

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Midway Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 3244 Midway Church Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Blackshear State GA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 31516-7544

County Pierce County

Telephone (912) 807-0084 Fax (912) 807-0087

Web site/URL http://mes.pierce.k12.ga.us E-mail wtodd@perce.k12.ga.us

Twitter Handle https://twitter.com/MidwayEl Facebook Page https://www.facebook.com/midwayelementary/ 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.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent*Mrs. Terri DeLoach E-mail tdeloach@perce.k12.ga.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Pierce County Board of Education Tel. (912) 449-2044

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

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mrs. Linda Zechmann
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

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

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

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, 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	26	18	44
K	36	33	69
1	34	40	74
2	32	33	65
3	37	41	78
4	51	35	86
5	37	33	70
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	253	233	486

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 7 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 87 % White
 - 4 % 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: 14%

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	31
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	41
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	72
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	507
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.142
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	14

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 5 %
26 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 54 %
Total number students who qualify: 262

8. Students receiving special education services: 11 %
51 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.

- 0 Autism
- 1 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 0 Emotional Disturbance
- 0 Hearing Impairment
- 0 Mental Retardation
- 0 Multiple Disabilities
- 1 Orthopedic Impairment
- 9 Other Health Impaired
- 11 Specific Learning Disability
- 16 Speech or Language Impairment
- 0 Traumatic Brain Injury
- 0 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
- 13 Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 6
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	2
Classroom teachers	25
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	12
Paraprofessionals	8
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 19:1

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%	96%
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.

Midway Elementary School will make every student successful by maximizing student potential for learning.

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

Opening in 2010, Midway Elementary School (MES) rises from the surrounding farm lands and planted timber along Midway Church Road in western Pierce County. Built to accommodate growth in our community, MES was designed to house 450 students. Midway presently houses 486 boys and girls. We have two pre-kindergarten classrooms, four classrooms each in kindergarten through fourth grades, and three fifth grade classrooms. For a little country school, the MES population is quite diverse, hosting students who identify as Hispanic (7%), Asian (1%), African-American (1%), Caucasian (87%) and multiracial (4%). A closer look at our school's sub-populations reveals diverse needs in Midway students: students with disabilities (SWD), speech (SI), gifted and talented (GATE), Early Intervention Program (EIP), English learners (EL), and migrant students. Our economically disadvantaged student population is 54%.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

The mission of MES is to make every student successful by maximizing student potential for learning. Multiple opportunities for content mastery are offered and instructional methods are varied allowing learning to occur at high levels. Our teachers are professionals, working collaboratively and taking into consideration learning styles, developmental appropriateness, and differentiation needs as they plan for instruction.

Students benefit from standards-based classrooms, instructional technologies and flexible skills groups. To fully reach all students, our teachers are provided the flexibility to move students across classrooms for remediation and/or acceleration of skills. Many teachers freely give their time, tutoring students before and/or after school. Students not demonstrating proficiency are given additional opportunities to master content; however, if problems persist, then the RTI process begins. MES special services include Early Intervention Program (EIP), Migrant Education Program (MEP), Special Education services, Gifted and Talented Education (GATE), and assistance from our reading and math intervention specialists.

In reading/English language arts, the Common Core Georgia Standards of Excellence (CCGSE) are used as the foundational base for instruction. Our school district was awarded the Striving Reader Grant in 2013, allowing us to increase our resources and emphasize literacy. MES administers the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) three times yearly to all students. Results are used to identify children experiencing difficulty in the acquisition of basic literacy skills. Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) test is administered in grades 2-5 to analyze the Lexile ® level of each student. Based on these assessments, the following strategies are utilized in the classroom: small group reading instruction, leveled readers, literature-based units, and increased LEXILE texts focusing on comprehension. For this school year, we have implemented Bookworms in kindergarten and first grade classrooms. This comprehensive reading program focuses on whole group reading, shared reading, and partner reading as well as rigorous, higher order questioning. MES will implement this program in all grades next school year. Students also have access to the following computer programs: Istation, LEXIA, Essential Skills, and Study Island. We have a reading specialist who provides interventions and monitors student progress.

For mathematics, students are taught using the CCGSE. Teachers use the math frameworks, as well as teacher-created units as instructional guides. MES administers Aimsweb as a universal screener for all students three times a year. This test measures grade level appropriate math concepts and skills. Based on data, the following research-based instructional strategies are utilized: small group, skills-based instruction and fluency practice. We also use the computer programs Study Island, Sum Dog and Waggle as math supports and acceleration. Our math specialist provides interventions and monitors student progress.

Science units aligned to the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) have been created by our science teachers. In grades 3-5, our science teachers are departmentalized allowing our teachers to go in-depth with those standards and allowing our students the opportunity for hands-on experiments and in-depth learning. Students in 4th and 5th grades develop science fair projects, judged in a school fair. Midway hosts a Science Fair night where students are awarded prizes, with those winning 1st-5th place ribbons qualifying for the District Science Fair. To determine strengths and weaknesses in the areas of Science, MES administers benchmark tests. These tests are disaggregated by standards with the aide of Prosper ® Assessment Grading System. Teachers then analyze standards and determine next steps for students: skills based remediation and/or acceleration.

Social Studies units are created by and aligned to the GPS by social studies teachers. Our social studies teachers are departmentalized, and the teachers work closely with our Reading/ELA teachers to incorporate non-fiction texts on social studies topics into their classrooms. We invite guest speakers into the classrooms to discuss the topics associated with their curriculum. For example, State Representative Chad Nimmer was invited to discuss government in Georgia with 3rd grade students. To determine strengths and weaknesses in Social Studies, MES administers benchmark tests. Data is disaggregated by standards with the aide of

Prosper ® Assessment Grading System. Teachers then analyze standards and determine next steps for students: skills based remediation and/or acceleration.

Pre-K students are taught the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS), and teachers utilize the Frog Street Press Curriculum. This curriculum is a comprehensive, research-based program where instruction is integrated across early, developmental domains. With GELDS and Frog Street Press, our pre-kindergarten students are prepared with background knowledge needed to be successful in kindergarten. Our Pre-K teachers work closely with our primary teachers to help prepare them for future educational endeavors. Midway houses two Pre-K classrooms with 22 students. These 44 students are fully prepared as they enter into our K-5 educational setting.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

MES has a part-time music teacher, who is shared with a sister school in our district. Our chorus program is strong, despite the limited time at our school. Students attend music one day weekly during the first semester. Students participating in Chorus choose to attend music two days weekly. All Chorus members attend class on Fridays, working on productions for Veterans Day, Christmas in the Park, and Christmas Open House. Students do a phenomenal job representing MES with their performances.

The Physical Education (PE) program at MES is second to none. We have two full-time PE coaches who work diligently with our students to promote physical fitness and healthy lifestyles, while incorporating grade level academic concepts. They utilize the SPARK ® curriculum to help promote motivating and challenging activities for the students. The PE department hosts several events throughout the year, including seasonal runs and field day at the end of the year. Parents are invited when their students' athletic abilities are showcased.

MES is committed to supporting 21st century classrooms. Technology is utilized to engage students in the learning process. Software and instructional databases are researched, vetted, and approved by the school's BST before they are adopted into the curriculum. These programs are used for remediation, extension, data collection, and practice. A 30-seat computer lab is housed as a part of the media center. This lab is used for remediation and acceleration. Students are grouped homogeneously and report to the computer lab once each week during their PE time. Students in RTI go to the lab twice weekly for more intensive interventions.

MES classrooms are equipped with a teacher workstation, printer, document camera, interactive projector, teacher iPad, and four student PC workstations. One-to-one computing with laptops or chromebooks is available for 4th-5th grade students. We are currently working to obtain chromebooks for our 3rd graders. Each year, we send a group of teachers to the Georgia Educational Technology Conference (GaETC). Teachers who attend this conference re-deliver the latest trends in technology to the staff. This year, we host a "Tech Cafe" one Friday a month at 6:45 a.m. Teachers eat a "byte" of breakfast in the media center and learn new technology lessons/strategies to incorporate into their own classrooms. For the past two years, we have had two staff members chosen to be presenters at GaETC. In 2015, the Pierce County Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEAM) team was established. They hosted a 3-day technology day-camp at MES in the summer of 2015. In December, 2015, we held the first ever Pierce County tech fair at our school, followed in January, 2016, with the inaugural Okefenokee RESA Tech Fair. Students from 5 different counties came together at MES to compete for the regional title, with first place winners qualifying for the state competition in Macon. MES had several first place winners in the regional competition, all of whom will represent us well at the state level.

MES students have opportunities to foster leadership and academic growth. Student Council members are selected by their peers in 5th grade. These students work at school events, help with school projects, and assist with the Fall Festival. Students in grades 3-5 have the opportunity to compete in the regional "Battle of the Books" competition. These students read many books throughout the year, and the MES teams compete with other schools in our RESA district. Additionally, students in 4th and 5th grades have monthly 4-H meetings. 4-H assists youth in acquiring knowledge, developing life and leadership skills, as well as informing students about agriculture awareness and environmental issues. MES also competes in the

Academic Quiz Bowl, traveling to surrounding counties to compete against other schools. Fourth and fifth grade students are encouraged to join the Typing Club which meets at 7a.m. daily. This club helps prepare our students for online assessments. This year, MES will form their first Beta Club, and students will be tapped into this club during our May Shining Stars Assembly.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

MES has used an Extended Learning Time (ELT) in grades 3-5 for the past five years. During ELT, teachers have time to remediate/accelerate identified skills gathered from formal and informal assessment data. All faculty members are involved in teaching small groups, including administration and resource teachers. Additionally, the quality of learning time during all segments is enhanced by our reading and math Intervention Specialists. The interventionists push into classrooms to support students and guide instruction.

MES also uses the Early Intervention Program (EIP) reduced class model. This allows for more individualized instruction and teacher attention. The reduced class size EIP model is used to maximize both reading and math instruction with fewer students per classroom.

We have a Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) teacher to accelerate our gifted students who represent approximately 10.8% of the total school population. The gifted teacher instructs students in a given grade level for a full academic day. Gifted students being served are enrolled in grades one through five. The gifted teacher works in collaboration with the regular classroom teachers to enhance instruction and provide strategies needed by the gifted learners, and she attends instructional planning days with regular education teachers. Additionally, we have at least one other teacher per grade-level who is gifted certified.

For our English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) / English Learners (ELs), MES has a full-time ESOL teacher. The ESOL teacher provides a push-in model to assist with vocabulary acquisition in the four areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Migrant students at Midway are offered the same educational opportunities as all other students. Supplemental services for migrant students identified as “priority for services” are offered through the district Migrant Student Services Provider (MSSP) in coordination with the regular classroom teacher.

Students struggling within the classroom have the support of Response to Intervention (RTI). RTI is divided into 4 tiers: Tier 1-all students; Tier 2-students needing some support; Tier 3-students requiring close monitoring and intense support; and Tier 4-speech, Special Education and GATE. This is a general education service but is also implemented in the special education setting.

Midway offers special education services to qualified students. These services are provided to better serve students who are eligible and covered under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The special education program at Midway is dedicated to providing every opportunity for students with disabilities to achieve their maximum potential. Regular and special education co-teachers have received LRE training to support instruction for these students.

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

MES is committed to meeting the instructional needs of all students. Frequent and ongoing assessments are utilized to monitor student learning and determine if the implementation of school initiatives has been successful. Data from students is compared with data at state, district, and local RESA levels. Teachers analyze scores to determine specific strengths and weaknesses, and submit an action plan to improve overall instruction. The Better Seeking Team examines all student data to determine school-wide strengths and weaknesses, and makes recommendations for school improvements based on this analysis. The administrative team serves MES as lead learners and works collaboratively with teachers, students, and parents to ensure the instructional needs of students are met.

The CRCT data from spring 2014 shows MES students did very well on state assessments. For reading, 100% of students in grades 3-5 passed or exceeded on the test. The three subgroups that counted for MES were white (100%), economically disadvantaged (ED -100%), and students with disabilities (SWD-100%).

In English Language Arts (ELA), 99% of all students tested passed or exceeded this portion. Scores for the subgroups were as follows: white (99%), ED (98%), and SWD (100%). For mathematics, 99% of all students in grades 3-5 met proficiency on the state assessment. The subgroup data consisted of white (99%), ED (97%), and SWD (100%). When examining the data, one can tell there are no gaps between the identified subgroups.

MES reports student assessment results in a variety of methods including progress reports, report cards, and parent conferences. Teachers share this data to inform parents if his/her child is on, below, or above grade level, as well as to help parents understand the instructional decisions made at the school. Triangulation of data is examined from various sources, including MES Benchmark Assessments, ACCESS®, Dibels NEXT®, AimsWeb®, SRI®, unit tests, and classroom performance, products and observations. By incorporating multiple data types, MES ensures that disaggregated results are valid and reliable. Teachers use the data to plan instruction, organize flex groups, monitor student progress, and make appropriate interventions.

Because Midway is considered a high performing school, we work to maintain high levels of achievement for all of our students. Benchmark assessments help us to reach this goal. Benchmarks are administered in late November as well as early March. Assessments are cumulative and aid in evaluating our overall instructional program. Based on the results of these benchmark scores, educators continue successful educational practices and modify practices for those students who need additional support.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Students need fun, interactive activities to help motivate and encourage them. Every nine weeks, we host a Shining Star Assembly to honor students for outstanding attendance and academic performance. Administrators spend the entire day honoring students during PE times with ribbons and certificates. Parents are invited, and pictures are posted onto our school's social media accounts.

Fifth graders enjoy recording and editing the weekly announcements for the school. They are published to our social media accounts and viewed daily in the classrooms. Not only do the announcements get out vital information to students and parents, but also motivate students for a day of learning.

Many events motivate students to attend school daily. Red Ribbon Week encourages students and teachers to dress-up in an effort for students to “say no to drugs”. The Fall Festival is an exciting event during the month of October; students have a great time, and it is the school's largest fundraiser. We host seasonal one-mile runs for PE. Santa comes for pictures, and students can also visit the Secret Santa Shop to purchase gifts for their family. At the end of the school year, students enjoy the final week of school, with a variety of events including talent shows, year-book dedication, field days, and a movie day.

MES honors students demonstrating outstanding behavior. Classroom teachers utilize Class DOJO, an electronic reward system, for classroom management. At the end of the week, teachers submit the names of students with the most DOJO points for a drawing; students receive a prize such as a MES water bottle, free ice cream pass, or a Friday treat. A picture is posted on social media for parents and family to see. Elementary students love dodge ball and other physical activities; these games are scheduled periodically as rewards, pitting students against their teachers and administrators.

We believe we have the best teaching staff in the country, during these trying times of education, we do what we can to motivate and inspire our teachers. Teachers love jeans passes and early leave passes. We also celebrate with food in the teacher workroom for fun days, such as National Chili Day or National Tortilla Chip day. We host a faculty off-campus Christmas party, and we celebrate a week of teacher appreciation at the end of the school year. We recognize a weekly staff member as our Superhero of the Week. This person has reserved parking and is recognized on the school's active social media accounts.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

It is the intention of Midway Elementary to nurture strong relationships between parents, community, and school as we work together to provide a quality education for all students. By promoting parent volunteers, MES is nurturing those relationships. Parents and community members have been extremely supportive of the school's academic efforts, and they volunteer throughout the year for different school activities. Volunteers and mentors also directly assist teachers with classroom needs.

Parent and community support is an important factor to the success of MES, so we provide opportunities to establish those vital community partnerships. We extend invitations to parents and others to become active mentors and/or volunteers. We have implemented some high impact strategies of transition throughout the school. Teachers host “Lunch and Learn” sessions for parents to learn more about their child's education. There have been various topics ranging from fourth grade math strategies, Pre-K letter recognition activities, and constructed response development for upcoming assessments.

To increase parent involvement, we have a system-wide coordinator who serves as a liaison between families and MES. She confers with school administrators, parents, and teachers to establish and maintain ongoing parent activities supporting academic goals. To encourage family involvement, MES held an Annual Title I Parent Meeting in August. At that time, parents received information outlining the Title I program and opportunities for parent and family involvement from the school administrators. In September, MES held a Curriculum night where teachers shared important information concerning

curriculum, schedules, attendance, and discipline policies. MES also holds a GA Milestones night to inform parents of testing expectations and/or changes. On this same night, we have a Live Wax Museum featuring our GATE students, which ushers approximately 300 community members to MES.

Frequent and regular communications between teachers and parents are crucial. For this reason, teachers communicate regularly with parents using class newsletters, agenda books, personal notes, parent/teacher conferences, phone calls, emails, Remind texts, Facebook and school memos. In addition, we survey our parents to find out how to improve communication and instruction at the school. The administrative team reads the surveys and incorporates ideas from the surveys to make parent suggested changes at the school level. In addition, we have an active school council comprised of parents, business members, and teachers who serve as an advisory board for the school and have some decision-making opportunities.

3. Professional Development:

MES realizes professional development is a continuous process of improvement. Professional development should improve instructional practices and experiment with educational research. All professional development activities focus on increasing student achievement by improving teacher practice. Our recent focus has been centered on writing instruction, technology implementation, and data interpretation to better understand the needs of our students.

Professional development has been aligned to the needs of our teachers in order for them to teach Georgia's academic content at each grade level and to prepare students for academic assessments. In planning professional development, the BST examines the College and Career Readiness and Performance Index (CCRPI) closely to ensure professional learning is aligned to the components. Using data from Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) observations, collaborative meetings, and surveys, the administrative team evaluates the school's professional learning initiatives and needs.

Upon examining school data and new state testing methods, MES incorporated writing professional development. Teachers have been trained in Writing to Win strategies to help students become more successful on extended/constructed response items of the new Georgia Milestones. All teachers and administrators participated in the Formative Instructional Practices (FIP) Modules, which promotes rigor in classroom activities. Most recently, teachers attended Number Talk training to increase rigor in math instruction. The system recently received Google training, and teachers are incorporating Google classroom with the use of chromebooks.

The Instructional Coach and teachers who attend professional learning are responsible for redelivering to the staff. Research-based strategies and programs that improve student achievement will be supported by MES; however, teacher leaders and administrators meet to determine how the programs should be implemented. An example would be looping. During the summer of 2015, a group of teachers attended the Model Schools Conference in Atlanta. Looping was discussed with the BST at the beginning of the year, and a number of teachers began to explore the idea. Looping will be fully implemented in 3rd and 4th grades for next school year. The intent is to improve relationships with students and create a more collegial atmosphere between teachers on other grade-levels.

A challenge of professional development at MES is maintaining our high performing status. It is difficult to decide which professional development to implement because of our success. We want to continue to improve each year, but we do not want to alter programs that have provided success for MES. This is a challenge that we have to carefully consider each year.

4. School Leadership:

The school motto at Midway Elementary is "Making Excellence Standard". This isn't just a motto, but also is what drives our thinking and decision making. Every student deserves "excellence", and it is the responsibility of the leadership team to ensure that every student gets the best we can provide. As a part of the overall leadership team, the administrative team, comprised of the principal and assistant principal, makes informed decisions based on what is best for the students at the school. When possible or relevant,

decision making opportunities are shared with the Better Seeking Team (BST). The BST is comprised of teacher leaders, resource personnel, the media specialist, the school counselor, the instructional coach, and administration. All aspects of the school are represented through the BST, and all know that decisions are driven by what is best for students.

The principal and assistant principal work very closely together. There is a strong element of trust with these two professionals as they work together with a common mission, which is student achievement. After administrative walkthroughs and observations, they meet together to discuss ratings and comments with the goal of continuously improving teaching and learning. After observations, meetings are held with teachers if areas for improvement have been identified, and the instructional coach is asked to guide and provide support where there have been identified areas of need and/or improvements.

If at all possible, administrators are in every classroom on a daily basis. This visible presence not only curtails any discipline problems, but also portrays to both students and teachers that what they do on a daily basis matters. Students and teachers understanding the importance of education with the high expectations that have been set is crucial to our success. The administrators understand that in order to support this goal, their presence must be deliberate and pervasive. This also allows the teachers to know that they are supported, and students to know that the administrators are fully committed to monitoring their education.

Working with the school budget it shows the strength of the administrative team. When the school was built in 2010, the classrooms did not have any technology. The administrators have worked diligently to not only put interactive boards in every classroom, but also to have one-to-one computing in 4th and 5th grades. For 2016-2017, we hope to have chromebooks for every 3rd grade student as well.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

There are many factors that contribute to the success of Midway Elementary School, just as there are many contributing forces that enable a school to be high performing. However, after much thought and careful consideration, the one practice that MES attributes to the overall success of our school is our assessment practices.

Assessment drives all that we do at our school. Teachers and administrators know the academic levels of all students in the building. We not only know the names of our students, but we also know how they performed on state assessments last year and school assessments throughout the year. Teachers know the strengths and weaknesses of their students, and they provide additional support or challenge students appropriately.

Our rule of thumb is this—you cannot know where you are going, unless you know where you are! It is crucial for all staff members to work together as they help students learn the standards; individual students' success as well as the success of our school depend on this. It is a team effort, and we work collaboratively to get this important work accomplished. Once teachers analyze formal assessments to the standard level, flexible skills groups are formed. This allows teachers to differentiate more for students who have similar skill sets.

Teachers must incorporate informal assessments into daily instruction, and they must adjust the instruction based on the needs of the students. If teachers are not adjusting instruction, students are not getting a custom-designed education.

Assessments are the key to the success of Midway Elementary School, but it takes a combination of all academic factors to be high performing. Assessments give the teachers the starting point for instruction, but our teachers also are highly skilled and foster positive relationships with parents and students. MES families know we will do our very best for their children, and our students know we expect their very best as well. Our determination to achieve and succeed is as strong now as when we opened our doors in 2010, and it is our intention to continue our process of Making Excellence Standard.