

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mr. Doug Nielsen

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

Official School Name Lucy Franklin Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 111 NE Roanoke Drive

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

City Blue Springs State MO Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 64014-1305

County Jackson County

Telephone (816) 874-3690 Fax (816) 224-1396

Web site/URL http://www.bssd.net/Domain/2449 E-mail dnielsen@bssd.net

Twitter Handle

https://twitter.com/bssdlfe? 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. James Finley E-mail jfinley@bssd.net

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

District Name Blue Springs R-IV School District Tel. (816) 874-3200

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. Rhonda Gilstrap

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

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

Date _____

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

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

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

Part I – Eligibility Certification

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The public school has met their state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) using the most recent accountability results available for the year prior to nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) for the year in which they are nominated (2015-2016) and be certified by the state representative. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2010 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, or 2015.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 13 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 4 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 3 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 20 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	46	46	92
1	39	45	84
2	45	50	95
3	52	47	99
4	56	53	109
5	50	59	109
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	288	300	588

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 6 % Black or African American
 - 8 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 79 % White
 - 6 % 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: 9%

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	24
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	51
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	591
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.086
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	9

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 16 %
Total number students who qualify: 94

8. Students receiving special education services: 10 %
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.

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

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 4
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	28
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	8
Paraprofessionals	5
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 23:1

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	95%	95%	95%	95%	94%
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. 1997

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

Lucy Franklin is committed to providing a quality school experience characterized by high expectations, mutual respect, responsibility, and outstanding performance within and beyond the classroom.

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

Lucy Franklin Elementary (LFE) is one of 13 elementary schools located in the Blue Springs R-IV School District (BSSD). LFE currently serves a diverse, capable population of 605 K-5 students. The BSSD is located in eastern Jackson County, and as a suburban Kansas City metropolitan public school system, provides quality academic programming to families residing in the communities of Blue Springs, Lee's Summit, Independence, and Grain Valley, Missouri. The principal community of Blue Springs is comprised of approximately 55,000 residents.

LFE provides comprehensive K-5 services to students through its talented team of 41 certificated educators and 15 classified staff. The BSSD maintains a student to teacher ratio of 22:1. Of the total educators, 85.6% hold advanced degrees and have taught an average of 12 years. The BSSD has been recognized by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for Distinction in Academic Performance for 15 consecutive years and is the only public school system with more than 800 students to achieve a perfect Annual Performance Review score last year.

As a close-knit neighborhood school, LFE is best described as being student-centered, family-friendly, high performing, and parent supported. LFE was opened in 1990 and named after the former land owner. As a result of strong growth within its attendance boundaries, LFE has experienced additions to the facility, including classroom space, a multipurpose room, an artificial turf surface, and handicap accessible playground equipment. LFE also features an exercise course and walking/running track, which supports its commitment to community health and wellness. During the 1996-1997 school year, LFE was recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School.

According to the numbers and its past recognition, on paper LFE seems to have few, if any, challenges (i.e., the Free Reduced Lunch/FRL count has increased from 8% to 20%). However, after a concerted, staff-directed study of student performance, including annual state achievement test scores, during the 2012-2013 school year, it was evident a change in focus and approach was necessary. This has led to LFE showing significant gains over the past three school years in the number of students meeting or exceeding proficiency on statewide annual assessments.

It was not by chance that LFE implemented Professional Learning Community (PLC) Data Teams. Staff developed a vision of total stakeholder engagement, two-way communication, transparency, fidelity with instructional approach, and shared ownership for, and commitment to, school success. As a result, there is now a single LFE theme – unity of purpose. After looking performance in the eye, a collective decision was made to: no longer teach as individuals; throw open classroom doors, confer, and collaborate; speak a common language; and work toward a mutual cause – higher student attainment.

Beyond a shared vision, specific steps were taken to affect positive change. First, staff identified the essential learning skills embedded in the state standards, made certain instruction was appropriately aligned and paced, and determined the data points necessary to demonstrate mastery of English/Language Arts (E/LA) and math content. Skills were mapped out and aligned horizontally and vertically within and between grade levels. The math program was broken down so teachers could see how concepts were deliberately spiraled. To monitor students' growth more frequently, progress was tracked and displayed over time. A final important strategy – achievement-oriented teacher collaboration – resulted in constant dialogue about student targets, instructional strategies, interventions, curriculum, and other ancillary classroom activities. Staff also realized that conformity with teaching the current curricula required help from district elementary level instructional coaches. As a result of the concentrated assistance in the areas of early literacy, writing process, reading comprehension, math operations, problem solving, and computation skills; implementation of the Project Lead the Way (PLTW) STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) education initiative; and interventions such as before- and after-school tutoring and reading support in the primary grades, significant growth gains were made. E/LA and math learning laboratories were implemented to provide intensive on-site professional development (PD) and coaching via a train-the-trainer approach. LFE PD instills within staff the expectation of becoming a content expert, promotes collaboration and pooling of resources, and benefits non-district educators by allowing them to

observe best practices in action. Direct assistance and guidance were also received over time from contracted content experts related to reading comprehension, writing process, and math reasoning and proof skills.

LFE has a strong, actively engaged PTA (Parent Teacher Association). The PTA works tirelessly to enrich the lives of students and family members through curriculum-embedded cultural and educational events and fundraising. LFE also has parent volunteers who provide direct classroom support.

Ultimately, all of the puzzle pieces of the LFE school improvement approach have been implemented logically, carefully, and with an eye toward evidence-based research. It's for that reason that the future is now a bright one indeed for LFE students and staff.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

From the first day of kindergarten to the last day of fifth grade, LFE staff prepare students to be high performers. Key features interwoven into the instructional fabric to make this happen include district standards-based and aligned curriculum; high quality PD; effective use of classroom organization and grouping patterns; targeted pre-, mid-, and post-assessments to inform and guide practice; motivational techniques; current technology; and multi-faceted data analysis processes.

The K-2 literacy framework is distinct, as a balanced literacy approach encompassing strategies such as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension is used to turn print into meaning and create capable, strategic, and joyful readers. From third grade on, critical emphasis is placed on extending skills to develop more confident readers of increasingly complex, sophisticated text. While beginning reading emerges via step-by-step progression, upper grade mastery is more transformational and metacognitive in approach as students navigate how to make sense of different genres. Foundational and independent literacy skills are acquired and strengthened through: PD; direct support from educational consultants and instructional coaches; innovative, evidence-based programming and practices; and use of district designed common assessments. Key components are: Pathways to Reading (Terry Clinefelter), Writers' Workshop (Ellin Keene, Matt Glover, Katherine Bomer), Readers' Workshop (Deborah Miller, Tim Rasinski), the SRI (Scholastic Reading Inventory), data teaming, and implementation of an E/LA lab school to establish, practice, refine, model, and share effective strategies. Enrichment, remediation, and prevention strategies and methodology for regular and special education staff are available at all levels of the Response to Intervention (RtI) model continuum.

BSSD math curriculum concentrates on standards-based concepts, or “big ideas,” and the skills necessary to master rigorous content (e.g., numeration, operations, relationships, concrete and abstract representation). Programming and instruction focus on problem-solving and provide cohesive learning opportunities for in-depth math exploration. K-5 students learn to see the connections between prior and future learning and develop a sound understanding of concept structure and interrelationships through coherent, spiraled, “chunked” units of study. Clustering provides a global view of student learning and PD, as grade- and cross-level teachers discuss, investigate, and determine student-specific differentiated strategies. Represented in strands, the big ideas also act as a “lens” for: making instructional decisions about lesson emphasis; identifying prior learning; looking at students' thinking, understanding, and problem-solving strategies; collecting data for anecdotal records, including assessment-related; providing meaningful feedback; determining next steps; and communicating growth and progress. Specific approaches used to achieve success include: Math Workshop (math stations, manipulatives), instructional technology, off-hour tutoring, Math Club, Math Lab implementation, district instructional coach support, direct contact with content experts (Greg Tang), student-facilitated data and progression tracking, district-aligned common assessments, Go Math, and Reflex Math.

The BSSD strongly believes that students' attitudes and orientations toward science are formed in the elementary grades. At LFE, standards-aligned curriculum, inquiry-oriented methodology that emphasizes conceptual understanding rather than just facts, science integration across the core subjects, and technology tools and applications are used to enhance classroom instruction. Science PD enhances teachers' confidence in their knowledge, skills, and pedagogy. Specific strategies used to enhance science instruction include adoption of the PLTW STEM instructional approach (i.e., use of the scientific method and hands-on activities to think critically, investigate, research, problem solve, and innovate), direct contact with science content experts (Mike Heithaus), continuous support from district instructional coaches, involvement in a Federal grant-funded summer outreach project – Science Matters (i.e., study of, and video production pertaining to, different ecosystems), and science embedded field trips (e.g., KC Zoo, local nature reserves).

Social studies instruction is meaningful, integrative, differentiated, value-based, challenging, active, and viewed as basic for success as reading, writing, math, and science. Concepts, skills, and knowledge are interwoven across content areas and developed through a BSSD curriculum that addresses the four social

studies disciplines – history, geography, civics, and economics – and provides LFE K-5 students a critical foundational framework for life-long, informed participation as citizens. Methodology is focused, coherent, and comprehensive, and covers topics ranging from self, family, and community, to state, nation, civic engagement, critical thinking, socio-emotional development, interpersonal interactions, and information literacy. The infusion of technology also effectively prepares students in social studies.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

A full-time music teacher provides instruction to LFE K-5 students twice per week in a dedicated room via specialized content, appropriate equipment and technology, and an environment that is engaging, creative, and imaginative. PD is on-going and offered through workshops, conferences, or conventions; in-school or off-site seminars; and/or by artists in residence. The current focus is on connecting music with core content learning through integration of modern educational technologies. Curriculum and instruction are cross-curricular, incorporate cooperative learning strategies, and feature singing, dancing, playing instruments and games, improvising, composing, and performance. Evening grade level presentations at monthly PTA general sessions demonstrate classroom concepts. The Lyrical Leopards choral musical group meets weekly outside the regular instructional day and performs at various school, community, and business functions. In addition, select LFE 5th graders participate in a district-level music ensemble to perform at the annual Singfest in late spring, and all K-5 students attend district Arts Partners presentations conducted by KC area elite performance groups (KinderKonzert, Nutcracker, Theatre for Young America, Paul Mesner Puppets).

K-5 visual arts instruction reflects a similar setting, cross-curricular delivery model, PD, curriculum format, and technology support configuration as music. Concepts such as art production, forms, and history; famous artists; book illustration techniques; and world culture are addressed. Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) have been implemented to help students broaden their knowledge base and express themselves creatively. Curriculum-related art is: displayed in classrooms and school hallways, and at local retail and business centers, community organization offices, and City Hall; used as decorations for civic and recognition events (e.g., Mayor's Prayer Breakfast, Board of Education Appreciation Day, Teacher of the Year); and entered into a wide variety of fairs and contests (e.g., Reflections Showcase).

Physical education (P.E.) reflects music and art practices and dedicated space (i.e., large multi-purpose room, outdoor track and field). LFE K-5 students are equipped with the fundamental skills, attitudes, and behaviors essential to ensure fitness, health and nutritional wellness, and engagement in a wide variety of lifelong activities. Age-appropriate instruction emphasizes and facilitates efficient motion and movement patterns, promotes student-directed goal setting and accomplishment, accommodates body systems development, links concepts with core curriculum, and enables effective participation. Programming also establishes healthy lifestyle patterns and associated fitness capacities, and teaches the importance of safe practices. Finally, P.E. addresses the personal-social skills essential for good sportsmanship, fair play, and meaningful, productive, and successful interactions with peers in team and competitive settings. Ancillary P.E. supports include clubs (e.g., Life, Circus Skills, Girls on the Run, Brain Breaks), award accomplishment (President's Physical Fitness, Jump Rope for Heart), swim safety instruction (Swim 2 Success project), and an all-school field day.

BSSD LMC (Library Media Center) curriculum is based on sequential standards, concepts, indicators, activities, and assessments. The Library Media Specialist (LMS) provides quality programming that enables LFE K-5 students to build core content skills; access, evaluate, interpret, and apply information from print and non-print materials; effectively utilize current educational technology and software applications; and meet expected academic outcomes. Learned skills include how to: locate books, utilize reference materials and resources, cite sources, and conduct research for school work and personal interest. The LMC is attended 50 minutes a week for story time and lexile-leveled book checkout for reinforcement and enjoyment at home. Students can also purchase literature during periodic book fairs. Teachers are knowledgeable about the LMC and plan together with the LMS for cross-curricular integration and completion of project-based assignments. As students now have access to computers at a younger age, Internet safety and digital citizenship were recently added to the curriculum.

A full-time counselor sees students individually and in groups, makes classroom presentations, and

functions as a family resource. Concepts include family dynamics, making friends, stranger danger, body safety, school adjustment, study skills, resiliency, behavior management, problem solving, and college and career readiness. Gifted education services for qualifying students are rigorous, offered weekly, ability grouped with like peers, project-based, and technology-supported. Special education and Section 504 instruction are inclusionary, mainstreamed, and as regular education and core aligned as possible. Exceptional education umbrella programming is individualized, and all LFE students benefit from RtI tiered and differentiated interventions.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

LFE staff provide a personalized K-5 school experience through the incorporation of effective, fundamental teaching and learning strategies such as scaffolding, shaping, connecting to prior knowledge, motivating, constructive feedback, and skill practicing. Teachers, special educators, counselors, administrators, parents, and, when applicable, students, work together to establish collective understanding about the relationship between instruction, performance, and school success.

When difficulties arise, stakeholders work collaboratively to determine the nature, severity, and root cause of the social, emotional, or learning challenge, and define it in clear terms. A professional, multidisciplinary, problem-solving approach occurs within a data-based decision-making framework, as Care Team members share responsibility for determining skill levels; identify instructional environment variables; target appropriate assessments and link them to strengths, deficits, and intervention needs (e.g., informal and miscue inventories, curriculum-based measures, criterion-referenced and standardized diagnostic achievement tests); conduct systematic observations and monitor student progress over time; collect data from a variety of sources; and evaluate outcomes (i.e., Positive Behaviors Supports methodology). Once interventions are identified and implemented, staff work tirelessly to maintain treatment integrity by making sure they are applied consistently as designed. Teacher-made, curriculum-aligned measures are incorporated in a systematic fashion, and students engage in self-directed progress monitoring activities. Graphic data representations visually illustrate growth and describe whether or not interventions were appropriately targeted and applied.

K-5 instruction is explicit and differentiated and becomes more project- and problem-based when transitioning from the primary to intermediate level (e.g., Pathways, PLTW). The workshop model is employed for core content, and technology reinforces, enhances, and personalizes concept interactions. Various grouping configurations, participation approaches, and delivery formats are incorporated into classroom practice, including individualized and cooperative learning (e.g., pair-share, small groups, mini lessons, work stations). To build deeper understanding, students across ability and grade levels conduct authentic conversations about key concepts and track their own performance. In addition, teachers act as learning facilitators and collect, monitor, and share data horizontally and vertically with peers.

Off-school hours tutoring is voluntary and invitational, and based on multiple, identifiable at-risk factors such as classroom performance, SRI and MAP (Missouri Assessment Program) scores, and teacher observation. Flex time is built into the daily schedule for focused instruction several times per school week. Also, higher order learning and instructional intervention strategies, including self-questioning, constructing mental representations, and the PQ4R (Preview, Question, Read, Reflect, Recite, and Review) process are typically incorporated to help students grasp, connect, and reflect upon concepts.

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

LFE staff use a variety of methods and tools to evaluate, measure, document, and report upon readiness, growth, skill acquisition, and/or students' educational needs. Just as lessons have different functions, employed assessments address specific elements of learning such as depth of knowledge, or the ability to comprehend and analyze concepts. Assessments are also utilized to identify students' strengths and deficits and provide targeted interventions, supports, or programming.

LFE's comprehensive evaluation process includes: pre-assessments to establish a baseline for gauging progress; interim formative assessments to provide in-process feedback and make adjustments (e.g.,

Pathways; SRI, DIBELS-Dynamic Inventory of Basic Early Literacy Skills, Go Math, Reflex Math, A-Z fluency passages); summative assessments to determine end of instructional period achievement; placement assessments to match students with specific, tiered experiences that address distinct needs (e.g., reading and math groups, 5th grade level honors placement tests); screening assessments to establish developmental readiness levels or if more concentrated services are required (kindergarten entrance, special education); authentic/performance assessments to show mastery of complex tasks via scoring guides or other methods (e.g., 5th grade science fair project, student demonstrated art/music/p.e. skills); portfolio-based paper or digital assessments to collect and track acquired knowledge and skills over time (e.g., PLTW lab results, journaling/writing samples); district developed common assessments to assure consistent and reliable growth appraisal, compare results across multiple classrooms, schools, and/or learning experiences, and align formatting with annual state achievement testing; and high-stakes, standardized assessments to meet accountability guidelines and ensure LFE is an effective school in which students are taught by capable teachers (E/LA, math, and science MAP tests, Terra Nova).

As LFE and the district have become more equipped with computers, tablets, and wireless Internet access, a growing proportion of assessments are now online. New software applications and technologies are changing assessment nature and use by allowing students to log in and take tests and making results available immediately after completion. Digital and online assessments also provide detailed analytics used to personalize learning and modify educational programming and experiences, instructional approaches, and academic-support strategies to better address student's distinct learning needs, interests, aspirations, and/or cultural backgrounds.

LFE students and parents are provided frequent, informative feedback specific to individual learning, and students analyze their performance to set achievement goals. All BSSD schools routinely report on academic progress and share growth with appropriate cabinet level personnel, the Board of Education, and the greater community at large.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

LFE staff realize that school climate and culture have a profound impact on achievement and work tirelessly to sustain an environment focused on academic success free of bullying, discrimination, and harassment. Staff also fully appreciate that the quality and character of school life is based on patterns of stakeholders' experiences and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures.

Specific topics have been addressed to impact LFE climate and culture, including health, wellness, and personal safety (e.g., Olweus bully prevention program, Drug Abuse Resistance Education); governance (e.g., shared decision making); relationship building (e.g., Chat N' Chew); diversity (e.g., Ruby Payne training); behavior management (e.g., Blue Springs Best, monthly classroom recognition, tangible incentives); interventions/enrichment (e.g., RtI, E/LA and math tutoring; extra reading, writing, and computer time); work showcases (e.g., PTA K-5 music performances, PTA Reflections contest, Art and Writing Fairs); reinforcement (e.g., notes, phone calls, and emails home), and PD. Learning conditions and other key aspects that enhance outcomes are academic challenge (e.g., high expectations, self-directed learning and motivation, rigorous coursework and activities, connection between school and personal goals) and progress structures (e.g., strong bond between staff, students, and families; positive interactions with peers; wide variety of support techniques; strong involvement of parents, schools partners, and greater school community).

LFE students are challenged to grow academically and are accountable for setting, monitoring, and reporting achievement. Interpersonal and inter-group relations are fostered, and social and emotional skills are taught via a proactive, prevention framework (i.e., promotes pro-social development, de-escalation, and problem avoidance) using self-regulating and higher-tiered intervention strategies (i.e., addresses at-risk students with chronic and/or severe needs prior to display of inappropriate behaviors). Social and emotional learning helps students develop effective fundamental life skills, including recognizing and managing emotions; developing caring and concern for others; establishing positive relationships; making responsible decisions; and handling challenging situations constructively and ethically. Such skills help prevent negative actions and the resulting disciplinary consequences assigned when behavioral standards are compromised.

Beyond students, LFE staff are the largest group of stakeholders in the school and a crucial resource. Accordingly, their engagement and recognition are absolutely essential in creating and sustaining a safe and nurturing school environment that elevates student academic achievement and bolsters pro-social/emotional development. For this reason, they are acknowledged in a number of different ways such as PTA appreciation luncheons, collaboration tickets, and school and district Teacher of the Year ceremonies.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

LFE staff recognize the integral role of family and community in providing quality educational experiences and view both as a necessary component for achieving systemic school improvement. To ensure full engagement and deliver the structures needed for K-5 student success, a concerted effort has been made to bring all stakeholders together in a purposeful partnership.

Traditionally, the approach to parental involvement is one-way – parents are asked to do something. At LFE, staff, families, and community members work together to set, plan, and achieve school-related goals, and everyone benefits from the effort. By encouraging and assuring family and community engagement in activities, participants are more fully committed to LFE endeavors. This commitment includes creating processes and procedures that support student's learning and capability at school, home, and in the larger community; increasing access to student and school-related performance; fostering partnerships among teachers, administrators, families, and community members to support student learning; and involving family and community in making decisions about school improvement. As the perspectives of educators,

families, and community members are actively sought from the beginning to help make critical decisions, this proactive approach communicates that family and community members are full partners in the improvement process.

To ensure strong family and community engagement, parent and business partners assist with capacity building and improvement efforts. LFE representatives sit on the district's Citizen's Advisory Committee, (i.e., provides leadership regarding practices, policy, and financing campaigns); attend legislative forums (i.e., addresses state issues); and provide school advisement through surveys and at monthly advocacy meetings (e.g., PTA Board). To maintain coherence, parents are kept aware of: state requirements (content standards), what is taught (curriculum) and tested (assessment), and delivery systems (instruction); the data collected, interpreted, and reported to identify performance trends and patterns; school conditions, including resources, facility, and environment; and participation opportunities. For diversity and relationship-building purposes, stakeholders participate in meaningful training and interactions to create common understandings about expectations, pending issues, and how to support the school. A sampling of LFE activities includes the Family 5K run; academic, curriculum, and literacy presentations (e.g., Greg Tang Math Night, Bill Nye Science Day, Steve Spangler Science Night); PTA movie, restaurant, and Trunk-or-Treat nights; Girls on the Run and Life Clubs; Student Council food and winter coat drives, Adopt-A-Family project, and Sweets with Your Sweet Heart event; the Backpack food program; art fairs; grade level music concerts; the School Carnival; and All Pro Dads.

3. Professional Development:

LFE instructional staff constantly seek out and share learning and then act on it with the ultimate goal being enhancement of professional effectiveness to the benefit of all K-5 students. To ensure continuous improvement, the PLC Data Team framework was implemented as a powerful staff development process and a potent strategy for both driving and heightening school performance. The LFE PLC Data Team approach takes into consideration a wide variety of operational and environmental workplace factors and makes it possible for teachers to feel supported and validated in their own ongoing learning and classroom practice.

The relationship forged between school administrators and teachers is one of shared and collegial leadership, where all grow professionally and view themselves as a team player working toward the same goal – a better school. Along with teachers, LFE administrators are seen as learners too, who are constantly questioning, investigating, and seeking solutions for school improvement. As leadership is embedded in shared ideas, not in the power of position, teachers are encouraged and empowered to effectively respond to the needs of students, peers, and families.

To LFE teachers, support means a network of cooperation among colleagues, expanded professional roles, and the ability to adopt new classroom practices resulting in increased student performance. Through opportunities for collaborative inquiry and learning, staff develop and share a body of wisdom gleaned from their experience. Coupled with shared decision-making, new ideas and information are applied to problem solving and innovative solutions are created for classroom challenges. Other key aspects of the LFE PLC process are shared values and vision, and supportive environmental conditions such as structured daily time to plan instruction together, participate in peer classroom observations, and share feedback.

The BSSD delivers high quality, in-district PD that is research-based and proven to work. Top educational consultants in the field provide direct, ongoing information and support in the core content areas and help ensure that instructional methods are successfully incorporated (Matt Glover, Ellin Keene, Debbie Miller, Greg Tang). Some other components common to LFE are new teacher induction, mentoring, coaching, monthly paraprofessional PD meetings, topical studies/book reviews/workshops (reading fluency, math work, technology, intruder safety, OneNote), diversity training (Ruby Payne), quarterly ½ day collaboration opportunities, monthly instructional coach sessions (E/LA, math, science), content area cadre meetings, horizontal and vertical teaming, and lab classroom establishment (E/LA and math).

4. School Leadership:

At LFE, school leadership relates directly to providing a culture, climate, and conditions committed to student achievement and instructional improvement. To attain this objective, key strategies have been identified, including collaborative goal setting with high performance and quality instruction being non-negotiable; alignment of school and district targeted priorities; focused monitoring and reporting of pertinent data, and shared decision-making about available resources for attaining positive outcomes.

LFE staff meet in grade level, content area, and vertical teams to identify goals addressing individual and subgroup student population achievement, instructional practice, and overall school improvement. Once agreed upon, staff are made aware of the goals, action plans are developed, and the work begins. Through the district's comprehensive PD approach, instructional models have been identified for respective grade levels that teachers are expected to employ with fidelity. This establishes a common framework for classroom instructional design and planning, consistent language and vocabulary, and uniform use of research-based strategies. LFE teachers and administrators work together collaboratively to support, attain, communicate about, and celebrate goal accomplishment.

The district's annual CSIP (Comprehensive School Improvement Plan) review identifies and publicizes crucial targets for achievement and instruction. Prior to the start of each school year, LFE's lead principal shares this information with the Leadership Team, which in turn helps formulate a SIP (School Improvement Plan) aligned with the district's targeted, non-negotiable goals. Although other LFE initiatives are generally undertaken, staff ensure that SIP goals remain the top priority pertaining to attention and resources. It's not unusual for the LFE leadership team to enact broader, multi-year, school-specific goals to improve achievement and instruction such as adoption of a PLC Data Team PD approach. LFE staff consistently support the SIP goals, both publicly and privately, to attain overall success.

LFE achievement, instruction, and school improvement goals are continually monitored to ensure they remain the driving force behind stakeholders' actions. Data is regularly examined to determine the extent to which desired targets are met. Discrepancies between articulated and realized goals are interpreted to change or redouble efforts. As current classroom practice is a primary indicator of success, differences between expected methodology and observed application is a call for correction.

The LFE leadership team takes into consideration the necessary resources – time, money, personnel, and materials – allocated to accomplish school goals. It also helps ensure that PD supports the school's focus and provides the requisite knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to accomplish goals.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

LFE staff endeavor to ensure high student performance and realize that specific factors at pivotal times in a student’s educational career – kindergarten attendance, first grade behavior, the ability to read by the end of 3rd grade – have the potential to predict and/or effect the likelihood of on-time high school graduation and post-secondary achievement. While tracing attainment to one aspect, element, challenge, or condition may overstate or simplify the importance of what LFE has accomplished, there is merit to the argument that actionable use of a focused, comprehensive, indicator accountability system - PLC Data Teams - has resulted in academic success.

As students file into classrooms at the start of each new school year, LFE teachers are already aware of early warning signs and at-risk factors threatening future achievement potential. Accordingly, teachers, guidance staff, and administrators work together collectively with parents to help mitigate barriers and obstacles through early identification and targeted, personalized learning interventions and/or enrichment strategies.

LFE staff have access to data on a wide range of multiple indicators used to monitor, validate, and report academic growth – those with varying degrees of predictive power, such as student interest and college and career inventories; those pertaining directly to student outcomes, such as end of unit study grades and test scores; and those covering factors that indirectly affect student learning, such as attendance and behavior. In addition, indicators such as annual standardized achievement test scores are used in conjunction with formative, summative, and district-designed common assessments to identify levels of performance, effectiveness of instruction, and degree of core content rigor.

Ultimately, LFE’s focused, comprehensive, indicator accountability system - PLC Data Teams - provides staff a broad “menu” and “road map” for academic success. Options are facilitated by level (individual, classroom, grade, school) and dimension (quality of instruction, content preparedness and mastery) for determining readiness (Brigance III kindergarten screening instrument, Pathways), necessary student supports, interventions, and enrichment (Go Math, Reflex Math, special education evaluation process), identifying baseline and finish points (pre- and post-assessments); gauging on-track growth and progress over time (Pathways, DIBELS reading fluency, SRI reading comprehension, teacher-made quizzes and tests); obtaining perceptions about meeting student, staff, and family needs (parent surveys, Organizational Health Index); defining core content mastery (annual Missouri Show Me Learning Standards aligned MAP/Missouri Assessment Program test, Terra Nova); and assigning students to instructional groups and/or advanced courses (5th grade math & E/LA honors track placement tests).