

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 [] Choice

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

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

School Mailing Address 6085 Sun Valley Drive
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Grand Blanc State MI Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 48439-9166

County Genesee County

Telephone (810) 591-3000 Fax (810) 591-3002

Web site/URL <https://www.gbcs.org/Domain/16> E-mail ekato@gbcs.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* Dr. Trevor Alward E-mail talward@gbcs.org

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

District Name Grand Blanc Community Schools Tel. (810) 591-1695

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature) _____

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mrs. Susan Kish
(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):
- 9 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 1 K-12 schools
- 13 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	23
K	73
1	70
2	71
3	73
4	64
5	84
6	0
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	458

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 10 % Black or African American
 - 8 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 72 % White
 - 9 % 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: 5%

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	10
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	11
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	21
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	458
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.05
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5

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

Spanish, Vietnamese, Arabic, Chinese

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 37 %

Total number students who qualify: 169

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 6 %
Total number of students served 26

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>4</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>5</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>1</u> Developmental Delay	<u>7</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>4</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>5</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 4 %
Total number of students served: 20

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 11

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.	18
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	9
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.	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 25:1

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	92%	97%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2022.

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

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

Yes ☐ No ☒

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

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

To ensure all students actualize their own unique genius, freely and without fear, through an equitable system distinguished by: dedication to the discovery of profound learning, exemplary models of character and judgment, and commitment to inclusivity, accessibility, and belonging.

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

<https://www.gbcs.org/>

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

The Grand Blanc Community Schools are an option to students that live outside of the Grand Blanc boundaries through an open enrollment process in grades K-8. Families that live outside of our boundary area have a window of time to complete the registration process and identify the top three schools within the district they prefer their child attend. If the child has attended another district, they also have a responsibility to submit any discipline issues or concerns. Previous behavior issues are reviewed, and is the only reason we would give for not admitting a student that applies to attend. At the end of the open enrollment period, all students that have met the criteria are placed. We do our best to give families their top school choice, but final decisions on placement depends on student numbers and class space.

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Myers Elementary is located in the northeast corner of Grand Blanc, Michigan, and can be found in the middle of a modest subdivision. We are the largest elementary in the district, and service between 450-500 students in grades Young 5-5th. Most of our families are working families, and many are police officers, nurses, and educators. Our families are very supportive and actively involved in their children's education.

Before students begin their education at Myers, we invite families to attend our Y5/kindergarten orientation in February of the year prior to enrollment. This gives us the opportunity to welcome them into our school, introduce ourselves and our school, share information about our procedures and curriculum, and invite them to our Brigance testing in the spring. The Brigance test provides us with insight into the child's foundational skills. After the Brigance test we share information with parents and send home a summer packet of activities for the students. Our staff spends time reviewing the packet and providing families with suggestions and strategies to assist in preparing their child for school. We also invite families to a Y5/kindergarten orientation in early August. Our staff facilitate age appropriate educational games for the students, the principal has popsicles on the playground, and families can take bus rides around the community. We feel all of these activities help to ensure our young students enter school better prepared for success.

We do our best to spend the first few weeks of school building relationships and the classroom community. Teachers work with students to establish clear expectations and discuss how to effectively work together. Each child also works with their family to create an "All about Me" assignment, and the teacher spends time talking to each student individually to get to know each child better on a personal level. We feel strongly that having positive relationships with our students and families help us to better support them socially, emotionally, and academically. Our school also uses the Positivity Project (P2) on a daily basis to teach 24 character traits. The P2 initiative stresses good character and the fact that other people matter.

Our students complete the STAR assessment at least three times a year, and teachers administer the DRA reading assessment at least twice a year (more if a student is behind grade level). The administrator, special education support staff, and intervention staff meet with each grade level PLC three times a year for our data days. At data day we discuss every student to determine how each child is doing academically and socially. We discuss their progress or lack thereof, intervention or enrichment needs, and any other concerns. We also make it a point to celebrate growth. After data days are completed, the administrator meets with the intervention and special education staff to ensure all of the students that need intervention or enrichment are on the schedule to receive it.

Along with focusing on academics, we spend time discussing our students' social and emotional needs. The classroom teachers complete the SRSS (Student Risk Screening Scale) two to three times a year to help identify students that may be struggling. We have a student liaison coordinator and social worker that run a variety of groups to support student needs. We also have a student support room called the Tiger Den. The Tiger Den is staffed all day so that teachers and students can always depend on it being open when needed. The room has exercise equipment, a calming space, sensory activities, Legos, sand, books, games, and much more. Students are able to use the room for calming breaks, time outs, and rewards. Many students have breaks built into their schedules, and the Tiger Den has been a valuable resource for our students.

If you came to see Myers in action on a normal day, you would notice the day starts with staff standing outside welcoming students as they arrive. Staff and older students are available to open car doors and help students out of the car each morning. All students are welcomed with smiles and many teachers give students options for how they would like to be greeted each day (hug, high five, fist bump...). At the end of the day we have staff helping students into their cars, staff checking students in at buses, and staff spread out to ensure students safely get to their destinations. We give lots of hugs goodbye, and wave as the buses roll out each day. We feel it is important to take the time to ensure our students are happy and loved while they are at school.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

We subscribe to an active view of reading instruction. We use the current research to inform our curriculum resources as well as instructional strategies. We support readers where they are, providing them with the foundational skills of reading, while at the same time immersing readers in rich literature and content-based information texts to help them make sense of the world around them. Whole group, small group, and individual reading instruction occurs everyday, helping students grow their love of reading.

Classroom teachers assess students with the DRA at least two times a year, and more if the student is behind grade level. We also administer the STAR assessment at least three times a year to identify student needs and progress. We analyze data to determine specific student needs and develop our teaching and learning strategies to address the areas of concern.

Our 3rd-5th grades use the Wonders curriculum, created by McGraw Hill. The program is designed to explore texts and develop students skills as readers, speakers, and active listeners. We make a conscious effort to foster a love of reading and writing across all content areas.

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

For math instruction, we use the Bridges in Mathematics program. Our math program was chosen based on current research. The curriculum is composed of three distinct but integrated components: Problems and Investigations, Workplaces, and Number Corner. Students gain a deep understanding of concepts through whole group and small group instruction. We focus on problem solving and mathematical discourse. We use a variety of visual models, manipulatives, games, apps, and other learning material to help learners construct, understand, and apply mathematical ideas. Our teachers schedule at least 60 minutes daily for the math lesson and work time, and an additional 15-20 minutes for Number Corner. Number Corner is quick daily practice, that does an amazing job of continuously revisiting concepts. Throughout each unit, students work through checkpoints and work samples that teachers use to help guide their instruction. At the end of the unit, students show what they have learned through an end of unit assessment. We also currently administer the STAR assessment at least three times a year to monitor student needs and growth.

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

The K-5th grade science curriculum we use is Amplify. The program blends hands on investigations and experiments, literacy rich activities, and interactive technology tools to encourage our students to read, write, think, and problem solve like real scientists. We provide opportunities for students to learn how to figure out phenomena and solve problems while using literacy in science for deeper understanding. Powerful approaches to teaching and learning science bring together questioning, thinking, talking, reading, arguing, and writing in support of students' science investigations. Positive effects for reading and writing like a scientist occur when teachers provide clear and explicit instructions and opportunities for students to practice (formative assessment). Science teaching that aims to anchor instruction to real-life problems and experiences has significant positive impacts on students' interest, motivations, and/or attitudes.

At the end of the unit, their summative assessment is an argumentative writing that brings in data and science concepts to explain the phenomena. Students also can show their understanding through STEM, PBL, or other opportunities that showcase their strengths in learning.

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

We grow responsible citizens through our Social Studies instruction. We use both curriculum resources and instructional strategies that foster critical thinking and civic action. Students engage in real world PBL

(project based learning) that encourages students to explore their lives as well as the lives of others. Students regularly analyze informational text to support their decision making and understanding of the past and the present. Every student studies history, economy, geography and civics each year both within class and the community at large. Students have worked with organizations such as the Humane Society, the Foodbank of Eastern Michigan, Grand Blanc Chamber of Commerce, and several local businesses to engage beyond the four walls of the classroom. Our teachers also work together to plan field trips within our community and state to support the students understanding of the social studies concepts through real world experiences.

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)

Students at Myers Elementary have two art classes every 15 school days. Students learn the Elements of Art and Principles of Design in a designated art room with a highly qualified art instructor. The students work with many different mediums including paint, watercolors, oil pastels, indigo ink, pencils, and clay. We incorporate STEM type manipulatives and activities to promote creative thinking, problem solving, and collaboration. We introduce past and present artists to expose our students to a wide variety of techniques. The hallways of our school are decorated with student created art.

Our music program provides students with a wide variety of songs, dance, movement, and performance activities for 30 minutes, two to three times a week. Students develop vocal technique through voice exploration and solfege practice, as well as unison-singing and part-singing. Students develop expressive movement skills through guided dance, creative movement exploration, and traditional folk dances and circle dances. Musical elements such as beat, meter, and rhythm are learned using unpitched drums and percussion instruments. Melody, harmony and music literacy skills are built using pitched instruments such as boom whackers, recorders, xylophones, and ukuleles. Students are provided with opportunities to share their unique talents and abilities with one another in class, as well as opportunities to perform on stage with their classmates for the entire school and community.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

The students at Myers Elementary participate in physical education two to three times a week. This includes Young 5's through fifth grades. We place a strong emphasis on teamwork, participation, and sportsmanship. The essential skills practiced in physical education are carried over into their classrooms. We work hard to create a foundation for student growth in the areas of effort and having a positive attitude. Some of the curriculum areas we focus on are: spatial awareness, nonlocomotory, and locomotor skills.

Health education is equally as important as we cover body safety, nutrition, social/emotional health, and human growth development. The overall goal is to progress in these curriculum areas while developing personal and social growth.

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

2d. Technology/library/media

All our students take an active role in a Technology Explorations class each day for 25 minutes. Students learn specific tools in Tech Ex that benefit them across the curriculum. The class has a strong focus on coding, typing, robotics, cyber safety, and digital literacy. Each student in the district is provided a technology device. The students use their devices throughout the day to enhance and support learning. Along with 1:1 devices for students, each classroom also has Smart Boards and sound systems.

In 2020 our school library was completely remodeled and updated. We have an extensive collection of books across all genres, with added emphasis over the last few years to showcase diverse authors. All of our classrooms go to the library at least once a week to hear read alouds and check out new books. The 4th-5th grade students have flex times built into the library schedule to allow them to check out new books when they desire. We also collect used books from our families and make them available to any student that may need additional reading materials at home.

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

We started an initiative a few years ago and we call it our Celebration of Learning. It takes place during the week of our spring conferences every year. Instead of meeting privately with every parent like we do in the fall, we typically conference only with the parents of the students that are behind academically and/or socially in the spring. Meeting with fewer families allows us to meet longer with the parents that need the additional time.

Though we like having the additional time with families that need it, we also didn't want to lose the opportunity to bring all of our families into the school. Therefore, all families are invited to our Celebration of Learning! It is an open house style format, and families come with their child anytime during the duration of the event. The teachers work with the students to have work on display in the halls and in the classrooms. The students get to take their families around the school and show their parents a day in the life of a Myers Elementary Tiger. We have a huge turn out and everyone has a wonderful time. It is an extremely positive event, and we love showcasing the students learning.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Every year we hold data days at least three times. This usually take place in late September, February, and May. Each grade level is designated a half day to sit down with the principal, interventionists, and special education staff. A Google Doc is created with the pertinent information for each grade level, and it is continuously updated and reviewed. Each school year we create a new document, but the previous years' information is kept as a link for reference purposes.

Data days are specifically set up for us to discuss every child. We review data to see how students are progressing, we discuss strengths and weaknesses, and plan (if needed) for additional support or enrichment. The interventionists also provide their observations and feedback. Time is given at these meetings to review the current intervention plans, discuss specific student needs, and make plans for moving forward.

As we discuss the students that need additional support, we make it a point to be very specific about the student's area(s) of concern. It is very important to identify the specific areas that need to be targeted during intervention and small group or 1:1 instruction. It is also crucial to take the time to ensure that the intervention staff and classroom teacher are clear and consistent in their practices.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

We also use the three data day sessions held throughout the school year to identify students that are performing above grade level. We currently utilize STAR assessments to measure progress in math and reading. The assessments are given at least three times a year, and additional progress monitoring is administered if deemed needed. These STAR assessments, along with curriculum performance and teacher observations are used to determine if a student needs additional enrichment opportunities.

When students have been identified as needing enrichment, the grade level teachers work together or with the intervention team to develop these opportunities. Our reading curriculum and practices encourage small guided reading opportunities for every student 3-5 times a week. The teachers are able to use this time to provide more direct instruction based on the students level and needs. This gives us the opportunity to challenge our higher performing readers. Classroom teachers also create book clubs and provide high interest novels to motivate and engage.

We also utilize our interventionists and support staff when possible to offer game-based enrichment for high performing math students. The students try extra hard on the STAR Math Assessment because they want to be part of the fun and engaging enrichment activities.

We take time each week to give our K-2 students time for Makers'-Space, and our 3rd-5th grade students have opportunities to explore during Genius Hour. These times are set aside to allow students flexibility to learn about things they are interested in and provide them the opportunity to be creative with how they learn.

3c. Students with disabilities:

Myers has a resource room for special education students which is staffed with two special education teachers and two paraprofessionals. Our special education staff pushes in to general education classrooms to support students and pulls out students for individualized support when needed. The special education staff works actively as partners with our general education staff and has clear lines of communication to ensure our special education students are appropriately supported. We also have a district program at Myers that services students in grades 3rd-5th grades with multi-categorical diagnoses that require more intensive support. This classroom usually has between 12-16 students, one teacher and two paraprofessionals. The staff provides individualized academic instruction half of the day, and the other half of the day the students are included in general education classrooms for specials, lunch, recess, science, and social studies. We give select 3rd-5th grade general education students the opportunity to volunteer as special partners to our multi-categorical students. The special partners form special relationships with one another and support each other.

3d. English Language Learners:

When families enroll in the Grand Blanc Schools, they are asked to share information about languages spoken in the home. If a language other than English is indicated, the student is given the WIDA ((Measure of Developing English Language) screener. The results of the WIDA screener help to determine the amount of ESOL (English As a Second/Other Language) services the student qualifies to receive. Our ESOL support staff then provide push in and pull out support to our English Learners depending on needs. The ESOL support staff may sit in the class and help the student complete assignments in real time, or they may pull them out to provide more targeted support. The content areas of need and length of support are identified and dependent on the student's WIDA scores. The support staff work closely with the classroom teachers to determine the student's goals and accommodations and provide interventions accordingly.

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

The school motto at Myers Elementary is “When you make good choices, good things happen.” We chose this motto because it can be applied to all facets of our students lives. When you read more, you will become a better reader. When you study for a test, you will perform better. When you are kind to others, you will have more friends. We talk about our motto frequently and remind our students of the importance of their positive choices. Along with positive natural consequences, we also do our best to infuse fun in school. We hold special events all the time to help our students enjoy learning and coming to school.

The teachers at Myers also do a very good job of incorporating a variety of best practices to engage students in learning. Every classroom has a smart board and all our students are 1:1 with devices provided by the district. We are infusing flexible furniture in all our classrooms to allow for variety in partner, small group and whole group instruction. The teachers also provide students with options for how they show understanding.

Realizing that building a positive relationship with each child is important, our staff takes the time to get to know every child, and does their best to ensure that each child feels special. The staff is lined up outside to help kids get out of cars in the morning with a personalized greeting, and teachers are outside of their classrooms to offer a variety of greetings to each child every day. We encourage one another as we move through the building, and the students often share the “good choices” they are making with adults and are rewarded with praise or a smile.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

At Myers Elementary we have a very active and involved Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). The PTO Board meets with the principal in August to begin planning for the upcoming school year. Our PTO has representatives available at our annual back to school open house and provides information to families with ways they can volunteer and get involved. The information details the numerous functions throughout the school year, highlights the importance of parental involvement, and explains how to sign up to volunteer. Our PTO meets each month and schedules after school family events five to seven times a year. The classroom teachers utilize a variety of student management systems to maintain consistent communication with families. Many send messages out daily to parents to notify them of what the students learned, curriculum updates, pictures from the day, upcoming events, and things they need to know. We also have a bi-weekly newsletter that goes out to all families. The principal uses Blackboard to text, email, and call families with updates, invites, and reminders. We also have a school Facebook page where we showcase our students and the learning and fun events happening in the building. Myers we make a conscious effort to include service learning projects into our curriculum. We have partnerships with numerous community organizations that support charity causes, and we hold school events to raise funds. Along with fundraising, we model for students how to support others beyond money. We write letters to our military overseas and send them “desert friendly” Halloween candy. We collect nonperishable food items to supply our local food pantry. Our first graders have a service learning project where they perform cleaning tasks around the school to earn hygiene products to donate to a local shelter. To support our character program, P2, we stress to our students that other people matter and the important to help others.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

The principal has been at Myers for over 11 years, and many of the teaching staff are seasoned and have been at Myers for all or the majority of their careers. In August, the principal meets with the building leadership team to make decisions about professional development (PD) needs for the upcoming school year. Those needs are added to the calendar along with our district initiatives. The Leadership Team is conscious of the time and effort that our staff puts into doing their jobs effectively, and when possible, we want to give them time to collaborate, plan, review student work, and analyze data with their PLC's.

The staff at Myers is encouraged to be creative, think outside of the box, and to try new techniques and strategies. The staff at Myers has proven dedication to the teaching craft and is trusted to implement ideas and strategies within classrooms. We take the initiative to try new ideas and are excited to learn from one another.

4. School Leadership:

The principal has been in place since 2012 and has 28 years of experience in education. Most of the staff members at Myers are experienced, with an average of about 20 years of teaching experience. We also have very little turnover. The staff works together in Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) based on grade level. Our support staff form their own PLC, but often joins the grade levels they are supporting during professional development (PD). The daily schedule provides two planning times a day for a total of 55 minutes. At least one, if not both planning times, are common for the entire PLC to allow for daily discussion, planning and support. PLC's also have common lunch times.

Every year one representative is chosen to represent the PLC in building leadership meetings. The leadership team meets throughout the school year to discuss professional development needs, building concerns, and budget suggestions. The PLC leaders take topics back to their groups to establish building wide consensus before final decisions are made. The majority of our school's decisions are based on the input and desires of the leadership team and staff.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

The Grand Blanc Equity Team is committed to improving the lives of all students. More specifically, we believe that to fully embrace and operationalize equity in Grand Blanc Community Schools, all students must have their voices heard in a safe and, supportive environment that values difference. The Grand Blanc Community Schools will create and sustain equity through inclusivity, accessibility, and belonging, dignified policies and procedures, opportunities for students to actualize their own unique genius, and exemplary models of character and judgment.

At Myers Elementary School, we have our own Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Team (DEI) that meets bi-monthly to discuss school needs and ideas for improving our DEI practices. We discuss what is being shared from the district level and how to spread that learning and understanding to the Myers Staff. Professional development time is devoted to becoming more aware of our unconscious and conscious biases and developing ideas to ensure we are utilizing equitable classroom practices.

To continue to improve our DEI practices, we also have created building themes based on belonging, acceptance and appreciation of others, and kindness. We incorporate these themes with our Positivity Project (P2), learning to improve the overall culture and environment at Myers. All classrooms spend about 15 minutes a day to teach the P2 lessons, focusing on different positive character traits each week. The overall theme of the program is "Other People Matter".

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

Myers is an amazing place and we have many wonderful things in place to ensure the success of our students. The one practice that we feel is the most impactful is the fact that we take the time to develop positive relationships with our students and families. We get to know our students, and we care about the whole child. Academics are important, but they are just one piece of the puzzle. Our staff understands that it is our responsibility to meet the variety of needs of our students. We supply snacks, clothes, school supplies, hugs...whatever is needed to ensure our students can find success at school. We work hard to make sure Myers is a safe place where students can come and feel welcomed, accepted, and loved.

The staff at Myers Elementary goes above and beyond to ensure that every child is happy and successful. They are knowledgeable of best practices and naturally employ those strategies into daily curriculum and teaching. We do not need a parent request or formal plan to provide additional support to students, we just do what is best for each individual child. Myers' teachers and support staff are innovative, and they are always willing to try new strategies and ideas. We work together as a team to meet the variety of needs of our students. When a student is struggling, we keep brainstorming together to ensure we are doing all that we can to support him/her/them. We treat each child as we would our own, and we never stop working to ensure our students have reached their highest potential. We have discovered that when children know they are cared for and loved at school, they are much more successful.