

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

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Shane Bryant

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

Official School Name Weston Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 140 Polk Street

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

City Greenfield State IN Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 46140-1863

County Hancock County

Telephone (317) 462-1492 Fax (317) 467-6738

Web site/URL http://weston.gcsc.k12.in.us E-mail shbryant@gcsc.k12.in.us

Twitter Handle

https://twitter.com/WestonPrincipal 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\*Dr. Harold Olin E-mail holin@gcsc.k12.in.us

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

District Name Greenfield-Central Community School Corporation Tel. \_\_\_\_\_

(317) 462-4434

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 Mrs. Retta Livengood

(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

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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

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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):
- 6 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 8 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	0	0	0
K	45	39	84
1	33	48	81
2	41	46	87
3	42	47	89
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
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
<b>Total Students</b>	161	180	341

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 1 % Asian
  - 2 % Black or African American
  - 2 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 90 % 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	27
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	20
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	47
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	334
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.141
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	14

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 37 %  
Total number students who qualify: 127

8. Students receiving special education services: 17 %  
58 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.

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

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 2
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers	16
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	5
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.	4

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.

<b>Required Information</b>	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	96%	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.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
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 for Learning, Learning for All

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

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Weston Elementary is a K-3 school in a suburban setting located on the west side of Greenfield, Indiana, along US 40. The building was named after the subdivision, Weston Village. It borders streets that were named after United States presidents in concentric circles. The original structure of Weston was built in 1953. There have been three major remodeling projects over the past 65 years that have nearly tripled the size of the building. In 2009, Weston's student configurations went from K-5 to K-3. Weston currently has four classes per grade level, K-3, with approximately 340 students.

Greenfield is located 25 miles east of Indianapolis in central Hancock County. We are one of six elementary schools in the Greenfield-Central Community School Corporation. With a total population of 20,602 residents, Greenfield has seen substantial growth in the past 20 years. The median household income is \$51,875 with 10% living below the poverty line.

Demographic data at Weston Elementary is fairly consistent with the community at large. Our enrollment has remained steady in recent years and is currently at 342 students. The ethnic make-up is ninety percent white, 6% black or multiracial, 2% Hispanic, and 1% American Indian and Asian. Thirty-seven percent of our students receive free or reduced lunch assistance.

Weston was named a Four Star School (ranking in the top 25% of the state on ISTEP+ scores) during the 2012-13 school year and has been named an "A" school each of the past five years. Weston's ISTEP+ pass rates for both English/language arts and math are consistently in the high 80 to low 90 percent range the past four years. We are pleased that our Free and Reduced Lunch students pass at a similar rate to our Paid lunch students over that same time span. Over the past four years, Weston has had a 97 – 100% pass rate for third graders on the state reading assessment (IREAD-3).

Weston's success can be attributed to our goal of continuously looking for ways to educate the whole child. Our students receive instruction in core subjects as well as a balance of physical education, art, and music. We utilize a solid curriculum to meet and exceed the standards set by the state, and we offer a range of support between the use of special education, Response to Instruction and traditional classroom and extension support. All of our students are met at their academic level by professional and caring staff.

School-wide academic and curriculum strategies and initiatives include weekly PLCs (Professional Learning Communities), Instructional Coaches, Integrated Technology, School-Wide Four Step Solving, and Word Study Programs. All staff are trained to execute these programs successfully.

PLCs provide teachers a focused time to reflect on and adjust instruction based off of assessment data. Teachers spend time determining what they expect students to learn, how they will know when students have achieved mastery, and how they will respond to students who have and have not achieved mastery. This process has increased the expectations of instruction and learning.

Instructional coaches are utilized school-wide, with support based on grade level and individual needs. Coaches collaborate with teachers to support specific instructional and academic strategies that promote best practices. Collaboration includes lesson planning, model and co-teaching, as well as providing instructional resources. Increasing teacher and student support has had a positive impact on academic achievement.

Integrated technology has given Weston the ability to increase the overall rigor and engagement within instruction. Focusing on the SAMR model (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification and Redefinition), teachers and students strive to take technology from the substitution level to redefining the use of technology and 21st century skills to increase the effectiveness and retention of daily instruction.

Students engage in weekly problem solving and word programs to integrate and encourage higher order thinking. Students are given weekly math word problems and encouraged to show their work and thought process. Students utilize Frayer model organizers to work through words of the week to increase their vocabulary and language use. Through community donations and support, winners are chosen weekly and

work displayed to encourage participation.

Weston supports its students' physical wellness in a variety of ways. In addition to two P.E. sessions a week, many of our students participate in Weston Fit, an after school fitness club where students learn the importance of being active while participating in wellness games and activities. Several of our classes participate in daily exercise while being led by pre recorded video segments provided by the Indianapolis Colts.

Weston has a number of programs to promote emotional, social, and cultural wellness. Our full time social worker provides whole class lessons on topics like bullying and character education. She provides small group and one on one counseling where she helps students develop social skills and provides emotional support. She also organizes and provides resources for Random Acts of Kindness and Disability Awareness Weeks.

## PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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### 1. Core Curriculum:

Weston’s adopted core curriculum for all grade levels (K-3) is aligned to the Indiana Academic Core Standards. The curriculum for each grade level includes reading, language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Weston’s curriculum is consistent grade to grade and is developmentally appropriate while emphasizing differentiation and integration. The teachers of Weston strive to foster lifelong learners by working together to create rigorous and challenging learning experiences for all students.

English/language arts instruction at Weston begins with Scott Foresman Reading Street Common Core 2013. Reading Street is a highly engaging researched-based method of teaching the big 5 areas of reading, and writing. Through engaging thematic units teachers engage students in a systematic and spiraling approach to phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Cross-curricular instruction is seen weekly with students being provided with paired fiction and nonfiction selections. Each lesson offers students access to on-level text during a whole group exploration of the weekly skills. During small group time student are engaged with paired readers differentiated to their level. Teachers create an “access for all” approach to text in their classrooms to take students from “learning to read” to “reading to learn.” Students participate in the program provided diagnostic and assessment tools throughout the school year. Assessments are administered to track growth unit by unit, and weekly to progress monitor specific students needs. Weston teachers use these assessments to adjust their instruction to meet the needs of the students in their classrooms, and identify remediation needs. Silent sustained reading time, with student choice, is incorporated into the day to promote a love of reading and exploration of genre while improving fluency and comprehension.

Weston engages students (K-3) in the McGraw Hill Everyday Mathematics program. Everyday Mathematics is a highly researched program that promotes a deeper conceptual understanding and depth of knowledge for students. Teachers establish clear expectations of mastery and continually revisit concepts through the spiraling of instruction. Manipulative exploration, facts practice, games, writing and reasoning, and open response are offered daily as opportunities to problem solve. Differentiated small-group work helps strengthen students understanding and extend their creativity when solving different math problems. The Everyday Math program teaches multiple algorithms to solve problems such as the partial sums, partial differences, lattice, and partial products. Multiple assessment opportunities are provided through the Everyday Math program, teachers have access to daily, weekly, and unit assessments that they use to pinpoint specific student need and growth over time. Although not a part of the Everyday Mathematics program, Rocket Math is used by teachers at Weston Elementary to promote mathematical fluency, while allowing students to achieve at their own pace.

The Full Option Science System (FOSS) is Weston’s adopted science curriculum. The FOSS program is researched based and allows teachers to provide engaging experiences for their students. Teachers have access to tools and multiple strategies to lead their students to a deeper understanding of science concepts (k-3). Weston teachers focus on an understanding of real-world problems and solutions, and incorporate content and practice through hands on science activities. Multiple methods of instruction are used with the FOSS program from whole group, small group and project exploration. Students are able to demonstrate their mastery of concepts through multiple hands on learning activities and engaging discussions.

Our social studies curriculum is comprised from multiple resources. Macmillan MacGraw-Hill, Timelinks is used in conjunction with cross-curricular text from the English/language arts Reading Street program. Teachers align lessons with the Indiana State Standards and provide students with rigorous and engaging activities. Teachers differentiate instruction with the use of anchor charts, graphic organizers, and foldables. Writing activities, and project based learning assignments give students a variety of options to show their mastery of grade level appropriate content. Weekly integration of social studies is found throughout reading and writing instruction. Teachers utilize leveled social studies readers and help students make connections to self, text, and world through weekly connections in reading and writing.

## 2. Other Curriculum Areas:

In addition to the core curriculum Weston Elementary offers a wide range of non-core curricular areas. As a school that serves grades K-3 it is our goal to provide our students with a well rounded experience in all areas. Teachers at Weston strive to integrate core curriculum subjects into all areas of teaching in order to enrich instruction and maximize instruction time. Students participate once a week in music and library, twice a week in PE and art, and are engaged in technology 2 -3 times a week within their classrooms.

The physical education program is offered to all students. A certified PE teacher engages students twice a week for 25 minutes each. English language arts and math standards are incorporated in all PE lessons to extend and support classroom learning. School wide programs, like Jump Rope for Heart, not only encourage daily physical activity, but also healthy competition while supporting the American Heart Association. Students at Weston Elementary love physical education while also participating in 20 minutes of recess daily. Teachers and students extend physical education beyond the school day with Weston Fit, a teacher and parent volunteer led program. Teachers and parents lead students through exercises and activities to instill the importance of staying active.

Art Education at Weston is more than creating beautiful pictures. Art is a visual extension of themes and units that are taught in the classroom. Classroom teachers collaborate with the certified art teacher quarterly. Through art, students have an avenue to visually display concepts learned in the classroom.

A certified teacher who integrates all subject areas into his instruction teaches music. Though music instruction, students are engaged in science with the exploration of instruments, social students in the study of musicians and history, math in learning notes and the timing of different pieces of music, and English language arts through the close reading and analyzing of song lyrics. Grade appropriate vocabulary is integrated into weekly instruction and is a creative extension of classroom learning. Students perform for family, friends and staff several times a year to demonstrate skills they've learned.

Media instruction at Weston supports the English language arts standards once a week for 30 minutes. The library assistant works with teachers and students to foster a lifelong love of reading and book choice. Based on Donalyn Miller's books "The Book Whisperer", and "Reading in the Wild", student book choice and genre exploration is a focus of the library at Weston. The library assistant works to not only help students find books within their independent reading range, but also promotes student choice within their weekly selections. Students are encouraged and motivated to read by completing grade level Lego towers. Grade levels and classrooms compete to build a visual representation of the amount of books students are reading with each Lego representing a book a child read. Weston students look forward to a monthly visit from the Hancock County Library Bookmobile. Library specialists from the county library visit to read and share their favorite books while allowing students another avenue to explore and check out new reading material.

Technology enhances instruction for all students, and Weston is fortunate to provide multiple technology experiences for its students, daily. Teachers use technology to enhance their lessons and engage their students. Each teacher at Weston has an iPad and MacBook for individual use and a projector and Apple TV for classroom use. Weston teachers also have access to two computers labs, an iPad cart of 30, and a chromebook cart of 32. Teachers at Weston use the aforementioned technology for whole group and small group instruction as well as literacy and math stations. Teacher leaders are fostered through the LITE (Leader in Technology Education) program at Weston Elementary. Each year a teacher at Weston takes on the role as the school LITE, leading teachers to useful and engaging programs that will enhance the rigor and engagement in the classroom through technology.

## 3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

At Weston Elementary, we believe that differentiation is a key factor towards the success of our students. The use of grade level specific reading and math assessments such as NWEA (2-3) and mClass DIBELS, TRC and BURST (K-1), in conjunction with core-curriculum diagnostic assessments from Everyday Math and Reading Street, enables teachers to recognize specific learning strengths and deficits. Teachers utilize

large and small groups, flexible grouping, paired and individual instruction to meet the needs of all of the students in their classrooms.

Staff collaboration plays a key role in student success. Weston teachers work together not only within their grade level team, but also laterally with other grade levels. Teachers participate in Professional Learning Community meetings on a weekly basis to discuss their data driven instruction and assessments, and make adjustments to lessons. Every 6 weeks grade level teams meet with the school data team to review and discuss students of concern. Weston teachers collaborate with instructional coaches, school psychologist, guidance counselor and the principal to review benchmark, diagnostic and progress monitoring assessments as well as classroom observations to create individual plans for students with instructional needs. Throughout the year the data team reviews individual student growth and adjust the plans to best meet the needs of the students that are discussed.

Students at Weston participate in a well-defined Response to Instruction (RtI) time for remediation and acceleration purposes. Support begins in the classroom. Tier 1 support includes students receiving on grade level instruction from the Everyday Math and Reading Street programs, including differentiated small group instruction at the student's current level of learning. Students in need of remediation or acceleration participate in an additional 30 minutes daily of defined Tier 2 time. Students meet in groups, with a certified teacher, for additional instruction in a skill area of need. Teachers utilize researched-based programs such as Words Their Way, Ticket to Read, and BURST to maximize instruction and impact during Tier 2 instruction. Students in need of acceleration meet with a certified High Ability teacher. Weston High Ability teachers utilize grade appropriate lesson created by the Indiana Department of Education High Ability Department. Lessons utilize literature for project-based learning based around conceptual thinking, research, problem solving, writing, and Paul's reasoning model. Students needing additional services receive 30 more daily minutes of Tier 3 instruction. Tier 3 instruction occurs in a specialized setting utilizing specific researched-based remediation programs, such as Read Well and Number Worlds. Students are engaged with certified special education teachers who utilize both the push in and pull out methods of interaction throughout the school day.

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

Weston Elementary utilizes several levels of assessment to inform and guide classroom instruction. With a focus of every child's needs being met, teachers analyze assessments from the standardized to observational level to see what the whole child is capable of and identify specific needs. We use the following standardized assessments: ISTEP+ (grade 3) to assess English/language arts and mathematics, and IREAD (grade 3) to assess reading proficiency. Student performance and growth in reading, language, and math are measured 3 times a year with NWEA (grades 2-3), and specific LEXILE reading levels are found with the Scholastic Reading Inventory (grade 3) three times a year. For our primary grades (K-2), we utilize Dynamic Indicators of Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) and Text Reading Comprehension (TRC) to measure the 5 big areas literacy. Math skills are measured using mClass math and through teacher developed common assessments based on the Indiana Academic Standards. While many assessments are used to track achievement and growth, Weston also utilizes The Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) in kindergarten and second grade, in conjunction with NWEA, DIBELS, and teacher observations to determine students who qualify for High Ability education.

In addition to standardized assessments, teachers measure mastery of specific skills on a weekly and unit basis. Teachers utilize research-based, standard driven assessments in the Everyday Mathematics (McGraw Hill) and Reading Street (Pearson Scott Foresman) series. Instruction is driven based on the results of weekly skills tests and monthly chapter tests. Teachers track students' achievement, growth and areas of needs on grade level spreadsheets. Based on the data, students are grouped for small group instruction and RtI instruction based on skill, need, and grade level. Classroom teachers also use a variety of informal assessments in all subject areas including observations, checklists, running records, and portfolios. The data from these assessments allows teachers to differentiate lesson plans to meet the needs of all of the students in their classrooms.

Data is reviewed in data team meetings every 6 weeks. Westons data team consists of grade level teachers,

the school principal, instructional coaches, special education teacher, and guidance counselor and school psychologist. Team members review data from the grade level spreadsheets and listen to concerns from teachers to determine plans of action for students with areas of concerns. Throughout the year the data team reviews individual student action plans and based on growth will make recommendations for RtI instruction or further skills testing to determine specific need and additional services.

Assessment results are shared with key stakeholders in a variety of ways. Parents and students can access achievement data through our PowerSchool portal. Results from the ISTEP+ and NWEA are discussed with parents during parent/teacher conferences. Additionally, parents can visit our school website to view how our students have fared on state assessments as a whole.

## **PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS**

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

At Weston Elementary, we encourage students to develop a growth mindset, in which they believe that they can achieve success with hard work and determination. We strive to provide an atmosphere of positive praise and teamwork in the learning environment. This is accomplished in part through engaging instruction, integrating technology, and differentiated lessons. We accomplish this through the use of iPads, Chrome Books, Apple TVs, Mac Books and various other forms of technology. As a staff, we model respect for individuals and their learning styles to provide a safe atmosphere in which to grow.

Weston Elementary is an inviting learning environment, welcoming students, parents, and community members. We encourage involvement through weekly newsletters, classroom volunteers and math and literacy nights. To benefit the socio-emotional development of our students, teachers make a concerted effort to work meaningful and engaging experiences into their instruction. Grade levels work to research, plan and execute local and distant field trips that relate to themes and topics taught within the curriculum. Third graders apply their social studies knowledge of Indiana History by visiting the Indiana History Museum in the spring. First grade students apply their science knowledge of animals and habitats by visiting the Indianapolis Zoo. These experiences foster project-based learning projects that are planned during PLC, aligned to Indiana Academic Standards, and provide a representation of students mastery. Our social worker organizes groups to develop social and emotional skills for students in need. We cultivate a positive environment with our community through our Annual Fall Festival and Read Up program. Furthermore, our students have access to a free, after school, exercise program called Weston Fit that partners with a local gym.

Staff members at Weston Elementary enjoy coming to work everyday because of the positive and supportive environment educators receive from administrators, literacy and math coaches, and colleagues. Teachers are shown appreciation and support in a variety of ways. The administrator strives to provide staff with the materials needed to develop successful classrooms. There is a strong emphasis on collaboration and teamwork among grade levels, colleagues, and across grade levels.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

Weston strives to present an “intentionally inviting” environment for anyone who enters our building, especially our parents. Parent involvement plays a big role in our success and parents are encouraged to be an active participant in their child’s education at Weston. We understand the importance of staff, families, and the community working together to successfully make a difference and improve student learning. Our administrators and teachers work hard to create a culture of partnership by offering family and community participation in school- based and school-sponsored events, encouraging family engagement, and building relationships through effective communication. Volunteers can be seen in the building on a daily basis, assisting in small group activities and supporting the instructional development of our school as a whole. We have an active Parent Teacher Organization, which supports and enriches classroom learning through sponsorship of family and school activities. They also provide positive public relations and offer funds where needed.

Effective parent and teacher communication is a key component to student success. Weston families are kept informed through parent email blasts, newsletters, Twitter posts, teacher web blogs, and parent-teacher conferences. Parent are welcomed into our school for student musicals, carnivals, awards programs, math and literacy nights, field day, and for open houses and Meet The Teacher Night. Parents are encouraged to volunteer in their child’s classroom, chaperone field trips, and come in to eat lunch with their child any day.

Weston maintains partnerships with many local organizations. The United Way provides volunteers three days a week for our Read UP program. These volunteers read with and provide remediation to twenty third graders. Gleaner’s Food Bank and various other organizations provide weekend snacks and school supplies

to many of our students and families. Our social worker has many community contacts and resources to help families meet basic, social, and emotional needs.

### 3. Professional Development:

Professional development is a yearlong activity at Weston. Teachers are exposed to a variety of professional development opportunities, delivered in a variety of ways. One-on-one, small group, and whole group opportunities are available to both classified and certified staff, as well as parents, to ensure that all building stakeholders receive the same level of support and education in best practices.

In preparation of adopting our core curriculum programs, during adoption years, teachers participate in two and half day training camps during June and July prior to the first year of program implementation. Led by the instructional coaches, teachers dive deep into the structure and sequence of the core programs. Teachers also explore differentiation activities and integrate best practices and dissect the components that make up the program "recipe." Coaches continue to support teachers through follow-up trainings based on teacher, grade-level or school-wide need. After school sessions are held several times a year to focus on strategies, best practices, assessment, and management.

Instructional coaches allow teachers to participate in professional development individually. Coaches meet with grade level teams and teachers to identify specific needs. Coaches then support the development of individual teachers through observation, modeling, co-teaching and planning. A strong partnership has developed between the teachers at Weston and their instructional coaches, giving teachers the tools to take their instruction to the next level knowing that have a strong instructional support.

Ample professional development is given for new and updated assessments, along with refresher sessions. Teacher leaders participate in train the trainer models and share information with their colleagues in smaller building led sessions. Weston teachers pride themselves with keeping parents in the loop, especially with assessment. When assessments change, parents are invited to informational sessions to learn and experience the types of assessments their child will be exposed to.

With an increase in developing 21st century skills a teacher leader through the LITE (Leader in Technology Education) program at Weston Elementary provides monthly professional development to their peers. Each month the current school LITE prepares after school sessions to introduce and explore new technology to enhance classroom instruction.

Weston teachers are provided with volunteer opportunities to expand their knowledge and professional focus. Book clubs are held throughout the year, allowing teachers to collaborate, explore, and integrate the practices of well-known educational authors. In recent years Weston has explored book choice through Donalyn Miller's "The Book Whisperer" and "Reading in the Wild," and has increased student engagement and lesson effectiveness with Dave Burgess's "Teach like a Pirate."

### 4. School Leadership:

Our principal believes a school leader should work to eliminate barriers to teaching and learning. This may mean changing a schedule, handling disruptive behaviors, or streamlining a staff meeting agenda. He makes it a priority to provide teachers with time, resources, and training so they may optimize their craft. He also works with students to make sure their needs are met and that teachers and students feel safe at school. As with staff, he makes sure students have the resources and technology to learn to their maximum potential.

As the instructional leader, the principal believes that building positive relationships with students, parents, support staff, and teachers is key to the success of the school. Regular classroom walkthroughs allow him to interact with staff and students and to stay abreast of instruction and assessment strategies.

The building principal is the main decision maker, but is committed to staff input and shared decision-making. Our school has several different leadership teams. Our main leadership team consists of a teacher

leader from each grade or area. This team gathers and shares input from the larger staff and helps determine things like professional development needs and topics. The PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions/Supports) team helps establish school-wide expectations for behavior and creates systems for acknowledging and rewarding positive behavior. The SIP (School Improvement Plan) team meets regularly to analyze assessment data and create academic and attendance goals. In addition, the principal meets with Instructional Assistants regularly to solicit their input on issues and decisions.

Parents are also a part of the shared leadership at Weston. Parents serve on the SIP team, attend PTO meetings, and respond to school climate surveys. Parent leaders are responsible for helping to organize Movie Nights, All Pro Dad Breakfasts, Bowling Nights, Field Day, and a Fall Festival.

## Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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Weston can attribute its academic success to the implementation of PLCs (Professional Learning Communities). Weekly, teachers come together for a minimum of 45 minutes to discuss and focus on curriculum, instruction and assessment. This practice encourages academic, assessment, and socio-emotional success by being completely student centered and focused. PLC's foster student learning, staff collaboration and a positive strive for overall school improvement.

Teachers work together to establish rigorous expectations for their students during instruction, while keeping the whole child as the focus. Teachers establish and collaborate on defining how they will know when students have reached mastery in the skills they currently teach. Then teachers collaborate with coaches, paraprofessionals and school support staff to lay out a response plan for students who have and have not mastered specific skills within a time frame. Assessment plays a large role in the reflective process during PLC time. Teachers pull from formal and informal assessments to evaluate mastery and non-mastery and to make instructional adjustments.

Professional Learning Communities allow teachers the time to work together to analyze and dig deep into the academic areas that they teach. By focusing on specific subjects and lessons, teachers can develop more rigorous and engaging activities for their classrooms. An increase in engagement continues to have a positive effect on the school as a whole. A discussion with multiple grade levels has shown that increasing engagement increases skill retention and minimizes behavior issues.

Assessment is another large focus during weekly PLC meetings. Teachers analyze assessments from multiple viewpoints. Before assessments are given, teachers have the ability to look for questions that are outliers and answers that are distractors. Time is also used to create common assessments for weekly progress monitoring and mastery checks. Post assessment analysis is the most beneficial piece of PLCs. Dissecting student performance allows teachers to determine students who mastered and did not master specific skills. After identifying students who need remediation and acceleration, teams invite additional professionals to their meetings to discuss and establish groupings and instructional resources to best meet the needs of each group. Discussion of assessment results allows teachers to share successful lessons and things they may change during re-teaching of specific skills.

Overall, Professional Learning Communities are by far the most beneficial practice that we participate in at Weston. Teachers maximize their time and collaboration to create meaningful, rigorous, and engaging lessons that lead to skill mastery and overall school improvement.