

U.S. Department of Education
2016 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mr. John T. Larkin

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

Official School Name Addison Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 5050 Indian Drive

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

City Hartford State WI Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 53027-9590

County Washington County

Telephone (262) 644-8037 Fax (262) 644-1936

Web site/URL http://www.slinger.k12.wi.us E-mail j.larkin@slingerschools.org

Twitter Handle _____ Facebook Page _____ Google+ _____

YouTube/URL _____ Blog _____ Other Social Media Link _____

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*Mr. Daren Sievers E-mail d.sievers@slingerschools.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name School District of Slinger Tel. (262) 644-9615

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 Mr. Kenneth Strupp
(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, write N/A in the space.*

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. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The public school has met their state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) using the most recent accountability results available for the year prior to nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) for the year in which they are nominated (2015-2016) and be certified by the state representative. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2010 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, or 2015.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
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. 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.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2015-2016) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

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

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- ☐ Urban or large central city
 - ☐ Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
 - ☐ Suburban
 - ☐ Small city or town in a rural area
 - ☒ Rural
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2015 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	37	32	69
K	29	26	55
1	34	34	68
2	38	35	73
3	32	32	64
4	39	31	70
5	34	29	63
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	243	219	462

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 2 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 5 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 91 % White
 - 1 % 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 2014 – 2015 school year: 5%

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, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	14
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	8
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	22
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	453
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.049
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %
3 Total number ELL

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

Hmong, Chinese

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 9 %
Total number students who qualify: 42

8. Students receiving special education services: 17 %
80 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

<u>10</u> Autism	<u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>4</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>6</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>44</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>1</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>12</u> Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 14

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers	20
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	10
Paraprofessionals	12
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

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

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

Required Information	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	97%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **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 2015.

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%

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

Yes ☐ No ☒

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

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

ALL students can learn, achieve, and succeed when given proper instruction, guidance, and nurturing. Our focus at Addison is to prepare students to be productive, responsible, and sensitive citizens.

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

PART III – SUMMARY

Addison Elementary is a 4K-5th grade facility that opened in 2002. It is one of three elementary schools in the School District of Slinger and enrolls about 460+ students. Addison is located in a rural area, where all students are either bused to school or dropped off by parents. Approximately 25% of all students attend Addison from schools outside its attendance area through the state's school choice program or through intra-district transfers. The amount of economic and racial diversity within the student population is relatively low. There are 9% of the students receiving free and reduced lunch and roughly 9% of the students are non-white. The school houses two district-wide special education programs (along with an additional resource program) and has 17% of its students enrolled in special education.

Students at Addison are served by a full time principal, school counselor, and reading specialist. There are 32 full time professional staff and 12 support staff who serve the students. The principal is a former school psychologist and special education director, now in his 26th year as a principal, the last 14 years at Addison. The school is also supported by several part time resource professionals, including: a school psychologist, an RtI coordinator, and a math coach.

The school's mission since inception has been to develop the whole child. The school's foundation was built on the effective schools research known as The Basic School – A Community for Learning (Boyer, 1995). The four tenets of the Basic School are: curriculum with coherence, school as community, climate for learning, and commitment to character. The principal has also extensively used the organizational concepts from the Four Frames Approach (Bolman & Deal, 5th Ed., 2013) to guide and manage decision making. The four frames are: structural, human resources, political, and symbolic. The frames are used as “tools for action” and help in the framing of experiences and deciding what action(s) to take. Any decision made regarding students, staff, or procedures at Addison falls within the parameters of the Basic School or the Four Frames.

The daily schedule is central to the success of the school and is considered a modified block schedule consisting of the following blocks of time: reading/language arts, math, science/social studies, “Team Time”, and specials (art, music, physical education). This block scheduling has reduced transition time, increased academic time, and provided for essential common planning time (55 minutes daily) for grade level teachers.

Common planning time (held daily during specials) has contributed greatly to a more coherent and strengthened core curriculum. Grade level teams are required to plan at least two times per week, with most planning together daily. During this time, students receive instruction in art, music, and physical education in larger blocks of time designed to be more engaging and comprehensive in nature. All three areas are highly valued within the district, have clearly articulated K-12 learning objectives, and have contributed significantly to having well rounded students.

Our Team Time block (30 minutes daily) is part of the Response to Instruction (RtI) initiative and has been in place for the past five years. Team Time has been a “game changer” in meeting the diverse needs of students at Addison. It is designed as both intervention time for struggling students, as well as enrichment time for those students who need to be challenged. All students receive what they need, based on data that is collected and reviewed during the course of the year. A variety of intervention tools have been acquired in the past five years, further enhancing the program. A data warehouse program (Softwareology) has recently been added, which allows easy access to longitudinal data for timely use.

One of the many defining features of the school is the sense of culture and community that exists. Since the school is rural, a conscious effort has been made to create a sense of community within the “four walls”. The “tie that binds” are the monthly First Friday Assemblies. On this day, the school celebrates its past successes and looks towards the future as well. Three students from each classroom are nominated in one of three categories: achievement, effort, character development. Students are called by name, come before the entire school, receive their award(s), and take a bow. The winning bus for “Battle of the Buses” (a bus behavior incentive program) is also announced. The Addison “Character Crew” then presents a skit written

by the Addison “Playwrights”, which introduces the next month’s character trait. These groups represent two of seven student leadership groups in the building. Students then rise and sing the school song to close out the assembly. The entire school community is invited to celebrate our success, but more importantly, a strong message is sent to our students, staff, and community on the importance of what is central to our school.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

At Addison Elementary, what is critical in the teaching of the core curriculum is both what is taught and HOW it is taught. Several years ago, we made a commitment to instructional methodology that involves the Optimal Learning Model (OLM – Routman, 2008) which emphasizes a “gradual release of responsibility” that starts with the teacher and is eventually handed over to the students. In this model, teachers are facilitators, not the sole purveyor for teaching and learning.

Our district has adopted and embraced the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). This has been transformative in increasing rigor, challenging our students, and preparing them for meeting the demands of the 21st century. The district also follows the Wisconsin Academic Standards.

In literacy, the Slinger School District follows the scope and sequence of a common series (Benchmark Literacy, 2014). The first goal for all literacy instruction is the development of phonemic awareness, which then leads to phonics. The application of phonics is then used to produce words or to spell. It is also the basis for decoding, or being able to decipher words that are unfamiliar. Phonics instruction transitions to word study in grades 3-5. It is through this hands-on approach that students discover and increase their vocabulary.

Teachers build upon the phonics/word study component by following a balanced literacy framework through a reader’s/writer’s workshop model. It is a comprehensive approach delivered with a delicate balance of teacher-directed and student-centered instructional practices. This framework allows for the students’ reading fluency and comprehension to grow and develop more effectively.

It is through the read-aloud of authentic literature and the mini-lesson during the first 15 minutes of class, that the teacher explicitly directs and guides students through the learning goal of the day. It is followed by guided, then independent practice where the teacher hands over the responsibility or gently guides the learner into ownership through shared, guided, and interactive reading/writing. This may take the form of a 1:1 conference with the teacher, a small reading group or a series of “rounds”. The last five minutes of class is a reflection/sharing and celebration time. This occurs for both reading and writing instruction.

Our math instruction is centered on developing the CCSS foundational elements of math. Our teachers have transformed their mathematics pedagogy significantly by focusing on conceptual understanding, before working on procedural fluency. Teachers are consistently asking students to explain how they found their answer, while purposefully connecting various mathematical representations in order to build coherence, focus, and rigor within the standards. Due to all of these changes, including a focus on having students engage in “productive struggle”, our students are becoming more self-confident in their mathematical abilities and mindsets. Consequently, our teachers themselves have a renewed sense of being “learners and doers” of mathematics.

In the area of science, we are currently in the process of transitioning to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) on a K-5 basis. Science units include the study of life science, earth science, and physical science. Recently, a strong emphasis on the integration of science, technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM) began in earnest on a K-12 basis. Several new units and activities have been added at each grade level with a STEAM focus. An inquiry based approach is very prevalent, with our design process as follows: question, explore, plan, build, share, fix – then repeating the cycle.

Social studies at Addison begins with an understanding of the community in which we live and the importance of the resources available to us. It expands to a study of the regions, people, cultures, and architecture in the United States. It concludes with a study of our nation’s history through the Civil War. Social studies and reading in our building are carefully intertwined – especially at the upper grade levels. This cross-categorical approach allows us to use literature outside our reading program to support and enhance reading skill development, while also supporting the understanding of various times in our nation’s

history.

4K at Addison follows a set curriculum which is aligned with the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards and is a condensed version of the CCSS for 5K students. It is a balanced curriculum that supports learning through play, exploration, and academically based learning activities. When students reach the end of their 4K experience, students have had opportunities to explore numbers up to 20 and become fluent in working with numbers from 0 - 10. In language arts, the students have a spiraling curriculum influenced by the materials from Benchmark Literacy. They have opportunities to explore concepts of print, including but not limited to discovering how letters create words and words create sentences. Students build social skills as they participate in large and small group learning opportunities in which they need to communicate and interact with peers in order to accomplish a task.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

At Addison Elementary, non-core subjects for all students in grades K-5 include: art, music, and physical education (PE). Health/nutrition is incorporated into PE. The school does not provide foreign language. Technology is prevalent throughout the building, but it is not a separate class. Instead, it is taught systematically in each grade level through various projects, lessons, and units. Monthly guidance lessons are provided for all students K-5.

Art, music, and PE are referred to as “specials” in our building. All students have specials daily on a three day rotating cycle (A/B/C days). Specials blocks in grades 1-5 are scheduled for 55 minutes daily. In 5K, students have specials for 30 minutes. 4K students do not have formal specials during their half day program. In a typical month, students will have equal amounts of instruction in all three areas. Students in grades 1-5 are provided recess twice daily, for 15-20 minutes each recess. Students in 5K have recess three times daily.

All specials teachers in our building are fully certified in their content area and are full-time teachers. They meet with all grade levels on a daily basis. Specials at Addison are considered an integral part of educating the whole child. They each follow a systematic and sequential K-5 curriculum with clearly defined goals, objectives, learning targets, and benchmarks. Each area has common assessments that are administered and used to gauge student growth and development at every grade level. These results are reviewed regularly and compared across the district to assess proficiency gains. The specials teachers integrate grade level curriculum into their lessons, when appropriate. This cross-curricular approach supports instruction and learning for teachers and students alike.

In art, there is a strong connection with many concepts that cross over into math, science, and social studies. The elements of design are evident throughout, but students learn math concepts such as diagonal lines, patterns, geometric shapes, measuring, space/distance, how to use a compass, etc. Related to science, students learn about the solar system, seasons, hibernation, rocks and fossils, chemical reactions, and various animals. In social studies, students study art concepts related to various artists/styles, periods of time, art history, different cultures, and historical architecture. Art work is routinely hung throughout the building in grade level groupings that highlight the artist, technique, learning outcomes, and related curricular connections.

In music, our teacher is Nationally Board Certified. She systematically teaches students how to read, sing and play music through a wide variety of games, activities, technology, and traditional methods. Students are explicitly taught how to read music starting in 5K with the use of icons and continuing through 5th grade, where they can read and perform complex rhythms and symbols and apply them to vocal and instrumental music. There are strong cross-curricular links to math (notes, beats), science (how instruments work), reading (scripts for plays, the use of inflection), and social studies (Veterans Day performance) which the teacher reinforces daily.

In PE, our teacher is a certified adaptive PE teacher and has an elementary education teaching license. This allows her to easily integrate students with disabilities into PE and routinely reinforce academic skills taught in all content areas. Physical fitness is the primary focus, but there's also a heavy emphasis on life time

sports, an active lifestyle, health, and nutrition at every grade level. Students learn about the muscular-skeletal system on a daily basis through “Mr. Bones”. Physical fitness data is collected and shared with students during the year via an app kept on an i-Pad and used for goal setting and measuring student growth. This year, the PE teacher is working with the tech department at the high school to chart heart rate and steps for students (with pedometers). High school students then use the data and create helpful graphs and charts for the teacher and our students.

In guidance, monthly lessons for all students introduce, teach, and reinforce the nine character traits established by the school as part of the Basic School Framework (Boyle, 1995). These systematic lessons are taught by our full-time guidance counselor and provide the foundation for behavior in our building and the character traits we emphasize. Lessons also follow the framework of the Wisconsin Comprehensive School Counseling Model.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

Starting roughly seven years ago, Addison embarked upon a journey of instructional change that transformed the instructional landscape of the school. It began with internal staff development in the area of best practices in reading instruction. We started with the teachings of Regie Routman from *Reading Essentials* (2003) and implemented the gradual release model during instruction. Staff development was centered on developing a balanced literacy framework that focused initially on reading and writing, but has crossed over into math and other content areas.

That effort, together with a three year focus on differentiated instruction across the district, helped Addison teachers to understand that there was a more effective way to meet the diverse learning needs of students. We have also utilized many of the teachings from *Classroom Instruction That Works* (2nd Ed, Dean et al) and have emphasized the ten research-based best practices to improve student learning. The approaches we use are balanced – they are teacher directed and student centered. There is clear evidence and use of direct instruction, cooperative learning, use of graphic organizers, extensive modeling, generating and testing hypotheses, etc.

When you walk into a classroom, one would see teachers and students meeting in small groups based on ability levels or targeted skill development. This differentiated approach during core instruction was transformative in meeting the needs of students in each of our classrooms. Curriculum and resource materials were purchased that supported this philosophy. Teachers were trained to conduct “running records” and to keep anecdotal data on the reading (and math) behaviors of their students. Coaches and professional development training were utilized to model, develop, and instruct teachers as needed. New reading assessments (Ex: Fountas & Pinnell) were purchased and teachers began to collect and evaluate data and observe reading behaviors of students.

After this initial training, Response to Instruction (RtI) came into being. Universal screening data then started to be used. Student growth and development could be measured and compared. Grade level teams used their common planning time to discuss and evaluate student growth, as part of a professional learning community framework. Team Time, our daily 30 minute intervention block, also started at this time and students could be further grouped by skill level and provided with very specific intervention programming as needed in fluency, comprehension, math strategies, etc. Students above grade level could be provided enrichment opportunities and students needing on-going support could receive it as well.

4. Assessment for Instruction and Learning and Sharing Assessment Results:

At Addison, the use of data, along with other assessment results are critical components that drive instructional decisions about students and guide educational decision making for learning within our building. There are numerous data sources that teachers and administrators utilize in order to make these decisions. They involve both formative and summative assessments. There is a comprehensive and systematic procedure for reviewing all aspects of data that is collected.

At the classroom level, teachers utilize daily work, quizzes, unit exams, anecdotal notes, conferencing and

projects to assess the growth and development of students. Teachers also assess students individually, utilizing a wide variety of assessment tools designed to “dig deeper”. In reading, these tests include Fountas & Pinnell testing, followed by further assessments in the areas of fluency and comprehension. In addition to these assessments, common assessments are also given across the district for every unit in reading, math, and writing (science and social studies are currently in process). Teachers have the opportunity to review and compare their class results during common planning time (on a weekly basis), as well as across the district 2-3 times annually.

Universal screening assessments are completed three times annually (fall, winter, and spring). Utilizing STAR data from Renaissance Learning, teachers can evaluate student growth and trend lines for learning on a regular basis. Teachers can print a variety of reports almost immediately (including a report for suggestions to enhance learning) and are able to start implementing changes to instruction in a very timely fashion. Formal data meetings are held after each of these universal screenings. These meetings are conducted on two consecutive days during common planning time (reading results, then math) with student growth, development, and intervention being the focus.

At these data meetings, students are then assigned to intervention, enrichment, or exploration groups for Team Time, our 30 minute Response to Instruction (RtI) block for each grade level. This is highly focused, small group instructional time in addition to daily core instruction. Students involved in Tier 2 or 3 interventions are progress monitored anywhere from 1-3 times per week, depending on their specific intervention. The classroom teacher, reading teacher, and/or principal can then track student progress by examining trend lines. These results are reviewed with students at every re-assessment. All assessment results are shared systematically with parents to report student growth and development.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

From the time the building opened in the fall of 2002, the climate and culture of Addison Elementary has been a very carefully crafted and well thought out aspect of the total school environment. It emanates from a “climate for learning”, which is one of the four cornerstones of the The Basic School – A Community for Learning (Boyer, 1995), which is part of the effective schools research for elementary schools. It was this framework that guided the opening of the school and the decision making that has followed.

From this framework, we have stated regularly that at Addison you should feel the climate and culture the moment you walk through the doors. Examples would include: parents and students being enthusiastically welcomed each day, volunteers working in the building on a daily basis, parents having lunch with their children, substitute teachers welcomed during the morning announcements, daily birthday announcements, students wearing tooth necklaces for lost teeth and birthday crowns on their special day, as well as all students being greeted and welcomed by a minimum of three adults before entering their classroom. Addison goes out of its way to create a caring and welcoming culture.

Our First Friday Assembly programs are also a strong indicator of the culture that exists at Addison. Every first Friday of the month, all students and staff gather in the gym to celebrate our shared accomplishments from the past month. The school theme for the year is central to this event (this year: “Learning is Our Super Power” – with the principal dressed as Batman handing out awards and many teachers and students wearing masks and capes on this special day). Themed music greets the students when they arrive and parents and guests are invited and welcomed to join us in this celebration.

Three students are nominated by their homeroom teacher in each of the following areas: achievement, effort, and character. The “Character Crew” – a group of 4th and 5th grade students – then presents a skit on the next month’s character trait. We announce the “Battle of the Buses” winner (for the best behaved bus of the month), and we sing the school song together to wrap up the festivities. Award winners are then invited to a Principal’s Breakfast the following week, where we reinforce their hard work and efforts. The true climate and culture of Addison is certainly on display during all of these activities.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Our parents and families are a big part of our climate and culture, which clearly establishes the sense of school community we have at Addison. We have a well-established PTO group known as a PBO (People Behind the Owls). They sponsor a wide variety of activities such as walk-a-thons, movie nights, art activities, book fairs, scholarships, and an annual family dance – all of which promote a strong school/family connection. The school, the PBO, and the principal have long believed that parents should be active partners in their children's education. A volunteer network sponsored by the PBO supports this belief and is central to the effort. Whenever possible, parents are actively involved and encouraged to be a part of the school.

Examples of this would include: regular parent volunteers in classrooms – especially in the primary grades, active parent participation in grade level learning projects held at school (Gr. 5 - Digging for Gold activity, Gr. 3 - Ellis Island simulation, just to name a few), help with grade level musical performances, a moving and powerful annual Veterans’ Day observance to honor our own veterans, grandparent activities, and a wide variety of classroom activities that require parental help and assistance. There is no shortage of activities for parents to participate in at Addison.

To further engage the greater community, the school also sponsors fall curriculum nights to inform the parents and community of what is being taught (and how) in our school. Every other year, Addison also hosts a Career and Role Enrichment Day event. This involves nearly 100 different speakers and organizers – most of them our own parents – that expose our students to the world of work and encourages them to see all the different occupations that exist. We have everything from stock car racers to accountants, doctors to

hair care professionals, and beyond. It is a signature event for our school, which helps greatly in uniting our school community.

As a result of having so much parent and community involvement and stewardship, our students witness on a daily basis - and know from experience - that their parents, grandparents, and the greater community care deeply about them, value education, and care about their success. At Addison Elementary and in the Slinger School District, the concept of the “village raising the child” is not just a phrase – it’s a reality – and one that we have designed to be perpetual in nature.

3. Professional Development:

A comprehensive, systematic, and well thought out system of professional development (PD) has been central to the overall success of Addison. It starts at the district level, filters down to the school and teacher level, and ultimately ends at the student level. The goal of PD in the building is increased teacher growth and development, along with improved student learning outcomes.

At the district level, various PD initiatives and needs are determined on a K-12 basis, but buildings also contribute to the effort based on need. In the past 5-7 years, the overriding district emphasis started with training teachers to differentiate instruction, then turned towards implementing a Response to Instruction (RtI) framework. Most recently we have worked on implementing Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and improving best practices in reading and math instruction. The district also provides a new teacher induction program along with extensive mentoring to support new teachers.

At the building level, principals have the discretion and budget to release teachers for individual and/or grade level PD, as well as provide release time for alignment purposes. At Addison, every teacher is encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities. Internally, we have had numerous vertical and horizontal team meetings to align curriculum, have sent teachers to numerous local trainings on math and reading pedagogy, and provided in-service training on numerous reading and math intervention programs. Groups of teachers have also attended numerous state conferences in the areas of math, reading, and science. Teachers return from these meetings with increased knowledge, which is then shared with their colleagues and at staff meetings.

Also within the building, we conduct three large-group data meetings held annually that take place to systematically review universal screening data and check student growth and development. At these meetings, teachers collaborate with resource teachers, the principal, counselor, and RtI coordinator to determine if current interventions are working for students (or not). Changes are made (if needed) and new intervention and enrichment groups are formed for Team Time (RtI). Data collected from progress monitoring (every 1-3 weeks depending on the student) further drives decision making and allows teachers to have timely and relevant information to help drive instruction.

This systematic approach to PD at both the district and building levels allows teachers to have both global training, as well as specific training when needed – all centered around student achievement and teacher growth and development.

4. School Leadership:

The overall leadership structure at Addison Elementary is one of shared leadership. From the time the school opened in 2002, the principal has promoted this approach so that all factions of the school could be represented – students, teachers, and parents. As a result, the sense of school and community has been enhanced by allowing each group to have a voice. There are many examples of this starting with the philosophy of the organizational framework, the decision making process, and the committee structure.

As eluded to previously, the principal established the foundational basis for the school around the effective schools research promoted by Ernest Boyer in the Basic School – A Community for Learning (1995). The four attributes - curriculum, community, culture, and character provided a strong conceptual framework that has guided Addison in almost every decision rendered. The Four Frames Approach for organizational

decision making (structural, human resources, political, symbolic) by Bolman & Deal (1984, 2013) was also utilized. These two guiding premises have served as the cornerstone for all decision making groups in the building.

One of those key groups at Addison has been the Grade Coordinators (GC). These seven teacher leaders represent every grade level and department. They work voluntarily and meet with the principal on a monthly basis to guide activities, discuss issues, and provide feedback. They've been integral to the success of the building by focusing on decisions that enhance student learning. This includes everything from scheduling to the use of data. While the principal maintains final say on all matters, his decisions always take into consideration GC feedback and input.

The parent/teacher group at Addison, known as Parents Behind the Owls (PBO), has also been very active and involved. This group, made up of 5-6 officers and other at-large members, has provided significant financial support, along with numerous resources for the school. They've been responsible for purchasing smart boards, i-Pads, resource materials, providing parent helpers through our "Volunteer Network", and other school needs when necessary.

Finally, our students have also been instrumental and very involved in the success of the school. Addison doesn't have a formal student council, but we run several student groups (ex: Ambassadors, Buddy Bunch) that provide support to the school/community and carry out student lead initiatives including food drives, disaster aid, etc. Our motto of "Kids Can Do It" has demonstrated that our students are actively involved and contributors to the school/community.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Team Time (Together Everyone Achieves More) at Addison is the single most important change that has impacted not only student growth and development, but also our culture towards learning. Like many other schools implementing Response to Instruction (RtI), we needed to make a commitment to this philosophy – both structurally and from a human resources perspective. Hiring an RtI Coordinator was critical to this change. She provided the background, framework, knowledge, and vision for helping Addison and the District to understand how to better serve the needs of our struggling learners, as well as ALL students.

Looking at this structurally, we updated our block schedule to accommodate this 30 minute time frame into our daily schedule. It is now a sacred block of time. Resource personnel in the building were trained/allocated so that all Team Time blocks were covered in all grades. Each block has three classroom teachers assigned and 3-4 trained resource personnel (reading teacher, special education teachers, and para-professionals) providing services to students based on data and the learning needs for each child.

There are groups for intervention, enrichment, and exploration designed specifically for the strengths, weaknesses, and interests of students in both reading and/or math. Students are assigned to groups three different times during the year at data meetings, using both universal screening and progress monitoring data, as well as individually administered “digging-deeper” assessments. Our building also committed funding for the purchase of research based commercial reading and math programs, along with computer based programs to enhance student learning.

Teachers and trained para-professionals meet with students five days per week for 30 minutes. Students in Tier 2 & 3 intervention groups have their progress monitored every 1-3 weeks, depending on the student. Their data and the success of the intervention can be monitored by the program we use – Softwareology. Using trend lines, we can determine if the intervention is working effectively. If not, it can be changed quickly and confidently. The use of Softwareology has been instrumental in helping with data interpretation, having longitudinal information at our finger tips, and in saving teacher time and energy.

A strong component part of the RtI process has also been the improvement of core instructional practices. This has been heavily emphasized and the district has worked extensively to update both the reading and math curriculums in the last five years, along with providing needed resource materials, teacher training, and professional development.