

U.S. Department of Education
2023 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 Mr Jason Groendyke
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

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

School Mailing Address 501 Normal College Avenue
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Sheldon State IA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 51201-1743

County O'Brien County

Telephone (712) 324-4337 Fax _____

Web site/URL https://www.sheldonschools.com/o/ees E-mail jason.groendyke@sheldonschools.com

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

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent* Mr. Cory Myer E-mail cory.myer@sheldonschools.com
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Sheldon Community School District Tel. (712) 324-2504

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

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mrs. Susan Rensink
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

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

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

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

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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 2023 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 2018 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2022.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 or 2022.
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 (2022-2023) unless otherwise stated.

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

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

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

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

- ☐ Urban (city or town)
☐ Suburban
☒ Rural

3. Number of students in the school as of October 1, 2022 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 Students
PreK	34
K	79
1	96
2	86
3	81
4	96
5	0
6	0
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	472

*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
 - 1.2 % Asian
 - 1.4 % Black or African American
 - 21.4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 72.5 % White
 - 2.5 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2021 - 2022 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, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	10
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	20
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	30
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	474
(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):

Spanish, Chuukese, Vietnamese

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 12 %
58 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 44 %

Total number students who qualify: 206

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 14 %
Total number of students served 68

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 should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

<u>7</u> Autism	<u>9</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>14</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>1</u> Developmental Delay	<u>1</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>3</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>6</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>27</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 0 %
Total number of students served: 2

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 9

11. 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.	23
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	15
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	16
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

12. 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 21:1

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

Required Information	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
Daily student attendance	95%	97%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

14. **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 2022.

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%

15. 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.

16. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

Prepare all students to be self-confident learners. The child-centered, enthusiastic, dedicated staff, in cooperation with family and community, will provide an appropriate well-defined curriculum through rich, varied experiences to meet individual needs in an accepting and nurturing environment.

17. Provide a URL link to the school's nondiscrimination policy.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1MzLR5bRJVwgHMO6o3yPS4QCfoQwGxFierPA-qpuEcV8/edit?usp=sharing>

18. **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

East Elementary is located in Sheldon, Iowa, which has a population of about 5,428 people in northwest Iowa. The community has a strong agricultural and manufacturing history that has provided strong family values and community support for our schools. Families in our area have an array of options for educating their children, and we work to be the best public elementary school in our region.

The make up of East Elementary consists of preschool through 4th grade with approximately 500 students. Preschool students are taught in our new Little Orabs Preschool Center. The elementary students are divided into four sections in each of the grades kindergarten through fourth grade. Our student population is approximately 42% low SES (Socio-economic Status), 15% with identified disabilities, and 12% ELL (English Language Learners). Although our demographics are continually changing and challenging us, East Elementary continues to strive for excellence and have a proactive approach to maximize our students' potential. East Elementary has been a "High Performing" school as identified by the Iowa School Performance Profile for the last four years. This designation is limited to just under 13% of Iowa elementary schools and is something the staff works hard to maintain.

One of the most often asked questions of us is, "What is an ORAB?" and our response is, "An Orab is a winner!" Truly at East Elementary we take pride in and focus on our students being ORABS. We encourage our students to be Organized, Outstanding, Respectful and Responsible, with an Actively engaged Attitude who Believe in themselves and try their Best to be Super and Successful. Our keys to our success have been successful implementation of various initiatives, such as Leader in Me (LIM), Professional Leadership Communities (PLC), and a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS).

Leader in Me is a program designed to build students' leadership and life-skills while improving the culture and climate in our building. It is based on Stephen Covey's 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. The LIM program provides additional avenues for teacher leadership and the intentional integration of student leadership. The staff is aware of the climate in our building and works to keep us positive. This program has moved us to cover our walls with examples of learning around the 7 Habits and pictures of students learning and enjoying their time at East Elementary.

Another impactful initiative that has been put into place for the last fourteen years is Professional Learning Communities. These PLCs have been the basis of teacher collaboration and professional development that help the teachers reflect on the four guiding questions: What do we want all students to know and be able to do? How will we know if they learn it? How will we respond when some students do not learn? How will we extend the learning for students who are already proficient? We take a lot of pride in modeling the PLC process and having continual collaboration with our grade level teams. We are given approximately two hours on Wednesdays to PLC. This process goes far beyond these two hours, it is not something we just do during this time, we continually work collaboratively throughout each week to achieve better results. We have the mentality at East Elementary that "ALL means ALL," our students are not labeled according to their needs. We understand that all of our students matter and that our teaching and actions can make a difference for all of our students.

When looking at data and determining what's best for each student, the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) has really helped to define and implement an effective and efficient process to assist our teachers to use the data to make evidence-based decisions and to provide the necessary instruction to help close academic gaps. This system is well-articulated and known to the teachers to allow them to initiate support for their students as soon as the need arises without needing to search up and down a chain of people. Our system emphasizes implementation of researched-based resources with an attention to fidelity that maximizes the work of our staff.

East Elementary continually strives to implement innovative and creative techniques that build community while engaging students with our academic goals. Different ways this is done throughout the school year is by offering school wide reading opportunities to encourage in students the love of reading around teacher created themes, spirit weeks to maintain a positive learning environment for our students and staff, and

evening events that invite families into our building. This will include our literacy night which will expand this year into a broader event that includes literacy, math, STEM, and LIM activities.

East Elementary staff members work very hard to provide the best educational experience possible for our students; they truly are our number one priority! We create a welcoming, safe, and respectful environment for all students, staff, and community members. ALL students are encouraged in their learning to have a growth mindset, be positive, and above all do their very best.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

At East Elementary, reading and English language arts take a high priority on a day-to-day basis in and out of our classrooms. This is evident by the approximate 150 minutes of daily dedicated time to reading and writing instruction, along with additional time incorporating reading into science and social studies. We pride ourselves on using evidence-based curriculum and practices to help plan, deliver, and assess instruction along with fostering the love of reading through dedicated daily read aloud time, buddy reading between grade levels, providing reading opportunities throughout the school year, and maintaining a strong connection between school, home, and reading.

In order to help with the initial planning process in the area of reading, administration, instructional coaches, and Northwest Area Education Agency (NWAEA) set up a process for teachers to learn, align, and prioritize the Iowa Core Standards. Taking the time to do these things helped the teachers to identify essential skills at each grade level and create standards based report cards aligned to the Iowa Core. Creating this framework for instruction at each grade level also helped teachers develop formative and summative assessments based on the essential skills, along with developing qualitative rubrics to help with consistent assessing between classrooms and across grade levels.

The curriculum used with the students to help explicitly instruct reading and English language Arts takes place in the universal tier by allotting time in the day for every student to have exposure to grade level curriculum and content. During this time, teachers are introducing, modeling, and reinforcing various reading comprehension skills using grade level engaging fiction and nonfiction texts and incorporating the best practice approach of “I do” “We do” “You do”. Teachers are also using daily and weekly formative and summative assessments to determine which skills are acquired and which ones need additional reteaching by keeping individualized learning portfolios for students where they set goals and can track their progress.

A portion of whole group time is also dedicated to explicit phonics instruction using Really Great Reading (RGR). Not only are these comprehension and phonics skills taught and applied at grade level but also during small group time. This is a time for students to receive instruction on the same whole group skills, but also on a text that may be more appropriate for their reading level. During this small group time students are engaged with reading activities such as Word Work, Work on Writing, Read to Self, phonics skills and using the RGR Digital Playground. The classroom teacher has additional support for their students needing it such as Foster Grandparents, High School Helpers, Reading Club teacher, At Risk teacher, and ELL teacher. Students who are ready for guided reading are introduced to Rigby Readers. This is determined by teachers administering benchmark assessments to each student. Students who are not ready for guided reading use Star Readers to help with application of phonics skills and use structured literacy lesson plans and decodables to reinforce skills.

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

East Elementary has a long tradition of success in mathematics with our students. We have been using the Everyday Math curriculum for many years and recently updated to the 2016 edition of the series. The teachers are committed to a balance of conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and application; this program provides a good foundation for that work. One of the keystones of the program is the intentional spiral built into the curriculum. Using the resources provided with the curriculum that outline the spiral, along with the resources from the Achieve the Core website and support from coaches from the Northwest Area Education Agency, we were able to identify the essential skills derived from the Iowa Core Standards for each grade level, determine at what point in the year each of those skills should be mastered, and review the vertical articulation of those skills across grade levels.

Once those skills were identified, the teachers at East Elementary developed their skills-based report cards

and wrote qualitative rubrics that defined success for each skill. The teachers use many different forms of assessment from student interviews, to observation of skills, to weekly skill checks, to unit assessments. Since we have moved to standards based reporting, students are given multiple opportunities to demonstrate proficiency in the skills and are asked to demonstrate that proficiency several times before the student can be said to have acquired the skill.

Instruction of the math curriculum is explicit and offers many scaffolds to build in understanding and practice. Instruction begins with math routines either in the morning or at the beginning of the block of math instruction that include practice around broad skills such as dates, time, weather, temperature, money, and place value. Instruction on the learning target usually begins with activities designed to support mental math and fluency skills. Each lesson offers various ways to provide the instruction on the day's focus that include the use of manipulatives as appropriate, visuals to support learning, and plenty of guided practice. Journals are available that not only provide practice for the students on new content, but also incorporate distributed practice of past skills and brief introduction to upcoming skills, thus supporting the spiraling of the content. The use of games is also an important aspect of instruction. Games for the students are provided as online resources and in physical form and are aligned to learning targets to support additional, fun practice of skills.

While the common curriculum used throughout the elementary provides a comprehensive guide for coherent instruction in mathematics, the staff is also encouraged to design instruction to the specific needs of their students. Teachers continue to receive professional development around best practices for instruction in math. Some of this comes from whole-staff professional development and some of it comes through working with an instructional coach. We recently received training on learning progressions for numeracy skills to help us diagnose where in the learning progression students are, what they need to work on to progress, and to plan learning activities accordingly. Individual teachers share successes with strategies they have personally used. The instructional coach encourages building in conceptual understanding of skills offering a scaffolded approach from concrete to visual to abstract representations and emphasizing the importance of student voices in the classroom.

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

Science instruction at East Elementary is aligned to the Iowa Core standards, which are built from the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). NGSS gives the teachers Performance Expectations (PEs) that lead teachers to use an inquiry-based approach that intertwines the Disciplinary Core Ideas (DCIs), Crosscutting Concepts (CCs), and Science and Engineering Practices (SEPs). Time was given for the teachers to learn about the standards for their grade level, explore the three components of each Performance Expectation, and review the Evidence Statements to assess learning.

Teachers across all grade levels unpacked their standards and were encouraged to bundle the instruction of the science standards with literacy instruction to make efficient use of available instructional time. Teachers in grades kindergarten through second grade have self-created units created from a variety of sources including online units, units from previous curriculums, and curriculum resources available from STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) grants available in our state. Teachers in grades three and four teach from curriculums purchased for them by the school. These include Inspire Science from McGraw Hill and the online curriculum Generation Genius. In all grade levels, instruction is encouraged to be hands-on and inquiry-based.

Assessment is similar to other content areas in our school. Once the Performance Expectations were unpacked, qualitative rubrics were written and units were aligned to the assessments. Teachers use a combination of observation, formative assessment, summative assessment to follow student progress.

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

Social studies instruction at East Elementary is also aligned to the Iowa Core. The administrator and an instructional coach attended a three year training provided by the NWAEA with a classroom teacher from each grade level to learn more about the new social studies standards. This time was very beneficial as it helped give teachers time to unpack and explore the new inquiry anchor standards and content anchor

standards, plan for inquiry based instruction, and create units related to the standards. During this time, teachers focused on unpacking and bundling standards within reading and other curriculum areas, crafting compelling and supporting questions, and designing lessons using a social studies lesson plan template. Teachers were given resources to look at inquiry-based social studies units and places to access primary sources, along with ways to engage students by using the Question Formulation Technique (QFT), which helped aid in the creation of their social studies units. Teachers decided to build self-created units along with finding online created units to use for their instruction.

Also within this social studies unit template, teachers worked on creating formative and summative performance tasks, along with qualitative rubrics that aligned with these assessments to help determine if students acquired skills for each standard. If students are unable to acquire a skill then a retake is allowed along with a reteach of the skill to ensure mastery of each standard.

1e. For schools that serve grades 7-12:

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

Little Orabs Preschool serves our four year old students, as well as a limited number of three year olds who qualify for our Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) classroom. All students are integrated into the general education preschool classroom where we foster our students' exploration, discovery, creativity, play, and confidence. Each student is encouraged to take risks and not be afraid to fail, learn new skills, and make friends along their preschool journey.

Creative Curriculum GOLD is implemented into our learning environment for each student to learn the necessary social-emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, math, science and technology, social studies, and the arts skills to be successful. Our program also uses Really Great Reading, Launchpad, which is a playful approach to teach our students phonics and pre reading skills to prepare our students for kindergarten. Really Great Reading is essential for our students, as it is implemented in grades K-2. We are proud of the collaboration we have within our preschool setting; each Wednesday is dedicated to professional development for PK-4 staff; with the preschool staff receiving the entire day to collaborate with one another, Northwest Area Education Agency (NWAEA) strategists, and administration as needed. The last two hours of the day is professional development for the rest of the staff and this time allows for preschool staff to collaborate with the transitional kindergarten and kindergarten teachers. We pride ourselves on a team approach and understand the importance of having a strong foundation in place for our preschool students; this allows our students to feel confident and experience success as they enter kindergarten and assures our kindergarten staff that the students are well-prepared when they enter their kindergarten classrooms.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)

East Elementary operates on a four day cycle in which students engage daily for 30 minutes in one of four curricular learning opportunities including guidance, library, music, and physical education. In addition to these four areas, our classrooms are beginning to explore and incorporate computer science into their curriculum.

In music we place an emphasis on and demonstrate student learning through doing. To support this work, time is provided every month for the music teachers to collaborate across the district to make sure our program is cohesive and aligned vertically. Specific time was allotted and support was brought in to help the teachers unpack their fine arts standards and write their skills-based report cards. During the thirty minutes of music instruction the elementary students engage in a variety of learning activities through the Game Plan

curriculum. This is a program that focuses on learning through doing, experiencing, and creating. The curriculum is customizable to individual students, which makes it flexible and a strong asset to the music program. Typical lessons include activities such as singing songs, dancing and movement, playing instruments, listening, learning vocabulary of music, and the art of performing. Each year, our first through fourth grade students perform a winter and spring concert.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

In physical education the approach for our kindergarten through fourth grade students is skill based. The physical education teacher has updated his curriculum map, created assessments, and designed rubrics that align to the SHAPE standards. The physical education instructor understands the importance of having the students work on developing and comprehending the necessary skills it takes for students to be able to play a game, such as kickball. It is important for the students to understand how to approach and strike the ball, as well as fielding and throwing. The students are taught the importance of working as a team and not as an individual; this carries over into many other settings in our building. In the end, the physical education program is used to build the skills to get students interested in life-long activities that they can use daily and be confident in the process.

2c. Foreign language(s), if offered (if not offered, leave blank)

2d. Technology/library/media

Our library time consists of our students working with our school media specialist, as well as the library associate in the room. Each day is a little different and the staff tries to fit as much into the thirty minutes as possible. Students typically have a lesson taught to them that centers around skills that allow them to choose library books, using appropriate websites to find information, and making presentations. The library staff works closely with our general education staff to assist them when conducting research projects, providing the proper resources for students to be successful with their project. The library is a place where students are also able to “sharpen the saw,” meaning they get to build on our Lego wall, play with blocks and magnets, color, draw, increase vocabulary by building words on our magnet wall, and of course, listening to books being read to them and reading to self.

2e. Any other interesting or innovative curriculum programs you would like to share

In guidance our school counselor goes into the classrooms and teaches lessons that are built around our guidance curriculum and appropriate to the age level of the students. In our kindergarten and first grade classrooms the counselor spends her time focusing on, “A Little Spot,” which is a curriculum that focuses on building social and emotional intelligence, but more importantly helps the students to comprehend these emotions and how to work through them. Our second through fourth grade classrooms focus mainly on supporting the students’ academic, career, and social emotional/physical/mental health. In addition to these areas, the entire K-4 classrooms focus on acts of kindness and the importance of being a “bucket filler” for all individuals. The school counselor will read the book, Have You Filled a Bucket Today, by Carol McCloud to our students and focus on the importance of positive behavior and expressing kindness to all. Not only does the school counselor focus on whole group instruction, she also uses screeners such as mySAEBRS, East Elementary climate survey, and Conditions of Learning survey to assess individual student needs and building needs. Instruction and action plans are created based on these results.

East Elementary students and teachers have access to technological devices through a one-to-one initiative, providing transitional kindergarten and kindergarten with iPads and first through fourth grade with Chromebooks. Teachers integrate skills and technology use within daily lessons and activities. Students engage in and develop problem solving, computational thinking, collaboration, creativity, digital literacy, logical thinking, and planning skills, while exploring and persevering through trial and error tasks to reach a specific outcome. STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) Scale-Up kits and various online platforms such as code.org and Scratch/Jr. are utilized by all grade levels to enrich current math, reading,

and science curriculum activities. Additional lessons in device use, proper care and maintenance, and simple troubleshooting begin in transitional kindergarten, and formal keyboarding instruction begins in second grade and continues through fourth grade. East Elementary has interactive whiteboards in all classrooms providing teachers with the opportunity to display and interact with content to engage all learners.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Through the implementation of a MTSS (multi-tiered system of supports), leadership at East Elementary has defined a process that guides teachers through the necessary support for their students.

All students are given a universal screener through FastBridge three times a year. These screeners include Early Reading, Early Math, CBMR, Automaticity, aMath, and aReading, depending on grade level of the student. After each screening window, the instructional coach walks the teachers through a data analysis. The first thing that is looked at is to see if there are any classrooms where 60% of the students are not proficient and determine a classwide intervention for these classrooms. Next, teachers look at individual student data and determine if a student is persistently at risk, provide any necessary diagnostics to help determine gap areas, and provide an intervention and weekly progress monitoring during WIN (Whatever I Need) time. Evidence based interventions are provided to the students during this time; all teachers and support staff provide interventions. Teachers also collect implementation data logs to determine if the intervention was done with fidelity. The teachers and instructional coach review the data every 6 weeks to determine if the intervention is working or if the intervention needs to be intensified or changed. If a student is not showing growth after the intervention has been intensified, the classroom teacher, any support staff working with the student, and instructional coach move the student on to TAT (Teacher Assistance Team). This problem-solving team consists of teachers, administration, coach, and parents. The team members review the data and come up with a plan for the student. This plan may consist of changing to a new intervention, writing a 504 with included accommodations to support the student or going through an evaluation process for special education services, whichever the team feels will help the student be the most successful.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Students at East Elementary have the opportunity to receive enrichment or talented and gifted (TAG) programming. Since separating the effects of an advantageous home environment and true giftedness can be challenging at an early age, we keep our identification requirements broad and flexible for our youngest students. Students in grades kindergarten through third grade are eligible for enrichment groups. Groups at these levels are created based on teacher recommendations and are changed approximately each quarter. Teachers are given a list of traits, aptitudes, and behaviors (TABS) to review when recommending students for enrichment. Teachers also use classroom observation, screening data, and classroom performance data to guide their recommendations. Groups are formed and the elementary TAG instructor pulls students for specially designed instruction available only to those students. Once students near the end of 3rd grade, the TAG teacher performs a more rigorous identification process. This process looks at data from the Iowa State Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP), the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT), classroom grades, observation scales from teachers, and the Profile of Creative Abilities (PCA) assessment, if appropriate. All the data is collected and organized by the TAG teacher. It is reviewed by a team with the nominated students remaining anonymous. From the data, the team determines which students will be served by the TAG teacher the next school year.

Students who do not qualify for enrichment or TAG services with our TAG teacher but are still performing at or above grade level, can still receive enrichment from the classroom teacher and during grade level WIN (What I Need) time. Just as groups are created to support students who are performing below grade level, groups are also created for students who are at and above grade level as well.

3c. Students with disabilities:

Students who qualify for special services are placed on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) according to their needs which may include; reading, math, writing, behavior/adaptive behavior, fine motor, and speech. When establishing student goals for the IEP, evidence based approaches and curriculum are used. Classroom teachers, special education teachers, instructional coaches, and NWAEA strategist may be called in for guidance to share best practices, access to specialized curriculums, and strategies that have been previously successful. Regardless of the student's needs, we take a team approach to make sure the student is being served appropriately, whether that is in the general education classroom or special education setting; we always provide the best support for the student to be successful.

For reading, needs are determined based on data from diagnostics given to the student. The curriculum used to support students with literacy can range from programs like Really Great Reading and the SPIRE curriculum. Multisensory lessons are also pulled in to help make learning “stick” for the student such as the Red Word Procedure to help make the words easier to retrieve. Students are also tested on their phonemic awareness. To determine if this is an area of need, teachers use either the PAST assessment from David Kilpatrick’s work or the Heggerty assessment to find gaps and provide Kilpatrick one minute drills or use the Heggerty curriculum for more intensified instruction on phonemic awareness.

The special education teachers rewrote all their math probes to align with the essential skills identified by the classroom teachers when the most recent curriculum was adopted. They created a process where random skills are assessed. This process allows students to see the skills multiple times, as a preview, practice, and as review after. The special education teacher has multiple opportunities to assess the student on the essential skills. Instruction can be focused on the most essential skills that the students have not yet acquired. Instruction is based on best practices and can be from various sources such as Developing Number Sense by Kathy Richardson, Bridges Intervention modules, Zearn online math, and Math for Students on Alternative Assessment as provided by NWAEA, among others.

3d. English Language Learners:

The ELPA 21 (English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century) really helps guide the ELL (English Language Learner) Teacher on instruction during the day with each student. The teacher will look at how the students scored on the Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing sections and from these results will provide the students with the appropriate instruction. Along with this data, the parents also fill out a questionnaire based on the Steve Gill Matrix, so the teacher can have a clearer understanding of the language and learning taking place in the home as well. These questions also help the instructional coach and ELL teacher decide if an ELL student needs additional intervention or needs to be evaluated for special ed in the situation of an ELL not showing growth the same as “like peers.”

Students who are newcomers and score a one or two on the ELPA 21 receive daily language acquisition instruction from the ELL teacher using the Really Great Reading curriculum. The RGR curriculum Get Ready really helps our students gain a better understanding of English. In addition to RGR the students also receive individual practice in Reading and Math using a computer based program called Imagine Learning. ELL students who score a three or four are seen and provided instruction 2-3 times per week and are provided instruction using a curriculum called Connect that incorporates all components of speaking, listening, reading, and reading in all subject areas, like reading, math, science, and social studies. ELL students who scored a five are considered advanced and are monitored for a minimum of two years by the ELL teacher checking in with the classroom teacher on skill acquisition.

3e. Other populations, if a special program or intervention is offered:

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

In 2019, our school district adopted the Leader in Me program, based on Stephen Covey's 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. This program teaches students important skills around culture, leadership and academics. When walking through the building the culture and practice of Leader in Me is evident by the images and words on the walls with colorful pictures of our students engaging in learning and leading. Teachers bring in leadership opportunities for the students in the classroom and school. Examples include having a student say the morning announcements, having fourth grade students provide tours to teaching candidates, and having all grade levels plan and present at monthly assemblies. The language and practices of the 7 habits is not only used building wide, but also within each classroom by providing a multitude of leadership opportunities. Older students read with younger students, and teachers provide jobs in the classroom to engage each student. Students not only live and demonstrate the habits through leadership opportunities but also through academics by creating Wildly Important Goals (WIGS). These goals encompass personal and academic goals that are reflected on with the student throughout each quarter in their leadership portfolios. This has really helped students reflect on their growth and believe in their own leadership skills.

One way we celebrate student accomplishments is by giving ORABGRAMS. Staff is encouraged to find the good in all the students do and fill out an ORABGRAM when they see a student doing great things. These are mailed home to the parents to share in the exciting news. Staff is also always looking for ORAB Acts. These are given when students are "caught" doing something good, without being asked, such as helping a peer, cleaning up the building to help a staff member, or taking initiative in various ways to make our school the best it can be. This student is then recognized on the morning announcements and given a certificate donated from area businesses.

East Elementary is committed to help students engage in and find a love for reading. One way we do this is to provide more reading opportunities throughout the school year. There are four reading events beginning with a kick-off that involves having a celebration on the football field with reading theme based activities. The other events often include holiday and seasonal themes that provide the students with a break from the daily schedule and support our culture. Along with the reading events, high school students help out with various activities such as reading books to students in the classrooms, helping out on the football field and telling students about their love of reading and why reading is important. The end of the year is punctuated by a celebration of learning where hot dogs and hamburgers are grilled for our students. We eat outside, play in bouncy houses, and compete in games.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

At East Elementary we see the value of establishing strong relationships with our students, families, community members, and businesses. We understand that it takes a team greater than just our school staff to provide the best educational experiences for our students. We do this through a partnership with parents through our Excellence for East committee. This committee does a phenomenal job with organizing and planning yearly events such as Carnival in the fall where families are welcome to come and join in fun games, activities, prizes, and food. Special events are planned in the spring for our students to celebrate with a parent or other guests, like Ties and Tiaras and Moms and Misters. The fun continues throughout the summer months with four dates chosen for families to enjoy a movie on the East Elementary green space. They also acknowledge the hard work of our fourth grade students throughout their years at East Elementary and provide them with a keepsake when they "graduate" from East Elementary.

East Elementary continues to engage students in future ready practices by inviting local businesses to come into our classrooms and teach our students relevant life skills and topics about health, finance, agriculture, and environmental resources. These community members bring real life experience to our curriculum units in science and social studies. Some of these experiences result in traveling to various places for field trips. On these field trips other volunteers and community members give their time and energy to make these

experiences meaningful for our students.

One of our largest outreach events is our Literacy Night. This program has been an annual occurrence since 2015. During this night time themed event, students and families arrive for food, games, and prizes along with attending literacy based sessions provided by classroom teachers. Our hallways are decorated and our teachers are dressed in the theme. Nearly all members of our staff show up to make this a special event for our students and their families. Students and parents have also had the opportunities to listen to speakers and authors about the importance of reading. This night gives us an opportunity to celebrate the learning that has occurred for our students and for their parents to experience this with them by taking an active part in the literacy sessions. As this continues to evolve, we will be adding sessions for math, STEM, LIM, and literacy to spread the joy though all content areas.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

In 2016, Sheldon Community School District implemented our Teacher Leadership and Compensation (TLC) plan. Throughout the last seven years, teachers have stepped into leadership roles and have grown in confidence. The TLC plan facilitated expanded professional development practices that have had a positive impact in our building. As a district, we start our year with a TLC Kickoff. This kickoff has multiple purposes that include introducing and reviewing district initiatives with new and veteran teachers, introducing our instructional coaches and model teachers with their roles and responsibilities, and building a campus culture with fun activities and challenges for teachers to compete in and win prizes. Other professional development opportunities include a mini professional development conference where the model teachers, instructional coaches, and outside resources present to the staff on a wide variety of topics ranging from content specific topics, to engagement and effective teaching strategies, and technology. The teachers find value in this professional development as they can choose what sessions they want to attend based on their own needs. An additional professional development opportunity is Create Your Own PD Day. Teachers appreciate the autonomy and flexibility this day provides to determine their own professional development. This often includes curriculum work, professional reading, or observing teachers in area school districts.

Collaboration among staff is supported with PLCs (Professional Learning Communities). Every Wednesday, staff meets together for two hours using an early release schedule. During this time teachers meet in teams, typically by content or grade level, to discuss data. These conversations are centered around the four essential PLC questions: what we want our students to learn, how are we going to know that they are learning it, what we are going to do with the students who have not learned it, and what are we doing with the students who have learned it? Effective strategies are shared and plans are made for remediation and extension. Once a month K-12 days are scheduled for teachers to meet across buildings to discuss curriculum on a broader level. This gives cohesiveness with student learning as they transition between buildings. Paraeducators are provided time with their peers and lead teachers to action plan on students they work with.

The addition of instructional coaches in the district has also benefited teachers by providing individual support to classrooms and students through the use of coaching cycles. These cycles involve the teacher and coach looking at student data to determine a need with an instructional strategy, curriculum, or intervention to put in place with support from the coach, then discussing the outcome of the data after implementation. Teachers also complete Individualized Teacher Professional Development Plans (ITPDP) that are data and evidence based driven where a teacher reflects on his/her current reality and creates a SMART goal based on what's happening in the classroom. The teacher completes a self observation or an observation of another teacher related to the goal and then reflects with a coach to add that extra level of support.

New teachers, either new to the profession or new to the district, are provided extra support by having a mentor assigned to them. This mentor and mentee relationship begins before school starts where they are introduced to one another to start opening lines of communication along with giving them their responsibilities for the school year. After this initial meeting, mentors are encouraged to meet with their mentees weekly and discuss a monthly checklist of items. They also document the time spent together collaborating and share this information with the principal. Our goal behind this level of support is to set the

teacher up for success, to feel supported, and to help with teacher retention in our district and in the teaching profession.

4. School Leadership:

Our East Elementary principal has been in his role for nine years. He strongly believes in collaborative leadership, being visible, and understanding the classroom teacher has the most impact on student learning.

Building a bridge of trust among staff members is vital for the success of our school. Being team-oriented, having open and honest communication with one another, and being willing to listen are all important for the success of the students and staff. Having high expectations for self, staff members, and students is essential. Being transparent and honest with all individuals may sometimes be difficult, but it is important in order to stay committed to our students and one another. The principal takes an active part with various teams, such as BLT, PLC, TLC, and TAT meetings, all of these with a focus around students, staff members, and what is best for East Elementary. Being present in the building and visible is important for the principal; interacting with staff members, students, and being in the classrooms allow for the feeling of a team. The principal truly values each student and staff member. East Elementary is often referred to as a family; this is the belief and culture created with each individual in the building. Celebrating the accomplishments of our hard work is important and creates a positive culture; this is done quite often and is intentional. The principal meets with the K-4 staff on a weekly basis and the BLT on a biweekly basis. This is a time for staff members to share and have conversations with the principal about what is going well, as well as concerns or suggestions to become the best for our students and one another. These times are important for the staff to understand he is listening, cares, and wants to create a positive culture for everyone. The goal is to create an environment where staff members are empowered to lead with confidence and know they are doing the right thing each and every day for the students and staff at East Elementary.

East Elementary is fortunate to have three previous and current classroom teachers in leadership positions in our school through the TLC grant. This has allowed our staff many opportunities to learn, grow, and lead professionally. We have an instructional coach in the areas of reading, math, and technology, as well as three model teachers who help support the needs of our staff and help provide professional development throughout the school year. These individuals collaborate on a regular basis with the principal as well as one another to continue to find strategies to help student achievement. Professional development is a huge part of helping our staff to feel supported and confident in their practice. Communication among the TLC and BLT occurs throughout the year to bring in best practices for professional development, as well as the focus for the next school year. We pride ourselves on having this be a collective effort between administration, instructional coaches, and East Elementary staff members. This helps to create the family culture we want by allowing everyone to take part and let their voices be heard.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

East Elementary continues to grow in diversity; we pride ourselves on celebrating this diversity by welcoming all students into our building and providing all necessary support to help them grow socially, emotionally, and academically. We connect our families who are of low socioeconomic status to community resources who provide food, clothing, and any other necessary items needed to live. The school collaborates with an area church to provide food for our backpack program. Food and snacks are provided to students on a weekly basis and over extended breaks. During the summer, meals are also provided to students through the summer lunch program.

ELL students who attend East Elementary are provided with support from our ELL teacher by determining a baseline through the ELPA screener, information from the previous district, and through the ELL Parent Interview questions that are answered by parents at registration. All of this information helps to guide the ELL teacher and general education teacher on the best way to support the student in the classroom. Students who are newcomers receive time daily with the ELL teacher for learning English and vocabulary acquisition. Students who score higher on the ELPA test are provided support three times a week. Students who are proficient on the ELPA are monitored and checked in on from the ELL teacher to ensure progression in academics.

Any and all students are provided support through the MTSS and PLC process. Time is dedicated for teachers to view data on all students, collaborate with one another to determine the best support for all students during whole group instruction, small group instruction, during intervention time, and during specialty times such as Title I, At Risk, Special Education, and English Language Learners instruction. This type of collaboration is essential in giving ALL students what they need.

Overall, East Elementary staff truly are amazing; we have a growth mindset with all of our learners. We understand that many students come into our classrooms with some sort of difficulty, but it is the hard work, dedication, encouragement, and belief of the staff that helps these students progress and feel confident in their abilities. The staff takes the time to get to know the students and families on a personal level and develop relationships with them. We build trust with them, and they know that we care for them and respect them. In return, students feel safe and cared for and are willing to put forth their best effort.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

The most instrumental practice for East Elementary's success is our commitment to our Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS) and providing the right resources to our staff and students to be successful.

The students are given the FastBridge screener for reading and math three times a year along with mySaebrs two times a year for Social Emotional Behavioral Health. After the screener, the teachers go through a process of analyzing their data by determining if their class is in need of a classwide intervention due to more than sixty percent of students not showing proficiency. Teachers also look at individual students who are at risk and persistently at risk. These students are given diagnostics in early reading foundational or math skills to determine gap skills and an intervention. The teachers then set up weekly progress monitoring on FastBridge using evidence based interventions on the Student Success System. Many of these interventions are provided during Whatever I Need (WIN) time. At East Elementary, our philosophy is all hands on deck. Grade levels are assigned twenty minute time slots along with additional adults in the building to help with intervention. This helps to ensure our WIN groups needing an intervention are as small as possible. During this time teachers collect implementation data logs where they record exactly how many minutes the intervention was provided. Every six weeks the teachers review their progress monitoring graphs along with implementation data logs to determine if the intervention is successful, needs to be intensified, needs to be provided with more fidelity, or needs to be changed to a new research based intervention. If an intervention has been provided with fidelity and the student's trend line is plateauing or showing a downward trend then the teacher may move the student on to our TAT process (Teacher Assistance Team).

The TAT process starts with the teacher meeting with an instructional coach where additional diagnostics may be given to determine student needs and an intensified intervention is put into place, which usually involves multiple interventions and supports between the general education teacher, Title I, At Risk, and ELL teachers. The data is reviewed again after six weeks and if growth is still not showing then the teacher is referred on to the TAT team, which consists of multiple teachers in the building, along with the parents of the student to view the data and determine a new intervention or refer the student on for an evaluation.

This whole MTSS process continues to cycle throughout the school year continuously. Because this practice is ongoing, it always keeps all students in the forefront of teachers' discussions and helps to answer the questions about what do students need and what do we do if they don't know it and if they do know it

So again, people often ask, "What is an ORAB?" and our response is, "A WINNER!" Our MTSS has been implemented the past seven years with fidelity and has allowed our students and staff to be confident and successful and to celebrate the accomplishments of our hard work. It has led to East Elementary being identified as a high performing school the last four years and has allowed us to create a positive learning atmosphere where all day, every day, we are all winners.