

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

---

[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 6803 Manley Lane  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Brentwood State TN Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 37027-6901

County Williamson County

Telephone (615) 472-4480 Fax (615) 472-4492

Web site/URL https://www.wcs.edu/GES E-mail anng@wcs.edu

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 Jason Golden E-mail jasong@wcs.edu  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Williamson County School District Tel. (615) 472-4000

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Mrs. Nancy Garrett  
(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):
- 29 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 11 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 11 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 51 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	34	33	67
1	49	34	83
2	34	46	80
3	45	46	91
4	49	48	97
5	47	58	105
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>	258	265	523

\*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
  - 1.3 % Asian
  - 2.1 % Black or African American
  - 3.4 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 87.8 % White
  - 5.4 % 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: 10%

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	26
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	27
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	53
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	535
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.10
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	10

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

Chinese, Spanish

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

3 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 2 %

Total number students who qualify: 8

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 18 %  
96 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>8</u> Autism                  | <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>40</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>3</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>2</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>25</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>1</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: 21
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	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	24
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	11
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	13
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

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

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	97%	97%	97%	96%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

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

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

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

Yes  No

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

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

Grassland Elementary exists to provide all students with a quality education that supports their intellectual, physical, emotional, and social development.

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

<https://www.wcs.edu/domain/1327>

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**

---

History and tradition often spark a true sense of pride. Grassland Elementary School pride runs deep as it is rooted in 149 years of educational history. Grassland Elementary, formerly Sunnyside School, was built in approximately 1873 on Hillsboro Road, north of Sneed Hill where the present day Greater Pleasant View Baptist Church is situated. The community at that point consisted of farms. Having grown and needing larger facilities, the school moved into a new building in January 1911, just south of its original location on a hill overlooking present day Moran Road, and changed its name to Grassland. After World War II, Grassland once again found a new home and in the fall of 1950, Grassland Elementary opened the doors of its new Bethlehem Loop location with 240 students in kindergarten through eighth grade. In 1972, the school was changed to serve kindergarten through sixth grade, and in 1990, Grassland Elementary became a kindergarten through fifth grade school. The present facility on Manley Lane opened in August 1992.

Grassland Elementary students have consistently tested in the top percentiles in the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program. In 2013 and 2020, Grassland Elementary was a Tennessee Reward School for Performance. Schools are designated as Reward Schools for performance for overall student achievement. This designation is determined annually by a one-year success rate. A success rate is calculated by adding the total number of proficient or advanced students in each subject and dividing by the total number of test takers for each subject.

Our students are from diverse family backgrounds involved in various outside opportunities within our communities of Franklin, Brentwood and the Greater Nashville area. GES students regularly participate in athletic, cultural, artistic and philanthropic activities which prepare them for the Grassland experience. Parents/Guardians are supportive and work closely with teachers to create an environment welcoming to all. Students are actively engaged with hands-on learning opportunities, and students and teachers are highly enthusiastic and eager to learn together. Our teachers average 17 years of experience, and they are consistently involved in job embedded professional development in order to facilitate increased student growth. In addition, before-school tutoring conducted by Grassland teachers is available for all students in order to help students meet individual academic needs. Our TCAP (Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program) and benchmark scores are continually influenced by the procedures and strategies our teachers have successfully implemented. The instruction, support services, parent involvement, and student effort integrate to support all students and guide toward a path of success. GES implements a variety of instructional strategies that incorporate whole group, differentiated instruction in small groups, and independent practice. Another method of differentiation is the Response to Intervention (RTI) activities in which the teachers, coaches, and support staff implement daily. GES data team meetings drive the discussion on how best to extend, remediate and enrich to support all students while fostering academics and social/ emotional expectations.

Grassland staff and parents work collaboratively to create innovative and creative programs to meet the needs of all students. We offer extension programs such as Math Olympiad and Destination Imagination. Students are invited to participate in Ukulele, STEM, Broadcast, Runners, Student Council, Chorus, Health and Wellness and other activities held throughout the year before/after school. Each year the students participate in a school wide Inspired! GES Art Night, and invited to share their artistic talents at the Frist Art Museum in Nashville. The GES choir participates in programs to share their talents with the community. They perform the National Anthem for Belmont University basketball games and participate on stage at local festivals.

March of 2020 presented many challenges for the Grassland community. Teachers and staff prepared diligently to learn new and innovative techniques to continue teaching and growing students. Asynchronous and synchronous learning began and related arts teachers worked to maintain student engagement in the arts (music, physical education, library, school guidance and art). The RTI program transitioned to virtual activities to ensure that student needs were met in both extension and remediation. All services continued to meet the needs of all students at Grassland Elementary. Teachers worked to find engaging strategies to continue connections with their students virtually through active collaboration with all GES families and community.

Grassland continues to cultivate an environment steeped in tradition and pride for all in the community. A top priority for Grassland Elementary stakeholders is to foster growth in academics, arts and athletics through the well-being of all students. We exist to provide all students with a quality education to address their intellectual, physical, emotional, and social development.

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

---

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

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

In accordance with Williamson County Schools, our vision at GES is to provide a supportive environment where students are challenged to pursue excellence in academics, athletics, and the arts. Our mission is to provide all students with a quality education that supports their intellectual, physical, emotional, and social development. Grassland Elementary is a caring community in which all members share in the challenge to develop a lifelong love of learning, cultivate respect for others and themselves, and grow to their full potential as individuals.

To achieve this, all teachers and staff believe that every student can learn, and we strive to provide a rigorous learning environment where students are held accountable to master grade level standards. Throughout all academic areas, students' listening and speaking skills are strengthened through cooperative, problem-based learning opportunities and productive struggle. In addition to the use of Google Drive, Schoology, Kami, and ZOOM, teachers have a variety of platforms they use to ensure all students who are absent can access the daily lessons, instructions, and materials.

The GES character building program included expected behaviors of “Be Responsible” “Show Respect” and “Do Your Best.” Our “Class Dojos” program uses positive reinforcement to encourage students to perform to the best of their ability and to show respect to their classmates, teachers, and themselves. This program is used in conjunction with our guidance counselors to ensure a positive learning environment for all.

We provide multiple opportunities for students that are performing below grade level through remediative instruction. In addition to students that qualify for Tier 2 or Tier 3, we use “Walk to Intervention” so all students receive appropriate instruction. This time is used for enrichment for students performing above grade level. Additionally, we have a total of five math tutors who work with students in grades 3-5, and two FLIP volunteers serving students who benefit from individual time in reading and writing.

To further foster students’ appreciation in the arts and athletics, we have an art activity, chorus/choir, and fitness activities that students participate outside of school hours.

At Grassland Elementary School, teachers at all grade levels (K-5) participate in collaborative groups for six hours in the summer. During this time, they map out a pacing guide for the year using the provided county curriculum and the Williamson County Scope and Sequence which includes all Tennessee state standards. Through this process, teachers recognize which standards require greater depth in the provided curriculum and supplement as needed. The pacing guides include the TDOE Foundational phonics program for K-2, Wit and Wisdom Knowledge based reading program for K-5, and GoMath for K-5. All grade levels have 90 minutes built into their daily schedule for differentiated instruction. The reading blocks are designed as follows: 90-minute phonics block and an additional 60-minute knowledge block for ELA instruction in grades K-2, and a 90-minute knowledge block for grades 3-5. Teachers in grades 3-5 plan Common Formative Assessments (CFA) that are administered to all students in ELA and math twice every quarter. The data is analyzed along with guidance from the literacy and math coaches to help determine standards that need whole group reteaching or small group remediation. CFAs are given in addition to the Williamson County benchmarks given in all content areas for grades 1-5.

Additionally, all students are assessed in the areas of written expression, spelling, oral reading fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, math fluency, and math concepts and applications. This process is used to help determine which students need to receive Tier 2 or Tier 3 remediation in specific areas, as well as which students would benefit from enrichment. Data meetings are held quarterly to analyze student progress and plan instructional and remediation decisions accordingly. At GES, we implement a “walk to intervention” model to enable the largest impact for the most students during our RTI block, which is a thirty-minute

block in our daily schedule. Students who qualify for Tier 3 remediation receive forty-five minutes of targeted intervention daily.

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

Each summer, teachers collaborate to plan a pacing guide and Common Formative Assessments (CFAs) for ELA. This nine hours of planning is used to align instructional resources with state standards and the Williamson County scope and sequence. This collaboration allows teachers an opportunity to recognize which standards need more depth in curriculum, and can supplement as needed. The pacing guide also includes dates to administer formative and summative assessments.

Grassland Elementary uses a variety of assessments to make instructional and remediation decisions. We administer the AIMS universal screener three times a year and use this data to determine which students need remediation or enrichment. The CFAs are administered twice a quarter and are analyzed by state standard. Teachers can “drill down” to the specific standards students may not have mastered and plan accordingly. The summative assessments with the Wit and Wisdom program include grammar, vocabulary, writing, and comprehension.

At the beginning of the school year, all 3rd-5th grade students are given a developmental spelling assessment. This data is used to determine students’ individual placement in our Words Their Way program for spelling and teaching word patterns.

Students at Grassland Elementary experience a very rigorous English Language Arts curriculum. In grades K-2, students receive 150 minutes of reading instruction daily: a 90-minute phonics block and a 60-minute knowledge block. During the 90-minute phonics block, teachers use the TDOE Foundational Literacy program. This is a “sounds first” approach to teaching letter sounds. This program includes phonemic awareness, phonics, encoding, decodable readers, and grammar. As part of this 90 minutes, teachers are able to work in whole group, small group, and with individuals. The Assessment and Remediation guide built into this program is utilized to determine which students need additional instruction on a particular skill and how best to target that need.

The Knowledge block, 60-minutes for K-2 and 90-minutes for 3-5, uses the Wit and Wisdom program. This program was purchased based on the most current research on the “science of reading.” This is a content-rich reading program where students focus heavily on one topic for 9-weeks. The topic is explored through a variety of literature, art, poems, articles, and websites. Comprehension skills are cultivated through this deep exploration of a topic which helps build the students’ background knowledge of our world. During these topic studies, or modules, students’ listening and speaking skills are fostered through Socratic Seminars (even in kindergarten!) and classroom discussions. Writing is embedded into daily lessons, and a rich vocabulary is acquired through this rigorous program. Wit and Wisdom is designed for maximum educational equity for all students.

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

Grassland strives to meet the mathematical needs of students in kindergarten through fifth grade. The curriculum is deeply based on TN state standards which are specifically organized in the Williamson County Schools (WCS) Scope and Sequence promoting students’ academic success. The research-based resource in Williamson county is the GoMath curriculum following the Scope and Sequence including several vetted resources, such as Engage NY, Number Talks, productive struggle tasks, Touch Math, and technology pieces utilizing Khan Academy, Kahoot, Flocabulary, Freckle and Dreambox. They are used to enrich and extend math experiences so students’ differentiated academic needs are being met.

Math standards are taught within a 90-minute block. The teachers provide direct instruction using manipulatives and pictorial models, including the use of tasks for concept application. Through weekly collaborative planning, the teachers utilize and apply the Understanding by Design Framework and Instructional Focus Resources to best meet the students’ needs. Planning with the end in mind, ensures students are mastering the foundational mathematical skills and concepts. Planning incorporates classroom

assessments, Common Formative (CFA's) and WCS Benchmark assessments to ensure their students are moving in the right direction.

Grassland has a full time math coach, a retired teacher who serves as part-time math interventionist, two tutors that push into the classrooms (one for third through fifth grade and one for second grade) and several before school tutors for third through fifth grades. The tutors push into the classrooms during the math blocks and provide support to all students who require assistance during instruction. Teachers are meeting with students individually and small groups during the math block.

Kindergarten through fifth grade students are assessed three times yearly using AIMSweb. Academic grade level teams meet to discuss individual needs for each student. We use the data to place students into small groups. Student discussions involve in-depth conversation about the test, students' effort matching their classroom performance and whether or not there is additional testing necessary for academic success. Discussions take place during data team and team planning meetings by grade level to decide which programs best meet student needs.

Grassland teachers meet in the summer to develop CFA's for the first and second semesters. The math coach is included in planning sessions and provides the teachers with guidance and resources. After the students take these assessments, grade level planning teams analyze the data to remediate and extend concepts for students. The weakest standard is remediated by using Three-Act tasks and student collaboration during tasks so there is successful mathematical understanding. This pattern is continued throughout the year by producing and evaluating the CFA's and county benchmarks which creates numerous opportunities for student successes.

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

Grassland Elementary science curriculum aligns with the Next Generation Science Standards. The students use the 5E model (Engage, Explore, Explain, Extend, and Evaluate) for learning the standards. Williamson County provides science kits that allow students to experience hands-on, in depth learning in science, engineering, and technology practices. The teachers have access to OER (Online Educational Resources) website that provides guidance for planning and teacher instruction. OER includes Williamson County's scope and sequence, digital science resources, templates and other academic resources that are valuable to the teachers and students.

Williamson county provides kits and OER resources to provide students with clarity and wonderings that encourage them to look for cross curricular connections. This provides teachers the availability to plan cross-curricular connections in the literacy block, related arts and math. The opportunities for students to enhance their knowledge through STEAM concepts in Related Arts, mathematics and technology is plentiful. An annual STEAM family night applies knowledge and allows students to explore and promote curiosity in Science. The students also have opportunities to read about science in their literacy classes in conjunction with the Science Kits. They dig deeper in non-fiction literature such as seasons, how leaves change colors, ocean life, space, mountains, and nutrition. Teachers spiral the curriculum throughout the day so students make deeper connections in their learning.

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

Students at Grassland Elementary participate in a variety of teaching strategies to learn about government structures, world geography, and US History. Teachers plan collaboratively using the Williamson County Scope and Sequence, which includes all TN state standards. Using these standards, teachers design engaging and rigorous lessons. While WCS does not use a social studies textbook, teachers receive TN History for Kids booklets for all grade levels. Teachers also have the county created OER which includes a plethora of lessons, research based learning strategies, field trip recommendations, and online resources. Additionally, the ELA program integrates multiple social studies topics, like "then and now", Native Americans, Civil Rights, World Geography, Women's Suffrage, the Revolutionary War and Civil War.

Students engage in daily explorations through interactive notebooks, jigsaw learning, personal projects,

collaborative groups, on-site and off-site field trips, and guest speakers from the community such as county mayor Rogers Anderson and family members from China, Japan, Mexico, Australia, and England. Teachers task students to design a variety of visual and multimedia presentations on topics ranging from Native American tribes and explorers to the Civil War; they further develop their speaking and listening skills during presentations. Each year GES fourth grade students participate in a living wax museum where they dress up as and prepare presentations based on famous historians. Students participate in immersive cultural experiences including Chinese New Year and Mardi Gras where teachers share traditional foods, artifacts, and activities. Each year, fifth grade students have the opportunity to go to Biz Town, where they are engaged in the process of interviewing for a job, balancing a checkbook, and running a business. They have the opportunity to run and vote for elected officials!

Teachers use a variety of formative and summative assessments for social studies: project-based rubrics, exit tickets, interactive notebooks, presentation skills, and unit tests. Additionally, grades 3-5 take the county-wide CFA benchmark once a quarter. This assessment allows teachers to analyze each standard to see which standards may need whole-class, small group, or individual remediation or reteaching.

**1f. For secondary schools:**

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

**2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

At Grassland Elementary School, we strive to fulfill the Williamson County vision of becoming a district recognized nationally for educating students who excel in academics, the arts, and athletics. Students at Grassland receive instruction in guidance, art, music, physical education, library and technology during forty-five minutes classes. Students also have the opportunity to attend weekly Spanish classes outside the school day. Art, music and Spanish classes meet once a week, P.E. classes meet twice a week, Library Commons (library skills integrated with technology) and guidance rotate.

Students explore music from different genres, musical periods, and cultures throughout the year. Classroom activities, use of technology, grade level performances, as well as our “Lights, Camera, Grassland” Talent Show, help students gain confidence and competence throughout the year. Fourth and Fifth Grade Grassland students choose to participate in our before school Grassland Elementary School Eagle Chorus who perform at school and community events. Learning to play the ukulele both in music class and through an excellent before school group is another offering for our GES musicians. Grassland proudly hosts Nashville Opera, the Nashville Ballet, and Nashville Symphony for educational performances. Our students take field trips to The Nashville Children’s Theater to experience amazing live plays. GES Fourth Graders tour The Country Music Hall of Fame and participate in The Words and Music lyric writing classes provided by the museum.

The Physical Education and Wellness program at Grassland integrates core subjects into the daily curriculum in alignment with the state and national PE standards. Grassland is currently a pilot school for Quaver’s Physical Education and Health Curriculum. Students in kindergarten through second grade are taught all formative skills through a variety of activities and skill-based units. Third through fifth grade classes begin to integrate learned skills into sport and non-sport games. A major focus for third through fifth grade P.E. at Grassland is learning personal and social responsibility in competition regardless of the outcome. The P.E. program seeks and receives community support from the Nashville Predators in our “Preds Fitness Challenge” and during Parents in PE week each year. In addition, Grassland promotes fitness through a variety of events including Eagle Fit and a school wide field day.

At GES, we are delighted that our Library is now the Learning Commons Center, which encourages creativity, collaboration, and innovation to support our core curriculum. Each student is issued a

Chromebook and is responsible for computer care. Our lessons include basic computer skills, keyboarding, and in-depth knowledge of Google Workspace and Schoology. Students also engage in STEM activities and projects that utilize research skills, explore coding, engineering, and computational thinking.

The art program encourages freedom of expression and seeks to motivate students to reach their full potential as visual artists. The various elements and principles of design are covered each year in grades K-5 using a spiral curriculum that meets the abilities levels at each stage of development. We annually host Inspired! GES Art Show showcasing one piece of art per student that is framed and displayed in a gallery created in the cafeteria for the Grassland community to enjoy. GES participates in the Williamson County Art Show at the Frist museum in Nashville. GES offers master classes once a month before school highlighting advanced skills from clay handbuilding, enameling on glass and tie-dye. Our school hosts guest artists in residence each year. These specialists spend a week with the students teaching different skills from puppetry, mixed-media self-portraits to glass-blowing.

Grassland Elementary's School Counseling program provides support to students, staff, and families in the GES community through direct and indirect services such as classes, small groups, brief solution-focused individual counseling, and consultation and collaboration with stakeholders in our community. We teach students how to develop and maintain healthy relationships with peers and adults. We work on effective communication, problem-solving, and how to maintain positive self-esteem. Using the standards outlined by the American School Counseling Association, Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE), and Williamson County Schools, the GES School Counselors create unique and creative learning opportunities for students to explore career interests, learning styles, healthy habits, and coping skills.

### **3. Academic Supports**

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

Grassland adheres to the state requirements to assess all students in reading, writing, spelling, and math. We use a fairly comprehensive assessment platform, AIMSweb Plus, where students are assessed in oral reading fluency, reading comprehension, vocabulary, mathematics concepts and application, and math fact fluency measures. In addition to AIMSweb Plus, GES staff administer a written expression screener for all students in grades 1-5, and a developmental spelling assessment for students in grades 3-5 (K-2 students receive AIMS spelling). We then follow the state guidelines to further screen for dyslexia for students who fall below certain percentiles on any of the reading measures. All the data are analyzed and drive our quarterly data team meetings where all stakeholders are present: administrators, school psychologist, guidance counselor, teachers, student support service teachers, math and literacy coach.

During data meetings, staff make decisions regarding student placements during the RTI block. At GES, we follow a "walk to intervention" model to enable the largest impact for the most students during our daily 30 minute RTI block. Students that qualify for Tier 3 remediation receive forty-five minutes of targeted intervention daily. This time is also used for enrichment and social-emotional groups. Following state guidelines, we progress monitor all students in their area of deficit falling below the 25% percentile in any one reporting category. The progress monitoring data is shared with parents twice a quarter and is used to make additional decisions or adjustments for individual students.

All teachers and interventionists use vetted resources for remediation in identified deficit areas. These include but are not limited to: PALS, SPIRE, 6-minute solutions, Words Their Way, TDOE Assessment and Remediation Guide, 95% Group, Read Naturally Live, Williamson County Frameworks, Origo, Cams and Stams, Tier 2 and Tier 3 GoMath, Engage NY, and Developing Number Concepts.

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

To serve students performing above grade level, we provide a variety of enrichments, differentiated instructional experiences, and specialized services. At the Tier 1 Level, all teachers receive ongoing professional learning opportunities related to differentiated instruction, and students are provided with small group instruction, learning activities, and assignments that serve their needs, even as these exceed grade

level expectations. Differentiation in the general education setting is supported by our Differentiation Coach, who provides instructional strategies and coaching as well as practicable activities and lesson resources for teachers to better meet the needs of advanced learners. During the RTI block, students walk to intervention groups to meet their needs, and advanced learners are able to receive enrichment and challenge in an additional small group setting, using programs such as Junior Great Books, Math Olympiad, advanced novel studies, or other resources provided by the Differentiation Coach. Exceptionally high performing students may also be identified through Child Find, an ongoing referral process. Once eligible, the gifted teacher provides services to meet the academic challenges of students. Students receiving services are provided by the gifted teacher using a variety of research-based strategies and curricula to meet their individual needs in a targeted small group setting, using Individualized Education Program (IEP) plans to guide instruction and assessment.

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

The faculty and staff of Grassland Elementary are dedicated to meeting the needs of all students and are keenly aware of the importance of Student Support Services in accomplishing this objective. Services are provided based upon a Learning Center Model where both special education and general education students' needs are met through a non-categorical learning center incorporating inclusive educational practices.

Students with special needs are identified through the administration of various diagnostic and standardized measures. General Referral meetings and Individual Educational Planning (IEP) meetings are held regularly to determine the most appropriate interventions/ supports needed for each student. Parents, administrators, teachers, therapists, and other specialists collaborate to develop appropriate programs to meet individual needs of the students within the least restrictive environment. We offer a continuum of services that range from pullout to the consultative model. Special education teachers, speech/ language pathologists, teachers for the hearing impaired, a school psychologist, physical and occupational therapists, a vision specialist, a school nurse, an Autism consultant, a behavior consultant, an orientation/ mobility specialist, and paraprofessionals provide services in numerous educational settings.

Student Support Services offer a variety of models at Grassland Elementary. Students are served in a pullout/ remediation model to receive direct instruction in small groups or individually. This takes place either in a special education classroom or learning lab. This direct approach provides students with highly individualized instruction through use of alternative materials and appropriate curricular modifications.

The majority of our special needs students are served through the inclusion model. Modifications are implemented according to each student's specific needs. Administration, educators, therapists, and school psychologists work collaboratively as defined by the intervention team and IEP to ensure services and needs are met for student success. Our goal is to work with the general education teachers to provide support services to ensure success for all students.

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

Grassland Elementary offers instruction for English Language Learners (ELL). This instruction includes support for classroom teachers through resources and discussion as well as pull out services for identified students. The ELL teacher also supports and collaborates with the classroom teachers to develop strategies and accommodations to assist the students' success in the general classroom setting as well as small groups. Grassland's ELL teachers work to provide resources for the student's families. This helps tremendously to transition with communication. The team designs Individual Learning Plans (ILP) for our ELL students tailored to their individual needs and based on different learning styles that lead to the successful learning of English. We use various strategies such as visuals, pre-teaching vocabulary, and encouraging academic conversations with other students and teachers to enhance language acquisition. Currently GES serves students from China and Mexico who participate in the ELL program. When students attend Grassland Elementary speaking a language other than English, they are assessed with the World Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Screener mandated by the state of Tennessee to track progress. WIDA scores provide us with valuable information to understand their English proficiency. This determines their growth of English proficiency, as well as their placement in the program for the following school year.

When ELL students meet the state’s proficiency criteria to transition from ELL services, they are monitored for four years to ensure language gaps do not impede access to instruction in content standards. To close the achievement gap, Grassland Elementary follows a rigorous curriculum and provides RTI interventions, additional math and reading support. Tutors and teacher assistants also work one-on-one to provide extra support.

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

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

---

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

Grassland Elementary begins every school year with an evolving framework that promotes academics based on critical thinking, growth mindset, acceptance, and empathy towards all to engage and motivate students. The staff begins each day greeting students with a positive, supportive atmosphere that encourages students to feel safe, welcomed, and confident. Teachers warmly greet students as they enter the classroom to begin a variety of activities that promote student learning while allowing students to have positive peer interactions. One of the morning activities available to students is a student-led morning broadcast “news-style” program, in which students are able to write and deliver announcements, the weather forecast, and daily lunch menu. Throughout the day, students are recognized for kind and responsible behavior choices through the Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) and our schoolwide Class Dojo app. The GES focus for students is Be Responsible, Show Respect, and Do Your Best. This technology allows parents to engage in their students’ activities and behavior choices throughout the day, and helps foster positive student behaviors. Our class culture encourages students to become responsible for their own behavior, show leadership, and demonstrate kindness and acceptance. Students are recognized for positive character traits while earning points they spend in our parent run Eagles’ Nest store. The entire staff at Grassland uses this strategy to encourage a positive culture and to foster whole-child learning experiences.

Grassland has implemented Restorative Circles to promote social and emotional collaborative efforts between teachers and students. At the beginning of each day, classes gather together to share ideas and perspectives during a Morning Circle as they actively speak, listen, and support their peers. This is designed to give students a feeling of control as they encounter academic and social challenges throughout their day. Teachers and students build meaningful, appropriate, and professional relationships through these restorative practices. Teachers encourage students to use a growth mindset mentality to foster perseverance, problem solving, and positive self-talk. Skills are reinforced with the school guidance counselors regularly. Grassland completely embraces the district-led “Be Nice” initiative by recognizing students for kindness and acceptance, especially during the unprecedented past two years.

Grassland supports students’ academics and personal growth in a myriad of ways, engaging each child. Our school has fully integrated the district wide one-to-one technology initiative by ensuring that each student from kindergarten through 5th grade has a touchscreen Chromebook to participate in class collaborative assignments. Students are also actively engaged with technology in STEM and STEAM related lessons in the Learning Commons cluster shared between the library and computer staff. To engage students beyond the classroom, Grassland sponsors meaningful assemblies throughout the school year that promote STEM, literature, and the fine arts, as well as serving as a bridge between students and the community. Grassland also offers a variety of multi- curricular programming, including Inspire Art Night, chorus, musical performances, reading and family math nights. A high percentage of our students participate in the Road Runners and Health and Wellness before and after school activities. Grassland’s approach to facilitating learning creates a well-rounded atmosphere and fosters positive student-teacher relationships.

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

Grassland Elementary School’s pride runs deep as it is rooted in 149 years of educational history. In partnership with our families and community, our mission is to cultivate the ability, intellect, and character of each student. Our vision ensures an engaging and academically enriching environment designed to support the collaborative educational efforts of teachers, students, staff, and community.

Grassland provides opportunities for family and community members to support student academics by hosting family math and literacy nights. Family members participate in group activities designed to model differentiated (remediation and enrichment) approaches used by teachers in the classroom. Before-school tutoring conducted by Grassland teachers is available for all students to help them meet individual academic needs. Other academic events for Grassland students are Read Across America Week and BizTown. Grassland teachers and students also celebrate academic success such as 100th Day of School, 50’s day in

Kindergarten, and 50% done with 5th grade.

Parental involvement is a key factor to ensure a child's success in school. At Grassland, parents are strongly encouraged to remain involved and support their child's educational program to continue the rich tradition of excellence. The Grassland teachers, administration, and the Grassland School Community Association (GSCA), meet monthly to discuss the needs of our students and school building. Together, they plan events throughout the year, such as monthly Spirit Nights with local businesses, Sneak-a-Peek for incoming kindergarten families, Parents in PE Week, Grandparents Day, Bus Driver Appreciation Breakfast, Art Night, GES Fest, Roadrunners Color Splash, Spirit Week, Breakfast with a Buddy, and BooHoo Breakfast for Kindergarten Parents. Additionally, our parents host an annual silent auction and concert, Grassroots of Grassland Songwriters Night, in the heart of downtown Franklin which features our very own parent songwriters. This event is where families come together to promote the success of all students, faculty members, and facilities. GSCA's major fundraiser for the year is the Grassland Gives Campaign where every contribution directly enriches the educational experience for our children. With this campaign, GSCA has been able to provide: new kindergarten playground equipment, benches for the K-5 playground, 5 filtered water stations, and sound equipment that is utilized for plays, chorus, musicals, drama, talent shows, and 5th grade recognition. They have also been able to enhance our cultural events by bringing programs to our school such as the Nashville Symphony, the Nashville Ballet, and visiting authors.

At Grassland, we strongly believe that a school reflects its surrounding community, which is why, for over 100 years, we have worked in unison with our community to continue the rich tradition of lifelong successful students, parents and staff.

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

We teach our students regularly that "practice makes progress", and this is just as true for all educators. At Grassland Elementary School (GES), we continually strive to refine our "practice" so that students will experience as much progress as possible. Just as we differentiate instruction for the variety of needs of our students, leaders at Grassland understand that teachers are similar regarding differentiating needs. We are flexible in our approach to professional development in the areas of technology, student support services, new teacher outreach and mentorship, social emotional support, book studies, and practical application of innovative strategies.

In March 2020, COVID brought a technological upheaval creating a totally new experience in our educational careers. We needed support in order to seamlessly transition in-person instruction to online learning without disrupting the integrity of the academic standards. Grassland rose to the occasion. After receiving direction from the district regarding the use of the platforms Google Classroom, Kami, Online Electronic Resource libraries, Zoom, and other applications available on our district "dashboard", leadership at GES immediately started planning how best to utilize these effectively. Select teachers were chosen as "Digital Learning Leaders" who shared in-depth simulations within each platform so they could succinctly teach the best practices to our staff.

Professional development presents differently from year to year due to the needs which evolve and adapt. Covid highly impacted attendance and ability to deliver instruction, and had unexpected effects on the social-emotional well-being of students and teachers. To address this dynamic, Grassland began what is now lovingly referred to as "circle time" to focus on Restorative Practices. At the outset of each day, students and teachers spend a designated time sharing social and/or emotional topics that draw us closer together as a community and make us feel stronger amidst these unprecedented times. "Traditional" or "normal" school days are constantly redefined as leadership at GES leads our school into positive opportunities for learning and support. Our instructional practices are stronger, equitable, and we will continue to use many of our new technological advances into the future.

Our "Building Leadership Team" (BLT) is made up of one teacher per grade level or special area who meet monthly to determine school-wide goals and events. Grade level teams meet weekly to collaboratively analyze data, plan instruction, and create common assessments. Every teacher and staff member is

committed to growing professionally and personally with one another as we refine our practice and make continual progress.

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

The philosophy of Grassland Elementary focuses on outstanding academic achievement and model growth while creating an environment that supports the well being of the whole child. The structure for success consists of many vital stakeholders including the administration, (BLT) building leadership team, (GSCA) Grassland Community School Association, and classified staff that works to create a vision and focus for yearly professional development and school goals for all. This vision is communicated through staff professional development days, faculty meetings and other data based instructional planning meetings. The staff leads book studies to learn in-depth focus developed by the administration and leadership teams. Most recently, we are studying the text *Productive Math Struggle (A 6-Point Action Plan For Fostering Perseverance)* by SanGiovanni, Katt and Dykema. Administration works with the district support staff in curriculum, special education, counseling and elementary schools to ensure faculty and staff have the resources needed to implement productive struggle and growth mindset.

Grassland's leadership team (principal and assistant principal) work to create a healthy and supportive environment for the faculty, staff, and students. The team collaborates with the Grassland Parent Teacher Organization (Grassland School Community Association) to bring monthly recognition and activities to build morale and positivity. Luncheons, monthly "happies" and other staff surprises help maintain a focus on team building and positivity. This positivity spreads to the students and encourages the "We Are GES" attitude that allows for a safe, risk taking environment for students to learn. Collaboration and acknowledgement of successes and strengths is suggested and encouraged by the leadership teams to create an environment that allows faculty, staff and students to celebrate all stakeholders and grow together through lifelong learning.

The Grassland Building Leadership Team is comprised of representatives from all grade levels, related arts, special education and the coaching team along with administration. This demographic ensures that the diverse viewpoints of the staff and faculty are heard and considered at their monthly meetings and throughout the school year. The administrators at Grassland have an open door policy and encourage all faculty, staff, students and parents to support all and keep the focus on what is best for all students. The needs of all students are the center of the decision making process.

The Grassland Data Team (administration, school psychologist, literacy and math coaches, student support services (SpEd) and school counselors), focuses on the overall well-being of each student. Every 6 weeks, this team meets with all classroom and student support services (special education) teachers to discuss the academic, social/emotional and behavioral needs of students. Following Data Team meetings, the administration works with academic support teams and school guidance counselors to ensure identified students are supported with a clear data focused plan. Grassland has one full time counselor and one part-time counselor who collaborate to establish small groups that meet regularly based on student needs. Students facing changes in family situations, challenging social relationships, or emotional stressors benefit from this program and will ultimately experience more holistic success in the classroom with this support.

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

An eagle embodies loyalty, freedom, truth, honor, and hope. Grassland Elementary (GES) chose this magnificent bird as its mascot to represent the students, staff and community surrounding our school. The eagle represents "ALL" students at GES. The staff is committed to creating a culturally sensitive and responsive environment that values, honors, and recognizes the diverse backgrounds and needs of all. In order to serve the diverse student population, Grassland Elementary has invested in resources to create equity for all learners. Teachers work diligently to implement curriculum in the classroom that is culturally relevant. An ESL teacher meets the needs of students with English as a second language. In addition, interpreters are available for conferences with non-English speaking parents.

themselves reflected in our environment. Students attend guidance classes which focus on real-world life skills including diversity, respecting differences, communication skills, emotional regulation, careers, and interpersonal relationships. The school counselor intentionally selects materials with lessons that portray diverse characters with as much visual representation of cultures as possible. Students have opportunities for small group counseling, individual counseling, and social-emotional support.

At GES, we utilize the amazing QuaverEd music curriculum to promote social-emotional growth in our students. Quaver and QuaverSEL provide culturally responsive lessons and diverse resources for all students. Social-emotional learning, social skills, music education, and celebrating all students are features of this program.

Art classes are designed to honor art from countries such as Latin America, Mexico, Japan, China, and France. Student work is prominently displayed in our hallway. Women's History and Black History Months are celebrated with enthusiasm.

Our school social worker acts as a liaison between school, homes, and our community. She provides resources for comprehensive services to prevent, remediate, and remove psychological barriers that interfere with learning. Services also include safety and mental health support.

Each classroom practices Restorative Practices through morning meetings in which we build stronger relationships, increase social awareness, develop empathy, foster respect and celebrate the uniqueness of individuals in our school. We are all unique and we "ALL" Grassland Eagles.

The GES Elementary World Language Program invites and encourages all K-5 students to participate in Spanish instruction. Spanish classes are offered in 12 week sessions for 1 hour each week. GES has a fall and a spring semester of class offerings. These classes meet before or after school and allow students to learn the fundamentals of this beautiful language as well as more about the places and cultures around the world where Spanish is spoken.

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

---

The primary focus of RTI block is to meet students where they are academically and challenge them to move forward. Everyone benefits from this learning approach, because struggling students begin closing gaps in their understanding, high achieving students go above and beyond to expand existing knowledge, and students that are often “in the middle” are productively challenged to excel.

The GES data team analyzes data from nationally normed diagnostic tests, district benchmarks, Dyslexia and Written Expression screeners to gather information on each student to best serve their needs. Groups of students with similar needs are then formed based on this information and they meet daily at regular intervals. The “Walk to Intervention” approach allows a teacher to design tasks specially targeted to the needs of the students in their group. These groups are flexible and adjusted throughout the year as the data changes and students meet their goals. Quarterly data meetings engage all the grade level instructors, content specialists, and administration in analyzing up to date information on individual student growth.

Grassland Elementary currently enrolls 523 students, 18% (the district average is 15%) of whom qualify under special education. Students with a designation of special education automatically receive intervention during this RTI block from their file holder, classroom teacher, or building content specialist. Proof of the progress is reflected in our standardized test results from TN Ready.

In our current school year, despite all of the outside factors impacting learning the past several years, each grade level had outstanding outcomes due to effective RTI implementation. A student qualifying for Tier 3 intervention requires a percentile lower than 10. Tier 2 instruction is provided for students whose percentiles fall within 11-25. This includes students with English as a second language as well as our students with specific learning disabilities. In our building, the following data reflects percentage of students in each Tier for math and literacy:

Math ELA (English Language Arts)

Kindergarten T2: 1%/ T3: 3% T2: 12%/ T3: 6%

First T2: 5%/ T3: 0% T2: 1%/ T3: 2%

Second T2: 0%/ T3: 1% T2: 1%/ T3: 1%

Third T2: 2%/ T3: 1% T2: 1%/ T3: 1%

Fourth T2: 1%/ T3: 0% T2: 4%/ T3: 0%

Fifth T2: 1%/ T3: 1% T2: 1%/ T3: 1%

These tremendous numbers are also evident when it comes to state test results. In 2020-2021, 76% of 3rd grade students were at mastery level or on-track in ELA compared to the state average of 31.8% in those same categories. Math was just as successful with 75.9% at mastery or on-level compared to the state average of 21.1%. The percentage of students in 4th grade who were on-level or mastery was 78.7% whereas the state average was 33%. In math, 4th graders made up a staggering 93.4% on-level or mastery while the state numbers were only 33.6%. 5th graders in ELA who performed on-level or at mastery made up 60.2% with the state average being 28.8%. 5th graders in math who were on-level or at mastery made up 75.9% of our students, whereas at the state level it was 31.1%. Students at Grassland outperformed their statewide peers by at least 2 to 1 in all grade levels for both subjects.

Our scores on state testing as well as percentages of students in need of Tier 2 or 3 intervention underscore the importance and effectiveness of our consistently rigorous instruction on a daily basis regardless of pandemic-proportioned roadblocks.