

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 Mrs. Caitlin Benes

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

Official School Name Hiawatha Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 410 S. 1st Street PO Box 428

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Kirkland State IL Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 60146-0428

County DeKalb

Telephone (815) 522-3336

Fax (815) 981-4056

Web site/URL <https://www.hiawatha426.org/>

E-mail caitlin.benes@d426.org

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Mr. Jared Poynter

E-

mail jared.poynter@d426.org

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

District Name Hiawatha CUSD 426

Tel. (815) 522-6676

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mr. Tim Hall

(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 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)
0 Middle/Junior high schools
1 High schools
0 K-12 schools
- 2 TOTAL

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

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

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

3. Number of students in the school as of October 1, 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 | 30 |
| K | 32 |
| 1 | 32 |
| 2 | 31 |
| 3 | 33 |
| 4 | 30 |
| 5 | 27 |
| 6 | 0 |
| 7 | 0 |
| 8 | 0 |
| 9 | 0 |
| 10 | 0 |
| 11 | 0 |
| 12 or higher | 0 |
| Total Students | 215 |

*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):
- 0.4 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 % Asian
 - 1.9 % Black or African American
 - 6 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 79.1 % White
 - 12.6 % 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 | 9 |
| (2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year | 3 |
| (3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)] | 12 |
| (4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021 | 192 |
| (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, Lao, Albanian

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 5 %
10 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 58 %

Total number students who qualify: 125

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 18 %
Total number of students served 39

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>3</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>1</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>2</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>5</u> Developmental Delay | <u>4</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>20</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>1</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 1 %
Total number of students served: 3

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 5

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. | 14 |
| Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc. | 7 |
| Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students. | 6 |
| Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc. | 4 |

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 15:1

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 | 88% | 90% | 91% | 93% | 93% |
| 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.

Empower all students to become productive, responsible, caring citizens and independent life long learners through a quality education within a safe and respectful environment.

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

<https://www.hiawatha426.org/district/school-board/policy-manual>

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

Hiawatha Elementary School is a wonderful place to learn in rural northern Illinois. We are located in Kirkland, IL but support students in several small towns within the school boundaries. We have students from Kingston, Kirkland, Fairdale, Clare, Irene, and Esmond. Kirkland has a population of just under 2,000 people. The school was first built in 1959 and an addition was added to the building in 1969. In 2011, the original 2-story elementary building was torn down and our beautiful new elementary school was constructed. The newest addition in 2011 was added to the older portions of the building to make us a unit building, meaning that we house Pre K-12th grade in one location. This allows us so many unique opportunities for all our students to learn and grow together. The schools both operate independently with separate administrative offices, however we can work together to enrich the learning experience for both staff and students.

Hiawatha is also a great place to work. I have had the opportunity to be this school's principal for the past five years. In that time over half our staff has either retired or taken positions in other districts, allowing me the opportunity to hire an imaginative and inspired set of new educators. Hiawatha staff is committed to identifying and embracing the ever changing instructional needs in today's educational process. The average number of years of teaching experience in our classrooms is nine years, which aids in our staff's readiness to teach at a high level with innovative ideas and a zest for teaching today's learner.

Over the past five years the Hiawatha teaching staff has worked tirelessly to identify learning gaps and implement new curricula to help build a strong foundation for student learning through the spiraling of concepts Hiawatha students learn with a high level of skill mastery. We have started a new curriculum for reading and language arts, as well as, for math. We have added supportive materials for science and social studies to continue to enhance the learning environment. Writing has been an area that we continue to work on to help meet the increased needs of our students. We have implemented different strategies, interventions, and exciting opportunities for our students to express themselves through writing. We also work intensely to ensure our Hiawatha Hawks have a balanced education with daily PE and weekly art, music, and technology classes.

Our Pre-K program has changed quite a bit over the past five years from being a fully state-funded Preschool for All Program to our school losing our grant and having to change our program to a blended tuition based program. This, in combination with Covid, caused our pre-k numbers to drop during the 2018/19-2019/20 school years and then drop even lower for the next two school years. However, in 2022/23 we saw a surge in enrollment and we were even awarded a state Pre-K Block Grant to help offset costs and provide our pre-k program at no cost to families. Having students participate in our Little Hawks Pre-K program for one or two years provides an incredible start for our youngest learners.

Hiawatha has many plans of action to work with all students no matter if they are above, at, or below grade level. We know that learning can be exhausting for students on both ends of the learning spectrum. Some students are bored and we find ways to enrich and excite their learning with creative activities. On the other end we have students who are frustrated with learning because it is difficult for them. These children need to not only receive additional academic support but also need guidance fostering a love of learning, even if it is unorthodox or outside of the box.

In our building, we believe that laughter is the best medicine and, since we have the privilege of working with children everyday, we have fun while doing it. When new people come to Hiawatha they always ask what the best part is and the answer is almost always that our school community is like a family. We are close, rely on one another, have open and honest conversations, give each other feedback and above all else, appreciate everyone that works here. Each year a theme is chosen and this theme is incorporated in all that we do throughout the year. We use it to balance our behavioral goals, our social skill lessons, our academic focus, and the overall focal point that drives our school year. Below is this year's theme.

For the 22/23 School Year we are hoping to get back to where we were before the world fell apart! Creating our perfect puzzle that incorporates KINDNESS, MATH, READING, COURAGE, TECHNOLOGY,

WRITING, HEALTH & FITNESS, SCIENCE, TEAM WORK, SOCIAL STUDIES, COLLABORATION, MUSIC, & COMMUNITY! When you put all of those together you will always get the HIAWATHA HAWKS!

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

What is taught: Our elementary school adopted Benchmark Advanced (Benchmark) in 2019, with a three-year roll-in for all classrooms, grades K-5. Benchmark is a knowledge-based program that aligns with Illinois state standards and Science of Reading research, and it provides a cohesive structure for the development of literacy skills and content knowledge. It promotes independent thinking through its use of text annotation and analysis of high-interest close-reading texts. Benchmark is designed to empower students to build skills within and across grades; to expand both general and academic vocabulary in support of reading, writing, and constructive conversation; and to provide inclusive resources that meet the needs of each learner through culturally responsive content.

How it is taught: Benchmark's units rotate between literary and informational texts and topics and use a variety of instructional strategies to promote repeated reading for improved fluency and deeper comprehension. Students are asked to collaboratively support answers to open-ended questions using textual evidence, and complete both formative and summative assessments around the units' essential questions.

Assessment: Assessments range and may include short response questions, multiple choice, longer answer essays, and culminating projects. Every Benchmark unit includes both formative and summative assessments. We have created new ways to assess students that draw on their overall level of mastery of a given skills. This year our entire elementary school participated in an Author's Showcase which allowed every student to write a story and create their very own book to display for families. Different grade levels also have the opportunity to create poetry every spring to help demonstrate their understanding of poetry as a literary genre.

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

What is taught: Our elementary school adopted Great Minds' Eureka Math in 2018, with a two-year roll-in for all classrooms, grades K-5. Eureka is a comprehensive math curriculum with an intense focus on key concepts that layer over time, creating enduring knowledge. Students gain a complete body of math knowledge, not just a discrete set of skills, that aligns with Illinois mathematics standards. Eureka uses the same models and problem-solving methods from grade to grade, so math concepts stay with them, year after year.

How it is taught: Eureka's units are divided into modules categorized into four areas of mathematics: number sense; geometry; numbers and geometry measurement; and fractions. Each module is divided into topics, and each topic's lessons contain fluency practice, an application problem to model the problem of the lesson, a whole group collaborative lesson, and independent practice.

Assessment: Eureka modules includes both formative and summative assessments. Formative assessments occur during learning such as exit tickets, topic tickets and mid-module assessments. Every module has an end-of-module assessment as its summative assessment.

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

Our elementary school uses multiple resources to meet the Illinois science standards (NGSS). Our core curriculum consists of Scott Foresman's Science series, along with supplemental resources such as Mystery Science and Scholastic News. The elementary school is in the process of implementing a new science curriculum from TCi for the 2023-2024 school year that is more closely aligned with NGSS to better prepare students in the areas of technology and engineering. "Bring Learning Alive" by TCi gets students moving, thinking, asking big questions, and conducting hands-on inquiry experiments. It aligns with all of the Illinois science standards.

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

Our elementary school uses multiple resources to meet the Illinois social science standards. Our core curriculum consists of Scott Foresman's Social Studies series, along with supplemental resources such as Scholastic News and Illinois State Board of Education's (ISBE) websites to meet ISBE's "domains of competency in social studies" and the mandated elementary themes:

Kindergarten: My Social World

First Grade: Living, Learning and Working Together

Second Grade: Families, Neighborhoods and Communities

Third Grade: Communities Near and Far

Fourth Grade: Our State, Our Nation

Fifth Grade: Our Nation, Our World Scholastic News.

The elementary school is in the process of implementing a new social science curriculum from McGraw Hill for the 2023-2024 school year that more closely aligns with the social science standards. McGraw Hill's "Impact Social Studies" creates and cultivates an environment where students grow in their capacity to understand the world around them—both locally and globally. Students will gain building blocks for critical thinking and analysis as they use inquiry to learn about history, geography, economics, and civics. Impact is also designed to harmonize with Hiawatha's elementary Benchmark Advance ELA instructional goals.

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

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

Our preschool program provides students with a curriculum that is organized into nine areas of development and learning. They include Social-Emotional, Physical, Language, Cognitive, Literacy, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Social Studies, and the Arts. The Creative Curriculum: Teaching Strategies Gold Objectives and Dimensions align with the IL Early Learning Standards, and are used to create hands-on learning experiences that are engaging, as well as introduces students to school and learning in a way that is fun and developmentally appropriate!

When students and teachers have positive interactions and relationships it supports a strong foundation for future learning and school success. We work to build a strong social-emotional foundation to help students transition successfully into a kindergarten learning environment, while giving them the tools they need to participate within a classroom community of learners. Social-emotional competence is a significant factor in school success, and a strong foundation is built here within the preschool classroom.

Through play-based opportunities we provide materials that support and challenge children's abilities. The materials are arranged into the different curriculum areas within the classroom and then students are encouraged to explore them independently, with peers, and with teacher support. We teach new concepts and ideas often in large or small groups, and then carry the lesson and materials over to the different curriculum centers for students to explore and to expand on what they know. This allows students to work together to show what they know, ask for help when needed, and teachers can expand on their knowledge to take the learning to the next level when students are ready, or modify the materials for students who need more support and practice. In addition to being linked to self-regulation skills, studies have found that purposeful and productive play is positively related to memory development, symbolic thinking, positive approaches to learning, positive social skills, language and literacy skills, and math skills.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)

All students, in grades K-5, participate in both art and music classes. Art is a once a week 30 minute class and music is a twice a week 25 minute class. During these classes students get a hands-on experience that enables them to watch their teachers offer demonstrations, examples, or give instructions. Then they will have the ability to practice the new skill. In art, students start in the younger grades with exploring the color wheel, patterns, shape cutting, introducing clay, painting, and creating mixed media. As students grow we add levels of difficulty to these concepts as well as introduce creating landscapes, one point perspective drawing, and self-portraits. In music, students begin listening to and analyzing pieces of work, they start singing while focusing on pitch, vocal tone, and noise levels. Students are introduced to reading and notating music, as well as understanding the relationships the music creates. Students have the opportunity to play a variety of instruments, work on improvising melodies, and learning about music in relation to history and culture. As the students get older they will begin to compose and arrange music within specific guidelines, they also will learn how to improvise melodies. Students enjoy learning and playing a recorder in the 4th grade. Lastly our students love to perform at concerts throughout the school year to each other and our community.

For many years we have had this model of a 30 minute weekly art class and 50 minutes of weekly music. To move towards a more equitable plan, we will be changing music and art to one 45 minute class each throughout the week. This will allow art lessons where students practice the skill for a longer time period and music classes which go more in-depth during the given instructional lesson.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

Each one of our K-5th grade students has PE for 25 minutes each full school day. The students are tasked with many activities that require them to grow physically and mentally. Students start the year with lessons focusing on locomotor skills and cooperative games. Our PE teacher takes time each year to introduce and practice sports such as soccer, basketball, baseball, hockey, and tennis. She does this as she teaches the skills for throwing, catching, striking, kicking, and ball handling. Throughout the school year, our PE teacher revisits cooperative games, works with the younger students on body movement, includes a jump rope unit, and has our 3rd-5th graders complete the state assessment-Fitnessgram.

If you were to ask any one of our students here at Hiawatha, you will find out that they love PE, the skills they learn, the activities they get to experience, and the memories they make with their peers and PE teacher.

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

2d. Technology/library/media

K-5 students receive technology instruction for 50 minutes once a week. All of the lessons meet the ISTE Standards. The technology curriculum consists of: Computer Basics and Procedures, Mouse/Trackpad skills, Keyboarding (Typing skills), Digital Citizenship & Internet Safety, Online Research Skills, Creativity with Tech Tools, Software Programs (Google Apps), and Coding (Computer Science).

While working on these curriculum areas students are also learning how to become adaptive thinkers as technology changes at exponential rates. While in the Learning Resource Center (media center), students are learning how to work collaboratively all while enhancing their communication skills. Students are applying what they are learning through the engaging projects that are being covered in the LRC. They are able to explore using creativity and innovation while asking questions and problem-solving. Also within the

Learning Resource Center, is the K-8 library where students visit weekly or bi-weekly to check out library resources.

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

Even though we are a very small school district we have been able to offer several unique programs to help students learn and grow outside the typical school day. Our staff has always been amazing at pooling our resources and finding ways to best serve our students.

For the past 2 years we have offered an elementary summer school program and we will be offering the same program again this year. We focus on areas of achievement gaps and regression. During the 2020/21 school year we held a camp for K-5 grade students to help continue learning and offer fun ways to learn material that the student may be lacking. For both this summer and last we will focus our attention on the 3rd-5th grade groups and really pin-point what they need to be successful in the up-coming school year. An additional important element of our summer school program is to help these intermediate aged students learn to love school again.

Another program that is offered for 3rd-5th grade students is an after-school tutoring program. We have partnered with IL Tutoring Initiative through Northern Illinois University to bring highly educated College of Education students and education professionals to our building to work with students in small groups or 1:1 to best meet their needs and close their specific learning gaps.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Hiawatha has many different levels of tiered support for students who are below grade level. As mentioned above we have programs that support students outside of the regular school day, however, we have many interventions and reteaching tools that are used during our regular instructional time as well. As teachers work in the classroom and identify students who need extra support we always utilize the least restrictive methods first to offer that support. Students are exposed to both grade level materials and materials at their learning level. Teachers will use small group strategies and the built-in intervention block to expose students to instruction at their level in order to achieve mastery there and then begin to build on their knowledge. We use benchmark assessments and progress monitoring support to work with students who are below the 25 percentile. Our program gives classroom teachers suggestions for focused interventions to do with students in the classroom. If further assistance is needed we will make use of our Reading Specialist, paraprofessionals, and MTSS support staff. These individuals will either push-in or pull-out with students to work on specific skills. We have created a math club for students to use a games-based approach to practice foundational math concepts in a way that is fun and they look forward to doing.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Enrichment is an area that we have been working on for several years to find the right motivation and experiences for our most promising students. Throughout the school year we change our groups and area of focus to try to include as many students as possible. We have done independent novel studies with our 5th graders, guided discussions with our 3rd and 4th grade students. We also started including 1st and 2nd grade students with hands-on opportunities to apply their learning and take concepts to the next level. Some of our younger students have been introduced to research work and creating habitats. 5th graders were able to write a new and very imaginative ending to the novel "A Wrinkle in Time", and many have participated in other project-based learning opportunities.

Each day every classroom has a 30 -minute intervention block where students do what they need. What that means at Hiawatha is individualizing the time to work with students at their levels and be as creative as possible with the time. Some students go to different classrooms or even different grades, some work with support staff, and some work on independent passion projects.

3c. Students with disabilities:

Students that have been identified through the evaluation process with a disability and have an IEP (Individual Education Plan) receive services based on their area(s) of need. We have a variety of service providers for occupational therapy(OT), physical therapy(PT), a Vision Itinerant, social worker, school counselor, speech therapist, a special education teacher, and a remote school psychologist. These incredible educators work with our 39 students on a weekly basis to make their school experience is well-rounded, interactive, comprehensive, inclusive, and fun. In the special education classroom, students receive direct instruction from the Wilson Reading System and Moving with Math. The teacher works to support students learning with general education materials as well as with alternative curriculum. The teacher will modify assignments and work with the classroom teacher to balance the students' school day. Student progress is monitored quarterly and updates to goals are made. If a child needs their IEP adjusted, the IEP team will meet to make those adjustments. The Director of Student Services monitors these students and works with staff to provide materials, curriculum, and professional development to help the staff best support our students.

3d. English Language Learners:

Our group of ELL(English Language Learners) works closely with the ESL(English as a Second Language) teacher to identify unique needs that are creating language barriers for our students. She works with both the students and their families to create a connection between school and home that is without barriers. She utilizes the Cengage Learning curriculum REACH to help fill in the learning gaps and provide relatable learning examples. The teacher offers both pull-out 1:1 and group sessions, as well as pushes into classrooms to support the general education curriculum for these students. Student growth is measured regularly with informal and formal assessments, in addition each of our ELL participates in the Access assessment each winter.

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

In some situations we have students whose needs are outside the scope of what we can facilitate here at Hiawatha. In these cases we work with therapeutic, alternative, or even specialized schools to ensure our students receive the level of support they need to achieve success. Our Director of Student Services will continually work with the appropriate school to monitor and check-up on our students to keep their connection with their local school.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

At Hiawatha we work very hard to motivate and engage all students in a high level of learning. We find that this happens best when students are interested in the subjects or excited to achieve a positive outcome. Setting goals for students is extremely important when asking them to complete a task that may be challenging. As a school we use quarterly incentives throughout the year to address executive functioning skills, such as; organization, task completion, following directions, and preparation. We also spend time on a regular basis teaching and practicing social-emotional skills.

Throughout the school year we work hard to create fun and exciting incentives for our students. One example being, we have incorporate a reading challenge to increase the amount of time our students spend practicing their reading skills outside the classroom. In doing so, they earn minutes, which are applied toward a silly goal aimed at the principal. This year the students were able to earn inches of tape for the amount of time they read. the goal was to earn enough tape, to tape the principal to the wall in our gym space. I am proud to say our students have succeeded in reaching the goals set, each and every time. We have also set goals at the classroom level providing opportunities for individual classes to recognize each other, and praise great behavior. At the forefront of every school are academics. We also use academics as an area to motivate students and show them that hard work and determination will earn you great incentives. Students are recognized not only for grades and high achievement but also for the growth they have made in certain areas.

We have worked diligently to create fun and engaging activities to help students apply skills taught in the classroom. We have done passion projects, STEM days, and had the students participate in Genius Hours. This allows unique learning opportunities for all students to be able to focus on topics that are intriguing to them. It's extremely rewarding to see them have success.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

I feel that open and honest communication with families and the community builds the foundations of a strong relationship. Over the past five years we have worked conscientiously to instill trust with all community stakeholders. A strong and trusting relationship enables the school to open itself to bringing in different community groups to help support our students and teachers in a variety of ways.

Our close-knit community supports our school in many ways. From financial support to volunteers to participation in school events, we have different community groups often step-up to ensure Hiawatha is a great place to learn. We have had volunteers from the Kirkland Public Library come into classrooms to read to students and introduce them to their local library. Northern Illinois University has been a wonderful partner allowing student teachers an opportunity to come into Hiawatha and learn from our teachers while gaining hands-on classroom experience with students. Hiawatha has also been fortunate to have NIU students work as tutors for some of our young Hawks after school. The Lions Club has supported our school financially throughout several school years. Local girl scout and cub scout groups have come to school events to participate and volunteer. We work with the local fire and police departments to offer education to students, as well as, showing the students the importance of positive relationships with these two groups. Our Chamber of Commerce and local bank recognize students for outstanding achievements. We feel very fortunate to have so many different groups of people supporting our students throughout the community.

One group that I am especially proud of is the Hiawatha Parent/Teacher Organization(PTO). Over the past five years we have grown the PTO from 2 members to over 25 parents that consistently work, plan, and volunteer for our teachers and students. The PTO creates events that foster wonderful family involvement. They raise money that directly impacts our classrooms, and volunteer to come into the school on a regular basis to support teachers and students. I believe an active and strong PTO reverberates back to our students the investment the parents and community have in their education.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Hiawatha offers many opportunities for teachers to grow as professionals. We feel that feedback, guidance, and learning experiences are not limited to our students. Teachers can use administration, our instructional coach, each other, and outside groups to gain professional development support. Our school also participates in Professional Learning Communities(PLC). This allows staff to work together, have in-depth conversations, and work in groups to improve teacher strategies and enhance the students' learning experience. PLC's started five years ago when I joined the district. I felt strongly about the necessity of creating a professional atmosphere to set high expectations for our educators.

The evaluation cycle is used each year as a way to focus on desired areas of growth and work with the principal to implement strategies in the classroom, to improve instructional teaching, and enhance the learning environment. Regular classroom visits and feedback are so important throughout the school year to give guidance and another perspective on what is happening with and for the students.

Our district has employed an incredible instructional coach for the past three years to increase our ability to offer professional development for teachers. The instructional coach also facilitates a mentor/mentee program for new teachers. This program creates a partnership for new teachers as well as introducing them to meaningful professional education opportunities. Over the past few years the mentor/mentee program has proven to be a successful practice that allows new teachers to feel supported and learn the importance of their own professional growth.

Instructional rounds is a practice that we have been implementing over the past several years to allow teachers to request feedback or gain knowledge from each other. Teachers are able to visit their peers' classrooms and gather valuable information to improve their own instructional practices or give feedback to the teacher about a practice or strategy being tried in that classroom. This builds trust and unity among teachers, as well as, encourages teachers to take risks and try new strategies in the classroom.

The last area that teachers can use to aid in professional growth are conferences, webinars, and other professional development sessions offered outside of the school district. Funds are set aside each year to allow teachers to attend sessions focused on academics, social-emotional supports, classroom management strategies, and many more topics.

4. School Leadership:

Hiawatha is unique for several reasons, one of which is that our elementary leadership team consists of one administrator. We look at this as an opportunity to encourage teacher leaders, district administrators, and support staff to step up in order to help create a team that makes decisions that are student-centered and focused on each individual in the building. As the principal I feel it is so important to see and understand every student in our building. At the beginning of the school year I work hard to learn each new student's name and get to know them and their family. When a student hears their name and is asked about their home life they feel a sense of importance. I truly believe that creates a feeling of ownership and belonging at school, which helps build confidence from a young age.

My role as principal requires me to wear many hats; from the disciplinarian, to the evaluator, managing our district and local activity budgets, overseeing all curricula used within the building, communicating with district office and the board of education, creating professional development opportunities for our staff on institute days and early releases, working with community organizations, sharing important information with families, coordinating benchmark assessments for students, as well as managing coverage for classes due to absences. That list is very long but, by using our strong team of educators we are able to make smart decisions that support students and staff and ensure the best and safest learning environment.

As a member of the leadership team our superintendent believes our philosophy and supports us by allowing and trusting our decisions when purchasing new curricula and introducing new teaching strategies. The Director of Student Services is also an important team member when working with groups of students. The director helps the team dig into specific situations and assists when creating a plan of action. Our

instructional coach is also an important part of the team when looking when addressing staff development. The coach works closely with any and all teachers to bring out the best teaching strategies and offer guidance when staff members went to try or learning something new.

Lastly, I feel this community aids in driving our leadership style. Our small class sizes and intimate learning environment help our entire school, staff and students, to feel like a family. While we may be an one administrator building we are able to work as a team to accomplish the overall goal of an educator. To watch our youngest hawks grow to be successful, productive, responsible, and independent life-long learners.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Inclusive practices are very important to the staff at Hiawatha. No matter the differences in any student's life; meaning their educational background, ability, or culture all students are Hawks and will be included in all school experiences. We focus on culturally sensitive communication, offering financial support for school meals, and embracing all students who walk through our doors.

Teachers are mindful of the needs of the families that are a part of their classroom and communicate in ways that are sensitive to those differences. Our small school setting allows families and teachers to really build strong relationships over the course of their children's time at Hiawatha. Our support staff does an amazing job with getting to know families and their personal stories. This allows families to feel safe and share when they are in a time of need and then we can respond by offering any and all support possible.

We also participate in a free and reduced lunch program to ensure all students have the opportunity to have breakfast and lunch at school. The lunch program is state funded, we educate families in need about the possibility of the service then we help families complete the application process. Our cafeteria staff learns and pays attention to all students who walk in their doors. Particularly those students with food allergies or food sensitivities. We take pride in knowing NO student goes hungry while at Hiawatha.

We support local foster families by responding quickly when new children enter their homes. We work with the foster family and local agencies to provide support, a high level of education, and a welcoming environment. Showing all students respect and love enables them to let down their guards and accept the support from our staff.

Seeing each student as an individual with exponential possibilities for their future is how we view all Hawks. Our job is to take the students who walk through our doors and meet their needs. A quote that hangs in the main office is "Fair isn't everyone getting the same thing. Fair is everyone getting what they need in order to be successful."

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

Student-Centered Education

As I think about this question one word keeps coming to mind, students. The entire reason we are in this profession is the students. We enter this building for 176 days each year thinking and dreaming about how to make our students happier, smarter, and healthier. We no longer live in a world that allows us to simply focus on addition facts and sight words. We cannot assume anything about any one of our students, and we certainly will not take for granted the time we have with each of our students.

Each school year starts with a focus on students when they return to our building in August. Each year we greet them with open arms and an open mind. Each day can be so very different for each student that is sitting in your classroom. We need to embrace the obstacles and lead by example within the academic lessons. We must incorporate social-emotional support and education, as well as, teach students how to become life-long learners.

When our teachers are creating lessons, they are thinking about how the students will interpret the materials. When the support staff members are developing activities, they are thinking about how each student will soak up the knowledge. When I work on master schedules and planning classes, I think of the students and how this daily routine will enhance their daily learning experience. When the PBIS committee sets goals and incentives, we think about our students and what will motivate them to achieve a goal that will make them a better person. When we create any learning opportunity, we think about how to make it all about our students.

Each initiative we embark upon starts with one question: "Is this good for students?" If, and only if, that answer is undoubtedly "Yes!" may we move forward. As we set in motion a new intervention plan or instructional strategy, we continuously ask whether it is student- centered. Only when you can answer yes do we continue the journey. From PLC's(professional learning community) to the SIP team(School Improvement Plan), our discussions are student-focused and constructed with the mindset of how to help, motivate, enrich, support, and love all students.