

U.S. Department of Education
2023 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name N.S.U. Elementary Lab School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1 Caldwell Drive, Warren Easton Building
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Natchitoches State LA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 71497-0001

County Natchitoches Parish

Telephone (318) 238-6385 Fax (318) 357-6979

Web site/URL <https://www.npsb.la/o/nsue> E-mail ccoleman@npsb.la

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

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent* Dr. Grant Eloi E-mail grant.eloi@npsb.la
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Natchitoches Parish Tel. (318) 352-2358

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 Mr. Billy Benefield Jr.
(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):
- 9 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
2 Middle/Junior high schools
3 High schools
0 K-12 schools
- 14 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	0
K	44
1	44
2	48
3	52
4	52
5	52
6	0
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	292

*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):
- 1.7 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 3 % Asian
 - 19.2 % Black or African American
 - 4.5 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 71.6 % White
 - 0 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2021 - 2022 school year: ≤1%

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	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	0
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	0
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	288
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	<.01
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	<1

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

Spanish, French, Mandarin

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 17 %

Total number students who qualify: 49

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 11 %
Total number of students served 32

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>2</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>1</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>6</u> Developmental Delay	<u>7</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>3</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>2</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>1</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 7 %
Total number of students served: 19

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 15

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.	12
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.	1
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 14:1

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	94%	96%	97%	97%	97%
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.

Northwestern State University Elementary Laboratory School creates a nurturing environment of innovative thinking and problem solving where excellence is expected of everyone.

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

<https://policy.npsb.la/SectionJ/Jpolicies/JAA.html>

18. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

NSU Elementary Laboratory School has two kindergarten classes with 22 students in each class for a total of 44 students. The NSU Elementary Laboratory School strives to be representative of the population of Natchitoches Parish schools. Therefore, the kindergarten draw will make all efforts to include a minimum of 35% persons of color and an equivalent number of males/females.

The process for the kindergarten draw is as follows: Applications for kindergarten enrollment are accepted year round, but must be received by March 30th of the same year in which the child will begin kindergarten in August. A child must be five years of age by September 30th of the kindergarten enrollment year. All parts of the application must be complete to be eligible for the kindergarten draw. Information for each child is recorded on a spreadsheet by applicant's last name to include: child's name and birthdate, address, proof of residency, priority status, gender, and race/ethnicity.

Applicants with priority status are selected for enrollment first. The order of selection is: a child of an NSU Laboratory School faculty member; a child with at least one parent employed full-time at Northwestern State University or the Louisiana School for the Math, Science, and the Arts; and a child with a sibling(s) who is currently attending a NSU Laboratory School.

Note: In the event of priority applicants exceeding 44, priority status will be determined by the applicant's parents' seniority of employment at NSU Laboratory School, NSU, and the LSMSA. That is, applicants of

senior NSU and LSMSA faculty will be selected first over that of applicants whose parents have been recently or newly hired. This will be the case only in the event of priority applicants exceeding the number of seats for the kindergarten roster. Priority applicants not selected for the kindergarten roster will be placed at the top of the waiting list.

Once applicants with priority status are selected, the remaining seats in each kindergarten class are filled by other applicants who do not have priority status. Care is given to meet the threshold of a minimum of 35% persons of color and equivalent male/female distribution.

The order for non-priority applicants is as follows: NSU's Information Systems Office generates a list of randomized numbers based on the number of applicants. The first randomized number is placed beside the first alphabetized name of the applicant. This process continues until all remaining applicants are awarded a randomized number. The list of applicants is sorted by race (majority/minority) and gender (male/female) according to the randomized number assigned, beginning with number one. Seats are filled to balance race/ethnicity and gender of those children previously selected with priority status. Once 44 children are selected, parents are notified via email and U.S. mail. Those not selected in the kindergarten draw are placed on a waiting list in the order in which they fell in the draw. When all kindergarten seats are filled, waiting lists are established. Applications are listed in the order in which they fell in the draw, with a separate list for priority status, race, and gender. New applicants are added to the bottom of the list in the appropriate category (majority/minority and male/female).

A child selected for enrollment, but not attending kindergarten round-up held in May forfeits his/her spot and will be removed from the class roster. An applicant from the waiting list will replace an applicant who forfeits or declines his/her spot at any time. A child declining a position will be removed from all lists, unless requested by the parent in writing to be placed on the waiting list. In this case, the child's name is moved to the bottom of the respective list.

The kindergarten draw is scheduled in April of each year and is not open to the public. Those participating in the draw include the principal of the NSU Elementary Laboratory School, the secretary of the NSU Elementary Laboratory School, the Dean of the College of Education and Human Development, and the NSU Auditor.

When a child on the waiting list is accepted, any sibling applications are moved to the priority list of their respective grade. At the end of the academic year, kindergarten applicants on the waiting list are moved to the first grade waiting list. Applications are required to be updated with a school report card and current contact information in order to be considered.

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

The feeling of being on the Northwestern State University Elementary Laboratory School campus is like no other. Situated in the heart of a regional university and a warm small town community, the educational experience is truly unique. NSU Elementary Lab school serves as a learning laboratory for pre-service teachers in Northwestern State's College of Education. Supervising teachers model best practices for future educators, and because of this, students gain exposure to unique and innovative learning practices. Students are immersed daily in hands-on, exemplary education. The foundation of the student body is rooted in the Northwestern community with children of university employees having priority admission. Therefore, the educational experience at NSU Elementary Lab quickly becomes a family and community affair, providing a highly supported and enhanced learning experience. The value of each individual student is undoubtedly what has formed the culture of NSU Elementary Lab. The colorful ambience of the school goes beyond just the fixtures and furnishings. It extends up the walls of annually themed classrooms, ceiling tiles painted each year by students, and outside in the garden, which has been planted and cultivated by NSU Elementary's garden club members. Student involvement is highly encouraged, and enthusiastic and innovative faculty members have created opportunities that are not offered in a typical elementary school. Students make an impact campus wide as the running club jogs together after school, or as the garden club hatched chicks appear after being monitored for weeks by students collecting data and researching the incubation process. Student artwork and Christmas ornaments adorn the Governor's Christmas tree. The student led annual Veterans Day program honors those who have served our country by bringing multiple family members together for the common cause of honoring those who have served. Partnerships with local community leaders help to cultivate the education of all students. These leaders often volunteer within classrooms, educating students on ways they can serve the community. Additionally, a local bank provides financial educational opportunities for all students, the Kiwanis club recognizes "terrific kids" monthly, and students participate in community service activities including diaper drives for the local women's resource center. Funds are raised to fight heart disease through "Jump Rope for Heart," canned foods are collected for the local food bank, and diapers donated for the Women's Resource Center. Perhaps the most exciting time of year is the preparation and production of the NSU Elementary Lab Christmas Program. Each September, students begin the complex process of training for lead vocal roles, taking glow-in-the-dark drumming lessons, or learning lines as reindeer, elves, or maybe even Santa Claus himself. The talents within the walls of the school are limitless, and many of the initiatives taken at the elementary level prepare students for success in years to come. The orchestra program trains students from upper elementary grades to interpret and play music. Students perform multiple concerts in the community and have the option of continuing their talents with nationally-recognized programs offered at the middle and high school levels. Whether interest is piqued by academics, agriculture, art or music, there are ways for each individual to make his/her mark at NSU Elementary Lab. Creativity knows no limits at NSU Elementary Lab School, and for many, new talents are discovered through the unique experiences offered.

NSU Elementary Lab hosts a variety of opportunities that foster creativity, promote independence and ownership, and consistently challenge students. A key component of the school's success is goal setting to foster student ownership. Data is used to help students and teachers set standards to be met within the classroom. This is implemented by giving each student success criteria, effectively communicating to them what is needed for them to meet—and exceed—goals that they have set. Unique time is set aside during the school day to focus on personalized learning approaches. The Whatever I Need, or WIN period, is specifically tailored to meet the individual needs of every student in the school. Students are provided intervention and/or enrichment opportunities that include: Spanish lessons, music class, yoga, reader's theater class, student broadcasting, robotics, handwriting, healthy living, and ELA intervention. Placement in WIN is determined by student performance on quarterly proficiency exams. In addition, student-led conferences have been introduced as a tactic to further promote student-ownership within their education.

The faculty and students at NSU Elementary Lab are nothing short of exceptional. Positive attitudes, creativity, and devotion to learning are consistently shown through performance. The environment at NSU Elementary Lab allows for a multitude of ways for students to advance academically, socially, and emotionally. With innovative learning practices and motivated employees, it is easy for students to want to succeed. NSU Elementary Lab's campus sets a higher standard within the community for academic and

social growth, and is therefore highly desired by families who value an exceptional experience for their children. The communal support and enthusiasm of everyone on campus makes for a special educational experience. The school is invested in the development of the whole child from the beginning, and the commitment to growth is unwavering throughout each child's education.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

Kindergarten through second grade uses the Expeditionary Learning (EL) Education Core curriculum provided by the state for ELA. K-2 Reading Foundation Skills Block is taught using a structured phonics approach and assesses all reading foundations standards and language standards associated with spelling. Teachers adapt the skills block component to align with Science of Reading. Once the phonics skill is introduced and modeled, students practice the skill in tier 1 instruction and literacy stations throughout the week. Differentiated/adaptations are made within K-2 through literacy stations, peer/partner activities, and interactive word study. These diverse opportunities allow for all students to be successful. Oral reading and spelling assessments are given weekly to guide instruction. A project based approach is used to teach reading modules that focus on a common theme. To ensure mastery of all standards, teachers incorporate a variety of texts that increase rigor and expectations. In addition, teacher created materials are used to teach reading and writing standards. Writing is embedded throughout the modules and used as a form of assessment.

Third through fifth grade teachers use Imagine Learning Guidebooks (IL) in combination with Foundational Instruction for Reading Excellence (FIRE) materials and CommonLit, all Louisiana approved tier 1 core curriculum. Students begin their ELA lessons by accessing their Google Classroom, where they review standards, objectives, and the lesson agenda. Students, along with the teacher, participate in a whole-class discussion that is centered around what will be accomplished in the lesson and the route taken to achieve success. This allows for students to build their own success criteria and hold themselves accountable for their individually set learning goals. Teachers customize daily slides, determine if supplemental materials are required to enhance student learning, and tailor the assessment to align with standards and objectives and state assessment format. Teachers develop alternate assessments to allow students to demonstrate their understanding of the unit goals. These items include Google Slide presentations, project based learning, Socratic seminars, reader's theater, debates, book club discussions, and creating audio and hardback books.

Quarterly proficiency checks are administered, and the data is analyzed to determine student growth and future goals.

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

Kindergarten through fifth grade uses Zearn, a Louisiana tier 1 core curriculum, for mathematics. Daily instruction includes both whole group instruction and the 50/50 model where 50% of the students work is with the teacher for direct explicit instruction in small groups while the other 50% of the time, students have the opportunity to complete an online demonstration of the same skill. At the beginning of the lesson, or small group, the teacher, along with the students, identifies the core standard for the lesson and analyzes what they will need to demonstrate in order to be successful. Small group instruction provides opportunities for flexible and differentiated learning, and the students have the opportunity to engage in meaningful discussions about strategies they are using to solve problems. Interactive digital lessons give the students an opportunity to watch short videos that explain math ideas using problem solving and math manipulatives. Problem sets are provided for paper/pencil practice. A variety of assessments are given throughout the unit including curriculum provided and teacher created. Throughout small and whole group lessons, teachers analyze student work through the use of formal and informal assessments such as show-down with whiteboards, partner-to-partner feedback, and peer-created questions aligned to daily objectives. When students provide feedback to peers, they are encouraged to focus on error analysis and provide constructive feedback to guide further mastery of skills. Teachers utilize a variety of resources to support the needs of all students. Teachers incorporate skills based math activities during weekly work stations. In addition, teachers implement Xtra Math and Rocket Math to develop quick recall and automaticity of basic math facts. Teacher lessons are created using backward design with end goals in mind. Activities are designed to foster

higher level thinking and student engagement. Quarterly proficiency checks are administered, and the data is analyzed to determine student growth and progress toward goals.

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

Kindergarten through fifth grade uses Amplify for science, a Louisiana tier 1 core curriculum, that blends hands-on investigations, literacy-rich activities, and technology enhanced simulations. Teachers create Google Slides to guide student discovery towards mastery of standards and objectives. A plethora of resources are used to differentiate instruction to ensure the learning styles of all students are met. Students are introduced to a phenomena at the beginning of each unit to spark interest and guide thinking. Phenomenon-based learning engages students in a multidisciplinary instructional approach that is centered around student inquiry, collaborative learning, and problem solving. The use of non-fiction texts encourages authentic learning by connecting students to the real world. Experience based learning is implemented through the use of weekly hands-on investigations that are designed to guide students towards mastery of standards while applying the scientific process.

Students are assessed with a variety of teacher created assessments which include claim-based writing, analyzation of data, and working backwards to create a claim explaining the purpose of a given scenario.

In addition to implementing Amplify, teachers are given the autonomy to supplement additional resources to ensure that standards are taught rigorously. Teachers use outside resources to assist students in gaining a deeper understanding of the concepts being taught. Classroom teachers often invite members from the community and university to demonstrate specialized skills related to specific standards. Examples include members of the forestry industry discussing natural resources, fossils, and other artifacts. Computer information systems professors teach coding sessions. Teachers in grades 3 through 5 provide additional practice with LEAP-like questions provided by the Louisiana State Department of Education and Edulastic in order to familiarize students with the format and structure of standardized questions. Teacher created proficiency checks are given each quarter, and data is used to develop lessons for remediation on identified standards.

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

Kindergarten through second grade teachers utilize resources from Louisiana scope and sequence and performance tasks along with Studies Weekly, which is provided by the district. Teacher-created units focused on guided questions and state standards are developed around the thematic strands of civics and government, geography, economics, and history. Key concepts and vocabulary are introduced through the use of a variety of texts, online videos, interactive notebooks, and class discussions. Students, with teacher modeling, use analysis tools to interact with sources to enhance and transfer knowledge. Assessment is based on students' ability to create and support a claim to answer the unit and daily focus questions.

Third through fifth grade teachers use the Louisiana Believes website in conjunction with aligned Pelican documents. Focus of social studies builds on the unit question which is displayed and referenced by the teacher throughout the daily lessons. The teacher utilizes Google Classroom to display the standards, objectives, and lesson agenda. The students, with the help of the teacher, analyze the guiding question for the daily lesson and determine how it will help them answer the unit focus question and build success criteria that aligns with standards (Grade Level Expectations). Teachers create Google Slide presentations as visuals for students to follow and reference throughout the lessons. Students use a variety of sources, instructional materials, and graphic organizers to guide their learning. They are assessed in multiple ways to ensure they are successfully meeting grade level expectations and the rigor of the social studies standards. These assessments include evidence based writing, Google Slide presentations, interactive notebooks, group presentations, technology enhanced testing items, and LEAP-like formative assessments. The students are also exposed to the standards through immersive experiences such as celebrations that bring the social studies curriculum to life for the learner. Examples of these celebrations include Taste of Louisiana, Mardi Gras Ball, Party Like It's 1776, historical walking tour, field trips to the state capital, and project based learning activities. Data from teacher created quarterly proficiency checks is used to provide guidance for future teaching and remediation.

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

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)

The Arts program at NSU Elementary Lab school focuses on the belief that students that have access to the arts perform better in the classroom. All students kindergarten through fifth grade attend art and PE each week following an A and B day schedule. In the visual art room, the teacher communicates high expectations for students giving prompt feedback, motivation, and assistance as needed. Daily goal setting is reinforced with each project. The art teacher connects the core subjects to the art curriculum through several annual projects. Each year students develop a portfolio, and, sketchbook, and are entered into art competitions on both a city and state level. Students who exhibit artistic talent are referred by the art teacher for talent evaluation. If identified, they receive additional talent art instruction. There is an annual fundraiser where the students create Christmas designs to be made into Christmas cards. The ceiling tile legacy project where the outgoing fifth grade students paint a ceiling tile to leave their mark on the school is a favorite. Third through fifth grade students participate in an annual Art Show in the Orville Hanchey Art Gallery on the campus of NSU. Art professors from NSU serve as judges awarding 1st, 2nd, 3rd and best in show prizes.

Students have the option to take Orchestra in the fifth grade. The Orchestra class is taught 3 days a week by a national award winning conductor. They perform at the community Pumpkin Glow, Christmas concert, and Spring concert. Students who exhibit musical talent are referred by the Orchestra conductor for talent evaluation. If identified, they receive additional talent music instruction. These students are showcased at school performances. Through visual and performing arts, students develop skills like resilience, determination, and a growth mindset which is essential to a well-rounded student experience.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

The Physical Education curriculum at NSU Elementary Lab provides physical education for all Kindergarten through fifth grade students. The approach and philosophy tries to motivate students to show good sportsmanship and set personal goals. Physical education is cross-curricular in the school. The science curriculum is incorporated in the gym by having students demonstrate force and motion. The math curriculum is incorporated as our students count their warm-up exercises.

In addition to the regular physical education classes, the PE teacher teaches a tier 1 health class daily to Kindergarten through second graders. Students learn about food groups and how to make healthy food choices when eating. They learn that staying active leads to a healthy body and mind. Health and nutrition also brings in agriculture components used in the “Seeds to Success” program with library classes.

After school, the PE teacher offers a running club team for grades three through five to help promote healthy lifestyles outside of the classroom. There are 92 students that participate in the program along with some parents and teachers that join each week.

Kindergarten through fifth grade students participate each year in the Jump Rope for Heart challenge with the American Heart Association. Students raised \$10,523 to help children with special hearts. Students are eager to help others as they participate in the jump rope challenge and also have the chance to learn basic training in CPR.

At NSU Elementary Lab there is a partnership with the Rapides Foundation to help promote healthy lifestyles to the faculty and staff. The PE teacher provides a monthly newsletter to all faculty members and encourages them to increase their physical activity and exercise regularly. By promoting good health, teachers also encourage students to stay active as they get older.

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

2d. Technology/library/media

Students check out books weekly in the school library and have daily access to check out ebooks through a partnership with the Natchitoches Parish Library. Students check out and access books using their school iPad and are able to read immediately. They are able to continue reading these books at home using devices with internet access. Students have access to numerous digital resources and first hand training as needed from the school and parish library staff. The parish library brings the Book Mobile to school to provide students with the latest and most popular books to check out. Students participate in "Silent Sustained Reading Fridays," where they check out new books or read an e-book for twenty minutes. Afterward, they share their book with small groups or the entire class. Library goals are for students to have access to a variety of literature, to become proficient users of informational resources, and to become problem solvers.

Students engage in multiple research projects using informational resources available in the library to enrich the unique curriculum promoting student proficiency in research, writing, and reading. Annual research units completed in the library include topics such as veterans, local heritage, farm life, incubating chicken eggs, aquaponics, hydroponics, seasonal gardening and any teacher requested topics. Students celebrate and share their learning in various programs including a Veterans Day Program, holiday play, reader's theater productions, Monarch Madness Celebration, incubating chicken eggs in the library, tastings from the garden's harvest and more. Students apply gained knowledge through songwriting and sharing the songs with others during the annual author's tea. The library hosts two book fairs during the year that generate access to new high interest books for all students. The library hosts author visits throughout the year promoting literacy in a personal way. A renowned children's author and alumni of NSU visits the library regularly to share best practices with our students and encourage reading and writing. This year, the first NSU Elementary Lab's Young Author Fair will spotlight books written by our students.

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

The library uses agriculture to provide unique programming to reach academic goals across the curriculum. Information research skills are taught through agricultural content and applied by students in the outside garden. The garden is a command center of applied research and hands-on learning. There are two growing seasons a year, which help students see first-hand effects of weather, plant needs, and life cycles as they use problem solving skills and creativity. The garden is planned, monitored, adjustments made, and harvested using digital and hard copy resources. The fresh produce is eaten immediately and shared with community food pantries. Being involved in Louisiana's Harvest of the Month, Serving up MyPlate, Seeds to Success, and Ag in the Classroom help facilitate and provide educational material for these programs. S.T.E.M. has been incorporated through aquaponics and hydroponic gardens. Recycled and reused materials are used through composting stations and garden art. Students write across genres creating reader's theater scripts and short stories using agriculture concepts. Story elements are applied live when they perform in reader's theaters for audiences of all ages.

Students are engaged in a rigorous multi-sensory learning playground acquiring skills to promote academic success, foster mind and body wellness, and develop appreciation for the world's resources. The outside classroom facilitates instruction, experimentation, and observation as an extension of the school's curriculum.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Many structures have been put into place to provide interventions for all students performing below grade level. NSU Elementary Lab Whatever I Need (WIN) structure uses data from screeners, proficiency checks, and state formative assessments to place students in the appropriate Response to Intervention (RTI) tiers. Progress monitoring occurs biweekly, and proficiency checks using reading and math assessments are administered quarterly. This data drives the movement of students between the RTI tiers. Students in tiers 2 and 3 receive small group explicit reading intervention during a daily 45 minute WIN block. Kindergarten through second grade along with third through fifth grade tier 3 students, are immersed in phonics and fluency practice. Tier 2 intervention for kindergarten through second grade includes fluency and comprehension activities while, third through fifth grades focus on front loading students with content knowledge, vocabulary, and fluency to prepare them for core reading instruction. This reading focus can be attributed to the belief that reading proficiency is the foundation for all current and future learning across all subjects. As a laboratory school, there is also the added benefit of teacher candidates from Northwestern State University College of Education. These teachers in training provide additional support for students through small group instruction/mini lessons, one-on-one tutoring, and helping teachers monitor and scaffold activities in centers.

Students who do not make progress in RTI and/or are struggling in the classroom are identified early by classroom teachers and referred to the School Building Level Committee. This school level committee which consists of the principal, a classroom teacher, counselor, and pupil appraisal representative from the district, meets with parents to discuss concerns and identify areas of need. A plan to help students become successful in the classroom is established. This structure ensures that all students receive the individualized social, emotional, or academic support needed to be successful. Students who do not make progress may be referred for an educational evaluation through the district Pupil Appraisal team.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Data from the most current state assessments indicate that Lab School students perform above the state average in both math and English language arts proficiency scores, meaning they are at or above 75%. These proficient students are working at an advanced level in the classroom. Academic performance goals based on state assessment results are set by students at the beginning of the year. Students monitor progress toward their goals during quarterly proficiency checks. Student ownership of learning is displayed during student-led conferences when students share their goals and progress with their parents. Teachers and students create success criteria for daily lessons. Advanced students use academic feedback from teachers and peers to modify this success criteria for higher level learning. In the classrooms, teachers provide activities that allow students to work at their own pace. Students completing the assigned tasks are allowed to complete enrichment activities such as Prodigy math, Freckle ELA and math lessons, enrichment math problems, and creative writing.

Students performing at mastery and advanced level on the state assessment (LEAP) or quarterly ELA and math proficiency checks participate in tier 1 WIN enrichment activities focused on developing creative thinking and problem solving skills. These enrichment classes include broadcasting, music, reader's theater, cursive handwriting, fine motor skills, Spanish, yoga, and health.

3c. Students with disabilities:

NSU Elementary Lab School strives to provide a positive and supportive learning environment for all students. Students performing below grade level are identified by quarterly academic screeners, bi-weekly progress monitoring, and teacher observation and feedback. This data is brought to the School Building Level Committee for review. Some students are identified under section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act. These students have an individual accommodation plan (504) designed to provide the needed support for success in the regular classroom. Examples of assistance provided by classroom teachers are scaffolded notes, chunked assignments, small group remediation, specialized graphic organizers, and teacher or text to speech read aloud for assignments and tests. Teacher expectations do not decrease for students with disabilities. However, they may tailor the performance assessment to fit the ability of the

student. Examples of accommodations are small group or individual testing, extended time, and answers recorded.

Students who are identified with an exceptionality receive service minutes based on their Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). These minutes include having a special education teacher to provide extra support that is determined by the student needs. The special education service providers include two full-time certified special education teachers, a credentialed paraprofessional, adaptive physical education teacher, occupational therapist, physical therapist, and speech therapist. As part of the IEP meeting, members of the IEP team establish service minutes, an overall attainable goal, and short-term goals according to the students' evaluation data for specific academic, motor, social, or emotional needs.

In collaboration with regular education teachers, special education providers combine a variety of instructional strategies such as lesson planning, reviewing data, and weekly meetings. Special education teachers work in small groups and one-on-one instruction to provide differentiated and adapted instruction. Differentiated instruction enhances academic opportunities for the students' comprehension of current skills being taught in the general education classroom, in addition to specific skills identified in the IEP.

3d. English Language Learners:

English Language Learners (ELL) at NSU Elementary Lab are supported by the school district and state education department guidelines and standard educational procedures. An English Learners Accommodation checklist provided by the Louisiana Department of Education is developed for all students who are English Language Learners. This accommodation checklist is developed through the School Building Level Committee with parents and teachers working together to set accommodations to help the student be successful in the classroom. Some examples of accommodations include extended time for tests and assignments, repeated directions, tests read aloud on math, science, and social studies.

Students who are English language learners are immersed in our classrooms and offered support and interventions from their classroom teachers. The tier 1 language arts curriculum provides teachers with English language learner strategies to implement into daily instruction. Examples of these strategies include vocabulary word walls, choral and echo reading activities, guiding questions, and activities that build background knowledge. Students who are English Language Learners that need additional language support are placed in a tier 2 reading interventions WIN group with their classroom teacher for 45 minutes daily. During this time, teachers provide vocabulary development and background knowledge needed for upcoming reading lessons as well as grade level fluency practice. Students who are classified as English Language Learners participate every spring in English Language Proficiency Test (ELPT) testing and formative state testing (3rd-5th grades).

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

The elementary level is undeniably one of the most important stages of development in children. Because of this, NSU Elementary Lab School strives to promote positivity and encouragement in every facet possible. Multiple strategies are used that have allowed the creation and maintenance of an unforgettable atmosphere. The positivity while on campus begins before students walk in the door: colorful benches line the walkway into an annually themed and seasonally decorated school, establishing a hidden curriculum of joy and enthusiasm. For each of the various challenges presented to students, unique rewards are offered to reinforce positive performance and progress. One of the school's trademark reward systems occurs every Friday, as the "blue ticket drawing" is done over the intercom. Lucky students are called down stairs from each grade to draw a prize of their choice. The blue tickets are awarded by various faculty and staff members: from teachers to lunchroom personnel, to administrative staff such as the secretary and principal. Students receive tickets as a reward for behavior, academics, participation, and more. Special guests from the community, such as the Northwestern State basketball players, appear weekly to help draw and award students. This has continued to serve as a motive for positive behavior in students over many years and is an experience that many of them do not forget. At NSU Elementary Lab, the value of making students feel recognized as individuals is a top priority. Birthdays at school are celebrated and individualized for each child when they receive a birthday shirt, pencil, birthday card, and a serenade from the birthday bear as tokens to honor their special day. Experiences such as these are paramount to developing learners who are confident and excited about all aspects of school. Academic rewards are also eagerly sought at school, with quarterly celebrations for students who meet their goals or exemplify top-growth in the classroom. Ranging from glow parties, to walks across the street to the local ice cream shop, a variety of experiences for students are offered when academic progress is recognized both inside and outside of the classroom. The most frequent strategy of reward—and perhaps the students' favorite is a free dress day, which may be earned in a multitude of ways. Simple privileges like wearing an outfit of choice sometimes proves to be the most motivating for students, while concurrently promoting individuality within the school. A variety of experiences and opportunities for students to gain rewards and recognition are offered at NSU Elementary Lab, and the firm belief that these simple honors can instill positive attitudes within young minds makes them a priority. Though students are challenged to grow academically, socially, and emotionally, faculty works to consistently use encouraging methods that aid students in each of these aspects.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

The convenient location of NSU Elementary Lab poses many advantages for its families, students, and school. Located both in the heart of a college campus and small town community, endless resources have played a role in the school's success. With such close connection and proximity, accessing and utilizing resources offered by Northwestern State University and the community itself have proved invaluable. This strategy is unique to the school and has given students many exclusive experiences. Northwestern State University science professors often visit classrooms to wow students with demonstrations or assist them with projects. The Creative and Performing Arts university students selflessly give their time each year to help students prepare for their roles in the Christmas program or readers' theater activities. University athletes volunteer to help the P.E. program, running club, and field day activities. Special guests are welcomed and appreciated by the students and faculty. Many local community partners contribute each year to the school as well. The school agriculture program has expanded based on the interactions with local farmers and companies committed to learning. These generous resources have made endeavors such as the school garden and the butterfly garden possible. These projects provide hands-on opportunities for students to become involved both at school and in the community. Students interested in these areas may also seek opportunities offered by school partnerships with 4-H, which allows them to compete academically and creatively. In addition to local resources, NSU Elementary Lab benefits each year from applying for grants. These grants have opened the door for additions to the campus and student life, namely the impressive outdoor pavilion which was built alongside and works in conjunction with the school garden. Not only have these programs and developments offered improved educational opportunities, but they have increased student pride and the positive atmosphere on campus. The needs of the campus are rarely left unnoticed as

the generous support of partnerships and resources at the university and community levels are ongoing. NSU Elementary Lab is supported by the town and the families that have built it, and because of this, the students and school are improving continuously.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

NSU Elementary Lab School strives to create a professional culture where teachers feel confident and valued. The school has a dedicated staff with the autonomy to make decisions within their classrooms that best ensures the academic success of their students. The administrative team is available as a support system for growth opportunities rather than to evaluate or judge. Over the last two years, teachers have been provided with job embedded professional development time with an instructional specialist. During the weekly meeting, teachers receive development on new strategies based on the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET) Teaching and Learning Rubric. After being presented with new learning, they have the opportunity to practice these strategies within their classrooms and then meet to collaborate with peers. The instructional leadership team consisting of administrators, an Instructional specialist, and lead teachers also conduct walk through observations providing feedback on these strategies. Rather than insisting on cookie cutter implementation, teachers are encouraged to adapt these strategies to meet individual teaching styles. This allows the teachers to develop ownership and to become invested in the process. Teachers frequently observe peers in order to gain new ideas and perspectives. The goal is to build the capacity for giving and acting on quality feedback from colleagues.

Teachers are also encouraged to apply for lead teacher positions. Lead teachers are part of the Instructional Leadership Team and also act as a liaison between administrators and teachers. They work closely with the instructional specialist and assist in planning and presenting instructional development as well as conduct peer observations. Lead teachers are instrumental in providing teacher viewpoints on data analysis, professional development, and school goals.

Another vital component of NSU Elementary Lab's professional culture is the Parents of the Lab School (PALS) organization. This organization provides support for teachers throughout the school. They assist with class celebrations, school wide events, fundraisers, and year round teacher appreciation. They also provide two teacher appreciation luncheons: Christmas and end of the year. The administration also strives to provide incentives and motivational events for teachers and staff throughout the school year. These include a weekly positive parking spot, Friday jean day, cold drink and hot chocolate carts, and Bingo games. Another motivational event that faculty, staff, parents, and students enjoy is Christmas and end of the year car line events where teachers and staff dress in costumes and entertain the students as they arrive.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership philosophy at NSU Elementary Lab School is to build a family environment of which all stakeholders are proud to participate. The leadership team focuses on a positive culture where relationships are respected and success is tied to student achievement in not only academics, but also in ownership. The vision statement of NSU Elementary Lab ends with "where excellence is expected of everyone."

In January 2021, there was a shift to a joint leadership team between the elementary and middle laboratory schools. This required a change in leadership roles. There is one principal, one assistant principal, one guidance counselor, one instructional specialist, and three lead teachers, two from the elementary school and one from the middle school. As an Instructional Leadership Team (ILT), these seven leaders tie all school wide goals back to student achievement. The ILT meets weekly to analyze student/teacher data and use that analysis to drive the next steps in the school-wide long range action plan. Formal observations of all faculty are conducted using the NIET rubric. The leadership team analyzes all observations and identifies areas of need to design the cluster cycles for job embedded professional learning clusters. Weekly informal walkthrough evaluations are conducted by the principal, assistant principal, and instructional specialist. Each ILT member is responsible for observing and providing feedback within a particular content area. Teachers administer quarterly proficiency assessments which are then entered into individual teacher data trackers. Each quarter, the leadership team takes the proficiency results from teacher data trackers and compiles them into a school-wide data tracker. The guidance counselor uses each teacher's data tracker to

determine student placement for our WIN (Whatever I Need) block. Students who score proficient get placed in an enrichment group. Students who have not demonstrated proficiency are placed in a remediation group. An action plan for the next quarter is created using the data from the school-wide data tracker. The principal, assistant principal, guidance counselor, and instructional specialist present quarterly data and an action plan to the school district level leadership team in a quarterly data meeting. In addition to the leadership team analyzing all data and using it to drive the school-wide action plans and the WIN groups, students use their quarterly proficiency checks as markers of growth in their student-led conferences. Each student completes a presentation including proficiency checks, attendance records, discipline, and a “glow and grow” area. They present these to their parents/guardians during student led conferences. This instills the leadership philosophy of a positive culture focused on student ownership and achievement.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

NSU Elementary Lab School has a wide variety of cultural backgrounds. Because faculty and staff of NSU have priority for enrollment, there is a diverse population of learners, many of them speaking multiple languages or identifying with various cultural practices. One of the values at Elementary Lab is to ensure that students are exposed to the diversity that Louisiana has to offer. Being on Northwestern State University’s campus, students have the unique opportunity for exposure to many cultural programs such as plays, musicals, and concerts. Tickets to campus sporting events are often donated to students so that families can enjoy time together at NSU events. Members of various athletic teams volunteer at school, providing an example of good sportsmanship, diversity, and role models. Every year, the student body participates in a Veterans Day program where local veteran heroes are honored. Students learn about the branches of the military and the importance of service leading up to the annual Veterans Day ceremony. The art program focuses on numerous cultural experiences by teaching the history and art of Native Americans, Africans, Aztecs, and Asian cultures. The students enjoy learning about Natchitoches native Clementine Hunter and other prominent black artists during Black History month. The Spanish WIN class celebrates National Hispanic Heritage month by researching famous Hispanic Americans and showcasing their projects in the hallway. Louisiana and Natchitoches parish have a strong agriculture base. The librarian spends instructional time incorporating agriculture in the classroom with students as they learn about this important part of local culture. Students gain hands-on experience working in the school garden.

There is a focus on Louisiana traditions, specifically that of Mardi Gras and the variety of festivals and celebrations available throughout the state. Students research a state festival and present their findings to their class. They also design a shirt to represent the festival and prepare a culinary dish to share at Taste of Louisiana, the culminating event to this project. Natchitoches is the oldest permanent settlement in the Louisiana Purchase territory. Third grade students attend a walking tour of historic sites in Natchitoches sponsored by the Association for the Preservation of Historic Natchitoches. Students also culminate a unit on the American Revolution with a Party like It’s 1776 celebration.

While culture and diversity are an important part of the Lab School, there is also a value of inclusiveness and respect for all. Teachers undergo annual training in bullying, crisis management, and SBLC (school building level committee) protocols. School personnel are well versed in providing support for the physical, social, and emotional needs of our students. All school personnel can refer students to our SBLC and for counseling services. The school counselor is available for crisis intervention, therapy services, classroom lessons, and referral services. Teachers on each floor of the building as well as office staff are trained in medication distribution and emergency procedures. Providing a positive learning environment is crucial to the success of the school. PBIS (positive behavior intervention system) is embedded in daily routines. Classroom rewards for positive behavior and school wide celebrations happen weekly and quarterly.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

NSU Elementary Lab School has employed numerous strategies for success over time, continually analyzing and adjusting to the needs of students. In recent years, our school has opted to focus on one central practice: the use of data to enhance student academic growth. This has been a key component in our success and has distinguished our school both academically and professionally. Data is a fundamental tool for our leadership, teachers, and students. We have implemented the use of data at every instructional tier in our system creating opportunities for student-led learning and goal-setting within the classroom. We incorporate every stakeholder in the process from the students all the way to our school board leadership team. The Instructional Leadership Team examines and uses student data weekly to drive instructional decisions. This, then, allows the leadership team to create and use a long-range plan, preparing for professional development based on the needs that the data reveals. Data driven cluster meetings provide opportunities for teachers to meet weekly to engage in job-embedded professional development within their specialized content areas. An essential, dedicated time during the day for students is known as WIN, or Whatever I Need, focusing on individualized learning plans based on the needs of each student. The WIN period is centralized around data, as placement is entirely dependent on student performance and measurements. The involvement of students in analyzing their own data is a unique aspect of our strategy for excellence and has played a vital role in its success. In addition to WIN time, students set clear goals for themselves alongside their teachers within the classroom. Effectively communicating this information leads to expectations being mutually clear among teachers, students, and their families. NSU Elementary Lab values student ownership within academics. This has become a priority by hosting student-led conferences at the end of each grading period. Students are required to be accountable for their academic progress, thereby instilling a positive attitude and pride in their education. After completion of their conference with their parents, the goal setting process is reiterated when students set a new academic data- driven goal with their parents. Excellence is attributed not just from the use of data, but also from the unique and innovative ways that it has been utilized. It is a practice that is constantly seeking improvement in order to enhance the educational experience for each student to provide lifelong success. The belief by NSU Elementary Lab is that data is a powerful and telling tool for making instructional decisions that leads to increased student achievement.