

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 [X] Charter [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Ms. Pheng Lim

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

Official School Name Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School (FACTS)

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1023 Callowhill Street

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

City Philadelphia State PA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 19123-3704

County Philadelphia County

Telephone (215) 569-2600 Fax (215) 569-3985

Web site/URL http://www.factschool.org E-mail plim@factschool.org

Facebook Page
http://www.facebook.com/folkartsculturaltreasureschar
Twitter Handle terschool

Google+ _____

Other Social Media Link

http://www.culturetools.org
g _____

YouTube/URL _____ Blog _____

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*Ms. Ellen Somekawa E-mail esomekawa@factschool.org

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

District Name Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School Tel. (215) 569-2600

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 Mr. Ed Nakawatase

(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):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 0 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 1 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	27	23	50
1	33	21	54
2	33	21	54
3	28	26	54
4	24	30	54
5	24	30	54
6	31	24	55
7	28	25	53
8	23	29	52
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	251	229	480

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 67 % Asian
 - 18 % Black or African American
 - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 3 % White
 - 8 % 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: 1%

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	3
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	4
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	7
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	481
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.015
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	1

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 10 %
48 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Mandarin, Cantonese, Indonesian, Spanish, Fuzhounese, Vietnamese, Khmer

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 77 %
Total number students who qualify: 368

8. Students receiving special education services: 12 %
59 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.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <u>0</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>6</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>36</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>12</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>3</u> Mental Retardation | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities | <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 3
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	6
Classroom teachers	18
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	13
Paraprofessionals	2
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 26:1

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%	98%	97%
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.

FACTS provides children with an education that utilizes traditional arts and cultures found within communities as the catalyst for critical inquiry and community engagement.

16. For public schools only, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

Students are selected through a random lottery. Applicants must reside within Pennsylvania, but first preference goes to Philadelphia residents.

Entering the lottery requires only a one page Intent to Enroll form that requests: name, contact information, age, current school and grade of the student being enrolled, sibling information (if enrolled or also enrolling at FACTS), and parent contact information. The Intent to Enroll form must be submitted by the deadline for applicants to be added to the lottery. The Intent to Enroll form is available on our website in the following languages: English, Chinese, Indonesian, Spanish, and Vietnamese. Hard copies of the form are also available for in-person pick up at the main office during regular building hours. Completed Intent to Enroll forms may be submitted to FACTS by mail, fax or in person.

Students are recruited via advertisement in local newspapers beginning in late fall. Open houses for prospective parents are scheduled with dates posted on the school's website. In addition, letters are sent to community organizations with information such as when the Intent to Enroll form is available, how to obtain an Intent to Enroll form, application deadline, and the lottery date, time, and location.

The lottery is publicized in advance and the event is open to the public. Siblings of current FACTS students as well as children of FACTS staff and board members have preference, but still go through the lottery process. All the names are randomly pulled from a basket and placed on a list in the order they were pulled. There are 50 kindergarten seats, so the first 50 kindergarten names pulled are considered selected. The remaining students make up the waiting list. Each family that submitted an Intent to Enroll form is notified of their child's selection into FACTS or number on the waiting list.

During the spring and summer, as the office receives information about current students who are withdrawing or moving to a new school, names are pulled from the waiting list and families are invited to enroll their child into FACTS.

PART III – SUMMARY

The Folk Arts–Cultural Treasures Charter School (FACTS) was founded in 2005 by two local organizations, Asian Americans United and the Philadelphia Folklore Project. After 15 years of advocating and organizing to address the particular needs of English Language Learners and Asian immigrant and refugee students in Philadelphia public schools, the school’s founders turned to the strategy of institution-building. By starting a charter school, we could model how to provide high quality services to Asian English Language Learner students and their families. FACTS was designed to bridge the gulf of isolation, unfamiliarity with institutions, and language barriers that prevent some parents from playing active roles in the education of their children – and to nurture students to develop the character, skills, and sense-of-self they need to thrive in this world.

Beyond serving the particular needs of Asian ELL students, we wanted to show how a school could teach students to work together for justice in a diverse society. We created a deliberately multi-racial/ multi-ethnic school, adopting a folk arts approach that welcomes the knowledge, wisdom, and traditions of our families into our school. FACTS serves 480 students. The diversity we sought is reflected in our student population: approximately 67% of our students are Asian, 18% Black (African American and African), 4% Latino, 3% white, 8% Multiracial, 77% Low Income, 60% Primary Home Language Other Than English.

Folk arts are the unifying thread across this diverse school body. FACTS was founded on the idea that the students, staff and families of our school are cultural treasures; they are sources of knowledge. Too often children, especially children living in poverty, immigrant/refugee children, and children who speak non-Standard English, are asked to check their home cultures, their community knowledge and community ways of knowing at the door of the school. But FACTS drives success by making connections with the diverse cultural communities in our school and reducing the home/school divide. We do this by paying attention to and valuing students’ home cultures as part of our regular teaching practice and whole school culture.

Some students arrive at their first day of school already well versed in school ways of knowing and will be ready to be the first to raise their hands at every teacher question. Other students may have a wealth of community-based knowledge and ways of knowing, but in school they may not have an access point for demonstrating the kinds of knowledge that they do have. If we invite community knowledge into the school, we can help students access school ways of knowing as they demonstrate what they do know – and school becomes more relevant as they connect with their own personal experience.

FACTS students learn about music and movement from an African American dance troupe and learn about literary character development through studying and enacting the Monkey King legend with a Chinese puppet artist. Our school calendar is rich with ritual events that help define our school community; e.g. the whole school celebrates and learns about Lunar New Year. Whether or not this holiday is part of their home culture, students are invited to reflect on the ways that their own families celebrate whichever New Year they celebrate; they can note similarities and differences both within and between different cultural traditions. The more we do this, the more students are able to recognize differences as variations rather than seeing some as valid and others as inferior. When we bring students’ experiences and knowledge into the classroom, the teacher becomes a learner along with the rest of the class, and student knowledge and diverse community practices are shown to hold value.

FACTS has become a nationally recognized leader in serving English Language Learners. FACTS’ parental outreach among parents of ELL students was the subject of a 2015 video case study by the National Charter School Resource Center. FACTS was one of two charter schools invited by the DOE’s Office of Innovation and Improvement and Office of English Language Acquisition to present at a 2014 convening to discuss enhancing access to high quality ESOL services in charter schools.

FACTS is built on a belief that the social curriculum is just as important as academic programming. FACTS provides a safe learning community so students can develop socially, emotionally and academically. This is established and maintained through creating a schedule that provides opportunities for teachers to teach into the social skills, infusing folk arts pedagogy into the school, and implementing school-wide practices based on the Responsive Classroom® approach.

FACTS' unique school-wide educational goals, institutional practices and culture of learning have driven our ongoing progress on standardized assessments. FACTS was ranked the No. 2 school overall in Philadelphia according to the School District of Philadelphia's most recent School Progress Report and received the Pennsylvania Department of Education's highest School Performance Profile rating among all Philadelphia schools in 2014.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

The Principal, Curriculum Council, and Department Coordinators use the Standards Aligned System to align standards from K-8 in all core content areas.

MATH: FACTS uses Singapore Math®, the mathematics curriculum used by all schools in Singapore. Students develop a solid grounding in mathematical literacy by learning to master fewer mathematical concepts in greater depth and at greater detail. Singapore Math supports students with diverse learning styles and learning needs. Students learn concepts using a three-step learning process. In the concrete stage, students engage in hands-on learning. In the pictorial stage, students use pictorial representations of mathematical concepts. In the abstract stage, students solve mathematical problems by using numbers and symbols. Math teachers at FACTS are provided training on the use of precise language in delivering content. We utilize instruction that is free from extraneous language, gives clear expectations, and returns focus to the objective of the lesson. Daily lessons are structured similarly, therefore, students are able to predict the sequence of a lesson. This helps to anchor students' learning and reduce anxieties. This method supports our lower performing students in math who may be receiving Special Education or ESOL services because it is naturally scaffolded and presented in a format that increases the opportunity for students to access each concept. Students are able to exceed grade expectations by being invited to solve a problem in multiple ways or to solve higher grade level work on tests, quizzes and/or worksheets consistently and independently.

ELA: FACTS uses the Teachers College Reading and Writing Projects (TCRWP)® as the basic program for ELA instruction. FACTS selected TCRWP because it provides opportunities for targeted and intentional teaching that utilizes student data to inform and guide instruction. It trains students to be active learners. In reading, TCRWP emphasizes the interaction between readers and text. Students learn to ask questions, make connections with prior knowledge and previously read texts, and ask questions to clarify faulty comprehension they recognize has occurred. The program includes peer conferences and teacher conferences with students but emphasizes students' independence and allows them to become successful readers outside of the classroom. In writing, TCRWP includes instruction through shared, interactive, and independent writing across a variety of genres using the writing process. Teachers use conference notes during independent conferences or small group instruction to assess and monitor students and to tailor lessons to meet individual needs. Research has shown intentional or targeted teaching supports student achievement more than any other intervention strategy. Success and progress is measured according to the individual's point of entry either as ELLs or students with other challenges. However, the goal is for every child to meet grade level expectations with the acknowledgement that growth and development takes time and may look different depending on the student's history, background and needs.

SCIENCE: FACTS developed our own Science Units using Understanding by Designs™ framework. FACTS' Science curriculum consists of 4-6 inquiry-based units at each grade level. Students are encouraged to ask questions, to conduct experiments and to learn important concepts and skills rather than merely to remember detailed information. Inquiry based approaches to science education focus on student constructed learning. Each unit contains a performance assessment to show what a student understands and their ability to apply their knowledge to a real world situation.

SOCIAL STUDIES: FACTS developed our own Social Studies curriculum, integrating our Folk Arts Standards with PA Core History and Social Studies Standards. The goal of our Social Studies Curriculum is to provide an educational experience that raises our students' academic achievement and ability to think creatively; affirms language, traditional arts and culture; nurtures values of compassion and kindness; instills a commitment to taking care of themselves and their community; recognizes parents, elders, and community members as a constant presence in their lives; and inspires a vision of justice and fairness and the courage to pursue them. Students practice using the tools of social scientists, such as conducting interviews, looking at artifacts, observing people and places, studying maps and documents from history, and taking photos and videos to document a place or event. A unique feature of our social studies curriculum is that we use folk-

life methodology, namely, community-based investigations, gathering information from people in our community.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Students from K-8 receive weekly instruction in Physical Education/Health, Art, Music, and Mandarin. K-5 students participate in weekly choir, and grades 6-8 have an additional Physical Education class per week.

MUSIC: The music program reflects the belief that all children have musical potential and that critical thinking can be developed through music starting in very young children. The curriculum includes many opportunities for students to explore sound through singing, moving, listening, playing, and music appreciation. The fundamentals of music literacy are taught emphasizing experiencing first, analyzing, reading and writing second. We place importance on improvisation and creativity/composition. Repertoire from the cultures of the students is included in the curriculum. The curriculum is influenced by Orff-Schulwerk and Dalcroze Eurhythmics, models that emphasize body movement and creativity.

ART: The art program is structured around themes of: 1) Community and Home Investigation: Students take a close look at the places where we live work and play, and the people who fill our lives; 2) Folk and Traditional Arts: Folk Arts are a valuable way to learn about ourselves and those around us; 3) Art History / Art Work in Context: What can we discover about the time and place a work of art comes from by looking closely? Learning about the why of an artwork teaches us about the how—how it was made, how it was seen and how it was understood; 4) Our Natural World: Many of our Art projects focus on our planet and the natural cycles unfolding around us; 5) Design and Elements in Art: An artist’s toolbox is full – with line, shape, color, light, and pattern. By focusing on one aspect, students hone their artistic skills.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION: FACTS’ PE program helps students understand the importance of sustaining regular physical fitness. It provides them with the skills, habits, and interests for lifelong participation in physical activity. Students become knowledgeable in a variety of skills, concepts, and vocabulary through participating in various recreational activities, sports, dances, and fitness activities.

MANDARIN: The Mandarin Program goals are to: expose students to the culture, history, and language of China; provide students with hands-on experience with traditional Chinese arts and crafts; foster students’ confidence in learning a foreign language; support heritage speakers in retaining and strengthening their language; increase students’ appreciation for folk arts through the in-depth study of another culture; cultivate a sense of openness and respect for other cultures and languages.

FOLK ARTS: FACTS embodies a unique vision of arts-based education centering on folk arts. In content area classes, students may: read or write about a traditional art form or the culture from which that form comes; write the stories of the dances they are learning; conduct community surveys to find people with local knowledge; record and write oral histories; or use their knowledge of textiles to use mathematical concepts such as symmetry and measurement.

Folk Arts Residencies expose students to diverse artists and art forms, pairing folk artists with subject-area teachers for 6-10 weeks. The teacher and artist collaborate to design and deliver an integrated unit of study that addresses subject area and Folk Arts Standards. Students explore subject area content as it is exemplified in a folk art form while learning about the art form’s aesthetics, history, and cultural context. Residencies are staggered throughout a student’s career at FACTS. For example, in 2nd grade music classes, all 54 students learn music and movement through West African Dance. In 5th grade social studies and music classes, all 54 students learn about the history and origins of Brazilian Capoeira while also learning to perform it, etc.

Folk Arts Ensembles: Students may elect to study a particular folk art once a week over the course of an entire year. Approximately 160 students in grades 3-8 participate in ensembles including: African Dance and Drum, Chinese Opera, Vietnamese Zither, African American Step, Indonesian Dance, and Kung Fu/Lion Dance. Ensembles allow students to: develop skills and knowledge of a folk art form and its aesthetics; express themselves in culturally-significant art forms; and practice values and life-skills (i.e. perseverance,

collaboration, compassion). Students experience exemplary works of art through artist instruction and performances, work together to create a performance, and perform at school events.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

We structure our school – from the way we set up our schedule and teaching assignments to our choice of curriculum and teaching approaches to our use of assessment – in a way that identifies and supports the individual needs of students.

FACTS teachers specialize by content beginning in first grade. Classroom teachers provide instruction either in reading/writing or math/science. Social studies is taught by all homeroom teachers. This content specialization leads to increased depth of knowledge among teachers, provides for focused planning time, and allows for targeted professional development. Teachers also loop with students for two years, leading to greater familiarity with students and families.

FACTS utilizes the Readers/Writers Workshop which is designed to meet learners where they're at developmentally. The structure of a Reading/ Writing Project includes a brief mini-lesson that teaches a specific skill, conferences with individuals, small group strategy lessons, and student reading independently using their "Just Right Books" or leveled readers. Teachers use conference notes during independent conferences or small group instruction to assess and monitor students and to tailor lessons to meet individual needs. Students work at their independent level or instructional level with the support of a teacher to provide the right amount of support to meet the level of achievement.

Teacher collaboration is at the core of our approach to developing and maintaining instructional excellence. Teachers work in collaborative teams comprised of classroom teachers, Special Education teachers and ESOL teachers drawing upon one another's strengths to plan lessons that meet the students where they are at. Teachers are trained in collaborative techniques and have common planning time scheduled each week. Through this process of collaboration, teachers learn from their peers and inspire each other. They come together to share strategies and analysis about the learning strengths and challenges of individual students. ESOL Teachers and Special Education teachers work very closely with homeroom teachers for planning and delivery of instruction in order to meet diverse student needs. We utilize a flexible model combining pull-out, push-in, and sheltered approaches depending on the particular needs of our students.

FACTS' Response to Intervention (RtI) is a three-tiered, collaborative process by which we identify barriers to learning and remove them by accessing internal (school-based) and external (community-based) resources. The heart of RtI is the classroom, where the classroom teacher analyzes the strengths and learning needs of his/her students and adapts instruction and the environment to create learning conditions.

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

One of FACTS' most impactful uses of assessment is our regular use of formative assessments to quickly and frequently check students' understanding. Math lessons often close with "exit tickets" – three quick questions on the current lesson, giving teachers and students instant feedback about whether each student mastered lesson objectives. With Leveled Pattern Boxes, students work at their own level to assess math fluency. In ELA, teachers use individual conferences to assess students and tailor lessons to meet individual needs.

Using Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) results, teachers plan for small group strategy lessons, guided reading instruction, independent reading, targeted interventions, and supplemental support. Students read independently using their "Just Right Books." Teachers select materials that match students' levels and provide appropriate instruction to challenge them.

We use data from ACCESS for ELLs to (1) help students and families understand students' current level of English language proficiency along the developmental continuum, (2) help determine whether students are prepared to exit ESOL, (3) assist in determining whether ELLs have attained the proficiency needed to participate meaningfully in content area classrooms without ESOL support, (4) help teachers enhance instruction for ELLs, and (5) provide data to help teachers and school leaders evaluate the effectiveness of the ESOL programs.

Two parent teacher conferences and three interim report periods provide systematic ways to inform families of their children's progress, including sharing results from assessments and opportunities to answer questions about assessments. Interim reports note both positive feedback and areas for improvement. Parent teacher conferences are times to discuss the whole child and how the school and family can best support the child's academic, social, and emotional growth. We understand that standardized tests are difficult for many parents to understand. FACTS has written our own statement in language that students and parents can understand about what PSSA test results do and don't tell us about a child's performance and growth. We emphasize that standardized tests are a snapshot and they do not measure the spectrum of a child's many qualities and capabilities. We read this statement to all students and circulate it to all families.

While parent teacher conferences provide time to discuss assessments with individual parents, Back to School Night meetings provide the opportunity for the school to discuss how standardized tests reflect on the school as a whole and for parents to raise questions about the meaning of the PSSA reports.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

FACTS students are encouraged to develop intrinsic motivation to do well, belong, contribute, and engage in meaningful learning and growth. As educators, it is our job to help students learn these skills so that they may become well-rounded individuals that contribute to their communities.

FACTS provides a culturally competent school setting that honors the languages and cultures of our students. Our school seeks to give children necessary linguistic and social skills for becoming successful students in the US, while at the same time affirming their home cultures. Allowing families to secure a physically and psychologically safe space for the acquisition of linguistic and social skills will enable children and families to have both a base, and the confidence, necessary to exercise their responsibilities as members of a democratic civil society. Folk arts, already vernacular means for creating such safe spaces and times, are important resources in this effort.

We work to meet the social, emotional, and academic needs of our students by building relationships with students and families, incorporating folk arts and culture into the curriculum, setting high expectations, taking time to build community and character, and providing academic rigor. Creating a positive school culture at FACTS is proactive and reactive. Proactively, we work with children to create, teach, and practice expectations. Reactively, we use logical consequences to help children regain control and take ownership of their actions and choices.

FACTS has adopted the Responsive Classroom program, and its middle school counterpart Developmental Designs, in the effort to foster a caring, thoughtful and structured school environment for all students. The Responsive Classroom program has been recognized by the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) as one of the most well-designed, evidenced-based social and emotional learning programs. The Responsive Classroom and Developmental Designs approach encourages community building through dialogue and established routines. Students learn and practice life skills such as cooperation, compassion, trustworthiness, patience, active listening, and perseverance. The school invests in this social curriculum and sees it as a critical to our success.

Teachers are trained and supported to establish efficient classroom routines and provide clear guidelines for student conduct within the classroom. They are encouraged to deliver consequences consistently in the classroom and reinforce positive behavior. Our Director of School Culture supports teachers by modeling classroom management and training on Responsive Classroom techniques so that misbehavior is minimized and students can focus on learning.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

FACTS' well-attended family events familiarize parents and caregivers with our academic program (e.g. Math Night, Literacy Night, ESOL Night, Special Education Night, Science Night). Some events involve parents coming with their children to engage in math activities or reading books aloud; others inform parents of their rights as parents of ESOL or Special Education students. All of them provide interpretation so caregivers can fully participate. We schedule gatherings when working parents can most often attend. We provide childcare or create events that include children to increase the ability of families to participate.

FACTS routinely communicates with families in their home languages. Written communications are regularly translated into the main languages spoken by families. When we don't have a staff member who can interpret spoken interactions, we use telephonic interpretation or contracted interpreters. FACTS teachers log their communications home to parents and these logs are part of their professional portfolios, used in their annual evaluations.

FACTS maintains robust community partnerships that invite community partners to share their resources

and talents with the school and that share the school's resources with the community. Two community partners, Asian Americans United and the Philadelphia Folklore Project, are on a committee with FACTS staff for the planning, delivery and evaluation of FACTS' Folk Arts Education Program. FACTS partners with the Franklin Institute to host telescope building workshops and star parties for the community. The Pennsylvania Ballet provides weekly ballet lessons to first grade students, an afterschool dance program for middle school students, opportunities to attend PA Ballet performances, and tuition-free classes for selected students at the Pennsylvania Ballet School. Need in Deed supports service-learning at FACTS. FACTS hosts community events such as the City Planning Commission's Chinatown Planning sessions, Viet Lead's Vietnamese young leaders' trainings, non-partisan voter education trainings, and the Teachers Action Group's annual conference. FACTS maintains relationships with several community child care centers. AAU and BPSOS-DelValley run summer youth workforce development programs at FACTS, serving FACTS students and alumni, and students from the broader community – one program is conducted in Mandarin; one program is conducted in Vietnamese and English; and one program is conducted primarily in English. FACTS partners with the Callowhill Neighborhood Association on projects such as neighborhood clean ups. FACTS offers placements for UPenn, Temple, Bryn Mawr, Swarthmore and Drexel education students and for the Senior Citizen Community Service Employment Project. FACTS participates actively in the major annual Chinatown Mid-Autumn Festival.

3. Professional Development:

FACTS' leadership creates a culture of collaboration and an expectation of continuous professional growth.

Reflections and best practices are shared among colleagues. Teachers are provided release time to observe other teachers. Department meetings are held to share best practices, address concerns, and celebrate successes. Lesson studies within departments give teachers the opportunity to collectively analyze lesson plans to increase instructional effectiveness.

In department meetings the nuances of each curriculum or program (e.g. Singapore Math® or TCRWP®) are addressed. The Principal and content coordinators provide on-going and targeted support to teachers through workshops, department meetings and observations with post-meeting discussions.

Each year all instructional staff create a professional growth plan. They share this plan with the Principal and are partnered with at least one other teacher to work collaboratively on this goal. PD time is set aside throughout the year for the partner teams to meet. Teachers also reflect on parent communication logs, school contribution logs, and professional development logs each marking period.

As the instructional leader, the Principal establishes the schedule of PDs and sets a focus for the year. This year, for example, the focus of professional development was "Inquiry and Reflective Practices." Reflection is a key practice for gaining insight on student learning. By engaging students in reflection, we have a window into their understandings and self-realizations. Practicing the skill of reflection also supports our students in becoming actively engaged in assessing their own learning.

Teachers are working together on improving the quality of student reflections, brainstorming strategies for prompting higher order thinking, and sharing strategies for engaging students' multiple intelligences. Teachers are also working on their own reflective practices in study circles and through sharing experiences by leading Inquiries with their peers. Honing in on a focus area helps solidify gains because the whole team is pulling in the same direction for a concerted period of time.

PD also supports the school's mission with 1) Anti-Bias Trainings to unpack our biases and build our awareness of the experiences of systemic biases that our families, students and communities face; 2) Folk Arts Education and Pedagogy training including content integration of folk arts pedagogy and unpacking FACTS Folk Arts Standards; and 3) Train on best practices in ESOL instruction led by ESOL staff and the Principal.

School Leadership:

FACTS' philosophy is that the role of school leadership is to create the structures and conditions under which people are motivated and encouraged to maximize their contributions (of talent, ideas, effort, and heart) to our collective project. Each prospective staff member receives a copy of our "Who We Are" Statement that clearly addresses the values and mission of our school. The collective focus on this shared vision has led to our students' academic excellence in a safe and caring environment. We rely on every staff member to work in the service of our shared mission, and every staff member at FACTS is referred to as "Teacher" because we all are responsible for creating the school community and school climate that nurtures our students.

We have built a collaborative professional learning community. Teachers work with one another during weekly meetings to devise plans that are accessible to all learners. Peer coaching and peer lesson reviews are a common practice. We encourage teachers to have continued dialogue about best practices to increase student achievement through scheduled professional growth plan meetings and weekly meetings.

The leadership team of FACTS is comprised of the Board of Trustees, Executive Director, Principal and Administrative Council. This team understands that all staff are integral to building a successful school community of learners and are stakeholders in the continued progress and development of the school.

The Board of Trustees stewards the school's resources, guides the school through leadership transitions, and safeguards the school's mission. The Executive Director serves as the lead administrator responsible for upholding the mission, ensuring effective institutional operations, maintaining accountability, building school/community relationships, enhancing work culture, and building institutional consensus. The Principal serves as the instructional leader and is responsible for achieving and sustaining rigorous academic standards. The Principal provides educational leadership using the Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership Standards and administrative direction to the school while ensuring compliance with all state and federal regulations.

Recognizing that it takes a team and multiple perspectives to analyze and make decisions about the complexities of running a school, our Administrative Council brings together the Executive Director, Principal, Director of School Culture, Director of Finance, Assistant Director, Special Education Supervisor, and Non-Instructional Coordinator. The Administrative Council leads strategically, intentionally and collaboratively. Similarly, we have a Curriculum Council, comprised of the Principal and a team of teachers representing different disciplines that models professional leadership and guidance on curricular and academic issues.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Community building is essential to the success of FACTS. FACTS deliberately carves designated time in its daily schedule for teachers and students to develop a deep sense of community. From 8:15-8:40 teachers and students participate in morning meeting. FACTS uses the Responsive Classroom/ Developmental Designs structure of facilitating morning meeting. Every class begins every morning with a greeting, sharing, activity and message.

FACTS believes in the important of balancing the social curriculum with a rigorous academic program. We achieve this through intentional scheduling and on-going training for staff. In addition to morning meetings, each grade includes a weekly period for class meetings. During class meetings, teachers and students bring issues to the surface and work collaboratively and proactively to solve problems and design solutions to prevent issues from occurring. It is also a time where ritual calendar events and the values of the school are reinforced and reflected on. Students are encouraged and empowered to present topics of discussions. Teachers are trained to act as a facilitator, so students can emerge as the leaders of the classroom and take on the responsibility for a healthy classroom and school environment.

FACTS also recognizes the importance of building a strong community within the staff and teachers. Community building and anti-bias education are built into FACTS' PD schedule (a week before school, three days at the end of the year, and other days throughout the year). PD includes time for community building; only through taking the time to build relationships of trust among staff are we able to address tough issues such as race and gender bias. Through anti-bias education, teachers are challenged to recognize their own biases and discuss issues of bias, stereotypes, and systemic inequality.

FACTS invests in community building because it is the foundation for building a highly functioning team. A community that works together and believes in each other opens the possibility of deep and sustained collaboration among staff. Teachers grow when they trust their colleagues and are able to share openly the challenges they face. Children blossom when they feel safe and confident, when they feel comfortable taking risks to try something at which they might fail. Classroom disruptions and discipline issues become rarer when students feel connected to and accountable to their peers. Social and emotional competence among a school community leads to social and emotional safety, a critical condition for learning and academic growth.