

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

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 10040 Cottonwood Road  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Bozeman State MT Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 59718-8968

County Gallatin County

Telephone (406) 587-1305 Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Web site/URL https://andersonmt.org E-mail Kjacobs@andersonmt.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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Superintendent\* Kristi Jacobs E-mail kjacobs@andersonmt.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Anderson Elementary Tel. (406) 587-1305

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 Brandon Atkins  
(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

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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

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**Data should be provided for the current school year (2022-2023) unless otherwise stated.**

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

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)  
0 Middle/Junior high schools  
0 High schools  
0 K-12 schools
- 1 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	17
1	25
2	18
3	24
4	25
5	25
6	24
7	25
8	22
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	205

\*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):
- 0.9 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 1.4 % Asian
  - 0 % Black or African American
  - 5.7 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 87.1 % White
  - 4.9 % 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: 3%

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

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

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	6
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	1
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	7
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	205
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.03
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

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

Spanish with bilingual students

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %

0 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 6 %

Total number students who qualify: 12

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 2 %  
Total number of students served 5

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

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

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 3

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.	6
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.	3

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 23:1

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%	96%	95%	95%
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.

Anderson School District will foster a challenging, nurturing learning environment for every student. We will achieve this through small class sizes, highly trained teaching professionals, innovative use of resources, and high levels of community involvement.

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

<https://andersonmt.org/ada-titleix/>

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

## PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

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Anderson School is an independent K-8 Elementary School District located south of Bozeman, Montana in Gallatin County. Anderson is considered a “county school” and serves approximately 210 students who both reside within our school district and approximately 35% that choose to attend the school as out of district students. Our students matriculate into the two high schools within Bozeman School District. There is a single administrator who serves as both the superintendent and principal for the district.

The school district was formed in 1894 to serve local ranching families as a one room schoolhouse. The Little Red Schoolhouse still stands across from our current school and is the home to our annual Haunted House.

The school prides itself on class sizes below the Montana state accreditation standards. Our classes range in size from 12-18 in primary grades to only a maximum of 26 in sixth grade. This lower class size allows for more individualized attention to students' needs and the ability to create a close knit community. Anderson has a very dedicated teaching staff, many who have served the school for over twenty years, sharing their expertise and craft as teachers. Anderson has a strong reputation as caring, but with a rigorous academic environment. In the spring 2022 Smarter Balanced Assessments, 81% of our 3rd-8th grade students were proficient in English Language Arts and 71% were proficient in Math. This is twice the state proficiency average in each discipline.

Anderson is a model MTSS (Multi-Tiered Systems of Support) School. This philosophy helps us meet all students' needs and provide appropriate interventions for every student. Through our weekly Tier 3 meetings, monthly Teacher Assistance Team meetings, and trimester Teacher Team Meetings we are able to have rich discussions about students and their academic and social emotional needs. Anderson is also a PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports) school. Our school-wide universal expectations of Be Safe, Be Responsible, Be Respectful and Be a Learner guides everything we do. Our MTSS team utilizes the PBIS suite of tools to provide positive reinforcement to students and track our data which helps us reflect on where improvements need to be made throughout the school. Both MTSS and PBIS ensure we meet every student's individual needs.

Students at Anderson School receive a well-rounded education including English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science based on the Next Generation Science Standards; Social Studies is based on the Montana state standard. Students participate at least a few times a week in Health Enhancement, Music Education, Library, Technology Education, Spanish and Art taught by certified teachers. This not only provides students with more opportunities to learn, but also provides our staff with planning and collaboration time. Our Anderson Parent Council helps provide other enrichment activities such as choir and jazz band through their annual fundraising efforts.

Throughout Bozeman, Anderson School is known for two unique annual events. In the fall, our eighth grade students put on a spooktacular Haunted House to raise money for their spring Washington DC/New York City trip. This is attended by hundreds of people from the Gallatin Valley and raises over \$50,000 dollars. Anderson also puts on an annual spring musical with over 50 students participating. The musical is a Broadway style production at a local theater that has incredible sets, costumes, and performances. Every student who wants to participate is included. One of the directors was nominated in 2015 for the Tony Educator Award for the excellence of our annual productions. Students from across our valley have the opportunity to attend at a discounted rate the days before the performances, and our three performances are typically sold out. Both of these events require heavy parent involvement which they do enthusiastically. These events contribute to the overall success, strong community, and uniqueness of Anderson School.

Student achievements and our community is celebrated weekly during our Friday Flag Ceremony assemblies. This is a time for the entire school community to gather. It is run and organized by our elected student council officers. All staff and students say the pledge, sing a patriotic song, recognize our “Proud Panthers,” or students of the week from each class, and make announcements for the whole school. This gathering as a school community for all students K-8, is one of the main ways Anderson School differs from



other schools around the country.

The ability to be its own school and school district allows the board of trustees and superintendent to work with staff on creating an engaging and caring community for all stakeholders and positive changes to occur in a timely manner to help meet the needs of the entire community. This and its small size work to make Anderson the incredible learning institution it is.

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

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

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

We understand the importance of creating a literate society with the goal of students loving to read, write, and become lifelong learners. Reading/English Language Arts curriculum content at Anderson School is based on the Montana English Language Arts Standards. Anderson School currently uses Journeys by Houghton Mifflin for our Reading/English Language Arts instruction in grades K-5. Teachers in grades K-2 also utilize Haggerty for phonemic awareness instruction. Students in grades 2 through 6 also complete a variety of book clubs and novel studies throughout the school year. These novels from all genres are chosen to teach different standards and often integrate into the Science or Social Studies curriculum. Students receive approximately 90 minutes of Reading/English Language Arts instruction daily. After a Science of Reading Professional Development, our curriculum committee is in the adoption process for a new English Language Arts program for grades K-5, to begin in the fall of 2023.

Students receive instruction in a whole class setting, small groups, partner work and individualized instruction for approximately sixty minutes daily. Various instructional techniques from centers to think, pair, and share to choral reading are utilized by Anderson staff during their instruction.

Students spend approximately thirty minutes per day on writing as an individual class, but writing is taught across all curriculum areas. During writing instruction, students work to create narrative, persuasive, informational essays. They also respond to a variety of prompts created by the teacher. The writing process is instructed for all writing assignments so students understand the importance of drafting, editing, and publishing their work either by hand or using their Chromebook.

Anderson utilizes FastBridge by Illuminate Education for our benchmark screening three times per year: fall, winter, and spring. Students in kindergarten and first grade take the Early Reading test. Students in grades 1-6 take the aReading Computer Adaptive Test. Students in grades 1-6 are also administered the CBM oral reading fluency test in a one-on-one setting with an adult. Teachers, the administrator, and our student intervention coordinator discuss the data from the Early Reading, aReading and CBM fluency tests at our Teacher Team Meetings, which occur after each benchmark period. Data driven goals are developed by teachers at these meetings to help improve and guide their instruction for the next benchmark period. Student interventions are also reviewed and adjusted at these meetings to best meet individual student needs. Anderson students also engage in both formative and summative assessments as part of their Reading/English Language Arts curriculum. The assessments are used by staff to gauge progress toward proficiency on Montana grade level common core standards.

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

Creating students who are confident mathematicians is a priority at Anderson. Mathematics curriculum content at Anderson School is based upon the Montana Mathematics Standards. Anderson students in kindergarten through 5th grade are instructed in a whole class setting utilizing the Illustrative Math curriculum. Anderson School district adopted new math curriculums in the spring of 2021. Our 6th grade students are instructed using the Carnegie Math curriculum, which is the same curriculum used with our 7th and 8th grade students. Anderson students receive about 75 minutes of instruction daily in mathematics. Since we are a one-to-one Chromebook school, applications such as IXL and XtraMath are used to enforce skills taught within the classroom. Students are taught in a whole group setting with various techniques like turn and talk, and hands on manipulatives are utilized to facilitate understanding. Students also engage in small groups, partner work, math stations, and individualized practice during their math instruction to help reinforce concepts.

Anderson utilizes FastBridge by Illuminate Education for our benchmark screening three times per year: fall, winter, and spring. Students in Kindergarten and 1st grade take the Early Math test. Students in grades

1-6 take the aMath Computer Adaptive Test. Students in grades 1-6 are also administered a math fact fluency assessment a few times a year to help determine progress on math fact mastery. Teachers, the administrator, and our student intervention coordinator discuss the data from Early Math, aMath and fluency assessments at our Teacher Team Meetings, which occur after each benchmark period. Teachers develop data driven goals at these meetings to help improve their instruction. Student interventions are also reviewed and adjusted at these meetings to best meet individual student needs. Formative and summative assessments from the math curriculum are completed by students and reviewed by staff as well. This helps determine the students progress towards proficiency on the Montana math grade level common core standards.

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

Science curriculum content at Anderson School is based upon the Montana Science Standards. These are based on the NGSS (Next Generation Science Standards). Anderson utilizes the Amplify curriculum to have students work towards proficiency in the science standards. Teachers also supplement with Mystery Science and other outside resources. In 5th and 6th grades, teachers rotate students with one staff member teaching Science and the other teaching Social Studies, allowing more expertise in these areas with the content standards. The curriculum is taught for the whole class but students work in small groups or with partners to engage in the various activities that are part of the curriculum. Students keep science notebooks to share their understanding of what is being taught. They participate in a variety of hands-on activities to engage in the scientific process. Students also complete various individual and group Science projects that they share with their classmates and the rest of the school.

The superintendent coordinates an annual STEAM Week in the spring where students are further exposed to various Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math activities to enhance their interest and exposure in these areas. We go on field trips, have speakers, and artists in residence come in to conduct lessons. The week culminates in our annual cereal dominoes, where over 400 cereal boxes were donated to the local food bank after being set in a school wide dominoes run.

Anderson students have the opportunity and our staff are encouraged to take advantage of our beautiful surroundings by taking part in active field trips. This includes partnering with the Montana Outdoor Science School for activities. Hiking, downhill skiing, and cross country skiing occur annually through all grade levels. We are then able to use our local area to further enhance student's understanding of science objectives.

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

The Social Studies/History/Civic Learning curriculum content at Anderson School is based upon the Montana Standards that were recently revised by the state. Every grade level incorporates Social Studies instruction in their classrooms at least twice per week for thirty minutes. In grades 5 and 6, teachers switch students with one staff member teaching Science and the other teaching Social Studies, allowing more expertise in these areas and with the content standards. Social Studies instruction is also integrated through the Reading/Language Arts curriculum through various novel students of both historical fiction and nonfiction books.

Students also participate in active research projects to help their understanding of both United States and World History. These presentations often involve research utilizing primary sources and non fiction texts to help students have a further understanding of the topics being studied. Students utilize Google Slides and other technology to help share their understanding of the topic they have studied.

Article X of the Montana Constitution and our Montana State Standards require Indian Education for All for all schools across the state. We conduct training for teachers and provide professional development for teachers in this area. This helps staff members instruct students on the cultural and historical information regarding our tribal neighbors within our state as part of our Social Studies curriculum.

### **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)**

Music is an important part of every Anderson student's education. Music is taught by a certified music teacher. Right from the start, kindergartners are becoming musically literate. Vocal performance is a constant, as they sing through musical games and learn how to sight read written notation. By 5th grade, all students have chosen an instrument and sing in choir. Anderson musicians are well rounded and possess a broad musical appreciation. They graduate Anderson having studied and performed a wide array of music from many cultures. In addition to the classical masters, jazz, and rhythms from around the world, current pop songs, jazz, blue grass, and rock and roll reverberates through our hallways. We are always working to be the best we can be, refining our musical skills through persistence and practice. Anderson school concerts and musicals are consistently of the highest caliber and are thoroughly enjoyed by all those attending.

Students also participate in visual arts every other week in grades K-4 with a certified art teacher. This is made possible from our Anderson Parent Council. Grades 5 and 6 receive art for a trimester three days a week as one of their three rotations. Students' incredible visual art work can be seen throughout the hallways of Anderson School.

Finally students in grades 4-8 have the opportunity to participate in our annual amazing drama production that has three sold out shows every spring, allowing another opportunity for Anderson students to share their talents with the Bozeman community.

**2b. Physical education/health/nutrition**

Anderson's Health Enhancement (H.E.) Program is dedicated to preparing students to live self-directed, responsible, physically active, healthy lifestyles. The program is taught by a certified Health Enhancement teacher. Anderson's H.E. class aims to actively develop, maintain, and improve student health as well as an awareness of society's critical health issues. Health Enhancement is a comprehensive program that combines the traditional disciplines of "health" and "physical education" in a more balanced program with students learning both in the gymnasium and in the classroom. Health enhancement develops the skills and behaviors necessary for students to become healthy, productive citizens who take personal responsibility for their own well-being as well as social responsibility for the health of their community.

H.E. is offered to grades K-8th grades several times a week. K-4th grades have H.E. 60 minutes a week, 5th grade attends 90 minutes a week, 6th grade attends 120 minutes a week, and 7-8th grades attends 192 minutes a week. H.E. is one of the students favorite classes as they work on not only learning to control their bodies, and how to live a healthy lifestyle but how to demonstrate proper sportsmanship with their peers.

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

Anderson School offers Spanish to students from Kindergarten through 8th grade. We are one of the only schools within the state of Montana who provides a foreign language for students in grades K-5. Students in Kindergarten through 4th grade meet for Spanish class twice a week for 30 minutes while 5th and 6th grades have Spanish class 45 minutes, three times a week for one trimester as part of their rotations.

At the beginning of each year or trimester, depending on the circumstance of when students are beginning their course, basic conversational phrases are taught and/or reviewed. The basis for the remaining curriculum is built around stories and visual content whether that be short videos, power points or other

means. The goal is to provide students with meaningful context and comprehensible input. Depending on the age, students develop proficiency through the repetition of frequently used verbs, reading or viewing materials and lots of speaking practice. Many of the stories facilitate the introduction of culture in Spanish speaking countries as well as a means to teach about geography, music and socioeconomic issues, among other topics. Many Anderson students have the opportunity to take Spanish II when they start high school.

## **2d. Technology/library/media**

The Library Learning Commons is located in the heart of Anderson School's community, surrounded by the cafeteria, music room, gymnasium, and classrooms. The area was recently renovated thanks to a \$70,000 capital campaign by our parent council.

Kindergarten through 8th grade students attend library media classes once a week for 35 to 50 minutes per class. Library lessons are guided by state and national library standards and include literature-rich activities centered around diverse titles and authors, with digital literacy skills woven throughout. Library is taught by a certified librarian. The framework for lessons within the library include group discussions and collaborative, hands-on activities.

5th and 6th grade students also complete one trimester of technology education each year, which includes keyboarding practice, digital citizenship lessons, beginning coding skills, hands-on computer hardware lessons, and a project-based exploration of programs within Google Workspace. Giving students opportunities to interact with these programs will equip them with valuable tools and skills for future education and career endeavors.

Anderson School offers additional opportunities for students to utilize the library which builds a positive perception of the learning commons while cultivating positive student and staff engagement with the space. In addition to regular library classes, students are encouraged to visit the library for occasional recesses, additional book check-outs, after school clubs, and during teacher-librarian lesson collaborations.

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

Our school counseling program provides direct instruction weekly to all of our K-8 graders, emphasizing and enhancing our social emotional learning. Our counselor also provides one on one and small group counseling for kids who need Tier 2 social and emotional support. In addition, we provide indirect student services through consultation with parents, teachers and other educators. Collaboration with school teams to support student achievement and referrals to school or community resources for student support are also important components of our school counseling program.

Our counselor is here three days a week. She holds a master's degree in both school counseling and mental health counseling. In addition to providing counseling services, our counselor provides Section 504 coordination services as well as serving as our McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison Coordinator. Anderson is proud to have a warm and welcoming school community, with very low incidences of bullying or behavioral infractions. This is due in part to the time and effort we put into focusing on teaching social emotional skills school wide, and to consistently monitoring and meeting the social and emotional needs of all of our students. By focusing on relationships our students are able to thrive academically and socially. We are proud to be a community, not just a school.

## **3. Academic Supports**

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

Students who are performing below grade level are identified through our MTSS process. Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a three-tiered intervention process. The principles and practices of MTSS are based upon what research has shown to be effective in both creating successful and sustainable system change as well as what is necessary in providing the most effective instruction to all students. The MTSS framework is designed to address the academic needs of every student, regardless of whether the students

are struggling or have advanced learning needs. We have served as a model MTSS school for the state of Montana and our staff has trained other schools around the state in this process.

Anderson implements a universal screener, FastBridge in reading and math to help intervene at the student level. Data based decision making process is used to help make student decisions. We administer diagnostic assessments to help drill down and match appropriate curriculums for interventions. Tiered models of service delivery are used to effectively differentiate instruction for all students. We utilize high quality, research based instruction and interventions delivered by certified staff who serve as interventionists. By only utilizing high quality research based materials, the materials and instruction methods are known to work well. We also monitor the child's progress through progress monitoring utilizing our FastBridge assessments. We examine this and other data to see if or what changes need to be made for the method of instruction to help meet the students' needs and close the gap that has been identified.

As part of our MTSS system we have adopted a problem solving process consisting of Teacher Team Meetings (TTM's), Teacher Assistance Teams (TAT's), and weekly Tier 3 meetings. This problem solving process helps us look at data for each student and see if they are making appropriate gains in academic areas.

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

Anderson School recognizes that some students develop cognitive skills more rapidly than their same-age peers. Students who demonstrate a strong need for differentiation through informal classroom observations and formative and summative assessments may be referred to the Teacher Assistance Team for further GATE screening. Teachers will differentiate for all students performing above grade level within their classroom to meet these students' needs by providing advanced work, independent work, project based learning, compacting curriculum, small group instruction and offering choice. Anderson students perform at a very high level and our curriculum pacing reflects that. Differentiating for the needs of our above grade level students is a strength at Anderson school.

Students identified as gifted will be serviced by our gifted program which is described below. Students who are above grade level, but not identified as gifted will be most often served in the classroom, however still at times have the opportunity to attend small group pull outs with our identified gifted students taught by our certified student coordinator.

### **3c. Students with disabilities:**

Anderson's Teacher Assistance Team(TAT) exists to provide teachers with the support they need to ensure that all students are successful. The TAT develops plans for students with specific behavioral, social, emotional and academic needs. These plans include evidenced based interventions that provide targeted instruction in a student's area(s) of concern. A goal is set for each area and the interventions are provided for 4-6 weeks, monitored every 2 weeks and then reviewed by the team monthly. If a student is making adequate progress the intervention plan is continued until the student meets the goal(s). If a student is not making progress, the intervention may be modified to provide more intense instruction. If the student does not make progress, a comprehensive special education evaluation may be recommended.

When a student is referred for special education, a meeting is convened with parents and teachers to create an evaluation plan. The plan identifies the assessments the school staff will conduct and a 60 day timeline is instituted to complete the evaluation. Once the testing is completed, the team is reconvened to review the results and determine if the student is eligible for special education. If the student meets the eligibility criteria then an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is written. The IEP consists of measurable annual goals, service minutes required to meet the goals and accommodations to ensure the student is successful in the general education classroom. The student receives specialized instruction in identified areas and the instruction is done by either the special education teacher or a certified paraprofessional. IEP goals are monitored several times throughout the school year to ensure that the student is making adequate progress. The IEP is revised annually. Special education students at Anderson consistently meet benchmarks in Math

and ELA. This accomplishment can be attributed to the school's philosophy of inclusion that integrates special education students into regular classrooms.

### **3d. English Language Learners:**

Anderson School currently does not have any students who are English Language Learners. We would utilize the MTSS system to help reach the needs of any English Language Learners. We also would reach out to the Office of Public Instruction or other districts for help on implementing an effective ELL program should the need arise.

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

Gifted students possess academic talents and abilities that differ from those of their peers to such a degree that opportunities must be provided to help them develop to their greatest potential. Anderson School has a gifted and talented coordinator, who facilitates our identification process and works to ensure students' varying needs are met.

The formal identification process for the GATE program begins in the spring of the 2nd grade with placement in the 3rd grade. Identified students require high intensity academic and/or behavior support and make up 1%-5% of our population. These students may require an alternative or replacement curriculum and will receive support from specialists.

The initial referral process is a review of the general student population to determine which students need further assessment for placement in the GATE Program. All students, regardless of ethnic group, socio-economic background, or disabilities are considered for inclusion in the GATE program. Students must meet the eligibility standards to qualify for services. Each identified student will have an individualized plan based on needs. This could include grade acceleration, subject acceleration, small group pull out. Any new students entering grades 3-6 will be administered the Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test (KBIT 2nd Edition) or the CogAT in the fall of that school year to screen them for our GATE program. Anderson is one of the few schools in the state that has a formalized gifted program that provides an opportunity for small group enriched instruction.

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

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

Anderson has universal school wide expectations of “Be Safe, Be Responsible, Be Respectful and Be a Learner.” These expectations are taught at the beginning of the year by teachers and reinforced on a daily basis. Anderson School implements PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports) school wide. Students receive “Panther Points” in every environment: classrooms, hallways, playground, and lunch room, for following these expectations. Students use Panther Points to purchase from a school store a few times a month. The store has fun toys and fun opportunities to build relationships like extra recess, time in the library, or ice cream with the principal. Every week each classroom, specialist, and staff have the opportunity to nominate students for the Proud Panther of the week. These students are recognized at our weekly Friday flag ceremony assemblies in front of the whole school highlighting which expectation they have exceeded in the past week. The students also receive extra Panther Points for this honor and are recognized on a bulletin board.

Each classroom works to build community through weekly class meetings. They also engage in a variety of field trips outside of school like skiing, tubing, and hiking to allow students an opportunity to connect with each other and their teachers outside of the classroom setting. Students also go out and help in the neighborhood by picking up trash as part of our student council. They are able to take advantage of living in a beautiful place like Bozeman, Montana.

Buddies are established between our kindergartners and our 8th graders and our 1st and 7th graders, helping each student feel connected to school and have an older student to mentor and guide them. Our buddy program is a highlight of students' time at Anderson school and helps students make connections that last. It also warms staff members' hearts when they see the students interact together. On the 8th grade trip to DC, students often voluntarily purchase a small memento for their kindergarten buddy.

Our students are provided opportunities in technology and coding to prepare them for various STEM careers. We bring in a variety of outside presenters from across the state to expose our students to different careers and opportunities.

Students at Anderson school have high expectations for behavior and academics, helping prepare them for the future ahead. A strong emphasis is placed on building relationships between students and between staff members and students so that every child knows they have peers and adults they can depend on at school.

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

Anderson School prides itself on engaging our parent community and reaching out to the broader Gallatin Valley community. Communication with our parent community is the most important strategy in keeping everyone engaged. Classroom teachers send weekly newsletters about happenings within their classrooms. The school sends monthly newsletters called the Panther Paw which includes updates on what is happening at the school. We have recently started using the application ParentSquare which has been helpful in providing up-to-date information for our parent community.

We have a very active parent council at Anderson that is run by parent volunteers. They organize fun community events like movie nights and bingo nights in our gym, and also support activities. The parent council fundraises annually to help support art, jazz band, and choir, and they offset additional expenses such as curriculum purchases.

To help share information within the district, the superintendent holds “coffees” that are open to the entire community four times a year. Various topics are discussed from our MTSS systems, to curriculum, to legislative actions, and anything else that is timely. There is also an opportunity for parents to connect and have a question and answer session with the superintendent.



Anderson partners with the Gallatin Valley United Way to help provide an after school program for students. The United Way annual grant helps us deliver this service to our families at a very reasonable price so that they may finish their work day without worrying about childcare for their children.

Anderson also participates in the Gallatin Valley Farm to school program providing local foods to our students for lunch and exposing them to different vegetables each month. This is done through our food service program. We have approximately 85% of our students and 50% of our staff eat lunch at Anderson school daily.

We are fortunate to be in a college town with Montana State University located in Bozeman. This offers our students the opportunity to visit the Museum of the Rockies On the MSU campus and attend special sporting events just for local students. Students within the School of Education at Montana State also come to Anderson for various practicum classes and to complete their student teaching. We have also utilized the engineering department and other departments to come do special lessons with our students and project plans for the school.

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

The state of Montana allows each district to have eight Pupil Instructional Related (PIR) days annually. This allows teachers to participate in various professional development and have time for beginning of the year orientation. Our annual parent/teacher conferences are part of this, as well. Anderson staff also utilizes the days for 12 hours of flexible professional development in areas they are wanting to learn more about. This type of flexibility allows the staff personal choice over their professional development.

Anderson School prides itself on teachers having a say in what their professional needs are. Every teacher sits on at least one committee within the school. Teachers get to choose their committees. The number of committees a teacher serves on varies based upon their years of experience. Committees are developed when a need is seen by staff or the board of trustees, but our usual committees are leadership, negotiations, professional development, technology, curriculum, culture/wellness, and MTSS. The superintendent sits as a member of every committee. The committees then report through both email and at staff meetings about what is currently occurring in that committee. This helps all teachers voice their opinions about various happenings at the school.

As part of the staff collective bargaining agreement, certified staff members have to complete a professional development plan every year in order to step up on the matrix. This plan is developed in the fall, approved by committee members, and then shared back with the school administration in the spring. Each staff member has their choice in what they want to focus on during that school year for their professional development plan, and they can partner with other staff members. Topics have included everything from book studies to implementation of new curriculum to classroom management strategies. This is a wonderful opportunity for staff to focus on an area they see as a need in their professional toolbox versus being told what to focus on by the district.

First year teachers are provided with mentors and complete a mentor program as their professional development plan. They attend an extra day of orientation at the beginning of the year and participate in non tenured teacher meetings on various topics with the school administrator and the student coordinator. This is an extra opportunity for these individuals to receive support and ask questions about timely topics plus develop their own professional learning community of other new teachers.

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

Anderson School is a very unique model in that we are a K-8 school with approximately 210 students that is its own school district. There is a single administrator who serves as the superintendent who reports directly to the five member board of trustees and also as the principal for the school. This individual also serves as the curriculum director, special education director, facilities manager and in any other leadership capacity that is needed. This leadership role requires a unique personality and skill set in order to manage both aspects of being a superintendent and a principal. This rural school leadership structure provides for some

challenges, but also allows change to occur quickly when a need within the school develops.

There is an individual who serves as the student coordinator overseeing our Multi Tiered Systems of Support, Gifted and Talented Program, and serves as our testing coordinator. Having an individual dedicated to coordinating these areas helps our systems be implemented with fidelity.

A leadership team made up of staff members meets approximately monthly. Its role is to help with collective decision making and provide feedback to the superintendent on various issues, plus solve problems when needed. The leadership committee is a resource for our staff members and they are available for staff members to share concerns with if they don't feel comfortable going to the superintendent.

The school district has a budget manager/district clerk who helps oversee policy with the school board and help ensure that adopted policies are being followed. She also ensures that the district stays within their budget and provides helpful suggestions to meet budgetary goals and guidelines.

The uniqueness of the leadership structure is part of what makes Anderson the amazing school it is. Decisions are able to be made that focus on the student achievement data of only one school versus an environment where you have to go through a consensus process to make any type of decision or change. Anderson School is able to identify a need, work through their leadership team, have the superintendent take the recommendation to the board of trustees and enact the new change or policy. This has been enacted with the adoption of two new curriculums in the past two years where the need was noted by both the administrator and staff.

The unique rural school leadership structure is one of the reasons why Anderson students are performing at a high level. Curriculum, schedules, and policy have been harmonized to support the needs of our entire single school community.

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

Anderson School is guided by four tenets: respect, responsibility, learning and safety. Respect is at the core of diversity, equity and inclusion. Recognizing and celebrating cultural, familial, and economic diversity is, in fact, respect in action.

Anderson School is rather homogeneous, with a splattering of international, native, and biracial families. Additionally, our community includes gays and lesbians, single adoptive parents, multiple faiths, parents of trans kids, and traditional families. The board and administration are supportive, granting the same respect, compassion and sensitivities that arise for all families. No one is forced to feel unworthy, invisible or less than. Anderson's guiding principle of safety includes our non-binary students and families of all kinds.

Schools should serve as both windows and mirrors for students. ALL students need to see themselves reflected in the curriculum and culture (mirrors). Additionally, students from the mainstream need multiple opportunities to learn about our diverse world to prepare them for a successful life in a pluralistic society (windows). Teachers are committed to weaving perspectives, cultures and recognition of others into all aspects of curriculum. Literature, social studies topics and activities, special guests take every opportunity to offer multiple perspectives to students of all ages. Anderson's teachers have taken advantage of multiple IEFA (Indian Ed for All) trainings, and are supported by a library program that is committed to help foster an educated, compassionate and kind citizenry.

Older students are encouraged to grapple with real word issues of tolerance, diversity and inclusion through literature, unredacted history content, and activities.

Middle school teachers do not shy away from hard conversations about history or current events, facilitating safe and respectful discourse, challenging students to think critically and broaden perspectives. For example, 5th and sixth graders participate in segregation simulations, while eighth graders re-enact immigration scenarios at Ellis Island. The sixth grade novel studies program is almost fully dedicated to exploring issues of inclusion. Younger students learn tribal mapping.

While the Anderson population is primarily (more than) economically secure, Anderson has seen an increasing diversification of social-economic status within our family units. All of our extra-curricular activities, field trips, and expeditions offer scholarships. Trips to the ski hill, high ropes course, or playing on sports teams leave no one behind. Our eighth grade travels to Butte, Washington DC, New York, and Yellowstone National Park. Money for this hardy list of adventures is raised and shared collectively, as a team.

Anderson School is a vibrant, rigorous and safe place to learn and work. A rural K-8 school surrounded by cows, we know we are preparing the next generation for a kinder and more compassionate world.

## **PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE**

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Anderson School has many attributes that set it apart from other schools within Montana and the United States. The small class sizes, dedication to Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, and strong instruction all help Anderson students achieve at their greatest potential. Anderson staff feel their freedom and individuality as teachers is the most instrumental strategy that leads to the school's success.

Anderson has a small staff of about 30 individuals, with approximately 50% of them being certified teachers. Our turnover rate tends to be lower than normal. Indeed, we have teachers who have been at Anderson for over 25 years and bring invaluable experience to the school. These experienced teachers are also integral to mentoring the next generation of teachers at Anderson. This camaraderie has created a culture of trust at Anderson in which everyone is dedicated to doing what is best for their students to create a positive and engaging learning environment. This culture flows throughout the building from the board of trustees, to the superintendent, to certified and classified staff. We know that buy-in at every level is key to student success. Everyone has to be rowing in the same direction.

While the administrator conducts very regular walkthroughs of classrooms, staff are not micromanaged. No weekly lesson plans are required to be turned in, and teachers do not have to follow a strict pacing guide. Instead, teachers are trusted to be professionals, teach the adopted curriculum and adapt as needed to meet standards. This does not mean that they are unsupervised. It indicates that they are trusted to do their jobs.

Teachers have the ability to take risks in the classroom. They can enrich their curriculums by using novels, completing projects and inquiries, and going on field trips to supplement learning in the classroom. This autonomy also helps with our student engagement. Adjustments are matched to individual student learning styles and passions they see within their students or class can be encouraged and explored.

Autonomy for the teachers allows teachers to work within their own teaching style, not teach out of a scripted curriculum. They have flexibility to adapt the instruction based upon student needs. Our teacher's high level of instruction and dedication is clearly successful, as shown by our high state test scores as well as our school district assessment scores. We also have a high demand from the community for available out of district placements. This strategy has led Anderson to educate high achieving students who are lifelong learners. helps solidify the school's reputation as an excellent institution of learning across Bozeman and the state of Montana.