilling. Instead, we will build knowledge through our curricula, while using a personalized approach in early literacy and other skill-based domains. Fort Barton teachers will engage and challenge our students right from the start."

The educators at Fort Barton committed to accelerating student learning from the start. This commitment combined with personalized supports and intervention enabled all students to grow. In 2021, Fort Barton students earned the highest elementary English Language Arts scores in Rhode Island, along with the second highest elementary level math scores state-wide as measured by the Rhode Island Comprehensive Assessment System. We are proud of our students.

## **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:**

Fort Barton uses high-quality evidence-based curricula to teach our students the Common Core State Standards, Next Generation Science Standards, and the Social Emotional Learning Standards adopted by our state. We use both formative and summative tools to measure progress on these standards, and report progress to families at least quarterly. Lessons in all content areas are designed to be universally accessible, with multiple entry points for the range of learners we serve.

Fort Barton routinely implements nationally-normed universal screeners for mathematics, literacy, and social emotional learning. Since these are web-based, we were able to use them throughout our concurrent model of face-to-face and remote learning. These universal screeners had been validity-tested for online use, so Fort Barton teachers are confident in how to conduct those screenings face to face and/or remotely as needed. We screened every student at least quarterly in mathematics, literacy, and social emotional learning and we used these data and our curriculum-based assessments to tier and personalize instruction.

Selections of our instructional materials are made by adoption committees made up of teacher leaders and our administrator. All of those programs have online components and the adaptability to be used in blended learning environments. While we believe we have the best programs available, our principal often reminds us that the most important instructional aspect of the classroom is the educator. Educators at Fort Barton are quite talented and use their professional judgment, screening data, and data from both classroom and curriculum-based assessments to adjust instruction for the learners in front of them. We are proud that routinely, even throughout the pandemic, every one of the diverse range of learners we teach continued to access the support services and interventions needed to personalize their learning.

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

Our school addresses literacy comprehensively by using the Foundations, Geodes, and Wit & Wisdom programs in concert to provide an interdisciplinary yet thorough approach to discrete skill-based development of early literacy that is connected to themed units of study. We teach reading and writing of all genres, comprehension and critical thinking in a connected manner that provides an equitable build of background knowledge for our students. Students are actively engaged in high-level, cognitively challenging tasks using informational and fiction texts at every grade level. Critical thinking, comprehension, language usage, and vocabulary are nurtured, explicitly-taught, and monitored.

Early literacy skills are explicitly taught at Fort Barton, across grades kindergarten through third. Our teachers are well-trained and use a thorough evidence-based approach. Our reading specialist models and supports high quality instruction and formative assessments in her field of expertise. Together with the specialist, classroom educators analyze our students' understanding and application of the components of reading and writing as each is taught. We use a multisensory approach that builds over time and is redundant by design, across these grade levels.

Geodes texts provide non-fictional quality texts that address the skills we've taught at an 80% or higher level of decodability, and bridge to our units of study in English Language Arts through common subject matter. Teachers at grades kindergarten to two use these texts for small group intervention and to connect our students' foundational skills with the content they are learning.

All of Fort Barton's classrooms are learning communities where children are encouraged to predict, reflect, infer, and imagine. Students at every grade level read and discuss texts at their independent levels and at much higher levels. Fort Barton students use reference texts, and anchoring artwork and cite evidence from these pieces often both in discussions and our writing.

We strive for independence and encourage self-monitoring, as well as positive peer interactions through conferencing and collaborative writing projects.. Additionally, teachers monitor student progress with formative and summative common assessments at each grade level, as well as web-based adaptive learning tools including Lexia and Freckle. In-class support from our literacy specialist and special educators allows students with specific learning needs to fully access the curriculum. Additional personalized skill development occurs during our What I Need (WIN) blocks.

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

Fort Barton School's mathematics program, Eureka, was selected due to a strong constructivist approach that develops visual and mathematical models. Instruction in mathematics is carefully sequenced to develop computational skill and the math practices as children grow and learn through the grade levels. Children learn to develop and use both mathematical modeling and algorithms to solve problems.

Our curriculum and resources emphasize foundation mathematics skills and practices centered on number sense, fluency, problem solving, geometry, elementary data and statistics, and algebraic thinking. Math lessons are designed to meet the varied academic needs of all learners through differentiation, math application activities and games, as well as individualized interventions and instruction.

Students are engaged via teachers' instruction, engaging independent practice, and mathematical discourse. Various pedagogical approaches ensure that Fort Barton students develop a strong foundational understanding of mathematics and mathematical thinking.

Blended learning opportunities are provided via web-based software such as Zearn and Freckle along with online math manipulatives and tools. Teachers monitor student understanding with these tools as well as common formative and summative assessments at each grade level, along with exit tickets and check-ins, and fluency probes. In-class support from our mathematics interventionist and special educators allow all students to fully access the curriculum. Additional personalized skill development occurs during our WIN blocks.

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

Our Science program, Amplify, was chosen due to its real world problem-based approach and strong connectivity to how we teach the close reading and citation of non-fiction texts and data sources. The program is also accessible, having been written with universal design for learning front of mind.

Engineering and other scientific and computational practices are embedded in our lessons. Fort Barton students study earth and space, physical, and life science through an inquiry-based approach at each grade. Students engage in three-dimensional learning and apply the mathematics and literacy skills in an integrated manner as they learn. Science affords children the opportunity for both hands-on investigations and web-based simulations. Our students get to apply the skills they have been learning in real and engaging ways.

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

Social studies, history, and civics are also addressed in an integrated way, through our units of study in English Language Arts. Topics include geography, the development of timelines, westward expansion, reconstruction, immigration, school segregation and integration, the space race and exploration, as well as the American Revolution.

Dedicated time for daily morning meetings in each homeroom was added to our schedule in August 2020. This time affords teachers opportunities to build social emotional skills and teach civics in small real-world ways daily.. We have found this time invaluable to build classroom culture and community especially for our students whose social learning opportunities have been constrained and reduced by the pandemic.

We know that our school is a community of learners, and we work hard to develop the value of community

in our students through how and what we teach. This applies to social studies and tends to permeate all that we do.

**1f. For secondary schools:**

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

**2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

Other curriculum areas taught at Fort Barton are once weekly classes in Art, Music, and Library Media. Each of these classes are forty minutes per week. In addition, students have twice weekly Physical Education/ Health classes.

In Art class, students each have 40 minutes weekly to explore various media, and learn various methods used to draw, paint, sculpt, print, and design. Children learn about famous artists, various techniques, and are encouraged to incorporate their own original ideas and express themselves using similar media. Our students have the opportunity for project-based learning and extension activities that build on what they are learning in our core curriculum.

Students have a multi-sensory and engaging Music class for 40 minutes weekly. This class includes movement, singing, composing, improvising, listening and playing instruments. Students explore history and culture in musical lessons that connect and expand upon our core curricula. For example, when second graders learn and read about the Plains Indians in English Language Arts/History, they listen to and learn about the instruments and culture of the Plains Indian in Music class. Third graders all also learn composition. Students in grade four all have the option to learn a string instrument in a supplemental class held before the school day.

Students in kindergarten through grade 4 learn with the Library Media Specialist through lessons in digital literacy and digital citizenship, exploration of various genres, and literature appreciation. This class meets once weekly for 40 minutes. In addition, students in grades three and four are offered a chance to apply their knowledge and skills in media production to develop screencasts and slide decks that are used school-wide.

All Fort Barton students learn skills and habits that enhance their physical well-being and long-term health through our Physical Education and Health program. This is provided forty minutes twice a week at each grade level. Our students access a wide range of different sports and activities including soccer, basketball, volleyball, bowling, softball, and floor hockey. Through exposure to a wide variety of physical activities, students are given the opportunity to develop preferences that will encourage them to stay active as they get older. The program helps students identify and model characteristics of good sportsmanship. Students learn to work as part of a team and to encourage the efforts of all of their peers. Health lessons address nutrition, wellness, body systems, substance abuse and prevention, mental and emotional health, and personal health.

**3. Academic Supports**

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

Each time our universal screenings in mathematics, literacy, and social emotional learning are completed, Fort Barton teachers meet to review the data by grade level, with our specialists and principal present. Together as a team, we determine which students we need to look at specifically, and additional information and assessment data is gathered. When reviewing universal screening data, teams consider national percentile rankings as well as student growth, and examine specific gaps in skill. All these data are used in concert to determine instructional goals and learning targets. Teacher teams work together to design

personalized interventions in the primary area(s) of concern and determine the best way to monitor progress with specific growth/learning targets in mind.

Our mathematics interventionist, reading specialist, and special educators join core instruction to allow all students to fully access the curriculum. Personalized interventions are also provided, in addition to that time, during our What I Need (WIN) blocks. These are focused, direct instruction on the identified learning target.. As students progress, new targets and goals are set by our team.

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

Strategies and techniques are employed to advance and extend learning for Fort Barton students who perform at or above grade level. During What I Need (WIN) time, students may engage in enrichment activities or extension activities to stretch their learning. Enrichment for these students also offers the opportunity to investigate a topic more deeply. Our adaptive learning tools, such as Lexia and Zearn, provide opportunities for students who are above grade level to build skills beyond what is expected at the enrolled grade level.

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

Fort Barton School's entire faculty and all staff members pride ourselves on welcoming, including and supporting all learners. Students with specialized needs enroll in our school from both our district and two nearby districts, as Individual Education Program teams from the three districts place students with the most complex support needs here. We have three very talented special educators, a speech language pathologist, an occupational therapist, a social worker, as well as many classroom teachers with experience and expertise as special educators and additional itinerant related service providers.

Our educational teams work with families well, and strive for meaningful engagement for all students, and foster self-advocacy and independence. We are planful about how we support each learner to reach his/her academic, personal, and social potential as contributing members of our school community. Providing special education services involves teamwork and collaboration and that is a definite strength demonstrated on a daily basis by our faculty and staff members.

Educators tailor instruction and supports to meet the individual needs of each student with an Individualized Education Program. For some of our students that may mean specialized technology, preteaching or review, adaptive equipment or alternate texts. Tailoring instruction may mean accessing core content through a different modality, or- for a few students who are alternatively assessed- accessing different adaptive content. Regardless, every Fort Barton student is a member of their grade and homeroom first. Educators at Fort Barton intentionally foster a culture of belonging and membership for each child. A student with special support needs is first and foremost a "first grader" or a "third grader" with all the opportunities and responsibilities of that membership afforded to them.

Fort Barton School strives for high growth rates for all of our students. We assume capacity, provide support, and believe all students will make significant growth. Our curriculum, instruction, and assessments are aligned and universally designed to foster learning for each and every child.

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

We use a sheltered instructional model, focusing on in class support for our learners who are acquiring English. Our itinerant ELL Specialist screens students after registration based on the home language survey and a parent interview. Since our district and state are part of the WIDA English Language Development consortia, we incorporate those standards and the Can Do descriptors into our instructional planning for English Language Learners. We use MODEL and ACCESS results in concert with our other formative and summative assessments to measure progress.

The ELL program at Fort Barton is designed around in class support, and small group/1-1 sessions of direct instruction with students and parent collaboration and communication. The ELL specialist teams with and

attends parent meetings with the classroom teacher and has developed relationships with students and their families, supporting engagement and advocacy in our school and larger community.

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

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

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

The school community at Fort Barton values and embodies equity, inclusion, respect, kindness, personalized instruction, and community-building in all that we do. Our values are woven into our curricula, school schedule, school activities, and the language we use. As faculty and staff members, our intention is to help students acquire, practice and develop these in all aspects of their lives.

Academic and social engagement starts with knowing our students well and our faculty intentionally plans for this. One way is through the daily school announcements. Fort Barton students in grades three and four apply and demonstrate their digital literacy skills by designing slide decks and screencasts for our daily announcements, which they broadcast school-wide. While we have several teacher-made templates and certain expectations for these announcements, students are also encouraged to share their individual interests as well. So each morning, as a school community, both staff members and students look forward to seeing who is leading the announcements that day and learning about them through the graphics and photos they have added to their slide deck, as well as any jokes, tips or quotes they choose to share. This three to four minute ritual builds community and starts us off connected each day.

We also intentionally schedule morning meetings in a school-wide block. This is a time when classroom teachers model and afford children practice of social skill development, inclusion and our school values. Agendas for the day may be reviewed, and oftentimes questions of the day are discussed, with student voices dominating.

Fort Barton is a Kindness Certified School, and we are committed to recognizing and honoring our students' kindness. Our "Be the I in Kind" are posted prominently in the main hall, with a photograph of each honoree emailed home along with a narrative explaining their kindness. As children walk to the cafeteria, you may overhear them say things such as, "Oh look! Your little brother got the I in Kind award!" We also work with our students' families to engage children in school-wide Spirit of Giving charitable projects to encourage kindness as well as community engagement.

Having cross- grade level activities is another valued strategy we use. We pair classes of older children with classes at the younger levels to engage in activities such as paired reading, or teach how to use certain instructional software or manipulatives. When COVID mitigation restricted us having classes physically together, we were able to continue many of our school-wide activities through online break-out rooms where older children met with those in younger grades. Even virtual, the interaction with students of different ages was something children looked forward to with eagerness. These cross-grade level activities motivate our students so much, and we are thrilled to be transitioning back to having more of them face-to-face.

Our students know we care about each of them, their struggles, and their successes. We engage all children in school-wide and classroom rituals and routines, which they anticipate and appreciate. We set goals and celebrate growth toward them school-wide, by grade-level, within classrooms, and at the individual student level. We teach in a personalized manner, and know each student by name. Fort Barton faculty and staff members strive to support our students' academic and social emotional growth.

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

Fort Barton School engages the families we serve, and our greater community, in various ways. Our teachers communicate with the families of their students through email, notes, phone calls, as well class newsletters and district-approved communication software applications. We also now leverage Google Classroom tools for communication, as student assignments, reference materials, and curriculum arcs are accessible there. Our principal sends emails that highlight what is happening at school at least weekly to all families of the children we serve. Additionally, we have a website with grade-specific virtual backpacks for each grade level.

Fort Barton School hosts orientations for incoming kindergarteners and our new students, as well as a school-wide Open House each Fall. While some of these activities and many of our parent meetings, such as parent conferences, have shifted to become virtual of late, we still aim to be a welcoming place. One way in which we've tried to stay welcoming is by installing picnic tables so that we can offer our students' families the option of face-to-face meetings on campus. While we can't yet invite parents back into our physical school, we do invite and get to have many meetings face-to-face live in person just outside at the picnic tables.

The school is a member of the Feinstein Feinstein Jr. Scholar philanthropic program which encourages children to do good deeds throughout the school year. We also partner with a local nonprofit called The CORE Organization, and are grateful to welcome them to offer both before and after school enrichment programs, both face-to-face and virtually.

Our PTO is an active committee of families with children who attend our school as well as the principal and two-three teacher representatives. The PTO endeavors to support the learning, sense of community, and well-being of the children at our school. The executive board members of the PTO work closely with the principal to coordinate special events and activities. For example, when Fort Barton held a school-wide Spirit of Giving project to create holiday gifts and cards for local senior citizens, the PTO provided the wrapping paper and special art supplies our students used. During our school-wide celebration of the one-hundredth day of instruction, each student at Fort Barton received glow sticks and a pair of neon sunglasses to go with the theme, "100 Days Brighter!" from the PTO. We are pleased to partner with our PTO to develop themed school-spirit days and special events for our students throughout the year, too.

Together with our PTO, our principal works hard to communicate Fort Barton's interest in Kindness and the Spirit of Giving to our larger local community, and this creates opportunities for real and meaningful connection. For example, this year our students worked with our art educator to create a Kindness Quilt for display at the local artisan and farmer's market. We also had students from the local career and technical education program design and build playground equipment for our students to use.

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

There is a longstanding culture of professionalism at Fort Barton School. Teachers and staff members know we do important work here, and we take it seriously.

Professional Learning is provided to all employees at Fort Barton in job alike groups, during the work day. This year our principal and teachers had a series of professional learning sessions focused on high leverage instructional strategies that are evidence based and intended to boost student engagement. As we intentionally began to move away from our concurrent instructional model and refocus solely on face-to-face learning, the emphasis on student engagement and culturally responsive strategies made sense. Our paraprofessional staff members had a series of sessions to learn about best practices for social/behavioral support; our social worker's professional learning focuses on trauma-informed practices and social emotional learning. These topical approaches to learning were then brought to each job-alike or grade-level professional learning community for discussion, analysis, and implementation. The intention of this approach is to ensure that we don't have "one and done" training, but have deeper learning that promotes our growth as educators and yields a positive impact on the students we serve.

We are in the midst of reinforcing our professional culture through guided study of best practices for Professional Learning Communities and intend to build in more time for PLCs to meet, analyze student work, and continue to make instructional decisions that are student-centered. As a community of learners and learning, we want to model and practice what we expect of children and continue to grow as professionals.

In addition to this, we work at ensuring a collaborative environment. For example, each time our principal has a faculty meeting, a draft agenda is shared in advance for all to see and add to, and there are at least two opportunities for all present to share at each meeting. Additionally, common planning time is built in each grade level schedule, and protected. Teachers collaborate on lesson development, data collection and



analysis, curating supplemental resources, planning extension activities, and supporting all of our learners well.

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

At Fort Barton School, we have a collaborative approach and value servant leadership. It is a shared understanding that we are here to foster our students' growth and development and to accelerate each child's learning. Staff collaboration and engagement abound throughout our school, while the responsibilities of each distinct role are valued. We are committed to our role in the work and our shared values. At Fort Barton, everyone works in concert.

All of us recognize that quality student-centered initiatives and solutions to challenging situations are what matter, and we work well in our various job functions as a team. Our principal encourages collaboration and asks for feedback from staff members, students, and their families. This feedback is welcomed anytime and is often impromptu, yet is also formally culled through surveys on school climate, school communication, and student engagement.

Teachers are key players in the leadership process. Our school has several structured leadership activities in which teachers engage. Our School Improvement Team includes stakeholders representing students' families and our faculty. This group has input into hiring and the development of the school's priorities for each school year, which drive the use of our allocated resources. Additionally, a screening committee comprised of teacher leaders and the principal review the qualifications of candidates and hold first round interviews. As discussed elsewhere within this document, collaborative data teams at each grade level are at the heart of our work and play an important and influential role in designing interventions for students.

Faculty and staff members also opt into volunteer leadership roles, which run the gamut from ad hoc special event planning to more cyclical committee work such as developing the building schedule, or refining our implementation of a program or strategy. One specific example, most recently, was our Rebooting Recess committee which was the brainchild of one of our paraprofessionals in response to a greater need for developing play skills at recess after the isolation of COVID-19. This committee wound up becoming a group of three paraprofessionals, the principal, and a teacher who worked to develop common expectations for both staff members and students during our recess periods. The committee enlisted special educators to develop accessible visuals to communicate these expectations, and revamped many recess activities as well, to give children more choices along with more consistent support. The committee also used free resources from Playworks.org to develop a New Game zone with explicit instruction and support and harnessed the digital morning announcements as a way to communicate expectations throughout the school community. Their work was valued and implemented with great success. Thanks to this group's organic leadership, recess is once again an engaging and fun experience for students, with clear expectations, more choice, with scaffolded supports in place. This is one good example of how things work at Fort Barton School. We are here to serve students, together.

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

Our faculty has been engaged in professional learning about high leverage instructional strategies throughout the 2021-22 school year, including many that we know to be culturally responsive. These include considerations for classroom setup, moves for activating students' prior knowledge, making learning contextual, building social connections, tapping into social and cultural issues to build connection

We spent time last year as a faculty on developing our skills in using restorative practices, and many teachers at Fort Barton have opted to learn about trauma-informed practices for the classroom. Faculty demonstrate and model respect across the school, and use restorative circles and/or restorative conversations to ensure each voice is heard and honored, with solution finding and restoration of relationship as the goals.

At Fort Barton, students know we care about them, and know we will support them to meet with and overcome challenges and opportunities. Our faculty and staff members strive for meaningful engagement for

each child, and foster self-advocacy and independence. We are planful about how we support each learner to reach his/her academic, personal, and social potential as contributing members of our school community.

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

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While many wonderful things happen every day at Fort Barton, our faculty's collaborative approach to using data to design personalized supports for children is key to our students' success.

This process is both intentional and iterative. We set aside clear blocks of time for routine universal screenings, as well as deadlines for ourselves. We block out time for groups of teachers to meet to analyze student data. We schedule What I Need blocks at every grade level, building both classroom educators' and specialists' schedules around them.

Our nationally-normed universal screeners for mathematics, literacy, and social emotional learning are given three to four times annually. After each universal screen, these data are thoroughly reviewed and analyzed by teams of grade level classroom teachers, who are joined by our literacy specialist, our math interventionist, our social worker, our special educators, and our principal. Together the teams identify strengths and challenges, and look closely at student growth rates, as well as national percentile rankings, and proficiency on standards. These data are used to prioritize and adjust how we teach.

Tiered interventions are designed and refined for groups of students based on specific area(s) of need and the needed intensity of support. Individual interventions are designed for our students whose rates of improvement have slowed or plateaued. Data meetings may result in many changes to which students receive what interventions, increases in the frequency or duration of interventions, and a list of individual children on whom the classroom teacher and specialist(s) may wish to meet about in more detail, with additional data from classroom work and assessments. All such meetings lead to our students getting the level and type of instructional support needed.

Having high-quality screening tools and a strong understanding of how to use the tools is key to our success. Our principal works with our district team to ensure that professional learning support on how to use these tools is provided for our new educators with refresher training for our veterans. Clear agenda and outcomes, along with uninterrupted time for our collaborative data conversations are critical, as is our foundational understanding of growth rates. We know that children who start out at a lower percentile rank should have higher growth rates when well supported, and we hold ourselves accountable to provide what is needed to ensure that happens. At the core of the work and of Fort Barton School's success is our shared belief in our students' capacity to learn. We are here to support and accelerate every student's growth. It is both our responsibility and our honor.