

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Robert C Lindsey Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 11844 Caves Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Chesterland State OH Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 44026-1710

County _____

Telephone (440) 729-5980 Fax _____

Web site/URL <https://www.westg.org/o/les> E-mail richard.markwardt@westg.org

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

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent* Dr. Richard Markwardt E-mail richard.markwardt@westg.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name West Geauga Local Tel. (440) 729-5900

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

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. Ben Kotowski
(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):
- 2 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
1 Middle/Junior high schools
1 High schools
0 K-12 schools
- 4 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	151
4	146
5	162
6	0
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	459

*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
 - 0 % Asian
 - 1.5 % Black or African American
 - 3.4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 92.5 % White
 - 2.6 % 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: 2%

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	7
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	3
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	10
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	456
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.02
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

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

Spanish, Russian, Arabic

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

7 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 0 %

Total number students who qualify: 0

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 10 %
Total number of students served 48

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. All students receiving special education services with an IEP should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

<u>4</u> Autism	<u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>17</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Developmental Delay	<u>15</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>3</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>6</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>1</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 8 %
Total number of students served: 35

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 0

11. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	22
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	5
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	3
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

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 21:1

13. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
Daily student attendance	94%	96%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

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

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

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

Yes No X

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.

Excellence through tradition and innovation.

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

<http://go.boarddocs.com/oh/westg/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=CNFL845501FC>

(Board Policy po2260)

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

The past several years have seen a great deal of transition and change at West Geauga Local Schools. While other school districts across the nation struggled with COVID and its immediate consequences both for online and in person learning, the educators in West Geauga Schools grappled with COVID while instituting the territory transfer of an adjoining school district and grade leveling two elementary schools, taking these buildings from two K-5 neighborhood schools to a K-2 primary building and a separate 3-5 upper elementary building that serve all district students. The school year, 2020, saw the classroom and building movement of over 50% of our elementary teaching staff while offering an option for online instruction and onboarding the new staff and students of the former Newbury School District now merged with West Geauga. What makes our district particularly proud is that the academic progress and achievement of our students remained the focal point of our work all the while organizing classroom shifts, new student orientations, online learning and COVID protocols. It is this emphasis on our academic achievement while mitigating these additional, unique circumstances that differentiate the West Geauga Schools and, in particular, Lindsey Elementary, from other high performing schools.

Currently, the West Geauga Local School District houses approximately 2100 students and serves several communities including Chesterland, Russell, Newbury and Novelty. It is an outer ring suburban school district located roughly 21 miles from downtown Cleveland, Ohio. The school district buildings are located on three separate campuses located in Chesterland and Russell. The community is supportive of the schools and takes pride in student achievements both in the classroom, on the athletic fields, in our music programs and throughout our community. West Geauga has both suburban and rural elements - housing several local fruit farms alongside various other industries and nonprofit business organizations. Our students are eager learners, anxious to participate in the programming offered at West Geauga Local Schools. Robert C. Lindsey Elementary School (Lindsey as it is known locally) houses grades 3-5 in the West Geauga Local School District. Lindsey is a very special building due to the dedication of the staff, culture of excellence, and engaged families. Throughout the territory transfer of Newbury Schools into the West Geauga School District and the ever changing COVID safety protocols instituted in the classrooms, Lindsey staff and students kept their eye on academic achievement and the continuation of the academic work which began many years before the pandemic.

In 2014, as the State of Ohio adopted new, more rigorous curriculum standards, there was a significant drop in district achievement as measured by the Ohio state report card. The district had historically performed adequately but the district had not prepared for the new standards and grade level expectations. From 2010 - 2015, West Geauga performed anywhere between 42nd and 55th in the state of Ohio. In the 2014-2015 school year, West Geauga Schools dropped to 133rd out of 608 school districts. As one former district level administrator termed it, “West Geauga was a fur-lined rut,” meaning we had traditionally seen adequate performance based primarily in the strength of our families and students, not on the strength of our instruction. At that time, district staff made a concerted decision to climb out of our “fur lined rut” to better serve our families and students - there was a great deal of work to do. We began by aligning grade level curriculum with rigorous standards, building grade level assessments, and establishing Multi Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) to ensure that every student achieves.

This work was embraced at Lindsey Elementary School where they accomplished these tasks and worked towards others which included the adoption of new English Language Arts and Math curriculum, the development of a writing curriculum and the use of data to help guide individualized instruction. Lindsey staff worked to build aligned, grade level, content specific curriculum maps that provided the foundation of an equitable, accessible education for every West Geauga Lindsey Learner. Lindsey staff understands this work is ongoing and will continue to push our students toward academic growth and excellence.

In addition to the academic curriculum work, the team at Lindsey has worked to embed programming that supports the whole child. In recent years, the team has worked hard to adopt and implement a Tier 1 social-emotional curriculum as well as implement the state’s PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support) initiatives earning a state of Ohio bronze award. Additionally, the community at Lindsey has been excited to embrace the Anti-Defamation League's No Place for Hate initiative and has been working with our

students, teachers, and families to help foster a sense of community that embraces inclusivity. We have worked closely with our parents to offer Girls on the Run, the first school to do so in Geauga County. Our staff understand that having resilient children who are thriving in all aspects of their lives will help them in their pursuit of academic excellence.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

The Reading/English Language Arts curriculum was built by administration and teaching staff. The team developed common pacing guides to ensure that students have access to consistent, well-designed content across grade levels. Consistency remains at the core of our work which has been fundamental to ensuring that every student, regardless of their particular teacher, will have access to high quality curriculum. Teachers are using the same vocabulary work, morphology instruction, identical read alouds and mini-lessons to focus on selected standards. The writing curriculum was developed through backward design utilizing the Ohio state curriculum standards, the End of Year assessment blueprints, practice tests and established grade level writing expectations. The writing curriculum is Lindsey Elementary's own design which includes an emphasis on organizational strategies, analysis techniques, supporting details and analytical and persuasive skills. The staff at Lindsey redesigned the writing curriculum based on the input of grade level professional learning communities (PLCs) that continually monitor the timing of instruction, the expectations of instruction, and the assessment of children's writing skills through common PLC weekly meeting time. As our children become stronger writers and analyzers the PLC teams work to be responsive and increase the rigor of our expectations and curriculum. We find that as we challenge our students, they meet and exceed our expectations time and again.

The work to establish a common curriculum included both content development and instructional delivery. Lindsey staff continues their work to engage learners in a variety of instructional delivery methods including turn and talks, model text read and think alouds, analysis through high level questioning, and analytical writing. Our teachers have embraced the use of higher level questioning to ensure that our readers are doing more than simply following along with the story. They work to utilize Webb's Depth of Knowledge and Hess's Rigor Matrix to ensure that students are making connections and analyzing these works at deeper levels. No more recall nor plot questions for these avid readers!

Students at Lindsey Elementary are assessed using NWEA's MAP assessment three times a year. This diagnostic has been fundamental to help students, families, and teachers know where our students are entering and where we need to go. Every student meets with their teacher to set a goal and is accountable for their growth during each iterative test administration. More importantly, students are able to talk about their strengths and weaknesses as it relates to the domains. No longer are the days of students saying they are not a good reader; instead, they can share specific standards based strengths and weaknesses. Following MAP assessments, each teacher meets with the principal to study student performance and discuss if individual students are showing adequate growth.

Additionally, our teachers have implemented common assessments and the use of higher level questioning to ensure that our readers are doing more than simply following along with the story. These formative assessments pair with our exemplar texts so that all students get practice tackling challenging questions that require re-reading and employing learned metacognitive strategies. Data points allow our teachers to discuss what our students are doing well and where we need to tailor instruction. Being flexible to pivot when we identify student need is important to ensure we are helping every student.

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

Six years ago a district curriculum team of administrators and teachers adopted a new Elementary math curriculum called Bridges. The Bridges curriculum emphasizes the benefit of productive struggle to solve complex mathematical problems through sound reasoning. The staff at Lindsey participated in professional development specifically to learn about Bridges. Staff undertook a curriculum re-haul to align our new resource to the curriculum and state standards. Additionally, staff worked in professional learning communities to create rigorous common assessments to assure our students can show mastery of concepts throughout the year. This was a great deal of work and met with enthusiasm by Lindsey teachers and

administrators.

The work has not stopped there. This year we began a deeper dive into our mathematics curriculum and instruction by beginning a professional development program led by the “Math Pact” - this work asks teachers to create a “Whole School Agreement” around the way we (as a school building) approach mathematical instruction including the use of precise mathematical language, rules and generalizations that will benefit all students. This work is substantial and asks staff to understand their beliefs about best mathematical instruction and practice. Currently, Lindsey staff members are walking through the process of building a Whole School Mathematical Agreement. This work includes identifying precise mathematical language and symbols, selecting cohesive and consistent representations, evaluating rules that expire, building generalizations and developing instructional strategies. We feel that building the Whole School Agreement at Lindsey Elementary is helping us to move beyond the curriculum to build mathematical thinkers and problem solvers.

Our math team is committed to differentiating instruction in the classroom. Understanding how to use assessment to identify a child’s particular strengths and weaknesses has been powerful-for both the teachers and our students. Our teachers use MAP assessments to look closely at performance within the measured strands and help students set personal goals. Our teachers promote student autonomy to allow our children the time and space to choose if they would like to strengthen their strengths or strengthen their weaknesses. Following each administration of MAP, teachers conference with students to discuss if students have met the outlined goals and what they can do to further enhance their growth and development.

We have worked diligently to help move away from rote tasks to incorporate rich tasks that have access points for all learners. A school-wide monthly math challenge helps promote the curiosity, love, and sheer fun that mathematical thinking brings to every child in our building.

Lastly, our teachers are able to diagnose the root cause of learning struggles through diagnostic interviews with their students. They have learned that no one can remediate a child’s difficulties better than the general education teacher. Therefore, our math teachers are learning how to provide Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions within their classroom to meet the needs of every child.

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

The science curriculum development has been a passion project led by our gifted coordinator who has a particular affinity for science. The goal of the science curriculum has been to explore the standards in a way that provides meaningful experiences that will lead to curiosity, fascination, and inquiry. Every third grader at Lindsey will remember their rock fashion show where students line the halls and students walk down the red carpet displaying that they are a metamorphic rock! The standards have been explored and debated in PLCs to ensure that common assessments truly require students to apply the scientific knowledge they have acquired rather than simply a long list of memorized facts they will soon forget as they matriculate to the middle school. Our commitment to the scientific method and hands-on learning makes our science program at Lindsey one which students embrace.

Our staff at Lindsey have been departmentalized at the 3-5 level. One impactful change we made at grades 3 and 4 was to make two person teams whereas one teacher teaches Reading and Writing while the other teacher is responsible for teaching Math, Science/Social Studies. This change has allowed our teacher to make the most meaningful connections between the math and science curriculum.

Our teachers have embraced the instruction of all students. General education teachers are working to ensure that all common assessments have also been modified for our alternatively assessed students. Our general education teachers are interacting intimately with the extended standards and embracing the idea that the content specialist no longer is the job, alone, of the intervention specialist. The initiative of the general education teacher in conjunction with the support and collaboration of the special education department has led to improved outcomes for every child.

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

Teachers teaching social studies at Lindsey understand the fundamental belief that instruction should be literacy based and provide a double block of instruction to support our student's reading and writing development. We have very intentionally added anchor texts to our pacing guide which allow teachers to model the content knowledge while immersing students in rich texts. Additionally, non fiction texts and historical books have been incorporated into units to ensure that students understand that the very best way to glean historical information is through print. Our teachers use book clubs on historical topics to allow students opportunities to engage in meaningful work with their peers that is highly demanding of literacy and speaking skills.

The team has worked diligently to redefine how we assess our students in this domain moving away from Depth of Knowledge Level 1 that emphasizes rote memorization. Instead the team has spent time analyzing each question to discuss ways we can increase levels of application. This has been powerful work that has helped us rethink what learning in this subject requires.

We have also worked intentionally to help strengthen the data analysis and accountability of student performance in this area. Data walls in social studies have helped teachers understand the importance of administering the same common assessment in the same time frame and capturing each student's performance in a spreadsheet shared with the teachers instructing this discipline. This allows PLCs to be targeted in our discussion of why students are thriving in certain areas and demonstrating more areas of need in particular areas.

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)

Our Arts program (Music and Art) integrates cultural and artistic elements into thematic structures. The Art teacher utilizes a variety of materials to help students express themselves creatively with empowerment and uniqueness. For example, third grade students inquire into various historical cultures. Each student creates a mask based off a chosen culture in Africa. The masks are mathematically represented through third grade standards about symmetry, shapes, and lines – all while concentrating on artistic expression and terminology such as textures, neutral tones, and media. Additionally, each student writes a story about the African mask. In 4th grade, students inquire into Native American symbols and how those symbols were a form of communication. Students create and tell a story through Native American symbols, focusing on family and relationships. Music classes also incorporate culture and history into lessons. For example, 5th grade students compare and contrast different versions of the song "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing.", analyzing the form and function of each piece of music. Students use their favorite parts of the songs to influence and guide their own composition, with an emphasis on rhythm, pace, dynamics, melody, tempo, and sixteenth notes. All students (3rd - 5th graders) participate in Music and in Art weekly.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

Students (3rd - 5th graders) participate in Physical Education weekly. Students set personal pacing and strength goals every quarter. They take ownership of their learning and movement by setting challenging goals. Additionally, every year Lindsey has an event called "Laps for Lindsey." Each student sets a goal for the number of laps he/she will run/walk. Each grade level participates in the laps and is cheered on by families while they walk and run. This promotes health, physical fitness, and is the biggest fundraiser for our school every year! During the Jump Rope Unit, which occurs during Jump Rope for Heart month, all

students strive to be Heart Heros. Students learn about heart rate, heart problems, and how a healthy heart impacts lives. Students learn to recognize and accept those with heart conditions, and raise money for the local American Heart Association by participating in the Jump Rope for Heart program. This action promotes positive ways to stay healthy, encourages students to strive for their goals, and gives back to our local community. This is a great connection to a book that the 3rd graders read, A Boy Called Bat, which teaches students to recognize and accept limitations.

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

2d. Technology/library/media

In library, we have taken an intentional approach to support the literacy work we are doing in the classroom. Our media specialist uses texts that are aligned to the read aloud books being used in the classroom to help further strengthen the metacognitive strategies students are learning at particular grade levels. Our PTO has partnered with the media specialist to help enhance students' love of reading through a building-wide 40 book challenge which asks every child to read 40 books in a school year. We continually work to showcase newly acquired titles in our library to excite our readers. The synergy between the library and the classroom has been strengthened with the development of the curriculum mapping. Our librarian knows exactly, for example, when third grade is going to read biographies and can pull all of the most exciting titles from the shelves to wheel down to the grade-level's rooms. Teachers feel supported because of the way she can strategically support the literacy work across the building in an efficient way.

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

Lindsey's Acts of Kindness is a program developed by our PBIS Committee and Building Leadership Team to foster perspective and empathy. The entire school building learned about schools around the world, focusing on culture and resources. Afterwards, teachers read the book One, by Kathryn Otoshi, to their class. This book inspires kids and adults to stand up and take action, which led to Lindsey's Acts of Kindness, a project to perpetuate kindness within our schools and outside of them in our broader community. The first few weeks of Lindsey's Acts of Kindness centered around kindness in the classroom through in house projects like classroom Kindness Jars and then branched out to the community and our world through writing letters to residents in local nursing homes, a food drive for a local food shelter and sock collection for local homeless shelters, sending toiletries for refugees settling in America and a collection for victims of the earthquake in Turkey and Syria.

On Veteran's Day our school came together to celebrate veterans. We had about 100 veterans and their guests in attendance. The program started in the Multi-Purpose Room (cafeteria), where veterans watched an honorary slideshow, 5th Grade Student Council members shared some facts about Veterans Day, the different branches were acknowledged, and all 5th graders sang the National Anthem. Veterans walked the hallways where the Lindsey students waved flags, sang a song, and clapped for the veterans. It was a great tribute to veterans and their families.

Lindsey Learners is an initiative started this year in response to a student need for homework support. We have 8 high school volunteers that come twice a week after school to work with students. We are finding that relationships are key to student engagement. Our students are on task and our high school students are fostering relationships with our elementary learners which is resulting in productive learning!

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

The success of our below grade level students is due to three important actions: assessment, teacher accountability, and progress monitoring. Elementary aged students are assessed using a benchmark in Reading and Math three times a year. The team targets students below the 30th percentile for required

participation in MTSS. The team closely monitors students from 31-50 percentile to ensure they are making gap closing progress with focused instruction from his/her classroom teacher. When students are performing below the 30th percentile, it is imperative to know the root cause of their difficulty. Using the 5 whys technique in conjunction with diagnostic assessment the team is able to deduce where the breakdown is occurring and what evidence based support is needed. Having trained staff who are able to provide Tier 3 interventions with fidelity such as Wilson reading or Just Words, for example, helps ensure that students receive a sophisticated intervention that will accelerate the child's learning. The team has become versed in progress monitoring using short cycle assessments to move kids in and out of support. The goal is always to provide the right level of support at the right time with the right intervention approach. We work hard not to over serve and rely heavily on the general education teacher as the expert. When teachers began "fighting" to keep the student in "their" class and not wanting to share the child was when we knew that general education teachers had the efficacy we needed to help all students.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

The success of our above grade level students is a very similar formula as our below grade level learners. This formula is dependent on three important actions: assessment, teacher accountability, and progress monitoring. Our teachers are committed to helping grow and add value to each of our learners. When students are assessed in the Fall and are found to be in the highest range of performance, teachers understand that helping each child grow or maintain their national percentile ranking is imperative. The old adage that it is hard to grow students at the top levels is a myth we have worked to disprove. Following assessment, goal setting with our learners occurs and it is through this process that we help teachers and students set rigorous goals that we monitor closely. Our gifted intervention specialist works closely with our teams in PLCs to ensure that we differentiate during each unit for our students where pre-assessment data suggests they already know the content. Differentiation occurs routinely when teachers understand they will be held accountable for the individual. A data wall for our gifted students has helped educators see the need for increasing the rigor of our assessments to allow stretch. Common assessments are carefully crafted to ensure that every student feels the need to apply learned skills. Gone are the days when high achieving students do not feel the discomfort and subsequent feelings of success when a challenge is overcome. It is our responsibility to ensure that our most academically successful students experience this type of learning at the elementary level on a daily basis.

3c. Students with disabilities:

Some of the most exciting changes in academic performance have occurred with our students with disabilities. The very first change that needed to occur was the expectation that all students, regardless of their challenges, have the fundamental right to have an education that leads to strong outcomes. To that end, all students with disabilities were monitored closely to ensure that they were receiving services that did not supplant best practice instruction in the general education classroom. Additionally, we moved to a model where instead of pulling students out of general education classrooms for supplemental services, when possible, services were pushed into the classroom. We worked diligently with parents to ensure that families understand the high expectations we have for our students and how they can support the work we are doing in the classroom. We had to help families understand that having an IEP would not simply cause their child to get good grades or reduced expectations. Families have supported this change and have embraced the idea that the most powerful learning happens in the company of their peers. We have worked closely with our special education team to find ways to build student independence and reduce the ways that we over accommodate or over serve. This work has been challenging and required crucial conversations related to deep-seated core beliefs. Lastly, progress monitoring our students with disabilities using our data walls was an important part of this change. Monitoring each student and meeting when we do not see gap closing progress is necessary to ensure the success of each child. General education teachers now demonstrate ownership of every child which is one of the most important indicators of our success.

3d. English Language Learners:

Lindsey has seen an increase in English Learners over the past five years and has made changes to accommodate varying needs. With a similar approach to what has been implemented with other

marginalized populations, our English Learners have found greater success in the general education classroom than being pulled out to a separate classroom. Teachers have increased the use of visuals, multiple modalities and frontloading of vocabulary as well as other strategies to support access and engagement with the curriculum. Language skills are taught across all areas and relationships are cultivated with students and with families to ensure communication and partnership with the learning. Lindsey has strongly supported learning about and appreciating other cultures including planned celebrations to demonstrate inclusivity.

The progress of our EL students is closely monitored through the MTSS process with the collaboration of the classroom teacher and EL teacher to ensure support is appropriate and targeted. Families are included in the process and if in person meetings are not possible, home visits, zoom, and phone access is encouraged. Summer services to continue academic progress and momentum have also been impactful.

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

We have worked as a staff at Lindsey to increase student engagement across the curriculum. Student goal setting, student choice with levels of complexity and high expectations, and a growing emphasis on inquiry-based learning result in an increase of learner autonomy. Allowing students to develop self-management skills while working and communicating with each other fosters a growth mindset and perseverance. For example, after 3rd graders read a book, they had a choice menu to choose from to demonstrate understanding and application of the text. Students could write from the main character's perspective, create an image of the setting of the story (drawing, online tools, 3D model), or could analyze a poem connected to the story. This has impacted student achievement in a positive manner, absorbing students in their work and providing a sense of accomplishment.

In terms of the reading instruction, the staff at Lindsey worked to diversify the literature our children read. The Lindsey team carefully selected exemplar texts that all readers at the grade level could study and enjoy as a community. The power in the collective study of engaging literature was transformational. The team no longer leveled students and assigned books by reading level but instead embraced the idea that a grade-level text is a fundamental right of each and every child. The exemplar text work allowed students to broaden their exposure to the most carefully curated texts to help redefine the ways they viewed themselves as readers.

Two years ago one teacher had the vision to offer her ELA classroom a 40 book challenge where every student in her room would be challenged to select and enjoy 40 books during the course of the school year. Because of the teacher's influence the entire building wanted to participate and the reading fervor was sparked. This has become an integral part of the culture at Lindsey and every family understands that working on this challenge is the very best way to promote their child's academic development. Our PTO has supported this endeavor by helping to recognize and reward students who accomplish this impressive goal and our library/administrative team works to ensure that we have the most exciting books on our shelves for our students to devour.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Our building has always had a tremendous amount of support from our PTO and parents. The PTO has historically taken a very active role and partnership with the building in an effort to provide social opportunities for our students. We have begun leveraging that support and talent to enhance student achievement. Our PTO yearly completes one annual fundraiser, Laps for Lindsey, that collects between 10,000 to 20,000 dollars. This funding has been used to support our academic goals. PTO has been integral to our 40 book challenge by doing things like counting read books, crafting morning announcements to recognize reading, providing incentives, and doing everything we ask to show that reading is our most important job. Parent volunteers have decorated the building with pictures of students' book recommendations to contribute to a palpable energy surrounding literacy in the building. Additionally, they have made our One School One Book possible with their financial support. PTO has worked closely with our media specialist to purchase alternative seating, bookshelves, and new books to make the library even more inviting for our students. Lindsey Elementary has partnered with the West Geauga Education Foundation to procure two recent grants that furthered our access to high quality materials. A Books Matter grant was given so that thousands of dollars could be spent on buying window and mirror books for our children. Additionally, the Education Foundation gave Lindsey another grant to purchase relevant non-fiction and historical fiction books to allow our science and social studies curriculum to be embedded with rich access to literature.

Lindsey was the first chapter in Geauga County to offer a Girls on the Run program. This program was led by parents and offered to girls their growth both physically and socially in the most tremendous ways. To build a culture of achievement required a very strong partnership with our families to help us explain what we were working to do and why it was important. After the second year of outstanding results at Lindsey,

the building principal asked the PTO to purchase a large banner that could be displayed on the outside of the building so that everyone entering our building, or driving by, could see what was accomplished. Once the banner was hung the principal was teased by teachers and administrators across the district and the reply was always the same: “Do what we did at Lindsey and you too should put up a banner.” Our parents learned quickly about their role in helping to energize our student body and became an important proponent of the work we did. Chalking up the sidewalks to surprise students before state testing, writing letters to each of their children before important assessments, and contributing the funding to buy lots and lots of snacks all contributed to a sense of community and ultimately positively impacted our performance.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

In 2019, when Newbury Local Schools was transferred into the West Geauga Local School District, Lindsey Elementary became a staff comprised of individuals from 3 separate buildings: Newbury Local Schools, Westwood Elementary and Lindsey Elementary. Our work to create a professional learning culture began with fundamental curriculum building coupled with professional development which consisted of team building exercises on professional learning days, professional learning communities and strong building leadership in the building steering team (composed of building and grade level leaders). The approach to professional development has evolved as professional need has changed. Initially, professional development was very traditional - district delivered and teacher consumed. As Lindsey built their professional culture, the work evolved to focus primarily on teacher driven decisions through a building wide leadership steering team and PLCs. These staff led groups and helped to continue the progress in curriculum and instruction by continually evaluating the effectiveness of their work in setting and meeting high expectations for students. We have moved our professional learning to be more teacher inclusive and driven, focusing now on new instructional strategies, time to meet as grade levels, content area teams and identifying new building goals.

There has been a marked shift in the building belief system that curriculum, resources and assessments were things handed to teachers, not teacher created. As we began the work of aligning to the rigor of new state standards, it was not unusual for teaching staff to ask district administrators to “just give them” the materials. It was only through the work itself of developing materials appropriate for our students that the building saw a change in attitude. Now teaching staff has moved away from purchased materials and is moving toward individual student goal setting, flexible learning routines and invitational instruction. At the heart of this work is the belief in staff that all students can and must learn. This culture of high expectations is what personifies Lindsey Elementary and sets it apart from others.

4. School Leadership:

Lindsey Elementary is built on a shared leadership model. Initially, as we aligned curriculum and adopted a data based decision making framework to respond to student needs, the work was carried primarily by district and building level administrators. The leadership team implemented new systems of PLC work, targeted professional development, alignment of curriculum, the adoption of data systems and the expectation of responsive teaching practices. What has been exceptional to watch is the building shift in responsibility from one of “top down” to a shared leadership model. Now, the building functions primarily through team PLC work and individual teacher professional decision making. Individuals carry the responsibility of student learning. The building principal operates more as a peer leader than a traditional supervisor. As the school leadership model has shifted, so too has the decision making structure. In the past several years, shared leadership teams have adopted new math and English language arts resources.

Our administration team consists of the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Director of Pupil Services, Instructional Data & Systems Coordinator, four building principals, and 2 assistant principals. We collaborate, plan, and implement programs to best meet the needs for all of our students. Our initiatives are brought to the District Leadership Team (DLT), then to the Building Leadership Team (BLT), and lastly to Professional Learning Communities (PLC). The (District Leadership Team) DLT is composed of 5-7 teachers from each building. The Building Leadership Team (BLT) is represented by one teacher from each team within the school. The Professional Learning Communities (PLC) are grade level teams.

For example, we are focusing on equity to ensure that all students learn in a safe and caring environment with rigor and with high expectations. Our administration team is reading *White Fragility*, by Robin Diangelo. and discussing topics related to race in our educational setting. This work is now being developed at our DLT level, with an emphasis on equity, race, and culture within our schools. Together, we are learning about these relevant and essential topics and are collaborating to develop plans and professional development to bring to our BLT levels. The BLT work will flow into our PLCs at each grade level in every building. At that point, the entire District will be working together towards the same goals and initiatives.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Lindsey has addressed student needs in multiple areas through widespread building initiatives as well as classroom and individual interventions and services. Professional development has been provided in the areas of best practices in mathematics, the science of reading, instructional strategies, differentiation, PBIS, PAX behavior games, Second Step, trauma, and restorative practices. The professional learning has occurred in large groups, PLC's, modeling in classrooms, and reinforcement over the past 6 years. This has helped to ensure that every student receives a rigorous education with alignment across classrooms and grade levels.

This work began with establishing tier one expectations about relationship building with students, communication with families, and curriculum writing which included exemplar texts that showcased students with different backgrounds. Work with the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) deepened the process with multiple action oriented initiatives which included students, staff and families. Lindsey continues this process with a kindness program which will focus on various topics paired with productive actions to make change on a larger scale.

PBIS, Second Step and PAX behavior games were implemented as tier 1 social emotional learning and supports. They have provided a framework for all stakeholders about expectations for involvement and interaction between staff, students, and families. Tier 2 SEL supports such as restorative practices have been modeled and implemented through district leaders in the schools. Small groups are regularly pulled to work on Zones of Regulation, Check and Connect, and friendship. The district also provides parent coaching and social work services to ensure equitable access to academic support and other assistance.

As teachers plan instruction, cultural context is a large consideration. Units are examined with a critical eye on activating prior knowledge, perspectives, resources, delivery and inclusivity. During this process, the district has worked with PLCs to provide updated, culturally appropriate resources. Most importantly, student voice and agency have been a priority in every classroom.

The cornerstone of equity in the district has been through the MTSS process. During these monthly conversations with every teacher, administration and families, student data is reviewed and input is given. Interventions and student needs are addressed and monitored to ensure appropriate services are provided and improvement occurs. No student is allowed to fall through the cracks and students performing at high levels are also discussed if achievement is stagnant. Social-emotional, behavioral and attendance needs are also addressed through MTSS.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

Lindsey has historically been a high achieving school. However, there have always been pockets of students who do not succeed and there has been an absence of systems in the building to monitor the growth and progress of these students. Prior to the past two years, if asked, it would be unlikely that a teacher could articulate why students experienced academic success or failure. Common responses would demonstrate a lack of understanding of what caused growth and typically students were blamed for academic failure.

The MTSS process (multi-tiered systems of support) was implemented with fidelity across classrooms and grade levels at Lindsey Elementary School with a focus on data that transformed the culture and productivity of the school. Performance data for every student was gathered and monitored to be sure growth occurred. When there was a concern, the MTSS team, led by the principal convened and generated instructional strategies to close gaps and ensure that student performance was commensurate with expectations. High achieving students were accelerated as appropriate with compacted curricula, and their achievement watched as closely as students who demonstrated lower achievement.

The leadership role of the principal in the MTSS process had many facets that integrated directive and supportive measures based on the skill and maturity levels of the staff. She built comprehensive data walls, and with transparency met with grade levels to examine data and brainstorm solutions to any concerns. After some initial discomfort, teachers welcomed the new data driven systems and implemented and assessed interventions and accelerations. Over time, they grew their confidence and began to own it and enter the data themselves including deep reflection on their instruction and student welfare. Throughout the process, the principal provided constant and consistent words of encouragement and literally cheered the teachers on as students thrived.

The granular level of involvement of the principal was exceptional and reflective of situational leadership as she toggled between a strongly top down leadership model to eradicate antiquated practices and mindsets yet conversely, encouraged the shared leadership in PLC's where the team collaboratively brainstormed solutions. This approach to the implementation of systems focusing on data is the foundation of the model of success at Lindsey. The culture of high expectations is now owned and embedded in every learner including staff and families.