Buena Vista Elementary School
COMMUNITY ACHIEVES STRATEGIC PLAN, 2019-20

Buena Vista Elementary School has identified 3 priorities as part of the School Improvement Plan (SIP) for the 2019-20 school year:

- Establish positive, safe and supportive school culture and climate, and respond to students' physical, social, and emotional needs and reduce high level (Same student) repetitive disciplinary incidents by 50%.
- Continue to build and foster a constructive and affirmative school culture and climate by increasing student attendance to 95% while decreasing chronic absenteeism to 15%.
- Increase student proficiency and achievement in Reading/English Language Arts to 19.5%.
- Increase student proficiency and achievement in Math to 11.6%.

As a community school, Buena Vista Elementary School strives to improve conditions for learning through collaborative work with our partners to bring community support to the school, as organized around four pillars of support that we believe are important to preparing the whole child for success:

- Family Engagement
- College and Career Readiness
- Health and Wellness
- Social Services and Adult Development

The purpose of this strategic plan is to present (1) a brief snapshot of our school’s data and other information to demonstrate the need to coordinate resources within the pillars in support of the priorities, (2) information related to how the school currently coordinates resources within the pillars of support, and (3) opportunities for community partners to support the school in its efforts and strategies to achieve goals for students in 2019-20.

SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS & KEY DESCRIPTORS
Buena Vista is a priority school which serves 236 students in the Historic Buena Vista Neighborhood, many of whom are economically disadvantaged. Our motto is we are a school for students on the grow. As such, we hope to help ensure families are actively involved in their children’s education and to provide the platform where all stakeholders can provide strategic, proactive solutions in partnership with the school community. We want to continually stress the “I can” attitude for all of our students to instill in them a confidence that they can attend college and improve career outcomes for themselves. We want to continually improve the conditions for learning by supporting health and wellness initiatives and by making sure that all students are “physically capable to enter and participate in school while feeling safe physically, socially, and emotionally.” We want to ensure that basic needs of food and clothing are met and that all students and families have access to the range of social services relevant to their needs. We want our parents and community members to have the opportunity to participate in personal development opportunities.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT
Over 20 events were held during the 2018-2019 school year in which 206 unduplicated attendees were present. These events include a Vanderbilt Football game, literacy and math-based events, parent orientation or meetings, and holiday events. Parent orientation included 56 attendees, the most attended event of the year, and Fatherhood Friday being the second most attended with 52 attendees total for the year. According to Panorama surveys, 74% of student responses show overall positive
relationships with their teachers. Teacher survey results show 67% positive responses in regard to family relationships.

The school hosted several event opportunities for parents to come to the school and take part in one-time events, but only 3 recurring events were hosted. Events as well as attendance trailed off throughout the year. In the last year, Buena Vista’s family engagement events included the following one-time events: Parent Orientation, Math with your Child, Literacy Night, and Holiday events. The following recurring events also occurred: Principal Coffee Chats and Fatherhood Friday.

Our parents like to have fun, partake in meals, and receive prizes and handouts, so events the encompass learning as the only focus have not been a high priority for the families in the community. We have some parent engagement from a small group of parents, but we want to engage more families for all events. We also want parents involved in their child’s education. For the 2019-2020 school year, we would like to continue programs from the past year and implement the following:

- **Data Days** (student-led conferences) are held twice per year. We need volunteers to assist in these events to organize materials and escort students and families throughout the building.
- We plan to host **community field trips** to a Vanderbilt Athletics game in the fall and a Nashville Sounds game in the spring. Donations are needed for families to attend, get transportation to and from, and to receive a meal during these events.
- **Literacy Night** will be in the fall as well as **Numeracy Night** at 5PM. For each of these events we need volunteers to host stations and to help families through the building to event stations. We will need book donations for Literacy Night as giveaways in the Bingo for Books station. Lastly, we will need to provide dinner for families in attendance.
- **Holiday events** will include Thanksgiving Baskets, Holiday Toy Breakfast, and the Holiday Theatre. We need volunteers to host stations and to help families through the building to event stations. We also need volunteers to provide childcare.
- **Fatherhood Friday** will continue September 13 and December 13 (7:30-8:30AM) and we will provide breakfast. We will need male volunteers to be with students without a father figure present. We would also like light refreshments to serve as breakfast for this event, such as pastries and coffee.
- **Principal Coffee Chats** will continue, and we would like to provide light refreshments for each of these events on the first Friday of every month, directly following Fatherhood Friday (see above) at 8:30-9:30AM.

**COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS**

From K-1 data, 52% of students were included in Tier II or III Reading intervention at the middle of the year and 61% of students were included in Tier II or III Math intervention at the middle of the year. While the number of students decreased in Reading intervention, the number of students in Math intervention significantly increased. (May be due to new curriculum implementation)

Average attendance rate is 91.7% and chronically absent rate is 27%. Chronic absenteeism correlates largely with economically disadvantaged.

Most students in Tier III came mid-year and have not had an entire year of deep interventions to close skill gaps. Most Tier III students did not have PreK or Head Start. Buena Vista implemented a new math curriculum for the 2018-19 school year to increase academic rigor. Teachers have had to build their content knowledge and pedagogy to effectively implement the curriculum and they need more training and support. Parents are frequently facing significant family barriers which do not allow parents to focus on ensuring their child attends school daily. The variance in the number of students enrolled causes budgeting to bell tower during student count weeks and as a result Buena Vista does not have funding for a full-time person focused on attendance. However, Buena Vista did utilize three student advocates whose focus was attendance case management. Other barriers to school attendance are weather and transportation which hinder students’ access to school.
During the 2018-2019 school year, Buena Vista ran programs with YMCA Fun Company, Turnip Green Creative Reuse, Trap Garden Club, Tutoring, Reading Partners, Career Day, and received donations from school supply drives.

- We would like to start a **teacher support team** of volunteers to help support regular teacher tasks involving paper handling and gathering materials for lessons. Volunteers are needed once per week on a rotating basis. Volunteers can sign up to come support teachers once a month, every 6 weeks, or every week if they wish.

- We will host **Career Day** in the spring to incorporate a variety of pathways to spark excitement for students. Volunteers are needed to speak about their career during this event or to participate in a career fair where you will share about your career at an information booth. Demonstrations, hands on activities, and promotional materials are welcome!

- **College App Week** aligns with the state’s college application week. We would like to incorporate conversation about college awareness daily during the week of September 16-20.

- Volunteers are needed one or two times a week to continue our **reading partners and math tutoring**. We would like to pair every child who is significantly below reading level or performing less than satisfactorily in math with a tutor. Training and guidance will be provided for volunteers.

- Bi-weekly experiential learning opportunities take place for students Kindergarten through 4th grade. We need volunteers from partners to spend an hour teaching a skill or activity to students. These activities could include anything of the partner’s interest, such as how to sew, yoga, how to make a healthy snack, etc. The experiential learning opportunities take place 9/11, 9/12, 9/25, 9/26, 10/16, 10/17, 10/30, 10/31, 11/13, 11/14, 12/11, 12/12

- Our school will offer **field trips** to colleges and universities or other places in Nashville, such as the Adventure Science Center. Field Trips that advance student learning and student exposure are critical to student success at Buena Vista. We are seeking donations from school partners to offset costs of these trips so that students can attend regardless of their financial ability to pay. College visits will take place once in the fall and once in the spring.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Of 102 behavior incidents, 14 were OSS incidents and 9 were black male OSS incidents. 30 restorative justice meetings were held. 19 Well Child Exams (Early Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, Treatment) conducted. Over 20% were reported at risk of overweight and about 15% were reported to have failed the vision screening.

From Panorama Survey data, 63% of student reported they feel a sense of belonging to the school community and 67% rate of perceived safety at school. Bullying is reported at 52%. Teachers’ overall perception of the school climate is at 97%. 6 cohorts of students were created including 56 students: Girls on the Run, Black Men Run, Girls, Inc., Big Brothers Big Sisters, Lunch Buddies, and Trap Garden. Other regular programming included Vanderbilt Athletics and Yoga and Mindfulness. The breakfast meal participation rate is 63%, while 93% participate in lunch meals.

The behavior incidents reported from the previous school year indicate a marked improvement in behavior incidents and OSS incidents, a 58% decrease in referrals and an 85% decrease in OSS. This includes a decrease in black male OSS incidents as well. However, many of our students suffer from trauma and have Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Many students could truly benefit from
general healthcare and mental healthcare, but only 8% of students participated in the EPSDT. Much of these students come from Cheatham Place and Nashville Rescue Mission in addition to four other homeless shelters.

Students may participate less in breakfast than in lunch because of unreliable transportation and/or attendance rates. In the last year, Buena Vista’s Health and Wellness included Vanderbilt School-Based Mental Health, Matthew Walker Comprehensive Health Center, Girls Inc, Centerstone, YMCA Learn to Swim, Kids on the Block Character Education, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Girls on the Run, Bi-monthly Yoga Class, Black Men Run, and Lunch Buddies.

- Our students benefit from one-on-one or small group time with community members who we call Lunch Buddies. In talking with adults of varied careers and experiences, our students expand their horizons, build trusting relationships, and build self-confidence. Volunteer opportunities available daily, in 30 minute – one-hour slots (dependent upon volunteer’s schedule) Monday – Friday from 11 – 12:30.
- Buena Vista implements a PBIS program that rewards students for positive behavior. Students will receive a “paycheck” every Friday (based on how many points they earned for positive behavior during the week) that he/she can use to buy items from the school’s PBIS Store. Volunteers are needed to assist students in the store every Friday from 11:15 – 1:00. Additionally, Buena Vista is in consistent need of donated items to “sell” in the store. These items should be student-friendly and $5 or less in cost.
- Teachers play a huge role in positively interacting with and influencing our students. Our teachers’ mental health and wellbeing is crucial for students’ positive experiences in the classroom. Donations are needed to provide such goodies as snacks, drinks, and other small tokens of appreciation.
- Girls on the Run and Black Men Run is an after-school program that Buena Vista has had success with in the past. Donations for athletic apparel for these participants are welcome.
- We hope to implement partnerships with mental health services and general health services to better serve our students and families.

SOCIAL SERVICES & ADULT DEVELOPMENT

87.3% of students are economically disadvantaged, 29% are homeless and the vast majority have ACEs. Buena Vista distributed food bags to 142 students every week, totaling approximately 5000 distributions for the school year. Additionally, we distributed 265 pieces of clothing to approximately 200 students. At the beginning of the year, 241 students received school supply distributions. We also had approximately 20 diaper & toiletry distributions and 194 unduplicated clothing distributions. 68 students were included in the H.E.R.O. program, which equates to almost 30% of students.

According to Panorama Student surveys, 63% of students favorably reported they go somewhere in their neighborhood to do something they enjoy, but only 28% of students favorably reported they go somewhere in their neighborhood to get connected to resources, programs, or opportunities.

The area Buena Vista serves is largely surrounded by low-income housing, where a transient population contributes to the school’s population. Many students are transient, especially students who are experiencing homelessness. Buena Vista has 5 homeless shelters zoned for the school. Regular clothing, food, and diaper distributions occur during the school year, but not all of these were captured in data points throughout the year.

This may be due to there being three site managers transitioning in and out of the role during the year, making it difficult to capture all the services provided for the year. In the last year, Buena Vista’s Social Services included the H.E.R.O. program, MNPS Social Work, Unicycle, Food, Diaper, & Clothing Distribution, and Germantown Dental Program.
Volunteers are needed to support distributions and the storage facilities that hold these items throughout the week. This is a great opportunity for those who don’t mind behind-the-scenes work or who cannot commit to regular volunteer opportunities. We will be tracking inventory, organizing, and distributing food, clothing, diapers, and other supplies. Some heavy lifting may occur. Organizing for food will occur Thursday afternoons and distributing will occur Fridays during lunch time. Organizing for clothing, diapers, and other supplies will occur Mondays and Wednesdays and distributing will occur Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Donations of high-need items will continue on a rolling basis. Such items are:
- Children’s underwear, socks, undershirts, and belts
- New or slightly used children’s tennis shoes or closed-toe shoes
- Teacher Supplies (tissues, hand sanitizer, Lysol/Clorox wipes, paper towels, sentence strips, easel paper pads, chart markers, dry erase markers, etc.)
- Laundry detergent and dryer sheets for our on-site laundry facility
- Personal hygiene items such as toothpaste, toothbrushes, body wash/soap, shampoo/conditioner, lotion, etc.

For our most current high-needs items, please contact Kaitlyn Jolley: kaitlyn.jolley@mnps.org.