

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 500 Main Street PO Box 1000
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Timber Lake State SD Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 57656-1000

County Dewey

Telephone (605) 865-3654 Fax (605) 865-3294

Web site/URL <https://www.timberlakeschool.org/> E-mail Danae.Paxton@k12.sd.us

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. Dan Martin E-mail Dan.Martin@k12.sd.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Timber Lake School District 20-3 Tel. (605) 865-3654

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. Jake Kraft
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

Date _____

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

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

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

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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

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

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

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

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

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

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 0 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 0 High schools
 - 1 K-12 schools
- 1 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 | 8 | 9 | 17 |
| K | 12 | 8 | 20 |
| 1 | 14 | 8 | 22 |
| 2 | 12 | 13 | 25 |
| 3 | 15 | 8 | 23 |
| 4 | 16 | 11 | 27 |
| 5 | 7 | 11 | 18 |
| 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 12 or higher | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Students | 84 | 68 | 152 |

*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):
- 54 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 % Asian
 - 0 % Black or African American
 - 1 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 45 % White
 - 0 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2020 - 2021 school year: 6%

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

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

| Steps For Determining Mobility Rate | Answer |
|--|---------------|
| (1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year | 6 |
| (2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year | 4 |
| (3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)] | 10 |
| (4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020 | 171 |
| (5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4) | 0.06 |
| (6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100 | 6 |

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

South African

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

1 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 31 %

Total number students who qualify: 47

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 15 %
23 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>0</u> Autism | <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>3</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>1</u> Developmental Delay | <u>3</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: 7
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

| | Number of Staff |
|--|------------------------|
| Administrators | 1 |
| Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher. | 14 |
| Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc. | 6 |
| 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. | 1 |

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 11:1

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

| Required Information | 2020-2021 | 2019-2020 | 2018-2019 | 2017-2018 | 2016-2017 |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Daily student attendance | 96% | 98% | 97% | 97% | 95% |
| High school graduation rate | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |

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

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

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

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

Yes No

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

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

The Timber Lake School provides a safe environment that empowers students to become critical thinkers and responsible lifelong learners in a changing society.

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

<https://timberlakeschool.org/>

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

The rural north central South Dakota communities of Timber Lake, Isabel, White Horse, Trail City, Black Foot, Promise, Firesteel, and Glencross make up Timber Lake School District. The Cheyenne River Sioux Indian Reservation and Standing Rock Sioux Indian Reservation are within district boundaries. A total of four buses provide transportation as some students travel up to 50 miles one way to attend Timber Lake School. Our ethnic groups include 54% Native American students and 45% Caucasian students.

On the 2020-21 state assessments, our Native American students scored 36% higher in English Language Arts than that of the South Dakota percentage of Native American students. In Math, our Native American students scored 40% higher than the state average for Native American students. The key strategies used within our school include using data to drive instruction and supporting the whole child. The implementation of Panther Academy, our Intervention and Enrichment program, supports all students with targeted instruction specific to their needs daily. Intervention groups are created during collaborative teacher data reviews which generally take place during Professional Learning Community (PLC) time. Student growth and progress is monitored on a consistent basis. Our recently implemented Standards Based Report Card and student led parent-teacher conferences allow students and teachers to provide parents with quality communication on grade level state standards, classroom expectations, and attendance. The partnership between parents and teachers is essential for maximum student achievement.

Within all grade levels, teachers support students with “I can statements” posted in their classrooms that are discussed throughout their lessons as they connect students’ experiences to the lesson objective and state standards. The elementary After School program is provided to students showing a below benchmark academic need. Students receive tutoring instruction two nights a week for one hour based on their skills gaps or areas of weakness. Social emotional learning support is provided in all Preschool through fifth grade environments and families are provided with SEL education and teacher feedback. Timber Lake Elementary takes great pride in promoting positive and healthy reading incentive events such as Fly Away with Reading where grade levels were challenged to read. Students then participated in an exciting trip to Air Kraft Spraying and the Timber Lake Airport.

During COVID-19, Timber Lake Elementary School strived to never lose sight of our student needs and followed a Stay the Course plan based on South Dakota Department of Health guidance, and staff and community input. The school packed and delivered meals, curriculum, and technology. Staff provided home visits and social distanced in student’s yards to assist them. Special Education services continued through school closures and sped meetings were held virtually or socially distanced. A summer counseling program was provided during COVID-19 and students received virtual sessions as needed. Homecoming Week encouraged students to take pride in our school with outside team building activities and events and families were included in the events through social media opportunities.

Ongoing professional development opportunities have always been important for teacher and paraprofessional growth in our school. During the Pandemic, our school board and staff committed to taking on additional professional development to enhance technology skills in all areas. Teachers not only provided technology instruction to their students, but also tutored parents in the use of Google Classroom which was designated as our district platform. Teachers also became masters at posting lesson plans, learning videos, and educational links online, facilitating classes and meetings via Zoom, and instructing students in person while others who were quarantined learned from home.

Commitment, dedication, perseverance, and hard work is what makes the students and staff at Timber Lake Elementary School achieve excellence.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

Timber Lake Elementary School strives to create processes, engage families, and use data to educate the “whole” child in all content areas while addressing social-emotional needs at the same time. Each grade level has identified their priority Power Standards across all subject areas. These are the standards that students need to have mastered in order to successfully complete each grade level. Teachers map their progress and the implementation of the standards by using Planbook or another curriculum tool of their choice.

PLC collaboration is essential in determining where a student’s current level of understanding is and determining what level of rigor is required for student success. Teachers use data from multiple sources to determine the depth of knowledge of the standards (Webb Leveling). Based on state and district data, students are supported with targeted intervention and enrichment during Panther Academy each day. Students are also provided with additional support through the Elementary After School Program, Title, and Special Education if they meet eligibility criteria.

Standards based report cards were implemented to track and report student growth and mastery of standards. NWEA MAP reports are also shared with parents/guardians three times a year to help them understand what students have learned, and what they are ready to learn next.

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

Timber Lake Elementary’s Reading and Writing program has made great adjustments in recent years with the support of our Reading Curriculum Committee identifying research-based curriculum. Our PreK- 2nd grade utilized Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Journey’s curriculum with a variety of supplementation such as writing materials and online programs like Exact Path, Reading Eggs, Accelerated Reader (AR), and IXL. The Story Works curriculum in our 3rd- 5th grades has been utilized for the past five years and has also required teachers to supplement in areas that are identified as an area of weakness through curriculum mapping and standard alignment data. Our elementary reading and writing CORE block allows for 90 minutes daily of literacy instruction. Students receive explicit instruction in reading, writing, phonics, and grammar. During this time, teachers utilize whole group learning, guided- reading instruction, small group support and individual tutoring and conferencing. Our students are supported with beginning and end of unit assessments, CORE and Dibels screeners, digital tools and teacher created resource materials.

We have amazing paraprofessional educators that assist in our classrooms based on student need and because of small classroom sizes it is not uncommon to see students continuously receiving instructional support and continuous formative assessments in a small group table setting, small group carpet setting or individual tutor session. Our reading and writing learning stations offer flexible seating such as wobble stools, bucket chairs, floor mats, and standing desks. In kindergarten, teachers are exposing students to manipulatives, anchor charts, whiteboards, and other learning tools as they teach their “I can statement” and students identify their letters, sounds, blends, and sight words. The upper elementary classrooms utilize technology integration to a more independent level as students benefit from additional programs such as Flocabulary, dreamscape, kid blog and Nearpod. An example fourth grade Story Works lesson includes reading the original Legends of Sleepy Hollow and the Story Works Legends of Sleepy Hollow and comparing two texts. Students can analyze and dig deeper into the language that was used in that time period compared to now.

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

Our math curriculum is Investigations by Savvas. Our math curriculum committee researched, visited other South Dakota schools, and implemented Investigations six years ago. At that time, our district data review showed a weakness in elementary math instruction. After the implementation of Investigations in Prek-5th grades, our math achievement scores have increased. This curriculum is inquiry-based and supports students with hands-on, real-life investigation opportunity. Teachers use manipulatives and other mathematical tools along with strategic and extended thinking strategies to help students grow with understanding math concepts. A large focus of the math lesson is spent on teaching students to collaborate, work in teams, and formulate their own questions as they analyze and prove higher order thinking. Students are taught to be responsible for their learning by explaining their thinking and teaching the skill to their classmates. The math core block allows for 60-90 minutes and begins with "10-minute math" and moves to investigating daily learning targets while incorporating small group practice, individual work and differentiated instruction based on a student's level of understanding.

Formative and Summative Math assessments are given throughout the year. Our NWEA MAP assessments are given in the Fall, Winter, and Spring. This data is used as evidence to reteach a concept and teach with a different approach, create targeted instructional groups during Panther Academy, our Intervention and Enrichment block, and identify the need for Title instruction and After School program tutoring. Our progress monitoring document is key as students are monitored closely on academic and behavior supports. For example, if a student is showing a weakness in Math, performing in the bottom 20% and receiving Title services, that student is additionally recommended to attend the After School program and receive weekly tutoring on specific math concepts. As we streamline our interventions and support our Core Blocks of instruction, students do not fall between the cracks and become overlooked.

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

The Mystery Science curriculum is utilized in all Preschool through fifth grade classrooms. Following next generation science standards, the curriculum focuses on four domains and different lessons within the domains. Each lesson takes from two to three days and can easily be extended between those days depending on grade level. An example of a third-grade lesson, Could you Outrun a Dinosaur? In it, students learn about how fossil dinosaur tracks reveal how quickly a dinosaur was running. They investigate and connect with how scientists study the past. Students create the dinosaur stride length and get to conduct the investigation with racing the dinosaur. Students are absolutely engaged in the curriculum, "It's amazing!" "It's my favorite subject in school," "It helps us learn creatively." Our primary grade levels also can make great connections to Mystery Science components. Technology use and video clips are utilized while students discuss extension questions for deeper thinking and analysis. Students are constantly exposed to different forms of science knowledge as they explore, create, test, critique and explain their thinking during science instruction. Curriculum-based assessments and investigation outcomes are used to continually evaluate student learning.

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

Our PreK- 5th grade teachers use a variety of resources to teach our South Dakota social studies standards. In fourth grade, students are exposed to South Dakota Historical Society Kits to teach state history. The kits are engaging and have interactive activities as students learn states, capitals, regions, presidents, etc. A favorite lesson from the Social Studies Kit, Fur Trade Act-It-Out, has students identify and use different items from the Fur Trade Kit. Students then role play the trade process while still communicating in the same way as Native Americans and early settlers communicated. Our primary grades research topics such as body/health, geographical areas, nonfiction animals, etc. and incorporate hands on projects to cover topics like "Communities and Community Helpers." The samples of these projects are displayed in our elementary hallway as students take pride in their work and make connections with social studies standards. Standard based rubrics are used to assess student projects and curriculum-based assessments provide additional evidence of learning.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

Timber Lake Elementary School is fortunate to have stakeholder support and the highly qualified staff necessary to set our youngest learners up for success through a strong and growing early childhood program. We offer a full-day Preschool program three days a week and recently added a Junior Kindergarten four days a week in response to the lack of early learning opportunities caused by the pandemic. Evidence (data) supports the impact these early learning opportunities have on school readiness skills, social development, and the success of our students as they transition to the primary grades.

Early learning standards and research-based curriculum are utilized in our early childhood classrooms. Students receive instruction in Language Arts, Writing/Vowac, Math, Science and Social Studies. Students are also supported with developmental play and social emotional learning blocks built into their daily schedule, along with being exposed to cultural education/Lakota Language, art, physical education, library, counseling lessons, and the music program. The Preschool and Jr. Kindergarten teachers utilize Professional Learning Communities (PLC) time and grade level meetings to collaborate on the alignment of early childhood learning with primary grade state standards.

Sensory integration is essential at this developmental stage, as is parent involvement. Students at this level are screened for developmental concerns and speech delays so critical interventions can be provided as quickly as possible in an inclusive environment. Additional evidence of the positive impact our early childhood program has includes the Kindergarten Readiness assessments completed by our Kindergarten teachers in February. Our Readiness team then meets with parents to discuss the opportunity to place their child where he/she will be most successful the following school year.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Timber Lake Elementary School shares staff with Timber Lake High School and Middle School. This does present challenges we have to adapt to when creating a master operating schedule. All students in Preschool through fifth grade have daily opportunities to participate in physical education class, art, music and library. It takes a great deal of collaboration and elementary teachers who are willing to be flexible with their planning times to ensure every child receives at least thirty minutes of physical education each day. Students receive sixty minutes of music each week and perform in two elementary music productions yearly. Art is also introduced in Preschool and scheduled for thirty minutes weekly in all grade levels. This exposure to fine arts is critical for the development of our youngest learners. Our library program is thriving as it supports literacy all year round. Library classes are scheduled for all grade levels for thirty minutes each week during the school year and we have a Summer Reading Program that directly impacts more than half of our families.

Our Native American Education coordinator is also a highly qualified elementary and early childhood education teacher who contributes to other curriculum programs for our children such as the teaching of Lakota values, Lakota Language, and cultural education. She also organizes special workshops that focus on building life skills such as drum and ribbon skirt making. The culture education activities she facilitates are offered to the general student population and help students embrace our diversity.

Technology provided to students in our school has a positive impact on learning. School issued iPads are provided to children in grades Preschool through 2nd and laptop computers are issued to students in grades 3rd through 5th. The technology we have and our daily use of it within all educational settings allows our school to transition to virtual school and online curriculum seamlessly when needed due to COVID-19 Pandemic related closures. Professional development in technology use, Google Classroom, and programs such as seesaw and class dojo have helped us be successful in this area. We also have assistive technology available to students with disabilities who benefit from it. Google Read and Write is one of the most recent purchases our district has made for students who have difficulty with reading and writing.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Tailoring instruction, interventions, and assessments to meet the individual needs of our native and non-native student population is a high priority at Timber Lake Elementary School. The Support Services Professional Learning Community (PLC) tracks student data such as NWEA MAP scores, state assessment scores, attendance, behavior referrals, counseling referrals, students who have been screened for EL services, students who have been screened for hearing and vision concerns, and students who have been diagnosed with medical conditions. Students who are receiving Special Education Services, Title Services, and Section 504 Services are also monitored closely by this PLC, as are students within the Student Assistance Team (SAT) process.

The SAT Process is critical when identifying students who are experiencing academic and/or social-emotional challenges that need to be addressed. Many of these students are initially identified by parents and teachers or through the Support Services PLC data tracking process. The SAT team responds to individual student needs by assembling a team comprised of educators, parents/guardians, the counselor, and other individuals that can assist in implementing accommodations, supports, and targeted interventions to address all academic and/or social-emotional (behavior) needs.

Title eligibility is also based on data and evidence that is gathered through the SAT and PLC processes to ensure student needs are being met. Panther Academy, the After School Program, the Summer School Program, Special Education, and our Junior Kindergarten Program are also data driven to help close the achievement gaps between student populations and to ensure that interventions and instructional practices are appropriate for all students who are performing below grade level expectation.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Continued accelerated growth for high achieving students is valued in our elementary school. Panther Academy provides a daily opportunity for students who are performing above grade level expectation to be challenged through engagement in Webb Level 4 learning experiences with other students of the same caliber. Because we embed the use of data in our instructional practices, teachers know what their students are capable of learning and there is a high level of collective teacher efficacy.

NWEA MAP scores are used to create individualized learning paths for online enrichment programs such as Education Galaxy, Exact Path and IXL. Our students also compete and are successful in regional and state spelling bee contests, math competitions, essay contests and Lego competitions. They have been exposed to Robotics and STEM programs through a partnership with our high school and have helped start seedlings for the Healing Hands Community Garden.

Some of our highest achieving students also benefit from counseling services, sensory integration support, and differentiated instruction that allows for extended thinking and learning opportunities within the general education setting. Our high achieving students also thrive when provided with exposure to Native American culture activities, especially those that include the development of Lakota Language skills.

3c. Special education:

To ensure that children with disabilities who reside within the boundaries of Timber Lake School District receive a free and appropriate public education, the district has a comprehensive special education plan that is approved annually by the school board. This comprehensive plan outlines policies and procedures that are currently under effect and were established under sections 300.101 through 300.163 and 300.165 through 300.174.

The Special Education Department organizes free early childhood community screening events each year and conducts additional individual screenings to identify young children who may need special education and related services. Child find practices continue for school age students through other sources such as the Student Assistance Team (SAT), parent/guardian referrals, teacher referrals, and even student self-referrals. Comprehensive evaluations are conducted in a timely manner and eligibility is based on state and federal guidelines.

The Special Education Department at Timber Lake School District uses state and district level data to drive decisions and write all Individual Education Plans. One source of pride is our high rate of successfully including children with disabilities in all general education settings. Assistive technology, the use of appropriate accommodations, high quality specialized instruction, professional development, and paraprofessional support in select classrooms all help make this possible.

The Results Driven Accountability (RDA) Process, Parent Survey Outcomes, and the State District Report Card for Special Education Indicator Performance all provide evidence of program effectiveness. Teacher and paraprofessional training, parent engagement, student participation, general education teacher commitment, and training are all critical to the child identification process and academic/social-emotional success of our children with disabilities. We also have great service providers who are exceptionally dedicated!

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

Upon enrollment, Timber Lake School District uses a Home Language Survey (HLS) to identify the primary language spoken in each child's home. Based on the results of the HLS, students who do not speak English as the primary language in their home will complete the WIDA Screener within two weeks of enrollment or within 30 days from the start of the school year. Students complete the WIDA Screener based on grade level clustering in the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students who achieve a score below 5.0 on the screener qualify for EL Services.

Qualifying EL Students at Timber Lake Elementary School receive intervention and enrichment services designed to meet their individual needs through Panther Academy each day. Additional times dedicated to English development are based on the qualifying scores for EL services, academic needs based on NWEA MAP data, and classroom performance data. Two methods of instruction include: Pull-out and Push-in. For Pull-out the student will spend a majority of the school day in the mainstream classroom engaged with their peers but will leave the classroom for intense direct instructional intervention. For Push-in services, EL instruction will be provided in the mainstream classroom to deepen the student's EL knowledge and application.

If a student scores below 4.0 on the screener, an appropriate curriculum will be used to provide EL instruction. However, if a student scores at or above 4.0 the student will engage in the Finish Line Program. A Language Acquisition Plan (LAP) is implemented annually for each student and yearly ACCESS Testing is conducted to determine EL growth and continuing EL service qualification status. A student exits from our EL Program when they achieve an overall proficiency level of 5.0 or higher on the ACCESS for ELLS 2.0 Assessment.

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

The location and population of our school presents unique challenges for some families. It is not uncommon for children on the Cheyenne River Reservation to move from one home to another within their extended family. Transitioning to different homes often means transferring from one school district to another- often with several weeks between enrollment dates. This can create skill gaps, social challenges, difficulty with classroom engagement, behavior due to overwhelm, and a lack of self-esteem. All these potential concerns need to be addressed should they become a hinderance.

Engaging new families/guardians and helping them understand the expectations and support systems available in our elementary school is key to helping displaced students and students who fall under the other populations category. Our educational team assembles quickly when we hear a family is homeless, has lost their home due to a fire, or is experiencing other unforeseen circumstances. We respond by filling immediate needs through organizing fund raisers, providing counseling services, and seeking donations. On an educational level, we can then provide interventions to meet the learning and social-emotional needs of the children that have been impacted.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Our school is committed to engaging and motivating students by providing them with a safe environment that empowers them to become critical thinkers and responsible lifelong learners in a changing society. Creating a positive school climate and culture for students and staff is the most challenging work but brings about the greatest rewards. Engagement and motivation from the top down is key to our success! Our administrators know all students and parents/guardians and have an open-door policy that allows for a higher level of trust and engagement to be established with families.

Timber Lake Elementary School has a variety of processes, procedures, and strategies in place to make sure all children have what they need to successfully engage in the curriculum and social interactions with their peers. We utilize flexible seating options in all classroom settings and sensory integration throughout our building. Students are supported with a sensory course in the hallway, calming spaces in all learning environments and specific strategies that are implemented for individual students based on data. Our SEL curriculum, counseling services, SAT process and student monitoring data have been extremely important since the pandemic started. During the school closure and when we had to temporarily transition to short term remote learning, teachers were able to continue with highly motivating and engaging activities through use of Zoom and Google Classroom.

Extra curricular activities such as Basketball help motivate and engage students. These activities also help prepare them for their transition to the Middle School.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Timber Lake Elementary strives to create fun learning environments while building partnerships with families and empowering the connections needed to help students grow. Our annual Math and Literacy Family Night has been monumental with starting trusting relationships with families as soon as they enter our school doors. Families have expressed appreciation for the hard work that teachers have put into Family Night and feel “Thankful that my children attend this great school” The Math and Literacy Family Night Committee starts planning in the Fall for a March event that incorporates Science, Technology, Engineering, Math, Reading, and Art. This event would not be possible without the support of our local businesses.

Our Elementary team was a part of the South Dakota Family Engagement Champions Cohort. The team consisted of classroom teachers, the Title teacher, the Counselor, Native American Education Coordinator, Elementary Principal, and parents. The team found success with building an action plan based on student and family needs and having the opportunity to network and create lasting friendships with educators and schools across the state. Teachers do an amazing job of creating personal and meaningful activities while inviting families into the classroom to be a part of the learning process. National Family Involvement Day, Gingerbread House building, Hot Rod Car Engineering, and a Walk through History Children’s Museum are a few of the family centered events held in the elementary.

Because Timber Lake Elementary School is located in a small rural community, we rely heavily on our families, local businesses, and community members to meet the needs of our students. We couldn’t experience the amazing success we have without them. We have formed long-lasting partnerships with local businesses that work with us to create fun and rewarding field trips and reward opportunities for students. For example, after participating in an intense Fly Away With Reading challenge, students earned an exciting trip to Air Kraft Spraying at the Timber Lake Airport where they got to see different kinds of airplanes and helicopters up close and talk to the pilots. Those same pilots came in and helped with the local hoop shoot competition for the Knights of Columbus in our school gym during PE class.

Local businesses donate items and/or money for the backpack food program, and healthy snacks during the day. Veterans have also made a positive impact on our students. They are always more than willing to

speak at assemblies and teach mini lessons within our classrooms. They are moms, dads, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, and grandparents.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Creating a professional culture is one of the things we do best at Timber Lake Elementary School. We value our teachers and support them in a variety of ways from the moment they join our staff. To begin with, new teachers are matched with mentor teachers from our district who can provide guidance and support when it comes to the day to day operational business procedures in our building such as how to request a personal day, how to handle classroom management issues, who to visit with if/when you have questions about insurance, requesting a school vehicle, or how to refer a child to the SAT team for assistance. Teachers are also provided with a binder at the beginning of each school year that contains all forms, processes, and procedures they may need throughout the school year.

The professional development opportunities offered in our district are second to none. We offer a variety of in-house training and also support teachers who wish to seek additional education in areas of growth that will impact our students and school in a positive way. The Professional Learning Community (PLC) process is designed to create small groups of teachers who actively engage in collaborative professional teams that work to increase professional capacity. PLCs primarily engage in collaborative work that focuses on best practices in the areas of curriculum and instruction. The three big idea's of our PLCs are a focus on learning, collaborative teamwork and student achievement.

Teachers were surveyed and agreed to adopt Google Classroom as our PreK-12 online platform. The district supported teachers who wished to get certified as Google Classroom trainers who then returned to the district to provide initial training to all staff as well as ongoing support throughout the Pandemic. Parent assistance was also provided which contributed to the positive, professional culture during the most challenging of times.

The teacher evaluation process provides teachers with an opportunity to lead and flourish within their professional growth. The positive and professional characteristics that are modeled from our staff daily contribute to an understanding of being flexible, compassionate, and accountable in education during a time of uncertainties. As a team, we continue to step up and help keep our building clean, safe and welcoming while displaying Panther Pride in our hallways and classrooms.

4. School Leadership:

School leadership starts with the Timber Lake School Board goals, strategies, and performance measures. The current Board goals that apply to our elementary school include School Safety, Using Data to Drive Instruction, and the Inclusion of Native American Culture. We have a very collaborative administrative team that meets weekly to ensure District goals are being kept at the forefront and all decisions being made are in the best interest of students. Administrators demonstrate leadership by being positive role models for students, teachers, parents, and stakeholders.

The district has a Data Leadership Team comprised of administrators, teachers, and counselors that meets each September to analyze all state and district data. The first meeting of the year is facilitated by specialists from the Technology and Innovation in Education (TIE) office. The Elementary Data Leadership Team works together to generate an Elementary Priority Action Plan that is then shared with the staff and used by each Professional Learning Community during their work sessions throughout the year.

The South Dakota Danielson Framework for evaluating teachers along with Independent Growth Plans, Student Learning Objectives, and frequent walk-through evaluations are used by leaders to provide evidence of coherent instruction and assessment. Artifacts such as lesson plans, student assessments, rubrics, and common formative and summative assessments provide opportunities for the leadership team to provide immediate feedback to teachers that can directly impact instructional practices and student learning. Our evaluation process provides teachers with an opportunity to improve in areas they are not proficient or advanced and the Independent Growth Plan allows advanced teachers to explore more in-depth professional

development in an area they self-select.

Overall, leadership is developed through professional development opportunities, our commitment to the concept of Professional Learning Communities, the evaluation process we have in place, the use of data and demonstrating the importance of putting students first.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Timber Lake School District lies within the boundaries of both Cheyenne River Indian Reservation and the Standing Rock Sioux Indian Reservation, so providing culturally responsive teaching and learning practices is very important. Our Native American Education Coordinator, Native American Education Committee, and the High School Native American Club all have a direct, positive influence on our young elementary learners.

The Native American Education Coordinator, who is also certified as an elementary and early childhood teacher provides daily lessons that focus on the development of Lakota Language, the seven Lakota Values, Native American Traditions, Native American Art, and cultural lessons of importance. She also facilitates staff training and secures presenters who specialize in working with Native American children and their peers. She is a member of our district Wookiye Project. The goal of this project is to create and implement a network of support that will help aid and assist teachers as they become proficient using the Oceti Sakowin Essential Understandings and promote additional support creating resources.

Our 2021 Elementary Summer School Program was specifically designed with special regard for the language and cultural needs of our Native American students. We partnered with American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) not only to help students reach grade level benchmark, but also to increase interest, engagement, and competency within STEM and culturally relevant STEM programs. Students were recommended for this program based on a collection of data and other evidence indicating need. Native American Education Day is always a student, family, and staff favorite in Timber Lake. Our staff goes above and beyond to make this day a special tribute to the great things Native Americans contributed to and achieved throughout history in our area.

To improve the ability of our staff to be more culturally responsive, we provided suicide prevention training within district and supported educators who wished to attend Mental Health team training, ACES Training, Dyslexia team training, and Paraprofessional Trainings. Sensory Integration Support is embedded in all classrooms. Children have access to a sensory course in the main hallway, sensory breaks as needed, sensory diets (individualized), alternative seating options, and sensory support tools in the classroom.

Panther Pals is an additional program that provides mentorship opportunities for older high school students to form meaningful relationships with elementary students within the school day. The relationships that are established provide High School students with leadership skills and accountability. Our elementary children learn from positive role models that are visible throughout the community. These connections are some of the most powerful impacts on student growth. This year all children in kindergarten through second grade meet with their Panther Pal during the school day each week.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The most instrumental practice to Timber Lake Elementary's success is a partnership among staff and students to honor the whole child. Our district empowers teachers to set goals during planned PLC time. These goals are based around the current staff, student, and family needs. We know that building partnerships with families is one of the leading contributors to student success. When our mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles, and grandparents entrust their child to enter our doors at Timber Lake Elementary we immediately become one Panther Family sharing the responsibility of growing a child into a successful lifelong learner.

The Professional Development opportunities start with our School Board goals, which is supported by our professional learning communities. Teachers analyze district data to determine student needs and next step success with academic and behavior support. The collaboration among stake holders is the start to building successful programs that take all hands on deck with understanding where our students are currently at and where we need to take them. Our professional development opportunities have been the baseline for monumental elementary programs such as Panther Academy, Math, Reading and Counseling Curriculum Adoptions, SAT, and SEL integration. Students are valued, loved and safe when they walk the halls each day because our elementary team goes the distance of knowing, understanding, and supporting all aspects of every student. When students are surveyed and asked what they enjoy most about our school the response is "I love my teacher because she cares about me." And "I love coming to school because my teacher gives me a hug when I am sad" The ability to research, change and add new opportunities to our educational program is a never-ending journey. Our staff diligently embrace that journey as our students come to us with a clean slate of possibilities and it is our job to explore those possibilities and take care of every student in our Panther Family.