

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

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

School Mailing Address 1123 S Main Avenue
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Rugby State ND Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 58368-2428

County Pierce

Telephone (701) 776-5201 Fax (701) 776-5091

Web site/URL <https://www.rugby.k12.nd.us/> E-mail jared.blikre@k12.nd.us

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. Michael McNeff E-mail mike.mcneff@k12.nd.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Rugby Public Schools Tel. (701) 776-5201

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

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

Date _____

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

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

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

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state's performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2023 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2018 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2022.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 or 2022.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. The nominated school has, or is subject to, a nondiscrimination policy (provide either a link to the policy or submit a text of the policy), is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff consistent with applicable law and does not have any outstanding findings of unlawful discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

12. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if one of these eligibility requirements is later discovered to have not been met or otherwise been violated.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. Number of students in the school as of October 1, 2022 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Students
PreK	0
K	0
1	0
2	0
3	0
4	0
5	0
6	0
7	42
8	67
9	43
10	54
11	41
12 or higher	48
Total Students	295

*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):
- 5 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 1 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 89 % White
 - 3 % 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: 9%

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	21
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	34
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	55
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	645
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.09
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	9

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

Spanish, Tagalog

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %
2 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 21 %

Total number students who qualify: 62

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 8 %
Total number of students served 23

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>1</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>1</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Developmental Delay	<u>15</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>4</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>1</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>1</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

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

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	5
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	21
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	3
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	5
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 12:1

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%	97%	97%	97%	96%
High school graduation rate	98%	97%	97%	100%	97%

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	44
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	50%
Enrolled in a community college	18%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	18%
Found employment	14%
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 cultivate relationships and promote growth with every student every day.

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

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/2h2rynn2jyi6qqw/AABo_7kjVnAycvwlcn5DyC63a?dl=0&preview=AAC+-+Non+Discrimination+and+Anti-Harassment+-+Required.pdf

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

Rugby was founded in 1886 at a junction on the Great Northern Railway, where a spur to Bottineau met the main line. The railroad promoters initially named it the "Rugby Junction" for the famous railroad junction in Rugby in Warwickshire, England, in the hope of attracting English settlers. About 80% of the population is of North Germanic and Scandinavian ancestry. When the community became a city, the "Junction" was dropped from the name. Rugby is considered a small regional hub for the surrounding communities and is located an hour away from Minot and Devils Lake, ND.

According to the 1931 U.S. Geological Survey, the geographic center of the North American continent is located near Rugby, ND. Rugby refers to itself as the geographical center of North America.

The city of Rugby has a population of 2,815 people and has been in decline since 2000. Even though there has been an overall decline in population since 2000, the community has seen an increase in population over the past five years. The average median household income is \$37,500 in Rugby compared to the state average of \$59,100. The population in poverty status in Rugby is 19.9% compared to the state average of 10.8%.

The school district comprises three different facilities: Rugby Early Learning Center, Ely Elementary, and Rugby High School. The Rugby Early Learning Center (RELC) is a joint effort between Early Explorers Head Start and our school district. RELC has approximately 40 four-year-olds enrolled. Ely Elementary has approximately 280 students in grades K-6. Rugby High School has approximately 300 students in grades 7-12. It should be mentioned that there is a small Catholic elementary school in Rugby, and they have approximately 55 students in grades K-6. Students from the Catholic elementary school transition to our high school in grade seven. Overall student enrollment is projected to be stable over the next five years for our school district.

North Dakota has seen a decline in population for years until recently due to increased oil production in the west. Our overall population has increased over the past decade, the same has occurred in Rugby, ND. We have a proud community that continues to find ways to be relevant in North Central North Dakota. This is unique in this part of the state, most of the large population increases have occurred in the eastern and western parts of the state. We are off the beaten path but have been able to pass two school referendums within the past 15 years. Most recently, we received a 79% approval rating to provide an addition and renovate portions of our elementary school. The board of directors of our hospital recently approved to build a new \$64 million hospital at a new site located in Rugby. We are a small vibrant town in rural North Dakota focused on improving the lives of those that live within our community.

The Rugby Public School District has been operating as a Professional Learning Community for over a decade now. We consider our collaborative practices within our educator teams as the foundation of our success as a school district. Our school board has been supportive of providing the time needed for our teachers to collaborate. Over the past ten years, our school calendar has been restructured to provide an increase from just two professional development days to seven. In addition to the increase in professional development days, we added nine early outs. Increasing teacher collaboration and our focus on standards-referenced instruction has increased our student achievement scores over the past decade. We are proud of this work and we will highlight these particular areas throughout our application.

We have also spent a great deal of time creating our own Multi-Tiered Support System (MTSS). This work started five years ago when we received a large federal grant to support our struggling readers. We were able to hire two instructional coaches and one of them specialized in implementing MTSS within our district. Since that time, we have created a literacy pathway and a math pathway. Learners receive additional supports based on universal screeners on a few different assessments. An MTSS Committee has been established at both schools and they meet regularly to lead this very important work. We have learned over the years that not all interventions will work for all kids and that we need to personalize these supports to support all learners. We are confident in this hard work and we have seen the payoffs as students have been improving their math and reading levels post-pandemic.

Professional development is another strategic initiative we have focused on within our district. As mentioned, we provide a significant amount of time for teachers to collaborate within our district. We established a professional development committee that meets regularly to help guide our adult learning practices within our school district. We have implemented more choices for educators combined with training on district initiatives so that educators have more autonomy over their learning. Recently, we added a choice board for educators to choose from to develop their personal learning plan for the school year. This has been a successful change to our professional learning practices. We have also embedded the ability to receive graduate credit to count towards their continuing education requirements for licensure.

We are a standards-referenced grading and reporting school district. Educators have developed essential standards for each content area; they report on those standards within Empower (a standards-referenced learning management system) in grades K-8. In grades 9-12, educators reference standards to align their instruction. All grade levels and content areas have developed proficiency scales and are currently aligning assessments to the proficiency scales. This has been a tremendous undertaking and has taken us a better part of a decade to get to the point. We are proud of this work and have seen the fruits of our labor pay off.

Our Cognia School Review in 2018, indicated a need to improve connections between educators and learners within our schools. We have since implemented a Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum that occurs during our Student Responsibility Block (SRB) and have added what we call “Mentors” periodically during the school year. The SEL program provides an opportunity for educators to develop closer connections with our students. Our Mentor program focuses on service learning projects throughout the year. These two strategies have helped to improve our connections between adults and students within our high school, as indicated in our most recent Youth Risk Behavior Survey data.

Our High School has received high marks on our Choice Ready (Military, Work, or Post-Secondary) measures over the past few years. These are indicators of our success on post-secondary measurements like ACT, North Dakota State Assessment, ASVAB, etc. Overall, our graduates are choice ready and are able to be flexible in whatever career path they choose. The Choice Ready measurements closely align with the North Dakota Academic and CTE Scholarship. We qualify between 35-50% of our senior classes over the past five years for this prestigious scholarship. The North Dakota Academic and CTE Scholarship requirements include success on the ACT/SAT and required upper-level course work.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

Over the last two years, Rugby High School has invested in Science of Reading professional development. Our coaches, strategists, and interventionists have taken LETRS training. In addition, our literacy instructional coach has led PD with 7-12 teachers on the Science of Reading for upper-level grades across all content areas. Individual team-teaching has also taken place with the coach in science, math, and social studies classes to incorporate more literacy instruction. In North Dakota, all non-ELA courses have literacy standards that are written for those content areas under the actual ELA Standards.

Tier 1 instructors use NWEA MAP assessment, North Dakota State Assessment, PLAN, and ACT data to understand their students and plan for instruction. Content-area Professional Learning Communities meet to discuss data. Instructional coaches also work with individual teachers as well as teams to assess school-wide data and plan for instruction.

More specifically dealing with ELA, is the fact that three years ago, our ELA department decided to reconfigure the HS courses. Rather than offering traditional English 9, English 10, etc., ELA staff decided to create a menu of courses. This offers more choices for students, including the opportunity to additional ELA classes as electives. We are also able to offer dual credit college English courses and have a high participation rate.

In these courses, students are challenged to read independently and to write for authentic audiences. Teachers use the workshop model for both reading and writing-based courses. Mentor texts are used to teach students best practices in writing. Teachers frequently conference with students about their reading and writing. Since we are a standards-referenced school district, all our work begins with the standards and challenges students to grow. We use proficiency scales to indicate a student's current level and how they can get to the next step or to go above and beyond expectations.

At the end of their senior year, ELA students are expected to complete Senior Capstones. Students brainstorm topics that are of interest to them and that may coincide with their future career choices. After choosing a topic, students create a literature review. From there, the students create research questions and generate a survey. They also find relevant people to interview. They use their quantitative and qualitative data to generate a report. Finally, students present their findings to the community.

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

In 2021, the school district decided to purchase a new K-11 math curriculum. Big Ideas Math was purchased for grades K-8, Algebra I and II, and Geometry. The purchasing committee chose to invest in a school-wide curriculum with the belief that the common vocabulary would be beneficial for students. Big Ideas Math is a more rigorous curriculum than what was previously being used by any grade level in the district. In addition to the courses mentioned above, Trigonometry, Probability and Statistics, Consumer Math, College Algebra, and Pre-Calculus are also offered at Rugby High School.

Tier 1 instructors use NWEA MAP assessment, North Dakota State Assessment, PLAN, and ACT data to understand their students and plan for instruction. Content-area Professional Learning Communities meet to discuss data. Instructional coaches also work with individual teachers as well as teams to assess school-wide data and plan for instruction.

Each year, advanced 7th grade students are given the opportunity to skip 7th grade math and take 8th grade math instead. Based on state testing and interim testing data, as well as a placement test, eligible students are invited to move up. Those students then take Algebra I as eighth graders which grants them the opportunity to take more of the advanced math courses when they are in the upper grade levels .

Students who remain on a more traditional path in middle school have choices in high school. Students who find math more difficult may take a two-year Algebra I course. Most students opt to take Algebra I their freshmen year, Geometry their sophomore year, and Algebra II their junior year. Students who want to challenge themselves or plan on studying for a math-related field may opt to take Trigonometry, Probability and Statistics, Computer Science, or College Algebra.

Our instructors believe in direct instruction for math learning. Instructors focus on the gradual-release method to provide instruction for all students. This method helps teachers understand where individuals are in their learning path. Then, students who are not ready to move on in their learning are placed on what we call “intervention,” which is a time of day for teachers to work with individual students or with groups of students on targeted skills.

Students in grades 7-12 compete each year against area schools in local math competitions, such as Math Counts and math track meets. RHS students fare very well at these competitions. Multiple high school and junior high teams have won or placed in the events. Additionally, many individual students have been amongst the top students participating.

Students in grades 7-9 are screened two times per year to measure growth. Student progress is monitored closely and adjustments in instruction are made to ensure student growth.

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

We are in the final stages of a robust Science curriculum review and selection for students in grades six through eight. Our district’s instructional coaches have included teachers across grades and they are leading the selection initiative by ensuring the new curriculum is engaging, rigorous and aligned to Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). We have sampled six different curriculums and weaned our selection to two (by referring to EdReports) and by the end of the school year we will make a final decision.

Our goal for middle school science courses is to make it more real-world relevant, which is why we chose to purchase a new curriculum. By posing more real world questions and providing simulation experiences, we hope to inspire future scientists.

Our high school science courses are very successful. We offer physical science, biology, chemistry, physics, anatomy, environmental science, botany, genetics, and forensics. In addition, we offer dual-credit anatomy and chemistry courses. Our science classes focus on phenomena-based instruction using NGSS standards. They use hands-on, inquiry-based learning experiences to drive classroom instruction. Last year, our physics’ students competed in NASA’s “Plant the Moon/Mars Competition” through the Institute of Competition Sciences.

In addition to instructional time, our classroom teachers provide STEM-based extracurricular choices. We have a successful LEGO/robotics team. In addition, we have both a middle school and a high school Science Olympiad program.

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

The Rugby High School Social Studies Department strives to help students make meaning of the world around them. Courses are designed around the North Dakota Social Studies Standards and aim to make students actively informed citizens of the world they live in. Courses begin with World History, Geography, and North Dakota Studies so that students better understand how their life connects as a larger worldview.

A strong foundation in American History teaches students how the country started, key events from history, and how those events shaped the country into what it is today. Government is presented to students as Seniors, essential learning includes understanding the function and structure of the government, the processes involved in a Democratic society, and the importance of being an involved and informed citizen. All Seniors must also pass the state Civics exam as a graduation requirement.

During content PLC meetings teachers review standards, build proficiency scales, analyze student achievement data, and align the curriculum. A key component of Rugby High School Social Studies courses is helping students to think globally and develop a broader view of how places and events connect. Rugby High School Social Studies teachers help our students become civic-minded and actively participate in our Democracy.

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

The pathway to college and career readiness is deeply rooted in all levels of learning at Rugby High School. State and locally developed standards clearly identify the learning in all classes and strong belief in the components of standards-referenced grading and the PLC process.

Students in grades 7 and 8 have additional courses that were not accessible to them in middle school. All students take core courses (math, science, ELA, and social studies, as well as physical education and health). Student also take 9 week rotational courses, which are essentially recruitment courses for high school elective classes. Finally, all 7th and 8th grade students are required to take a music course, but have the choice between band, choir, guitar, and world drumming. Lastly, any student who may need an intervention plan will receive the services they require within the day.

All students in grades 9-12 at Rugby High School develop a 4-year rolling plan, selecting courses and a graduation pathway that is unique to their own interests and abilities. During this process, staff collaborates with each student to develop their individual plan. Every student also has an adult mentor throughout their high school career that guides them through course registration, college and career readiness, social-emotional learning lessons, and other academic and personal support. Students can take a plethora of dual-credit courses while attending high school in Rugby. Another strength of our rural district is that we offer robust Career and Technical Education (CTE) course offerings. We offer a full selection of Business, Family and Consumer Science, and Agriculture courses and local internships. Throughout high school, students chart their North Dakota Choice Ready status, helping guide them to be college, career, or military-ready post-graduation.

Beyond our CTE course offerings, we'd like to highlight our wonderful Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSO). We have three CTOS in our school district, Future Farmers of America (FFA), Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), and Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA).

FFA is a national student organization that is connected to our Agriculture Education courses. We continually perform very well in regional, state, and national events in FFA. In the fall of 2021, our Ag Technology and Mechanical Systems Team took home the national championship in Indianapolis. Twelve additional students qualified for the national conference held last fall in 2022, and our Agricultural Sales team placed in the top five.

We recently added a full course listing of Family and Consumer Science courses for our high school students. In conjunction with these courses, we have also started an FCCLA chapter this past year. We are looking forward to watching FCCLA grow within our high school.

Finally, Business Education also has an active FBLA chapter. This past summer in 2022, we sent two students to the FBLA National Conference and one of our students took home first place in Digital Citizenship.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) are important programs for students in Rugby, and as you can see, they also perform at high levels. These programs provide students with experiences that help shape their decisions about post-secondary education. We know that four-year colleges may not always be the right option due to the amount of student debt incurred. Two-year and certificate programs are great options for students, and we continue to see a high percentage of graduates that choose this career path. CTE programs help provide learners with experiences that help them choose a career. 91% of our 2022 graduating class

will go on to post-secondary education, 40% will attend a two-year or certificate program, 31% will attend one of the four-year research institutions in our state (NDSU or UND), 8% will attend a four-year regional college, and 8% will attend an out of state four-year institution.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)

Rugby Junior High and High School (grades 7-12) has a very strong arts program. We offer multiple music programs, including band, choir, guitar, world-drumming, and piano. In addition, we have a full-time high school art teacher who teaches a variety of courses. We also offer many extracurriculars for students interested in the arts.

Rugby's music program is very strong. Our band director pours her heart into her students and was awarded for her dedication last year when she was awarded the Pierce County Teacher of the Year. About 25% of our students are members of the band. Because of a passionate new teacher, our choir program is also growing. From 2021-2023, the choir program has grown by 61%. Our music teachers also offer guitar (approximately 40 students are in guitar this year), piano (which always has an enrollment around 5-10 students), and drum classes (which have about 15 students enrolled).

The art program at our high school is just as exciting. Most class periods are at a maximum capacity of 16. Our new art teacher recently rewrote the course descriptions and will offer new, innovative art courses. Last year, we also constructed a professional-quality gallery.

In addition to our credit offerings, RHS offers art club, e-Sports, speech, pep band, and one-act play as extra-curricular opportunities. We feel we have a place for all students at our school to participate and be involved.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

In Health, Rugby High School supports students in the development of life skills. All junior high students take health for a semester each year. High school students must take the semester-long course once in their high school career (most take it during their freshmen year). The units contain information students can use for life after high school. Rugby High School teaches cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), strategies to cope with stress, and how to reduce heart disease or stroke. Staff discuss the importance of exercise and nutrition and how it impacts students on a daily basis. Staff also talk about human reproduction, relationships, healthy dating, the dangers of drugs and alcohol, and how to interact socially with all people.

Staff consistently try to meet the needs of all students by giving them the tools they need to be successful in the future. In a physical education setting, the goal is to teach the importance of exercise and the impact that it can have on you physically and mentally. Rugby High School classes develop exercise plans and execute them throughout the semester. Students see first-hand how beneficial exercise and physical activity are on the body and mind. We have added new elective courses such as Lifetime Activities and Personal Fitness to expand offerings and to give our students more voice and choice.

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

Rugby High School offers Spanish I, II, III and IV for all students in grades 9-12 onsite with a certified instructor. The same instructor offers a 9-week introductory rotational course to all 8th grade students. High school students are allowed to take other foreign language offerings via the North Dakota Center for Distance Education if approved by administration. World Languages help broaden vocabulary in English

and help with understanding grammar to improve and enrich students' writing and literature interpretations in English. World Languages also help students understand and operate in a more connected world.

2d. Technology/library/media

Our district has two libraries: one is at Ely Elementary School and the other is at our high school. We have a full-time district librarian, as well as two paraprofessionals (one at each school). The combined budget of the district library is \$13,000. Our staff has worked hard to "weed" the library to ensure titles are appropriate and updated. The student to book ratio is 25:1. In both libraries we have collaborative space.

Technology is also a priority within our school district, and we consider ourselves very "tech forward." We are 1:1 with devices and utilize a variety of programs and software. Each classroom has a Smartboard, as well as a printer. We also have multiple 3-D printers students are encouraged to use for projects. We continue to implement ways students can be creators.

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

This opportunity also exists for any students interested in a career in education. Rugby High School students have the opportunity to participate in the Senior Instructional Leadership Corps (SILC). Students in this program participate in a variety of activities associated with classroom instruction. Students in SILC will engage in leadership development through multipurpose mentor relationships with teachers and students. Mentored by a cooperating teacher, the SILC student will serve as a mentor to younger students in the classroom and assist in appropriate curricular activities.

Recently our school added a Practical Assessment and Exploration System (PAES) lab. Many of our students participate in the PAES lab where they explore different practical careers and acquire real world skills. Under this model, students become employees and teachers become their employers. The PAES lab has been an excellent addition to our course load for students who may not have the background for other CTE courses.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

We have been working to establish an MTSS process to support ALL students within our schools. This work began four years ago with a literacy grant, we were able to hire two instructional coaches that have helped build a Multi-Tiered Support System. This has been a work in progress.

The MTSS committee spent many hours creating pathways for reading, math, and behavior. When teachers have concerns about students they are encouraged to fill out an MTSS referral form. The teacher lists the concerns they have, provides data, explains strategies they have implemented, and documents parent contact. After the teacher submits the referral, they are invited to an MTSS meeting, where the committee aids in developing a plan to help the student.

There are supports in place to help struggling students in grades 7-12. We have reading intervention for any 7th or 8th grade students whose reading level is more than one grade-level behind. For all students in grades 7-12, we have two retired teachers who work with students throughout the day. These interventionists go above and beyond to help students find success in the classroom. Both are willing to spend time observing classes so they have a better understanding of the material the students are working on. The interventionists then work with individual students or small groups of students to reteach the material and help students with their work.

At RHS, all students attend Student Responsibility Block (SRB) as their 8th period class. Additionally, all teachers have an assigned list of students they are responsible for during SRB. The teacher checks in with each student in their SRB to ensure they are completing their assignments. Teachers may also place students

who are missing skills and/or assignments on intervention each week. Those students then have to report to the teacher who placed them on intervention for extra practice and work time.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

As a PLC district we use the PLC process to answer the essential question of: What do we do for students if they already know it? Currently all teachers are in the process of developing proficiency scales for all power standards. These proficiency scales have built in performance indicators for students who are performing above grade level. We challenge students with higher order thinking projects, Project Based Learning projects, or individual research. We also have students serve as peer tutors and SILCs (students interested in education as a profession), where they assist in the teaching and learning process. Our high school utilizes our co-curricular organizations such as FFA, FCCLA, FBLA, Student Council, Academic Olympics, Math Counts, and National Honor Society to provide higher level culturally responsive activities. We also offer our students that perform above grade level a plethora of dual-credit courses through local colleges and the opportunity to complete a Capstone project.

3c. Students with disabilities:

We are using our MTSS process as previously mentioned (in 3A) to reduce the number of students that qualify for special education services. We are seeing success by intervening early and have seen our numbers for students who qualify for special education reduce over the past five years. This is largely due to the focus on providing universal screeners to identify weak areas and then providing small group or individual support for each student.

For students on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), we have many resources available. There are two special education teachers and three paraprofessionals that work with students in the resource room and in general education classrooms. Student success is the goal, and we use academic supports and accommodations to meet their individual needs. However, in cases where Tier 1 instruction is not appropriate, we do offer targeted coursework for students in the resource room.

3d. English Language Learners:

Although our numbers are very low for English Language Learners (ELL), we have a solid process for any students that may need this support. Our ELL strategist works with any families who indicate they speak multiple languages at home when they register within our district; if families do not give us this information, but a teacher suspects language may be a concern, teachers may also identify students and reach out to our ELL strategist. Once we have this information, the strategist screens any student who may qualify for services. If they do not pass the assessment, then she develops an intervention plan for each individual. The strategist targets each individual student's needs. If they are also on an IEP, she works with the student's case manager to support the IEP goals. Most targeted students work with the strategist weekly, but if the student's needs are greater, they meet more often. From there, students continue to be screened weekly. Although we are a rural school, we are ready to support any students for whom English is not their first language.

Students are screened for EL if their home survey shows that there is a language spoken in the home other than English. They can also be screened if a classroom teacher feels there may be a need. If the student meets the criteria, they will work with the EL teacher every week for at least thirty minutes. Students are given the Wida ACCESS test once a year which assesses a student on their skills in listening, reading, speaking, and writing. They will continue to receive services until their testing scores allow them to exit the program. After they exit the program, they will continue to be monitored.

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

For grades 7-12, Rugby High School contracts with a mental health therapist that is provided by an outside agency. This has helped improve our students' access to mental health therapy as it is otherwise unavailable in our rural community.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

At Rugby Public Schools, we strive for high levels of student engagement. Our teachers use multiple strategies to meet the needs of their students. All curriculum is based on standards. From direct instruction to hands-on learning, educators assess what strategies students need to reach mastery.

Currently, our junior high and high school are working on engagement through community-based project-based learning opportunities. Many of the projects were cross-curricular and community-based. All PBL units focused on driving questions and an authentic audience. One of the projects included a fashion show where high school Family and Consumer Science students worked with middle school computer classes to advertise and put on a show that included retail stores from around town. In another project, the high school anatomy class met with advanced art students (seniors majoring in art) and explained different body systems. The anatomy students commissioned the art students to illustrate bodies depicting their chosen system. Another project paired what 7th grade students were doing in physical education and math class – two courses not often associated together. Students learned the basics of frisbee golf in PE and discussed the goals of the sport. Then, in math, they used mathematical skills to draft a plan to create a new frisbee golfing course in town. The plans were then reviewed by the local park board and the best one was chosen. These teachers hope to carry the project onto next year and complete the course. One last project (among many others) was done in high school geometry. First, student planned a specific building for a community they were all building. They used drafting software to perfect their plans. Then, an architect visited the classes and provided feedback to individuals. Finally, students created 3-D models to bring their plans to life.

In addition, we are very proud of our school mentorship program. Every student in grades 7-12 is assigned an adult mentor in the building. Small groups of about 7-15 (depending on the grade level's size) meet weekly. Teachers use the 7Mindsets curriculum to discuss behavioral and mental health. The time is also dedicated to team building and community engagement. Mentor groups have conducted book studies, written cards to and visited the local nursing home, and cleaned yards. We feel our mentorship program is extremely successful. Each year our students take the "Youth Behavior Risk Survey" and over 80% of our students in grades 7-12 say they have an adult in the building they can talk to.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Engaging Families and Community comes in two forms for our school: curricular and extra-curricular.

We put a lot of thought into our 7th grade orientation. Since we are a "big little town," we sometimes feel like everyone knows everyone. However, the 7th grade transition can be difficult for some students. All students are going to a new building, and for students coming from the small, private school in town, it can feel especially daunting. Therefore, we have created multiple experiences for these students to transition better. Students visit the 7-12 building in the spring. Then, before school begins, students and their families are invited to 7th grade orientation. Students learn about expectations, get to practice opening their locker, are allowed to "walk their schedule," and meet their teachers. In addition, we have a parenting expert present on specific topics to the adults while the students attend an "activities fair." At the activities fair, 7th grade students learn about all of the extra-curricular activities they can join.

Within our 7-12 classes, we have many courses that encourage family and community participation. As mentioned in section V.1, we have focused on Project Based Learning. With this, teachers have created projects where students present to an "authentic audience," which means someone beyond the normal classroom walls. We have had industry leaders come into our classrooms as well as whole-community presentations.

Besides PBL projects, we also have many specified nights for the community to come into our building or for our students to go out into the community themselves. For example, we have family game nights sponsored by the Future Business Leaders of America. We also have a senior Capstone night where students

present their yearlong research projects. For the past two years, our art students have put on an art show. Students may submit pieces and artists from around North Dakota judge for “Best in Show.” The entire show culminates with an open house to which the entire community is invited.

Our school counselor also offers a “Financial Aid Night.” This night is for all high school juniors and seniors and their parents. Presenters are here from different colleges and financial institutions. In addition, the school counselor gives assistance to families filling out FAFSA.

Our extra-curricular activities are an important part of our school and community. Rugby takes a lot of pride in the Panthers. An astounding 88% of our 7-12 student body is involved in some sort of extracurricular activity.

We offer many sports, such as golf, cross country, football, volleyball, basketball, baseball, archery, trapshooting, cheerleading, and track and field. Not only do we use events and games for the activity at hand, but we also use the events to raise funds or awareness for specific causes, such as cancer awareness and mental health awareness. Clubs, like the Panther Ambassadors (a grade 4-12 community-service group) often have bake sales at volleyball or basketball games to raise money for specific groups.

Other extra-curricular and co-curricular groups include the one-act play, speech, band, choir, e-sports, art club, Teens Night Out, FFA, FBLA and FCCLA. Many of these groups bring in families that would not otherwise come into our building.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Our Professional Culture is perhaps one of our most distinguishing features. We value professional learning for our educators. We have added numerous days/hours to our yearly calendar for teacher professional development. Each year we have between 6-10 full professional learning days and about 15 early release days. During this time, educators complete a variety of professional learning opportunities which support district-wide initiatives, classroom instruction, and personal professional growth. We have conducted Professional Learning Communities (PLC) for about ten years and have a very solid PLC model in place. Over the last few years, our district has encouraged individual professional growth through a Personalized Learning Plan (PLP). Educators are given choices for how to initiate their own learning, including participating in book studies, partaking in a coaching cycle or instructional round with an instructional coach, or presenting professional learning, just to name a few. We are proud of the professional culture within our schools.

4. School Leadership:

We will highlight an excellent program that we have established within our school district to develop teacher leadership. Our school superintendent has worked in collaboration with the University of Jamestown to develop a Teacher Leadership Academy. The academy is an onsite master’s degree program for our teachers and the goal of the program is to keep excellent leaders in the classroom. In collaboration with a charitable organization, we have been able to support most of the cost for the educators to receive their master's degree in Teacher Leadership. We started our second cohort last June 2022, the experience is powerful for the educators, they get to focus on assignments that directly benefit their district with peers from their school and a neighboring district. We are a rural district that lacks access to a university, and this collaboration has been a game-changer for the educators in our district. Their leadership has led to numerous innovations while allowing them to lead from the classroom.

In addition to teacher leadership, we also have a leadership team, consisting of the superintendent, 7-12 principal, instructional coach, and MTSS coordinator. Our school’s mission is “to cultivate relationships and promote growth with every student every day;” however, the same is true of our staff. Although our superintendent oversees the district, he is very visible within our junior high/high school building. Our principal has an “open-door” policy and can be seen in classrooms often. Through the teacher evaluation process, he provides ample feedback. Our coach and MTSS coordinator are there to be a liaison between the administration and school staff, as well as mentors to teachers and paraeducators. Our district has made our

educators' professional learning a priority, and we offer choice through a personalized learning plan where educators can choose from a menu of professional learning options. With all of this in place, we feel we can promote growth for our students and our staff.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Rugby Public Schools is committed to culturally responsive teaching and learning. Our student population is about 90% white, and our largest minority group is made up of Native American students, which represent about 8% of our district. In our classrooms and in our school libraries, we have ensured all students are represented in the texts we offer. We have made a commitment to have diverse literature available to our students, especially books written by Native American authors. We have used the "Windows, Mirrors, and Sliding Glass Door" method to choose books because we want all students to see themselves in the books they read and to learn from others by viewing life from different perspectives.

Within our classrooms, our teachers are sensitive to each student's background and current identity. Many of our courses, including advanced and dual-credit courses, are choice-driven. We encourage students of all backgrounds to enroll in these courses. Our social studies department is perhaps the best at introducing students to those from backgrounds they may not have associated with on their own. This year alone we have had visitors from all over the world and from many walks of life.

In addition, we have implemented book studies for our faculty focusing on culturally responsive teaching and learning, including *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain* by Zaretta Hammond, and next year we will read, "Equity Partnerships: A Cultural Proficiency Guide to Family, School, and Community Engagement" by A.R. Clark-Louque, R.B. Lindsey, R.L. Quezada, and C.L. Jew. As a staff, we will take what we learn to continue to embody our motto, "Every Student Every Day."

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

At Rugby Public School District, we have made teacher collaboration a priority. There are multiple components of this work that we will share within this answer that has led to student outcome improvements.

Over the past ten years, our school has been working on transitioning from traditional grading to standards-referenced grading. Teachers have developed proficiency scales for all their power standards and lesson plans are guided by those power standards and proficiency scales.

The primary reason our school has chosen standards-referenced grades over traditional grades is for better information for parents and students. We have found that doing this using PowerSchool (a state-required student information system) is very difficult. In order to increase communication, as well as student ownership of their learning, we are going to purchase and use a new student information system, Empower. With the help of Empower, teachers will have more evidence to show parents and students of each individual's learning.

Teachers also have the opportunity to participate in an instructional round process. We have led a variety of instructional rounds, including within the PLC, cross-curricular, and multi-grade level instructional rounds. This entire process begins by the team identifying a "Problem of Practice." Common problems of practice include student engagement, questioning, or classroom management. Once a topic is chosen, then teachers create a driving question. Some questions that we have explored are, "How can we provide instruction that is relevant and authentic practice for all students?" and "What strategies are we using that best engage all students?" From there, classroom observations take place, and the instructional coaches select "Data Gathering Tools" that best measure what is being assessed. After observations, the coaches give the team their data and provide feedback. The team then has a debriefing session where they identify strengths and areas of improvement. Finally, the team sets goals. This entire process has been well-received by educators because it is perhaps the only time they get to observe each other and to truly understand what is happening in one another's class.