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 <u>Mrs. Kathryn Hardesty</u>

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

Official School Name <u>Houdini Elementary School</u>

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address <u>2305 West Capitol Drive</u>

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City <u>Appleton</u>   State <u>WI</u>   Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) <u>54914-6831</u>

County <u>Outagamie County</u>

Telephone <u>(920) 832-4608</u>   Fax <u>(920) 993-7078</u>

Web site/URL <u>https://houdini.aasd.k12.wi.us</u>   E-mail <u>hardestykathry@aasd.k12.wi.us</u>

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

_____Date_____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* <u>Mr Greg Hartjes</u>   E-mail <u>hartjesgreg@aasd.k12.wi.us</u>

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

District Name <u>Appleton Area School District</u>   Tel. <u>(920) 852-5300</u>

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

_____Date_____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson <u>Mrs. Kay Eggert</u>

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

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

_____Date_____

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

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

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

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state's performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.

2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2023 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.

3. The school configuration must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.

4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2018 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2022.

5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 or 2022.

6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award.

7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.

8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.

9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.

10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.

11. The nominated school has, or is subject to, a nondiscrimination policy (provide either a link to the policy or submit a text of the policy), is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff consistent with applicable law and does not have any outstanding findings of unlawful discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

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

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

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

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

1. Number of schools in the district   21 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
   (per district designation):   5 Middle/Junior high schools
                                        8 High schools
                                        1 K-12 schools

                                        35 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")

   [X] 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	85
1	76
2	86
3	81
4	80
5	66
6	71
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	545

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of   0.5 % American Indian or Alaska Native
    the school (if unknown, estimate):   7.7 % Asian
                                         2.6 % Black or African American
                                         8.8 % Hispanic or Latino
                                         0.2 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
                                         74.7 % White
                                         5.5 % 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: 10%

    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 **to** the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	31
(2) Number of students who transferred **from** the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	22
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	53
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	545
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.10
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	10

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

    Albanian, Gheg, Arabic, Hindi, Hmong, Farsi, Eastern Persian, Darai, Parsi, Spanish, Castilian, Swahili, Vietnamese

    English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 4 %

                                                        23 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 32 %

                Total number students who qualify: 172

8.   Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 16 %
                    Total number of students served   88|

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.

8 Autism	4 Multiple Disabilities
0 Deafness	0 Orthopedic Impairment
0 Deaf-Blindness	21 Other Health Impaired
9 Developmental Delay	12 Specific Learning Disability
8 Emotional Disturbance	22 Speech or Language Impairment
0 Hearing Impairment	0 Traumatic Brain Injury
8 Intellectual Disability	0 Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9.   Students receiving special education services with a 504:   1 %
                    Total number of students served: 4

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 6

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.	26
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	10
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	5

12. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1   25:1

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

Required Information	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
Daily student attendance	92%	96%	97%	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.

Houdini Hawks: We learn, we care and we inspire.

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

https://cdnsm5-
ss7.sharpschool.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_457520/File/District%20Leadership/Board%20of%20Educat
ion/Individual%20Policy%20PDF's/400s/Student%20NonDiscrimination%20411.2%20and%20Complaint
%20Procedure%20411.2-Rule.pdf

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

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Houdini Elementary School is a big school that feels small. One would never guess that Houdini welcomes about 550 kindergarten through sixth grade students each day. Houdini's "magic" is in making all our students feel a sense of belonging, that they are part of a school family. Each morning starts with staff greeting students as they arrive and enter the halls of the school. Classroom teachers stand outside classroom doors to welcome every student with a greeting, hug, high-five, and/or handshake. Breakfast is served in the classroom and is eaten together as a classroom community as morning meetings begin the day. Social and emotional learning is at the heart of why students at Houdini feel loved and are successful learners. Every morning it feels like students are returning home.

Take a walk through the halls and peek into the classrooms. Visitors would never even notice the large student population because all you see is family–Houdini family. Students are grouped together at tables with books in hand reading with their teacher. Some are nestled in calming spaces with regulation tools in-hand, providing them with breaks as they are needed. Students sit on rainbow rugs rolling dice and playing math games. The gym is bustling with red-faced students playing their favorite games. Sounds of singing and instruments playing fill the hallways around the music room doors. Artwork and writing pieces line the walls of the hallways like proud family memories decorating a home. Children are visiting the library, returning books, and pointing out the ones they hope are still there when class book check-out time arrives. They are learning and loving school.

Houdini's teachers are especially caring and fun. Theme days bring teachers in Harry Potter robes, poodle skirts, and crazy socks. Classrooms may be filled with blanket forts and flashlights or glitter and glue. Student engagement is a top priority, and teachers are invested in making learning fun and showing students the relevancy in what they are learning. Creativity is endless, and the students thrive within it.

Teachers are lifelong learners who not only receive professional development but implement that learning. Teachers are focused on Teacher Clarity and providing their students with success criteria and content relevancy that match their learning intentions. Students clearly understand what they are learning, why they are learning it, and how they will show their understanding. Teachers are clear in both their expectations and their feedback for students. When our students know what is expected and understand what they need to do to improve, they are successful learners.

The engagement strategies that teachers provide to their students reach all learners. Teachers are clear in their learning intentions and explain success criteria so that students understand what they need to do to show their learning. Students understand why learning is relevant with the guidance of their teachers. Classrooms are filled with books that reflect the readers in that classroom. Active discussions to explore deep understanding and messages within text happen just as much in kindergarten as they do in sixth grade. Math manipulatives are readily available for students to use as they work to solve problems. Group work is encouraged and is an opportunity for students to be leaders, active listeners, and team-players and also understand the importance of working together toward one goal. Our teachers recognize the importance of engagement and the learning that results.

Our non-homeroom specialist teaching staff provides support to our students who need it the most. Detailed plans are created to be followed that work towards success. Students who are part of tier 2 or tier 3 interventions are supported through intentional instruction tailored to meet their needs. The staff collects data to share with classroom teachers and the progress monitoring team for collaboration and developing ongoing plans and opportunities for instruction. Our students benefit from the number of staff involved in supporting the success of each and every student.

Our students have special bonds with the staff. Some students check-in daily with buddy teachers who prepare them with encouragement for a successful day. The staff connects with their buddy student throughout the day as well as meets with them for closure at day's end. Students have the opportunity to talk about their day and their feelings while staff listens and guides. The importance of having additional trusted adults at school gives our students the comfort they need to be the best learners they can each day.

Houdini Elementary School is a magical school because of its shared devotion to the emotional, social, and academic success of all students. Houdini School is set apart from other schools by how we look at students. We are all responsible for the learning and success of all students. There is no "his or her" student – only "our" students. That shared sense of responsibility provides every student with an immense amount of care and support. At Houdini, all students are our students.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

Houdini Elementary School follows the Appleton Area School District board-adopted scope and sequence of ELA Standards aligned to the Wisconsin Model of ELA standards and delivers individualized, student-centered ELA instruction through the workshop model using a balanced literacy approach. Appleton Area School District board-approved resources come from Fountas and Pinnell Reading Minilessons (K-6), Writing Minilessons (K-1), Fountas and Pinnell Word Study (K-2), and Words Their Way (3-6). District-provided units of study organize the standards and provide a scope and sequence along with common summative assessments. Students are provided with universal instruction in areas of shared reading, interactive read-aloud, reading mini-lessons, shared writing, interactive writing, writing mini-lessons, and word study. Small group instruction is provided within guided reading groups, as well as strategy- and skill-based groups. Daily individualized instruction for reading and writing are present in teacher-student conferring sessions. Formative data is collected from all daily components of ELA. Summative assessments are used to evaluate current student strengths and determine future learning intentions. Formative assessments, summative assessments, and informal records are analyzed by Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to develop responsive instruction for all students.

A daily ELA lesson begins with an Interactive Read Aloud to assess student knowledge and understanding at the whole class level. For example, the teacher reads aloud and leads an engaging conversation focusing on comprehension. Next, the teacher reflects on student responses and conversations and develops whole group reading and writing mini lessons that will be responsive to students' understandings. Lessons may include comprehension strategies such as retelling or examining problems and solutions. Additionally, small groups of students may be placed together to work on skills specific to their own learning needs such as making predictions or studying character traits. Formative assessments are used to be responsive to students, ensuring all student needs are met.

Additional student data is collected through the use of diagnostics and daily lessons from i-Ready and reading levels as determined through use of Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment Kits. This student data is analyzed by grade-level PLCs as well as the building principal, literacy interventionist, math interventionist, and instructional coach. Together, through progress monitoring, decisions are made to address needs ranging from below grade-level to enrichment levels. Every student has the right to make a full year of growth every year. This ensures that all students' needs are met.

Houdini Elementary is a school which implements Teacher Clarity in order to provide students with focused learning intentions, specific success criteria, and clear feedback. Students are cognizant of what is being taught, why it is being taught, why it is relevant, and how they will demonstrate understanding. Keeping clarity in mind provides students with precise expectations for successful learning.

Students at Houdini Elementary are immersed in literacy instruction throughout their day. Literacy is embedded within all other disciplines for students. Through this, students develop an understanding for the importance of literacy as well as a love of it.

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

Our school uses Achieve the Core to determine essential standards at each grade level to be the major focus in instruction. Math Expressions is provided and used as our board-approved curriculum and other supplemental materials are used to provide engaging games and interactive activities. Bump games, a differentiated math game that has multiple levels and covers concepts from kindergarten through sixth grade, are a fan-favorite for students and staff. Teachers can assign partners strategically so all students are getting the appropriate practice needed for them to move their learning forward.

Math talks are used at the beginning of each class to work towards fact fluency, number sense, and to engage students in the upcoming lesson. Resources used for math talks include Number Talks by Sherry D. Parrish, 3-Act Tasks, Which One Doesn't Belong, and Estimation180. Learning standards are first addressed by direct instruction. Then a math workshop model is used to provide differentiated small group instruction, partner work, and independent practice.

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Before each unit, students are given a pre-assessment. This is used to determine any re-teaching that needs to take place along with selecting students who may be ready for enrichment. Teachers take daily formative assessments through observations, exit slips, practice pages, student self-reflections, games, quizzes, and more. Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) then meet to review select formative assessments to determine next steps in differentiated small group instruction and/or whole group instruction.

Summative assessments are focused on the essential standards and the results are analyzed during PLCs. Our focused questions are: Where are we going? Where are we now? How do we move learning forward? What did we learn today? Who benefited and who did not benefit? We also utilize i-Ready diagnostics in the fall, winter, and spring. Teachers look over these results and reports to determine prerequisite skills that need to be taught along with areas for advancement.

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

At Houdini, we follow the Wisconsin Standards for Science supported with two different resources. Our kindergarten - 5th grade classrooms use Mystery Science. Mystery Science is aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Each lesson is aligned to a topic, performance expectation, science and engineering practice, and disciplinary core idea, as well as crosscutting concepts. Students are active explorers who learn not by listening and consuming, but by discussing, by building and observing hands-on models, and by writing about what they learn. Each video-based lesson begins with a mystery to solve. Students embark upon an investigation with the first big clue, guided by questions that provoke thinking and discussion. Students gather visual evidence to record and analyze. They solve the mystery with imaginative hands-on investigations that cultivate science and engineering practices and inspire a love of science. Our 6th graders use Foss Science. Foss Science focuses on a student-first approach in the areas of physical science, earth science, life science, and engineering. When appropriate, students are given the opportunity to participate in hands-on experience within our community to reinforce and create discussion on topics covered in our classroom. Many of our classrooms expand the curriculum while partnering with and visiting local nature centers. Each winter, our 6th grade classrooms go to Central Wisconsin Environmental Station for an overnight field trip connected to the science standards.

Across all grade levels, grade-level PLCs meet weekly to share data from both formative and summative assessments to brainstorm innovative ways to improve learning and drive student achievement.

Houdini Elementary is a school which implements Teacher Clarity in order to provide students with focused learning intentions, specific success criteria, and clear feedback. Students are cognizant of what is being taught, why it is being taught, why it is relevant, and how they will demonstrate understanding. Keeping clarity in mind provides students with precise expectations for successful learning.

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

At Houdini, we follow the Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies with an inquiry-based approach partnered with inquirED's Inquiry Journey's materials. This inquiry process engages students' drive to discover, their need to question, and their ability to create solutions that transform the world around them. We also deeply engage students in literacy through authentic texts and read-alouds. When appropriate, students are given the opportunity to participate in hands-on experience within our community to reinforce and create discussion

on topics covered in our classroom. One example is that our kindergarten classrooms visit our neighborhood fire station every year. Another example is that our second-grade classrooms raise money during their community unit to help support urgent needs in the community such as a canine for local law enforcement.

Houdini Elementary is a school which implements Teacher Clarity in order to provide students with focused learning intentions, specific success criteria, and clear feedback. Students are cognizant of what is being taught, why it is being taught, why it is relevant, and how they will demonstrate understanding. Keeping clarity in mind provides students with precise expectations for successful learning.

We use various assessments to ensure student mastery of the standards. Pre-assessment tasks provide teachers the opportunity to gauge the prior knowledge and skills of students. Formative assessment tools are available in every lesson, from teacher checklists to student-created responses. Assessment tools connect to specific "look-fors" that align to lesson objectives and build toward module objectives. These tools assess understanding and skills across a diverse set of tasks, including written claims and creative responses. Student self-assessment is an important component of the inquiry process and is embedded throughout the units. Students set goals and reflect on their learning. Additionally, during the final lesson of the unit, students reflect on and assess their learning from the unit. The product rubric serves as the summative assessment for units. This rubric is co-created with students at the beginning of the module according to a specific process described in a detailed lesson plan. Our 5th grade classrooms co-created a rubric to use for a vegetation region diorama. As a result of the students being co-creators of the rubric, the students appeared to enjoy the activity, and most were able to earn meets or exceeds for each learning target. Our second-grade classrooms created a cookbook in order to inspire our community to celebrate diverse cultures for a unit on families, cultures and communities. After reviewing key learning from the Investigation modules, the students and staff determined what learning should be evident in the product. The final rubric used statements such as "my written work includes a recipe with ingredients and sequenced steps", "my recipe represents a family tradition that helps us understand and stay connected to our families, cultures, and communities," and "my recipe is neat and clean and includes a picture." Once students shared their family traditional recipes, they received a compilation of all the family recipes. As part of this process, teachers incorporate key social studies concepts and content that aligns with our school, district, and state expectations into the success criteria.

Grade level PLCs meet weekly to share data from these assessments and share best practices and brainstorm innovative ways to improve learning and drive student achievement.

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)

Kindergarten through sixth grade students at Houdini School receive curricular instruction in the areas of visual and performing arts. Visual arts classes meet for guided instruction 50 minutes per week. Performing arts classes (general music) meet for guided instruction for a total of 60 minutes per week. Fifth and sixth grade students can choose to participate in a volunteer choir that meets to practice one lunch recess per week. Starting in fourth grade, students can additionally choose to learn an instrument. Each grade level and performing group (band, orchestra or choir) performs a concert or recital once a year. Student artwork is displayed during these performances as well as on our school walls throughout the year. Social emotional

learning (SEL) is one of the arts' biggest contributions to our students at Houdini. We continuously focus on self-awareness, self-control, and interpersonal skills.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

Students at Houdini Elementary School in kindergarten through sixth grade receive guided instruction in the area of physical education and health related concepts for sixty minutes a week. The Physical Education curriculum focuses on developing physically literate individuals. Physical literacy challenges the way in which individuals engage in and understand physical activity. It offers an approach to encourage students to engage in physical activity to improve themselves by developing their physical, cognitive, emotional, and social attributes. Physically literate students use a variety of skills to participate in physical activity: know how to move and use strategies when they play games; know and practice the skills that help them maintain a healthy lifestyle; act fairly, responsibly, and respectfully when they participate in activities; and know why it is important to be physically active. Physical Education gives students the motivation, confidence, physical competence, understanding, and knowledge to lead a healthy life from adolescence through adulthood. Social emotional learning (SEL) is one of Physical Education's biggest contributions to students at Houdini as we continuously focus on self-awareness, self-control, and interpersonal skills.

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

2d. Technology/library/media

Once a week, students meet for Library Skills for thirty minutes with a Library Media Specialist. In class, students learn to make connections between their real lives and digital lives, such as being careful when talking to strangers and not sharing personal information. Students learn to be cautious when visiting new locations and to ask for help when they get "lost" or uncomfortable. Best of all, they develop problem solving skills. In the library, we focus on collaboration, communication, and cooperation, and how each mistake we make gives us the opportunity to learn something new. During Makerspace days, students create things that may fall apart or don't come out the way they planned. They enjoy learning from those errors in a stress-free environment and work together to rebuild their creations even better than before. These skills transfer into projects and research. It's easy to get frustrated when you can't match a sound file to your video using editing software or when you can't find the information you're looking for fast enough. The library helps students learn that it's okay to take your time, to ask for help, and to try again. These are skills that are an essential part of education and growing up.

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

At Houdini Elementary, we take pride in providing students with an excellent academic education, and we excel in providing opportunities for students to grow emotionally and socially. In efforts to systematically increase students' social and emotional skills, we utilize the 2nd Step curriculum to guide specific and purposeful grade level instruction. Each classroom engages in a set thirty-minute weekly period to educate students with a direct focus on the five fundamentals of Social Emotional Learning (SEL): self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and decision making.

This school-wide emphasis on the importance of our SEL curriculum and enhancing students' social and emotional well-being has been widely accepted by students and staff and has become an important part of our culture. Additionally, increasing students' competencies in these skills has had a direct impact on our students' sense of belonging and ability to connect with others at school. At Houdini School, we put students at the center of each decision, and we focus on the whole child. We are able to align our social-emotional learning knowledge and skill with our restorative mindset and collaborative approach to working with students ensuring that every student knows they belong, they are safe, and that they are loved at Houdini.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

At Houdini Elementary, we hold academic progress monitoring meetings every six weeks. These meetings include classroom teachers, literacy and math interventionists, and the principal. During these collaborations, we review a data wall, as well as the data within eduCLIMBER (an online data collection system), to monitor the growth of each Houdini student in the areas of literacy and math. Our data wall reflects current and historic i-Ready data, Instructional Reading Levels (IRL), and Forefront Math Screener scores. The data wall also reflects subgroups of students (Gender, EL, SpEd, TAG, Students of Color). This data is used in order to be responsive to the needs of our students. To close the achievement gap, intervention teachers use formative and summative assessments to guide their instruction. Teachers continuously adjust the focus of instruction and have flexible groupings based on observations to ensure that skills continue to improve.

In literacy, students who have an IRL that is one or more years below grade level are considered for a tier 3 intervention with the literacy interventionist. Students who are within a year of grade level are considered for a tier 2 intervention with the classroom teacher. Specific interventions at the Tier 3 level are chosen based on students' literacy needs as determined through formative and summative assessments. Houdini uses interventions within the Comprehension Intervention Model (CIM); these include Assisted Writing, Writing Aloud, Guided Reading Plus, Strategic Processing Intervention, and Comprehension Focus Groups. At the tier 2 level, classroom teachers utilize Fountas and Pinnell's Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI).

In math, students who score in the bottom 10th percentile on the i-Ready diagnostic and/or score in the lowest band as determined by the Forefront Screener are considered for a tier 3 intervention with the math interventionist. Students who score between the 11th and 25th percentiles on the i-Ready diagnostic and in the bottom half on the Forefront Screener are considered for a tier 2 math intervention with their classroom teacher. Interventions used in tier 2 and 3 math may include Math Recovery, Add-Vantage Math Recovery (AVMR 1 and 2), and Graham Fletcher Building Fact Fluency.

Collaboration between interventionist and classroom teacher is important when a student is receiving a tier 3 intervention. This communication ensures that the student is working on skills repetitively and sees the transfer of content between environments.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Talented and Gifted students are identified by using iReady scores of the 95th percentile or higher in both reading and math or scoring in the 89th percentile or higher on the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking. Teachers and parents are able to refer students for TAG services. Then a portfolio of evidence is used to determine which services will best meet that child's individual needs.

Identified students receive services outside of the general education classroom where the focus is on collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and creativity skills. Students plan, prepare, and present research and projects while self-evaluating along the way. Units of study include Bloom's Taxonomy, How the Brain Works, Inventions, Architecture, Countries/Cultures, Advertising, Crime Scene Investigations, and Kindness/Social Issues.

Students performing above grade level receive academic-specific enrichment opportunities in the classroom and/or in a small group with the Talented and Gifted (TAG) teacher. They are able to work with similar academic peers during enrichment tasks to discuss and solve problems together. Students are given challenging work beyond grade level with the expectation to persevere and try new strategies. Striving to practice a growth mindset is always at the forefront of all tasks.

Enrichment groups and TAG Pull-Together classes move at a faster pace to keep advanced students engaged and inspired. By using i-Ready data and pre-assessments, teachers can plan for what students are ready for next to enable them to make continuous progress. Groups utilizing pull-out with the TAG teacher are determined using grade-level norms and are flexible throughout the school year.

3c. Students with disabilities:

Houdini School has always been known for its inclusive practices for students with special needs. Houdini students with special needs receive universal instruction in the homeroom environment as often as least restrictively possible. When possible, special education and homeroom teachers co-teach within the regular classroom. Following universal instruction, based upon their individual needs, students will continue in the regular education classroom with the support from a special education teacher or students will have small group specialized instruction in the special education environment. Some services include the adaptation of the curriculum and modifications to assignments. Students will participate in group activities, present in front of their peers, and work on similar projects with additional support.

In math, students are assessed using AVMR and Bridges to learn skill deficiencies. Interventions are done using manipulatives, visuals, and skills broken down to the child's readiness level. The Bridges Intervention program, Reteaching from the Math Expressions Common Core program, and other programs are used to work on their IEP goals. Students also use i-Ready lessons to work on individual goals like their peers.

In Reading, interventions consist of using multiple resources and strategies. Materials include, but are not limited to using sight word vocabulary, phonemic awareness activities, Barton Intervention, and Literacy Footprints.

Assessments, whether for Unit Math tests, district assessments, or standards-based assessments, are taken in the special education classroom to provide a smaller class setting with less distractions and a familiar teacher.

To close the achievement gap, special education teachers have high expectations. They meet the students where they are and strive to push them to their full potential. We have the belief to challenge our students without overwhelming them. We focus on the least restrictive environment and include students to the best of their abilities.

3d. English Language Learners:

Houdini Elementary offers various instruction models to support students who are labeled English Learners (EL) according to the family's Home Language Survey and qualified according to the WIDA ACCESS Screener.

EL students with an English Level Proficiency (ELP) 1 receive instruction in the EL teacher's classroom for 30-40-minute sessions each week, one time per week. During such sessions, the EL teacher works to build student listening and speaking skills. In addition, the EL teacher pre-teaches academic language that students will be experiencing in the general education classroom to offer students background knowledge on the unit and give them confidence in future class work.

EL students of varying English Language Proficiency (ELP) levels of 1-4 are also co-taught by the general education teacher and EL teachers. With co-teaching comes various teaching models. Each unit, or lesson, can change teaching models so that what is presented to students is best for student growth. One example of co-teaching is the general education teacher teaches the mini lesson to the whole group. The EL teacher reteaches the lesson in a small group in the classroom while prompting EL students with sentence starters and sentence frames. The reteaching and prompting offers EL students the ability to perform at their ELP level while building confidence in their class work. Also, the EL teacher is able to use texts, visuals, and video to build background knowledge for students while enhancing work completion.

When assessments arise in the classroom, EL students' most common accommodation is time. Therefore, classroom teachers utilize the EL teacher when such assessments arise. The EL teacher will assess in the EL classroom to offer students a small quiet environment where peer to peer comparison is not present. EL students are offered the same testing environment for i-Ready, Forward, and ACCESS testing.

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Houdini Elementary School recognizes the role engagement plays in student success. The staff develops and utilizes innovative ways to engage and motivate students to be at their best during learning opportunities. A strong, supportive staff along with a strong family and community engagement focus provides students with a positive environment in which they are able to grow academically, socially, and emotionally each day.

Our school's Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP) team has prioritized student engagement as a primary focus. Staff come together to gather ideas on what engagement looks like, sounds like, and feels like in the classroom. The CSIP team meets monthly to assess engagement tools and strategies and develops new ones for the next month's student engagement goal. Examples of monthly goals include implementing new math games, using Culturally and Linguistically Responsive (CLR) protocols, and intentionally choosing interactive read-alouds which match specific class needs.

Houdini believes that being culturally and linguistically responsive keeps student engagement high. High-leverage instructional strategies in the classroom such as turn-and-talks, gallery walks, think-ink-pair-share, visuals, sentence frames, silent appointments, and use of the Frayer Model allow all students opportunities for engagement. Teachers are responsive to all learners and learning styles.

Our school gathers for monthly Soaring Celebrations where, following the recitation of our Hawk's Honor Pledge and singing our School Song, students from all grade levels are recognized for showing responsibility, respect, kindness, and characteristics of life-long learners. Students are presented with a certificate and their names are listed on our digital sign in front of the school for the community to view. Parents and families are always welcome to join in these celebrations where students are recognized for their work to engage in positive behaviors.

Additionally, teachers and staff regularly share positive feedback with students and their families. Teachers provide their students with clear learning intentions and success criteria. Students know what they are learning, why they are learning it, and how they will show their learning. Houdini also values clarity in feedback. Clear feedback from teachers to learners helps students understand their purpose and therefore remain engaged with the task and learning. Feedback from teachers to families is provided via phone calls home, emails, letters/postcards, and at parent-teacher conferences as well as informal conversations daily.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Our school has found many successful ways to work with our families and community to support student success and school improvement. We have hosted parent/student events, business connections, and volunteer opportunities.

Our parent/student events have occurred during the day and also in the evenings, providing times for all families to participate. We have hosted math days and nights, where parents were invited into our classrooms to experience their students' math learning targets. In this event, students and parents played games to highlight math standards and fun ways to practice that concept or skill. Parents were also given materials to take home and use with their child to reinforce the concepts. We also have had monthly math activities sent home with students to practice math skills at all grade levels. Families were provided with rules and supplies to complete these games. We held a night when a math company showed parents engaging math games to play with their students on the computer. The families could join us from home or come to the school to participate. The company then gave away an iPad to a lucky participant! We also have had volunteers from the community join our 3rd and 4th graders for math practice, following a set schedule of learning standards and activities. The students and the volunteers looked forward to these collaborative times!

With reading, we have had community volunteers come into our school to read with students. The students

looked forward to their special person and reading time each week! The students had the opportunity to read aloud, discuss, and write while working with their volunteer. Many classrooms have had parent events to showcase students' published writing. The parents could listen to students read, familiarize themselves with their students' learning targets, and also give their students praise for their great writing!

Our student success and school improvement look at the whole student, not only academically but socially and emotionally, too. To connect our students with one another and enhance our learning community, we have utilized classroom buddies for several years. This has proven to be a program all students look forward to each month (or more often when arranged). The "big" and "little" buddies take time to get to know one another through communication and activities. These activities sometimes include doing activities that we can contribute to our community with donations, for example making fleece blankets for a local shelter, making dog toys for the Humane Society, and donating pillows and pillowcases to the Emergency Shelter.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Houdini's professional culture begins not on the first day of school, but on the first day a person is hired for our building. Once the existing staff hears of a new hire, they reach out and welcome that person into the building, often offering help moving them into their new room and getting them set up. Our staff meets before the students come to school; we not only take time for professional development, but time to also get to know one another, catch up from over the summer, and build relationships.

Staff feel valued and supported through a Champion Belt that is passed from one staff member to another during staff meetings. In that recognition, staff share the ways that the Champion Belt recipient is a champion for the children in our building. Staff also feel seen when our administrator comes into our classrooms and often leaves a sticky note with a positive message of something she has seen that we have done well. This really boosts morale and builds a feeling of being supported and valued.

Our administrator shows she values us by having rounding conversations with all staff members each year. These rounding conversations help to give staff a voice and make them feel valued and supported. She always asks the first four questions and adds a fifth relating to current needs:

1. What is working well for you?

2. Is there anything I can do for you to help you continue to perform well?

3. Do you have what you need to do your job?

4. Is there anyone who has been especially helpful to you?

5. What do you want to learn or accomplish before the end of our school year?

Professional development is approached with what is best for the students at Houdini. Our administration and staff look at what is needed for the students in our building for that year and provide learning opportunities for those areas. Our staff feel valued and supported when they are asked to share their practices with other staff members, reassuring them that they are valued and are doing what is best for students. Most recently, instructional staff have focused on Teacher Clarity (Fisher and Fry). This clarity in communication with students on what they are learning, the relevance of that learning, and what criteria needs to be met in order to be successful has focused students on their job of being learners. Concurrently, our Student Services team and social-emotional educators have focused on the work of Dr. Ross Greene studying Collaborative and Proactive Solutions. This approach is about seeking solutions to unsolved problems and involving students in those decisions rather than simply provide consequences to our students. Additionally, all staff are focused on Culturally and Linguistically Responsive teaching. The focus this school year has been to increase engagement and development of our own capacity in CLR mindset and skill set through conversations about identity and implicit bias.

4. School Leadership:

It goes without saying that our principal is a natural born leader. She exhibits a strong commitment to our school, respects staff, students, and families, and has an amazing way of influencing others around her. Pair that with her impeccable organization and ability to show gratitude to her hardworking staff, and it's no wonder that our school is a high-achieving, well-functioning, amazing place to be.

Our principal centers all leadership decisions around one central question: "Is this decision what is best for our students?" When this question leads and concludes most conversations with her, it is easy to see why our school has become so student-centered under our principal's leadership.

Our principal has developed a progress monitoring system and data wall that ensures student achievement is always at the forefront. By coming together every six weeks, classroom teachers, coaches, interventionists and special education teachers are able to collaborate on which universal strategies, interventions, and enrichment opportunities would be most effective for our students. The data that we use to base our decisions on includes the i-Ready assessment, Instructional Reading Levels (IRLs), Forefront Math Screeners, eduCLIMBER, and Forward Exam. During progress monitoring sessions, our leadership is able to find a respectful balance between asking questions that solicit reflection on best practices and supporting teachers with their capacity during a school day. Goals are set by teachers at the end of each progress monitoring session and when we meet back six weeks later, the reflection of the previous goals are the start of our next progress monitoring meeting. Between progress monitoring sessions, our principal checks in with each teacher to see how they are doing on their goal and if there is anything she can do to support them in the achievement of their goal.

Our school's Continuous School Improvement Plan Leadership Team consists of our Principal and Dean of Students in addition to a classroom teacher from each grade level, special education teacher, English Language teacher, instructional coach, EMLSS (Equitable Multi-Level System of Support), literacy and math interventionists, and TAG (Talented and Gifted) teacher. This team collaboratively reviews district and school goals multiple times a year. It also chooses a focus at the beginning of the year and tracks its success throughout the year. This year, the team's focus is to increase student engagement within the classroom and has successfully raised student engagement by implementing Graham Fletcher Building Fact Fluency games, Kentucky Center for Mathematics Jamboard activities, increasing the use of Culturally and Linguistically Responsive protocols, and providing frequent opportunities for student discussion.

Our principal also puts forth a weekly Hawks Tale with information for staff for the upcoming week. This effective form of communication keeps everyone up to date on district news, special events happening within the school, timelines of staff expectations, and words of encouragement. Within the Hawks Tale, staff are recognized for their work to support students, and updates and best practices are shared by other leaders within the school such as our Instructional Coach, Wellness Coordinator, PBIS coordinators, and TAG teacher.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Houdini Elementary has 550 students from kindergarten to sixth grade, including students with Autism, Learning Disabilities, Intellectual Disabilities, Emotional Behavioral Disabilities, and English Learner programs. Our teachers use Culturally Responsive Teaching by adapting their teaching style to match students' learning needs. Teaching during COVID taught us more about where our children come from. To respect students' home environments and better serve their learning needs, we developed many ways to tailor school experiences in a variety of settings.

First and foremost, we form connections-connections between students and staff, students and their peers, staff and families, and between staff members. We strongly believe that everyone needs to feel like an important member of the Houdini team. We form these connections through communication. Our teachers work hard to reach out to each family with newsletters and class emails, but our communication is not just one-size-fits-all. We reach out individually to parents to keep them up to date with their children's successes and achievements as well as when there are opportunities for improvement. Parents hear from us beyond Parent/Teacher Conferences, on any given day, for any given reason, all in the name of making connections so that everyone feels important to our school.

Each month we have a Soaring Celebration where we recognize children from each class for making positive efforts during school. We invite parents, both in person and virtually, when their child is recognized. Also, we have Hawk's Honor Certificates that reward children by calling them down to the office to make a positive phone call home with the principal. We have SWOOPS for smaller classroom rewards. All our kids know we are proud of them for their efforts.

Our teachers are trained in many CLR-based teaching strategies focusing on different areas of cultural and linguistic abilities. We often make use of these strategies during Professional Development in order to remain familiar with them.

When teachers have been given money to purchase classroom library books, the books have been specifically chosen for cultural diversity and appropriateness. This allows our students to have books in their hands that more closely mirror their cultural representations in a positive way.

New this year, we have been able to have our district cultural advisors join our students for lunch. This Lunch Bunch has been a huge success! The kids are so excited to share lunch with someone who wants to talk about relevant culture with them!

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

Houdini Elementary School has many practices that contribute to the success of its students. One practice that stands out as the most impactful is our process of progress monitoring. This process provides teachers with the opportunity to meet with their own teaching team, the principal, the literacy interventionist, the math interventionist, and the instructional coach all together to address student progress and analyze data.

Progress monitoring is scheduled every six weeks. It is time that is devoted to each grade level to ask questions and provide student evidence to review and analyze data in order to provide ideas and create action plans. The progress monitoring team and the grade level team work through an agenda that begins with celebrations. This is an opportunity for teachers to highlight student progress and reflect on the high leverage instructional routines and procedures that led to success.

Teachers bring student concerns to the attention of the progress monitoring team. Academic concerns are supported with data from formative and summative assessments as well as district diagnostic results. All of this information is placed into a document that tracks progress for every student attending Houdini. The team then works through what the core needs are and decides how to address them. A plan is created which includes the goal(s) for student learning, how it will be instructed, how learning will be measured, and who will be responsible for instruction, assessment, and documentation.

We also revisit student plans from the previous progress monitoring meetings to check-in on student progress and determine if the plan of action was successful. We ask tough questions. Why are or aren't the students succeeding? What are the barriers? What needs to change? Do we need more time and opportunities? Has the growth closed the learning gap or is more time needed? How will we make sure that happens?

New plans are created with the team for students addressing additional questions. What is the student learning goal? How will students show their learning? How will we know they have learned it? How will we measure progress? Will the instruction be Individualized, within a small group or part of universal instruction? Where will the plan happen (homeroom or another room)? Who oversees the assessment and documentation and what will it look like? What is the expectation at the end of 6 weeks?

Teachers set goals at the end of the meeting which focus on various skills and strategy implementation such as student engagement, formative assessment collection, student evidence documentation, or trying specific high leverage teaching strategies. In the weeks following progress monitoring, there is a goal check-in for every teacher where support and guidance is offered.

Our progress monitoring team is devoted to student growth and finding innovative ways to support our students. The team takes pride in student achievement and supporting one another as we find solutions to bring students growth and success.