

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 230 New Boston Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Bedford State NH Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 03110-4318

County Hillsborough

Telephone (603) 471-1082 Fax (603) 472-7879

Web site/URL
https://sites.google.com/bedfordnhk12.net/rbs/home E-mail mccarthym@sau25.net

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* Mr. Michael Fournier E-mail fournierm@sau25.net
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Bedford Tel. (603) 472-3755

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

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

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

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

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

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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

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

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

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

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

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

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
1 Middle/Junior high schools
1 High schools
0 K-12 schools
- 6 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	86
1	99
2	102
3	112
4	127
5	0
6	0
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	526

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 9 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 5 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 85 % White
 - 0 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	10
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	7
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	17
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	522
(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):

Ukrainian, Chinese, Spanish, Arabic, Polish, Russian, Mandarin, Tamil, Telugu

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 3 %
14 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 4 %

Total number students who qualify: 20

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 12 %
Total number of students served 65

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>11</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>18</u> Developmental Delay	<u>0</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>3</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>0</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: 3 %
Total number of students served: 17

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 16

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	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	24
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	20
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	32
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

12. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 22:1

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%	98%	97%	96%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

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

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

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

Yes X No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2017

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

To create a safe, respectful, and responsive environment where each child can share the joy of lifelong learning together with school, home, and community members. Our collaborative effort is founded on diversity, accountability, and shared responsibility. We are committed to academic excellence as we inspire individuals to achieve their highest potential and to be contributing members of society. Inspire, Challenge, Celebrate

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

<https://sites.google.com/bedfordnhk12.net/sau-25-bedford-school-district/unused/special-services/nondiscrimination-notice>

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

Riddle Brook School is a neighborhood school of approximately 530 students ranging from kindergarten to Grade 4. Riddle Brook was created as a result of Bedford's restructuring to a neighborhood school concept in 1999, with newly formed teaching teams and school traditions. As the town's population had doubled in the previous 20 years, building a new school while realigning grade level settings was a necessary step for Bedford.

Bedford is sometimes called a "bedroom town" for families employed in Boston, MA, Manchester, NH and other surrounding cities. It is not uncommon for us to welcome 40 to 50 transferred students each year from across the country or beyond, and many of our families moved to Bedford due to the flexibility given to them by their employers of being able to choose where they think is best for their family to settle, which speaks volumes about our school.

Being responsive to and meeting the academic, emotional, physical, social, and cultural needs of our students is of the utmost importance to not only the staff, but the community as a whole. In an effort to ensure that all of our students' needs are being met, especially in terms of the curriculum and their social emotional well-being, individual needs are regularly monitored through our Response to Intervention (RTI) model, "Follow the Child." Part of our RTI model is what we call "Child Team," in which staff meet weekly to review individual academic testing and teacher observation. Our Child Team, or CT for short, is composed of the school's Assistant Principal/Special Education Facilitator, Reading Specialist, School Counselor, Classroom Teachers, and Speech Pathologist, to name a few. Through ongoing checks of academic and behavioral-social development, interventions are provided as needed, which may include such things as additional reading or math support, conversations with parents, or special education referrals.

Riddle Brook is the town's home for the district's Intensive Needs program, which meets the needs of children with a variety of physical, behavioral, and learning disabilities. Our school is also the setting for the NECC (New England Center for Children) program, one of many across New England that offers a highly structured approach which services children with autism. Students in both the Intensive Needs and NECC programs attend their regular education classrooms, as appropriate, to be with the grade level peers as much as possible, and the social emotional benefits this approach yields for all children as they work and play together cannot be overstated.

Academic opportunities and challenges are afforded to our students outside the classroom, as well. Our annual Math and Literacy Night is an event for families to play math games, participate in reading challenges, and connect with the staff. Additionally, third grade students participate in our annual Inventive Thinking Day which encourages creativity, resourcefulness and engineering skills, while the fourth grader's participate in Ellis Island Day. This annual event has become a "rite of passage" for fourth graders and is the culminating activity for their Coming to America unit, in which research, writing, geography, history, and creativity is integrated into lessons in which students learn about societal and cultural conditions of the late 1800s, concluding with them reenacting the experiences of the immigration stations of Ellis Island by those who traveled to America. Students cheerfully clap for each other as they officially become United States citizens, and families provide refreshments and food items native to the many countries of origin.

Riddle Brook also sponsors a variety of activities that build relationships, promotes fun, and builds community spirit, including annual events that include our Harvest Festival, dances, Family Fun Night and Art Fair, chorus concerts, school play, field days, and fourth grade clap out, which is the final rite of passage for our students. During this event, which takes place on the last day of school, students parade through the school as the entire school community lines the halls singing and clapping for our fourth graders while parents cheer nearby. Filled with tears, laughter, and excitement, fourth graders then board buses to visit the intermediate school, where they will attend fifth grade. Additionally, high school seniors who are Riddle Brook alumni return each June for a clap out of their own as they prepare to graduate high school.

Riddle Brook School is a place where children are able to thrive and meet their fullest potential, and their individual and collective growth in all areas are celebrated by students, staff, and families alike, and being

recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School in 2018 was an honor that allowed us to be able to share our successes with not only the greater Bedford community, but the state of New Hampshire. In doing so, we have been able to leverage that recognition by being able to foster leadership in the community at all levels, student, teacher, and family, to continue to move the growing and learning process forward.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

Riddle Brook School (RBS) prides itself on fostering a strong sense of community, where students and staff work collaboratively to achieve high standards in education. The core curriculum challenges and inspires all students to acquire foundational skills and develop a love for learning that will stay with them for life. In particular, RBS places a great emphasis on the development of reading skills, recognizing that a strong foundation in reading is essential to lifelong learning.

To ensure that its students receive high-quality reading instruction, RBS follows the science of reading and best practices, focusing on key components such as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Teachers implement district-selected programs that align with the Common Core Standards in reading, math, and science. In addition, curricula are developed by grade-level teachers and specialists across the district, ensuring that all students receive the best possible education.

In grades K-4, RBS uses McGraw Hill's Wonders program to provide strong tier one instruction in reading. This program is supplemented with flexible, small group instruction tailored to meet the needs of all students. Teachers continuously monitor students' reading acquisition and provide targeted intervention when needed. Ongoing assessment tools such as the Acadience Data Management System, Test of Phonological Awareness, Gates MacGinitie Reading Tests, and New Hampshire Student Assessment System (SAS), as well as informal assessments and teacher observation, are used to improve student performance. Higher-performing readers with strong comprehension skills who require additional challenge may participate in the Enrichment Program Readers' Group, while avid readers are offered opportunities to extend their reading and critical thinking skills using an inquiry-based approach.

In addition to reading instruction, RBS's writing instruction follows a workshop model, teaching the writing process, writing craft, and written responses to text, including evidence-based writing and reading response journals. Students study various forms of writing, including personal narratives, opinion writing, report writing, feature articles, essays, and revision strategies. The link between the reading and writing connection is strengthened as students write across the curriculum. For example, students may study famous Americans and develop scripts that are presented during their living museums. Additionally, RBS students engage in community-based writing assignments, such as writing letters to soldiers and veterans throughout the year.

Finally, RBS celebrates its culture of reading through Book Talks, informal presentations designed to inspire others to read good books. Students regularly prepare Book Talks and share them on the school website. These experiences promote awareness of current events and increase students' engagement with the wider world.

In summary, Riddle Brook School places a strong emphasis on developing foundational skills in reading and writing, believing that they are the cornerstones of lifelong learning. Through high-quality instruction, continuous assessment, and a culture of reading, RBS students are well-equipped to become lifelong learners who are ready to succeed in the modern world.

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

Mathematics offers numerous opportunities for students to be thinkers and problem solvers every day. Our core program for instruction is Big Ideas Mathematics. Included are five instructional strands: numbers and operations in base ten, numbers and operations with fractions, operations and algebraic thinking, geometry, and measurement and data. In tier one, teachers implement this program and enhance its effectiveness with problem solving activities, using manipulatives to make sure that foundational math skills are taught effectively.

Early intervention includes both small-group and individual skill reinforcement or skill sessions delivered by the math support teacher to solidify foundational skills. Students who require more targeted and intensive intervention participate in flexible groups with special educators who are trained in multi-sensory approaches from various math experts, making abstract learning concepts concrete and meaningful. Use of formative assessments helps highlight areas that require greater attention.

Students who demonstrate a strong understanding of concepts are provided opportunities to advance their development by participating in math enrichment activities. These students participate in Math Apps, a program delivered by our enrichment teacher that focuses on deeper levels of math exploration. Fourth grade students that demonstrate next level understanding of concepts work with the school's enrichment teacher in Math Plus. This is a replacement of the 4th grade math program for these specific students.

STEAM activities, such as catapults, sink and float, coding, and several other experiences cultivate a climate that promotes numerous opportunities for students to take academic risks and enhance their thinking and problem solving skills.

RBS staff strives to include our community members and families in our quest to become thinkers and problem solvers by hosting an annual Family Math & Literacy Night. Math activities are open-ended and change year to year to engage students and their families. Literacy at this event helps students make inter-curriculum connections.

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

Using an inquiry model, the K-4 science curriculum is designed so students develop and practice critical thinking and scientific method skills, aligning with the Next Generation Science Standards framework. Students participate in hands-on lessons and complete experiments to make sense of anchoring phenomena. Fourth graders smash steel spheres with paper in between which creates a hole. The storyline includes creating rubber band toys, and marble collisions allowing students to discover how energy transfers. Student led discussions that are guided by teachers, are key for discoveries. Students ask questions to explore scientific concepts beyond the curriculum. Connections with scientists among Bedford parents, community members, and scientists around the world through Zoom, enrich our programs.

Leveled texts allow for participation in close reading with the curriculum. Texts come from a variety of resources which allow for learners to access information. Technology, field trips, and presentations enhance scientific inquiry. Third graders participate in break-out activities demonstrating and applying their knowledge of concepts. Second graders go to The Butterfly Place to view creatures in their natural habitats during stages of life cycles. Third graders use engineering skills at the SEE Science Center to design magnet marble races and engineer a Lego race car. Fourth graders hike with a local guide on a community trail to see how glacial erosion shaped our land.

There are school events that encourage scientific inquiry and discovery. One event is Full STEAM Ahead Day for grades 1-4. Student choice is paramount to accommodate diverse interests. Teachers and community members offer STEAM activities. These enhance thinking skills and cooperative learning. A final example is the third graders participation in the Inventive Convention. Students develop an invention based on a problem and build a prototype to present. These activities illustrate opportunities students are provided to engage in activities and foster curiosity.

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

Riddle Brook School students are introduced to Responsive Classroom principles, which emphasize the importance of social-emotional and peer problem solving skills. During Morning Meetings, students greet each other, share news, and participate in group activities which emphasize cooperation and teamwork. Current events and cultural topics are explored through children's literature, school approved websites, and Scholastic News Magazine.

Kindergarten and first grade students learn about family, school, neighborhood, community, and

responsibilities of a good citizen. Personal and fire safety information is introduced and practiced. Students also explore the responsibilities of people who work in their community and school.

Second graders participate in the “Hooray for the USA” unit, where students are introduced to maps, globes, and landforms. They explore various landmarks, monuments, and U.S. symbols. Students are introduced to research skills using various platforms. The unit culminates with students choosing a famous American to research and presenting their findings through a Living Museum.

The third grade curriculum focuses on geographical awareness and content knowledge about Native Americans. Native American traditions and contributions are further investigated when students visit the Mount Kearsarge Indian Museum. In culmination, students work in groups to create a Native American village using materials from nature to depict the food, clothing, shelter, and landscape of a particular region.

Fourth graders focus on the state of New Hampshire, its history, and government. Students describe the function of the state government, roles and responsibilities at the local, county, and state levels, as well as the three branches of government. Students investigate New Hampshire’s history, early explorers, settlers, and events that changed our state. A New Hampshire topic is researched and students present their findings. History comes alive as students visit the Little Brook Schoolhouse to explore schools in colonial times, New Hampshire Historical Society, and the State House to support our government unit.

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)

At Riddle Brook School, students in grades 1-4 have the opportunity to attend weekly classes in art and music, where they engage in a range of exciting, hands-on activities aligned with the national arts competencies. The curriculum focuses on developing students' abilities to create, present, respond, and connect with various art forms.

For 3rd and 4th grade students who are particularly passionate about the arts, our school offers extra weekly meetings for the art club and chorus. This provides students with even more opportunities to hone their skills and showcase their talents. Throughout the year, these students have multiple opportunities to present their work publicly, further building their confidence and experience.

In addition to regular classes and extracurricular activities, 4th-grade students are also involved in an annual play that incorporates various elements of art, music, dance, and theater. This is an excellent opportunity for students to put their skills into practice and create something truly spectacular. Furthermore, the school also hosts a talent show where students can showcase their individual and ensemble abilities, providing an exciting platform for students to express their creativity and share their talents.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

The physical education program at RBS is designed to help students in grades one through four develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need to enjoy physical activity throughout their lives. The program consists of weekly 40-minute classes that focus on developmentally appropriate content, aligned with the NH State Guidelines and the National Standards for Physical Education.

Through engaging and enjoyable activities, students develop skills such as coordination, balance, agility, and teamwork. They also learn about the importance of physical fitness and healthy lifestyle choices. By providing a supportive and inclusive environment, the program encourages all students to participate and find enjoyment in physical activity.

For third and fourth graders who are particularly interested in physical activity, the school offers club activities that meet weekly throughout the year. These activities provide additional opportunities for students to hone their skills and deepen their knowledge in areas such as basketball, soccer, and dance. By offering these clubs, the school is able to provide students with a more comprehensive physical education experience, further supporting their lifelong physical fitness and well-being.

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

2d. Technology/library/media

The RBS library services Kindergarten through fourth grade. Classes are held each week. During classes the students are introduced to all genres of literature to promote a love of reading. Supporting teachers and the core curriculum is an important role for the library. The library's nonfiction collection has been built around this goal. A Google Presentation has been created for each unit of study and shared with the teachers. The presentations have live links to eBooks, databases, and many other resources. Students have access to these resources wherever they have WiFi. These resources are introduced and reviewed during library classes.

RBS has 1:1 technology. Teachers, with the support and guidance of the Digital Learning Specialist, integrate technology purposefully into the curriculum, with a focus on enhancing student learning outcomes. We use digital tools to create, distribute, share and curate student work. These resources allow students to collaborate with teachers and peers. We also use educational games and online quizzes to make learning engaging for students. We use video conferencing to connect students with mentors around the world. The use of these tools promotes the development of digital citizenship skills, such as online etiquette and responsible use of technology.

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

At Riddle Brook, social and emotional learning (SEL) is a top priority. The staff recognizes that SEL skills are essential for academic success and personal well-being. The school has implemented a tiered model of interventions, a common language throughout the school, and staff training to ensure that SEL skills are integrated into daily routines. Morning Meetings are held in all classrooms to promote community building, and teachers check on the emotional well-being of their students throughout the day. Calm Down Corners and Emotional Regulation Stations are also available to students as needed.

Monthly class lessons on various topics are provided by the school counselor, and teachers often join in to continue modeling and supporting the skills taught throughout the year. Small groups and one-on-one sessions are available for students who require additional support. The school behavior specialist teaches and reinforces school-wide SEL practices, emphasizing the importance of managing emotions to regulate behaviors and promote a positive learning environment.

Riddle Brook has also partnered with professionals to provide staff with opportunities to engage in service-learning projects that promote social and emotional growth. Through mindful implementation of SEL skills, Riddle Brook has demonstrated a commitment to the holistic development of students and the success of their academic journey. Incorporating social and emotional development into daily routines is essential for ensuring the success of students in school and beyond.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

At Riddle Brook School, assessment plays a vital role in tailoring instruction to meet the needs of its diverse student population. The school's teachers utilize a variety of assessment tools such as Acadience testing, TOPA, Gates, SAS, and formative and summative classroom assessments to guide their instruction. These assessments allow teachers to differentiate instruction by utilizing developmentally appropriate resources that cater to individual learning needs.

Teachers at Riddle Brook School specialize in instruction, making use of manipulatives that incorporate multisensory approaches to learning. Scaffolded instruction is provided through flexible reading and math groups and whole-group instruction, providing multiple exposures to skills and information. Students also benefit from a range of interventions, including small reading and math groups with differentiated resources, Zaps for quick skill hits, and special educators who work with students daily.

The school has also implemented a tier one system called Child Team, which provides teachers and professional staff members with the time to brainstorm ways to better support students in and out of the classroom. Additionally, the school has a reading specialist who works with students to provide reading support, even for those who are not identified through an individualized education plan.

Riddle Brook School's interventions are thoughtfully designed and implemented to ensure the success of all students. The school's all-hands-on-deck approach to learning is exemplified by the involvement of additional staff members such as guidance, behavior specialists, and English Language support teachers.

Overall, Riddle Brook School prides itself on its data-driven, research-based curriculum that values the unique learning needs of its students. The school's teachers utilize various assessment tools to drive instruction, providing a range of interventions and support to ensure the success of all students.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

By integrating a wide variety of advanced-level learning experiences and thinking skills into all curricular areas, Riddle Brook School is able to meet the needs of our diverse learning population. Our philosophy of providing opportunities for maximum cognitive growth through creativity of thinking enables our students to become creators of knowledge, rather than consumers of information.

A thorough screening process identifies students with high levels of achievement, self-motivation, and creativity in the areas of math, reading, and writing. These pull-out cluster groups provide focused areas of content while giving students the opportunity to be challenged in the context of advanced-level learning. Within these groups, students are not only immersed in hands-on projects using creative problem solving, but also display the motivation to pursue rigorous, yet rewarding learning.

The intentional process of yearly evaluation within each cluster group ensures the needs of each individual are being met. Students are evaluated in math using a nationally normalized evaluation, as well as teacher created materials to determine participation in a small group setting providing maximum growth opportunities. Our focus for reading and writing groups is to create various dynamic situations where students are highly engaged and motivated by an area of study, topic, or idea. This flexibility of pullout grouping lends itself to deep evaluation of texts while providing for a broad variety of literacy enrichment experiences.

Riddle Brook School also incorporates a school wide enrichment model created to integrate high-end learning across grade-level interdisciplinary units. It is through these units, Coming To America, Inventive Thinking, and STEAM Sail Cars, that the theory of “a rising tide lifts all ships” is put into practice.

The enrichment program continues to adapt to the changing needs of our population ensuring instruction is tailored to meet students where they are.

3c. Students with disabilities:

Students with learning disabilities are within the third tier of RTI. Individualized services are provided by special educators at each grade level. These highly trained teachers specialize in using research-based, explicit, multi-sensory approaches, such as Orton Gillingham Reading, Language Circle, Lindamood-Bell, Wilson Reading, and OG Math remediation. This intervention typically occurs in small group settings or individual tutorial sessions. Short, frequent, targeted, and intensive skill practice sessions (referred to as “zaps”) are also provided multiple times throughout the week.

Differentiated instruction is done in collaboration with various specialists and related service providers including the Reading/Writing Specialist, Speech/Language Pathologist, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, Behavior Specialist, BCBA, School Psychologist, Teacher of the Visually Impaired, Educational Audiologist, Guidance Counselor, and Regular Educators. Special educators and regular educators co-teach at each grade level, differentiating instruction to meet diverse learner needs in the classroom.

To monitor student progress, RBS uses a variety of assessments and progress monitoring tools including, but not limited to the SAS, Acadience Reading and Math Assessments, AIMSweb Writing, Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests, Quick Phonics Screener and Quick Spelling Screener and a number of informal assessments, such as the P.A.S.T. (Phonemic Awareness Screening Tool). Data gathered from these tools is used to form instructional groups, target methodologies, and track and measure progress towards individual student goals. The special education team convenes five times per year to discuss student progress, analyze assessment data and adjust instruction as appropriate to meet student needs. For those students whose learning gap is wide, services are adjusted and intensified. A whole student approach is considered including direct instruction in academics, social emotional learning and executive functioning as appropriate. This unique collaborative approach to data analysis and its use towards guiding instruction is reflected in the high level of student achievement at RBS.

3d. English Language Learners:

Riddle Brook School has a dedicated and diversified staff of educators and specialists who collaborate to support the needs of all students. English Language Learners receive direct services based on their level of English language proficiency.

At the beginning of each school year, or as students move into the district, home language surveys are completed by parents. Students who speak a language other than English at home are given the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) screener. Students who score below 4.5 qualify for English Language services. English language instruction, interventions, and assessments are based on the student’s scores in the areas of listening, reading, speaking, and writing.

The ELL staff determines levels of ELL support needed for each student based on the results of the WIDA, along with feedback from families and educators.

The WIDA Can Do indicators are used to help plan instruction and specific interventions. The ELL teacher works one on one or with small groups of students in a pull out program or in their regular education classroom based on the level of need.

Collaboration between the ELL teacher, classroom teacher, reading specialist, and resource teacher is crucial in determining appropriate instruction, intervention(s), and what types of classroom accommodations will be used to help students become most successful. District-wide assessments may be tailored to individual student needs (e.g. an alternative grade level Acadience reading assessment or accommodated Wonders vocabulary and comprehension assessments).

The team closely monitors progress using classroom (content) assessments, and Acadience progress monitoring scores to close the achievement gaps. In addition, student progress is tested annually using the ACCESS test for English language learners. Using the data received in May, determines a student’s continued ELL services or if the student is exited from the program. Students who have tested out of the program will be placed on monitor status for 4 years, during which time they continue to be eligible for accommodations and a quarterly check in between the ELL teacher and classroom teacher. If gaps are noted,

the team meets to review what services the student is currently receiving and what services could be added or changed to include a more collaborative approach that targets the individual student's specific needs.

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

At Riddle Brook School, there are two district programs for students with significant cognitive and/or behavioral needs, the Intensive Needs Program and New England Center for Children (NECC). The Intensive Needs Program is designed for students who are significantly below grade level (developmentally six months to two years below grade level). The student population ranges from children who are medically fragile, on the Autism Spectrum, have rare genetic disorders and/or who test cognitively well below grade level and may need support with behaviors and social pragmatics. The NECC classroom is a partner program based within our school. The program is designed for students with behavioral and academic challenges.

Upon entering the Intensive Needs Program, students are assessed using a variety of tools including the ACE CORE Skills Assessment, ACE Skills Assessment, VB-MAPP, and Brigance. Based on students' observational needs, therapists may complete more in-depth assessments. Once assessments are completed, the team meets to review goals and objectives that will drive the students' programming throughout the year. Each quarter the school based team meets to review student progress and update the goals and objectives. Most students require Rehabilitative support from a 1:1 paraprofessional, receive OT, PT, Speech, direct systematic instruction in academics, and social and behavioral management. Some students may also require nursing and feeding and swallowing services.

All students, regardless of their disabilities, are integrated into their regular education classrooms throughout the day. The level of inclusion will vary depending on each student's individual needs. Accommodations and modifications are made to allow all students to participate in their classrooms as well as integrated arts (art, music, physical education and library) with their grade level peers. Some accommodations and modifications include: supportive seating, FM systems, adaptive tools and technology (AAC devices), vision accommodations (backlighting, slant boards, minimal visual distractions, raised lines, etc), and breaks as needed.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Riddle Brook Elementary School is committed to providing its students with a positive and inclusive learning environment. The school understands that a welcoming and supportive community is crucial in engaging and motivating students to learn. Each day at RBS begins with school-wide morning announcements that connect students and staff as they engage in the Pledge of Allegiance and listen to administrators share current school news. Additionally, the school holds all-school meetings once a month, where every classroom participates in a morning meeting to share personal news, facilitate discussions with peers, and participate in team-building activities.

RBS values not only academic excellence but also students' social and emotional well-being. The school follows the Responsive Classroom approach to foster a sense of community among its students. It also teaches the "Zones of Regulation" curriculum to help students manage their emotions. The school counselor teaches monthly lessons to every classroom, which teachers reinforce and apply in everyday learning. The school encourages its students to be a community of respectful learners while being kind and considerate friends.

To recognize students making good decisions, RBS awards a P.A.W.S. award (positive attitude, acting safely, working together, showing respect). These students are recognized by name during school-wide announcements at the end of each month. The school invites students who excel in academic areas to participate in enrichment classes, such as math apps, math plus, readers and writers groups. In addition to subject area enrichment opportunities, RBS provides engaging school-wide projects such as the Invention Convention, Mystery Festival, Ellis Island Day, and 4th grade play. The school also offers various clubs during recess time, such as Art Club, Chorus, Book Clubs, and Physical Education Challenge Clubs.

To incorporate technology into the learning process, RBS provides its students with Chromebooks and/or iPads daily. The school utilizes many online platforms and apps for students to work with during the school day.

In conclusion, Riddle Brook Elementary School fosters a positive environment that supports academic, social, and emotional growth. The school believes in "failing forward" and always growing from the process of learning. By prioritizing inclusivity, effective teaching strategies, and addressing emotional needs, RBS encourages its students to reach their full potential. The school's commitment to creating a positive and inclusive learning environment is evident in its various programs and initiatives, which contribute to its academic excellence and students' social and emotional well-being.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Riddle Brook School recognizes that a school community is an extension of the core values and beliefs of the community as a whole. To connect with school families and the greater Bedford community, RBS staff collaborates with family and community members to facilitate and participate in numerous events, activities, and programs. The engagement of family and community members is a source of pride for the RBS community, having been named a Blue Ribbon Award Winning School for Excellence in Volunteerism since its opening in 1999.

Our school provides opportunities for parents and community members to participate in academic events. Through use of Skype and other technologies our students are able to connect with science and engineering experts across the globe. The Great Artist Series supported by the PTG bolsters our arts curriculum through monthly art and history lessons led by parent volunteers. Our annual Invention Convention, Ellis Island Day and Math and Literacy Night are additional opportunities for families to join us in person. Fundraising events, such as Family Fun Night, Harvest Festival, The Scholastic Book Fairs, and Parent/Student Dances have raised a considerable sum of money to put towards school improvements. RBS also hosts annual events, such as Meet the Teacher Day, Grandparents' Day, and the fourth grade Clap Out. The Clap

Out includes Bedford High School seniors who are RBS alumni. The joy on their faces as they return for a last visit is heartwarming.

We also collaborate with colleges and universities to provide opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to complete their student teaching internships. Our teachers lead by example through best practice approaches, availing the interns the opportunity to work within a culture of professionalism, respect, and collaboration.

Effective communication is key to engaging families and community members. The school provides numerous options to obtain information about school happenings and successes, including orientations, open house nights, teacher web pages, weekly Principal Notes. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram provide our parents with important information.

RBS takes great pride in striving for student success and continuous school improvement. The engagement of family and community members in our school is a keystone of the school's success. By connecting with school families and the greater Bedford community and beyond, our school provides opportunities for parents and community members to participate in academic, fundraising, and annual events. Riddle Brook School is honored to be a reflective voice of the Bedford community.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Riddle Brook School (RBS) holds the philosophy of being well prepared to meet pedagogical and content area advances by empowering teachers to provide professional development and support for each other. This approach contributes uniquely to the school's focus on supporting student performance by connecting teacher skills with increasing student achievement through professional development activities aligned with academic standards.

At RBS, teachers are encouraged to provide professional development opportunities that share their unique skills. Administrators recognize and showcase the strengths of exceptional educators and advocate for learning through leadership and colleague observation. As an example, each year, RBS teachers share their expertise with district colleagues at the district's ambitious Professional Learning Day. This year, this event saw 16 RBS teachers present their skills to school and district colleagues. Of the six schools in our district, RBS had the second highest number of presenters. The only school with more presenters was our high school, whose student and staff population is three times higher than RBS.

RBS acknowledges the unique learning styles of its professional staff and strives to offer alternative opportunities, including Flipped Professional Development. This program provides opportunities for educators to access a series of topics, allowing teachers to participate in meaningful professional development on their own time.

The Bedford School District ensures that professional development is a thoughtful response to data-driven, measurable goals set to increase student achievement. RBS educators have the opportunity to participate in workshops with experts and master teachers while receiving continued support throughout a practical application process. For instance, we partner with two experts in their fields. Bill Atwood (instructional expert) shared his unique mathematical innovations and practical ideas to increase student achievement. Each year, Bill partners with a classroom teacher from each grade level. He models instruction with students and debriefs with teachers afterward. Mike Anderson (Social Emotional Learning expert) uses the same model of partnering with teachers and models ways in which teachers can integrate social emotional learning skills into their teaching. Both partnerships have yielded high praise from practitioners, and growth in teachers' skill sets in the areas of instruction and classroom environment.

Through all its professional development endeavors, Riddle Brook School remains committed to academic excellence while inspiring students to achieve their maximum potential and contribute positively to their community. The school's approach to professional development recognizes the diverse learning styles of both students and staff, promoting teacher leadership and collaboration in achieving shared academic goals.

By empowering its teachers with knowledge and resources, RBS continues to enrich its community with excellent education.

4. School Leadership:

At Riddle Brook School, collaboration is the bedrock of our mission and vision. Our teachers and staff members are empowered by the principal and assistant principal to share ideas, strategies, and best practices while working towards our shared goal of improving student achievement.

Through various avenues such as the Child Team (Response to Intervention), Principal's Council (parents/teachers), Principal's Advisory Group (students), Building Leadership Team, and school-based committees, teachers, students, and parents have a voice in the policies, programs, and systems within our school. The administrative team provides the framework for addressing curricular or other school-based needs and works with staff members to help address these needs. We value the expertise and insights that our staff members bring to the table.

As an illustration of this approach, each year we survey staff members to determine the areas in which our teachers need professional development to enhance their classroom instruction and environment. Based on their feedback, we hold mini-workshops in several areas, including special education, behavior management, reading/writing, technology, STEAM, and Responsive Classroom. These workshops are developed and presented by our own teachers, who possess a particular strength and passion in the area in which they present. Thanks to our culture of sharing tools and methodologies for student improvement with colleagues, these presenters were eager to participate in our workshop.

Our Building Leadership Team is made up of curriculum leaders, specialists, and facilitators, including a reading specialist, school counselor, technology specialist, assessment specialist, assistant principal/special education facilitator, and principal. Our weekly meetings focus on reflecting on our current practices, systems, and results, and using that information to identify areas for improvement. For example, we recently identified small group reading instruction as an area for improvement. Working collaboratively with teachers, administrators, and district colleagues, our reading specialist set up a system by which she works closely with classroom teachers to model lessons and provide professional development. She will continue to provide ongoing support by modeling and/or observing lessons to provide feedback. This approach has been highly effective, as evidenced by the increase in our language arts scores on the New Hampshire Statewide Assessment System from 78% proficient or above to 90% proficient or above for the same cohort of students (third to fourth grade) in just one year.

At Riddle Brook School, we prioritize collaborative leadership and a shared vision of student success. These values drive our practices, programs, and policies, and enable us to continually improve our educational offerings to benefit our students.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Riddle Brook School understands the importance of recognizing the diverse needs and backgrounds of students, families, and staff, and does so in many ways. Staff is encouraged to learn about the backgrounds and interests of all students and staff members, and we strive to make meaningful, positive connections with students, families, and each other. One example is an "All School Meeting" held at the school each month, which is facilitated by a different grade level or group. At each monthly meeting, we recite the pledge of allegiance, sing the national anthem, recognize birthdays, welcome new staff and students, share grade level and specialist news and announcements, and sing our school song. At most meetings, the facilitating grade level also makes a special presentation on a topic of their choice, highlighting students' interests and learning. Additionally, Riddle Brook School brings in cultural enrichment activities for students and staff to enjoy throughout the year. The students and staff enjoyed a lively performance by The Spain Brothers, Irish folk music in March.

The school library and individual classrooms offer a variety of multicultural literature. We encourage cultural awareness by having the students explore and share one another's culture. Cultural tidbits are sent

out school-wide each month highlighting important holidays and traditions around the world. The fourth grade team also engages in an extensive “Where I’m From” unit in which students research their family’s backgrounds and ancestry. Multilingual learner family questionnaires are used to gain more information about a student's background, family, and educational experiences. Interpreters are offered for parent teacher conferences or any school meetings. Families are also given the option to receive school notices in their home language.

The ELL team offers a monthly “Coffee and Conversations” event inviting families to come together to discuss any school or community related questions, as well as make connections between families. These events are well attended and have had endless verbal positive feedback. Students have had the opportunity to share how they celebrate Chinese New Year, Diwali, Hanukkah and many other holidays or special events. Parents and families are also welcome and invited to present specific cultural celebrations, holidays, customs, and traditions in the school setting.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

The instructional approaches, methods, interventions, and assessments implemented at Riddle Brook School are designed to meet the diverse needs of every student, especially our struggling learners, through our Response to Intervention (RTI) model, “Follow the Child.” This RTI model consists of four tiers, including reading and math support, team instruction, special education, and intensive needs special education. The school's fluid and flexible approach allows instructional support to be effective and ever-adapting.

In the first tier of intervention, which includes reading and/or math support, students are provided with supplemental instructional resources, including but not limited to Project Read and Professor Mahesh Sharma’s math strategies. The second tier of intervention, team instruction, provides more intensive levels of academic support for students who do not currently meet the criteria for special education. The third and fourth tiers of intervention are special education and intensive needs special education, which provide the highest level of remediation in one-on-one or small group settings.

Riddle Brook also employs a push-in services model where special educators team teach with classroom teachers to differentiate instruction to meet diverse learner needs in the classroom. For higher achieving students, the school’s enrichment program provides opportunities for exploration outside of the standard grade level curriculum.

Child Team, or CT for short, is a weekly meeting that includes administration and the school’s reading specialist, counselor, and various other specialists who work together to determine the best course of action to meet students’ individual needs, monitor student growth throughout the year, and refer to special education when appropriate. Administration and the special education staff also meet a minimum of five times a year to discuss, analyze, and track progress on all students who receive any type of intervention(s).

Riddle Brook uses a variety of assessments and progress monitoring tools to monitor student progress, including Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests, Acadience Reading and Math Assessments, AIMSweb, state testing, and informal assessments. Data analysis is used to form instructional groups, target methodologies, and track and measure progress towards school goals.

Overall, the benefits of Riddle Brook's RTI model of early intervention, continuous progress monitoring, and staff collaboration have been instrumental to the school's success in ensuring that all students are given every opportunity to reach their highest levels. Using objective, diagnostic, and prescriptive measures that drive instruction to both remediate achievement gaps and extend learning through enrichment opportunities is a hallmark of our school’s success.