



HEART OF THE LAKES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

This year Heart of the Lakes is in year 3 of implementing a school-wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support System or PBIS. You may have probably heard the words “Jacket Best” and of golden tickets. These are all a part of our school’s initiative to create a culture of common expectations for all students in all areas of the building. Your child has heard talk about expectations and being our Jacket BEST – Be respectful, Engaged, Safe, Take Responsibility – through classroom meetings and school assemblies. You may have even been lucky enough to hear the Jacket Best song! It’s our belief that all students should know and have the opportunity to practice these expectations with explicit instruction and support in all areas of the building, to take ownership in how best to learn and operate together within these walls. We talk about what it looks like, sounds like, and the actions that should be practiced. It has allowed for some remarkable learning to happen here at Heart of the Lakes Elementary! In fact, it with great appreciation for everyone’s work and efforts that I announce our school was chosen as a school honored throughout the state of Minnesota as a recognized school for our work in PBIS. Our congratulatory letter reads:

Congratulations! Minnesota PBIS Leadership Team would like to recognize your school’s Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) work! During the 2018-2019 school year, your school team measured and met fidelity using at least one of the following PBIS implementation measures: Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI), School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET), or Benchmark of Quality (BoQ).

I’d like to take just a moment and expand further on what our school-wide plan this year includes and how we intend to continue to imbed and sustain our hard work with PBIS. Our steps toward this have been to continue our behavior expectations with the addition of providing students with strategies and skills to navigate school, friendships, road blocks and adversity, and ownership of how they chose to react positively to them. This fall we began to provide explicit work in these areas daily through a Social Emotional Program called *Second Step*. This program fully integrates a framework for elementary school students and promoting their social, emotional, and academic success. Our guiding question has become, “What can we do to create an environment that fosters energized learning and growth?” Second Step lessons allow students to gain skills they need to become independent, caring, confident, and capable learners and problem-solvers. Prior to the school year starting, each grade level received materials and training in the program. A pacing guide was created for teachers to help them navigate through the lessons and materials. Approaching this as school-wide, we have been making a conscious and consistent effort to make these skills and strategies an extension, a part not separate from our ongoing work in PBIS. In order to create a community in our school that consistently practices these mindsets, we have to be able to practice them. To organize the lessons, information and practice, our PBIS team used 5 mindsets for learning to help organize

and connect new SEL information to our work. These five mindsets are traits for learners to practice:

Empathy = feeling how another person is feeling and imagining what it would be like to be in another's position (perspective taking)

Flexibility = seeing and trying many possible actions within a task

Optimism = feeling hopeful that risks in learning are worth taking and that problems will work themselves out (self-talk that is positive)

Persistence = sticking with something even when it is challenging (trying more than once)

Resilience = bouncing back and recovering from setbacks and failures (relying on multiple ways to solve a problem)

Through teaching students these mindsets and providing explicit instruction and practice about themselves as learners and what works best for them, it allows students to be an active part of their learning, not a bystander. It gives them the tools to navigate and become independent problem solvers with strategies right at the tip of their fingers. Through our support and instruction, students continue to gain the confidence in themselves as learners beyond just school. The work that we do with our students matters and engaging them in this makes for stronger, more confident, and independent learners curious about the world beyond our school walls.