

U.S. Department of Education
2020 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 3243 Highway 70
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Morgan City State LA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 70380-8025

County St. Martin Parish

Telephone (985) 385-1366 Fax _____

Web site/URL https://se.saintmartinschools.org/ E-mail christopher_shirley@saintmartinschools.org

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* Mr. Allen Blanchard Jr. E-mail al_blanchard@saintmartinschools.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name St. Martin Parish Tel. (337) 332-2105

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. Russel Foti
(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. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2020 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. 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.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2014 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, or 2019.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
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 (2019-2020) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 9 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 4 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 3 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 16 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)
 Suburban
 Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2019 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	6	4	10
K	6	5	11
1	9	4	13
2	3	2	5
3	9	10	19
4	6	5	11
5	8	8	16
6	5	6	11
7	7	5	12
8	8	3	11
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	67	52	119

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1.7 % Asian
 - 0 % Black or African American
 - 1.7 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 96.6 % White
 - 0 % 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 2018 - 2019 school year: 20%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain:

Stephensville Elementary School is a very small, rural school. Any small change greatly influences percentage numbers. The population includes some transient workers who come and go with job availability. We also experienced severe flooding which closed the school at the end of the 2018-19 school year, which could have influenced some families to move away. This school is also known to have a very low teacher to student ratio. Some families move to our zone to pursue educational opportunities for their children.

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, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	17
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	7
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	24
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	122
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.20
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	20

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

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %
0 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 38 %

Total number students who qualify: 45

8. Students receiving special education services: 10 %

12 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> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>1</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>8</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>8</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 1

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	11
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	1
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	1
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	0

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 10:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	95%	95%	95%	96%	95%
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 2019.

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.

Stephensville Elementary School aims to provide a high quality education in a safe environment where teachers and students can thrive.

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

Stephensville Elementary serves the small, rural communities of Stephensville and Belle River in South Central Louisiana in Lower St. Martin Parish. The community is composed of mostly Caucasian families, many of which have lived here for generations. Typical families earn their living through blue collar work such as working offshore, commercial fishing, or construction. The few businesses in the area are dependent on the waters that surround the community. Many of the residents share a love of the outdoors, especially boating, hunting, and fishing. Students that attend Stephensville Elementary are not unlike the average student in other areas. They enjoy the same popular music as the majority of the youth, engage in online interactions with their peers, and idolize the same types of role-models. The students here are a joy to teach, and there are rarely any major discipline problems.

Stephensville Elementary has a very unique benefit of an extremely low teacher to student ratio. Due to this, teachers at the school are able to reach more students emotionally and academically. On average, there are twelve students in each classroom from Pre-K to eighth grade which greatly benefits the students. Teachers are able to give students more individual attention which helps to challenge students academically and foster emotional growth. We also set very high standards for student achievement. In addition to the low teacher to student ratio, we provide students with programs and curriculum recommended by the Louisiana Department of Education and the St. Martin Parish School Board that have been chosen specifically to help all students reach their full potential. We are also fortunate to offer French as a foreign language for all students from kindergarten to eighth grade which helps students to develop culturally. Many of the elderly residents spoke Cajun French primarily, so it helps to keep a strong connection to our historical culture. The alumni of Stephensville also help to build a sense of community. Community members who are not volunteers also help the school by showing their support and appreciation. I feel the love when community members stop me around town or at the grocery store and speak highly of the on-goings of Stephensville Elementary. The Association of Parents and Teachers has also been growing and becoming more involved at the school in recent years. These volunteers help to do wonderful things at our school for the students such as hosting festivals and raising funds to promote events at the school.

Stephensville Elementary has a highly qualified and dedicated staff. Many of the teachers here have been teaching at Stephensville for longer than a decade, and three of those teachers have dedicated over twenty years to just this school. Many of those teachers live in the community, and, through dedicated time and hard work, have gained the trust of the community. There is very little teacher turnover, and the staff morale is very high. The teachers also demonstrate a willingness to do whatever it takes to accomplish what's in the best interest for our students. There is a great amount of trust and communication between teachers and parents. Open, two way communication is a strong value at Stephensville Elementary, and the teachers and families work well together when planning to solve problems or communicate about the students. These factors play a pivotal role in the success of our school.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

1a. Overall approach, which may include overarching philosophy or approaches common across subject areas

At Stephenville Elementary, we follow guidance from the Louisiana Department of Education and from our school district. When trusted informants tell us what we should be doing, we take heed and adapt that advice for our specific needs. I became the interim principal of Stephenville Elementary for the 2018-19 school year, and my goal was simple. I wanted to ensure that all students were exposed to a rigorous curriculum (Tier 1 when possible) that would cover the academic standards required by the Louisiana Department of Education. Proper implementation would ensure that the curriculum was being covered, instruction was effective, and assessment was challenging.

Facilitating instruction is a cyclical pattern. I visit a classroom, leave some feedback, and, after a small period of reflection, plan with the teacher to improve instruction. I make it a point to visit classrooms daily so I can give frequent feedback and monitor classrooms. Instructional support is always positive in nature. This helps to ensure that teachers are supported and that we are making progress towards our vision. My goal with facilitating instruction is to increase teachers' capacity for success. Stephenville Elementary is extremely fortunate to have compassionate teachers who truly want to help their students succeed. The willingness of the teachers at Stephenville Elementary here has made facilitating instruction very pleasant.

Assessments in ELA and Math typically come from the Tier 1 curriculum which results in strong assessment opportunities in ELA and Math. Other subjects' assessments are scrutinized with the aid of documents provided by the Louisiana Department of Education. I find the Achievement Level Descriptors particularly useful when reviewing assessments. We also review the standards to ensure that the tests are aligned with the instruction. After an assessment is administered, we use the data to further drive instruction and plan for remediation when necessary.

1b. Reading/English language arts

Reading is, in my opinion, the key to academic success. I don't believe that any other subject plays a more pivotal role in the advancement of student intellect than reading and English Language Arts. I've taught or been an administrator over students from pre-k through twelfth grade, and I have noticed that there's a strong, positive correlation between students who read consistently and academic achievement on high stakes exams like the ACT or LEAP tests. Therefore, I consider reading and English Language Arts to be of utmost importance. My primary goal is to foster an environment in which students learn to love to read and to strengthen students' written and oral communication skills.

The core curriculum that we use for 3rd through 8th grades is the Tier 1 Guidebook curriculum. The Guidebook curriculum allows students to wrestle with challenging content filled with information that helps students to build a formidable bank of background knowledge and teaches important skills at appropriate grade level expectations. When done correctly, students have the opportunity to work with all of the core content standards several times each year because the curriculum is designed to spiral through the standards while collaborating with their peers.

In ELA classes, from grades 3-8, students engage in Socratic seminars. The class is divided in half where each half represents one side of an argument. Students then argue to defend their side. This type of investigation allows for all students to become very confident with perspective and point of view.

The curriculum that we use for kindergarten through 2nd grade is the Independent Reading Level Assessment (IRLA) Framework. The IRLA is a wonderful reading program that teaches students to read at their own level. It allows a large amount of time for students to pick a book of their choice within their reading level and simply read. The IRLA focuses on building students' reading stamina while promoting a love of reading by allowing student choice. While students are reading, the teacher will pull a small group

of students to work on a specific skill that will directly help the group advance their reading capacity. It's an extremely efficient program that has had a noticeable positive effect on our students.

Lessons and instruction start with the end goal in mind. If the instruction's goal is to teach a certain standard, the assessment is created at the beginning of the lesson cycle to ensure that the lessons will be on target. As the lessons are being planned, we make sure to have the standards at hand to ensure that the entire standard will be taught during the lesson cycle. Once we know for sure that the lesson will be covering everything that is necessary to master the standard and succeed on the assessment, the lesson cycle begins. After the cycle, students are assessed. The data from the assessment helps us to create a plan to implement rapid remediation for all students based on their specific needs.

ELA assessment is based on the ELA standards from the Louisiana Department of Education. All ELA standards are assessed throughout the year in order to prepare students for the LEAP test. Students scoring mastery or better on the LEAP test are deemed on track to college and career readiness. Most students at Stephenville Elementary who take the LEAP test are scoring above average in comparison to other students in the state of Louisiana which means that they will be more prepared for high school.

1c. Mathematics

The math curriculum that we use at Stephenville Elementary is Eureka. Eureka helps to ensure that all students are exposed to a rigorous math curriculum that requires fundamental and conceptual understanding in mathematics. Starting in kindergarten, students study mathematics to build their conceptual knowledge and number sense. We began using Eureka at Stephenville Elementary in 2016, and we are consistently noticing that the students who started Eureka math before 3rd grade are scoring higher on the LEAP test than previously, and that they're better prepared for the next grade level. This is because the curriculum focuses on teaching the standards with rigor.

A big shift has occurred in mathematics instruction in the past few years. Math teachers might have sat behind overhead projectors for the majority of every class period. They would show how to solve the math problem, and then students would practice individually. There weren't many word problems associated with the lessons, and students rarely had to create math related projects. The shift has been moving back into the study of mathematics as opposed to just practicing arithmetic. Instruction in math now has students wrestling with the concepts of math. The teachers act more as facilitators in the classroom to help students understand the challenging content. Math classes are now full of word problems, manipulatives, and group work. Math classes are now much more engaging. Math classes, from grades 1-8, focus on activities that require multi-step questions. This promotes meaningful mathematical discourse, conceptual understanding, and reasoning. In addition to this, these activities are typically done with partner groups so students themselves can bounce their thoughts off peers to better understand each other's reasoning.

We plan our instruction intentionally by using grouping strategies that are advantageous to all ability levels. We differentiate by assigning work that is particular to an individual's ability, erring on the more challenging side. So, if we know a student scored a Basic on the LEAP test last year, we will require that student to complete mostly mastery level questions in class with some basic and advanced questions sprinkled in.

The mathematics assessment process is much like the process for English Language Arts. We begin with the end in mind by tailoring weekly instruction to the assessment. While planning for the lesson, we diligently ensure the entire standard being assessed will be covered during instruction. Data gathered from the assessment will help us to create a plan for remediation for students of all ability levels. This will aid in planning for the next lesson cycle. We aim to include questions from approaching basic to advanced on the test so that students who should make advanced on the LEAP test should make an A on the test, whereas students who make a C on the test should be expected to make a basic on the LEAP. We use the LDOE achievement guide to gauge the achievement of each question. When we track data this way, we can ensure that students will make their projected LEAP goal, or we can plan for remediation so that they can get back on track to reach their goal.

Math assessment is based on the math standards from the Louisiana Department of Education. All math standards are assessed throughout the year in order to prepare students for the LEAP test. Students scoring mastery or better on the LEAP test are deemed on track to college and career readiness. Most students at Stephenville Elementary who take the LEAP test are scoring above average in comparison to other students in the state of Louisiana which means that they will be more prepared for high school.

1d. Science

The science curriculum adheres to the grade level standards from the Louisiana Department of Education for grades K-8th. At Stephenville Elementary, we focus on highly engaging, hands-on activities that promote depth of understanding rather than rote memorization of science facts. One example would be in fourth grade. Students have the opportunity to create a circuit powered by a battery or other methods such as wind turbines or water wheels. In order to provide opportunities for students to reach grade level expectations, students participate in science labs frequently. These labs help students to use what they've learned in class to gain conceptual knowledge of the science standards.

Science instruction is cyclical. Students gather knowledge from lessons in class, they apply the knowledge in activities and labs, and then they show what they know on an exam. This model allows numerous opportunities for teachers to elicit evidence of student comprehension before giving an assessment. Within the mixture of activities, discussions, and labs, students have many opportunities to wrestle with the science standards and the teacher has many opportunities to use various instructional techniques and interventions. These techniques and interventions include grouping strategies, scaffolding, frontloading, including additional resources, peer assessments, etc.

Science assessment is based on the science standards from the Louisiana Department of Education. All science standards are assessed throughout the year in order to prepare students for the LEAP test. Students scoring mastery or better on the LEAP test are deemed on track to college and career readiness. Most students at Stephenville Elementary who take the LEAP test are scoring above average in comparison to other students in the state of Louisiana which means that they will be more prepared for high school.

1e. Social studies/history/civic learning and engagement

Our social studies curriculum is based on the grade-level expectations, scope and sequence, and companion documents provided by the LDOE for grades K-8th. ELA and social studies collaborate to align instruction to address students' strengths and weaknesses. Based on data from assessments such as iReady and LEAP 2025, instruction is tailored to meet the needs of individual students. Remediation may include students being pulled by our resource teacher for additional curriculum support or small groups within the classroom to help students focus on certain standards.

The social studies curriculum focuses on four core disciplines: geography, civics, economics, and history. These core disciplines also incorporate sociology, anthropology, and psychology. Our social studies curriculum is based on critical analysis of various primary sources. Our program focuses on project based learning because it helps students make connections between historical events and the world they are living today. For example, eighth grade Louisiana History students learn about how coastal erosion has impacted Louisiana. They use their engineering and economic skills to create a budget and design and improve prototypes to help slow down or stop erosion. At times, students in lower grades are invited to participate with the hands-on projects if they are covering a similar grade level expectation.

In social studies our students are assessed on their projects and from using primary sources from the EAGLE 2.0 testing platform. Assessments are designed to allow students to demonstrate their knowledge in multiple ways. Students are also assessed at times by creating simulations of material learned. Other assessments focus on Document Based Questioning (articles, excerpts, graphs, charts, historical maps, or pictures).

Social studies assessment is based on the social studies standards from the Louisiana Department of Education. All social studies standards are assessed throughout the year in order to prepare students for the LEAP test. Students scoring mastery or better on the LEAP test are deemed on track to college and career

readiness. Most students at Stephenville Elementary who take the LEAP test are scoring above average in comparison to other students in the state of Louisiana which means that they will be more prepared for high school.

1f. For secondary schools:

1g. For schools that offer preschool for three- and/or four-year old students:

The Pre Kindergarten curriculum is grounded in the TS Gold assessment system and the CLASS Observation rubric. TS Gold and the CLASS observation rubric work in tandem to teach the whole child which includes assessment criteria for social, emotional, and academic goals. These two tools are used to diagnose and track progress for students as well as the teacher.

The TS Gold objectives include social-emotional behavior, language, literacy, mathematics, science and technology, social studies, the arts, and English language acquisition goals. Students are exposed to these objectives through a variety of learning modes. Students learn by investigating a variety of themes throughout the year through interactive play, small group activities, teacher-led discussions, and one-on-one instruction.

One additional curriculum that we use in Pre Kindergarten is the DIG curriculum. The DIG curriculum aims to achieve student growth designed to prepare students for early elementary education. The DIG curriculum focuses on ELA and math instruction. The instruction is challenging and appropriate for students in Pre Kindergarten. The instruction gives chunks of information over time that help Pre Kindergarten students to cement their understanding by experiencing the concepts frequently over time.

Another curriculum that we have recently adopted is the Waterford program. The Waterford program is an online program that gives personalized, adaptive ELA instruction. This program teaches students at their level. In Pre Kindergarten, students focus on foundational skills such as phonics, language concepts, vocabulary, and comprehension. These skills are essential for success in later years. The activities are highly engaging and include songs and stories that our students enjoy.

Once again, TS Gold and the CLASS observation rubric help to ensure the alignment of Pre Kindergarten to K-Grade 3. These two tools set up a pre kindergarten class so that it is developmentally appropriate for the student's age. The objectives for the students to master come from TS Gold, and the content from the previously mentioned curriculums allows the Pre kindergarten teacher to provide high quality, rigorous instruction that would prepare students to be successful in kindergarten. The objectives taught in Pre kindergarten are very foundational, and are built on each year as students advance through the different grade levels.

The CLASS observation rubric has three domains. Two of those three domains revolve around how the teacher can teach the whole child. The first domain is emotional behavior. In this domain, the teacher aims to prepare students for future academic education by ensuring that the child is more emotionally prepared to work with others, be responsible, have empathy, etc. The other domain is the academic support domain. In this domain, the teacher is responsible for promoting academic growth in students. The academic support domain is very rigorous and, when done correctly, greatly increases the success of students.

A child's success in K- Grade 3 is greatly influenced by pre kindergarten academic instruction. Academic instruction is critical; however, it would be remiss not to discuss the importance of emotional support in regards to student success. We've noticed that our young students are very willing to participate in class, engage in discussions, assist other students with problems, and work well with their peers. It is much easier to educate children when they develop and maintain a positive attitude towards education at a young age, so our Pre kindergarten classroom strives to foster a love of school.

Students who meet the TS Gold objectives are very well prepared for kindergarten. The TS Gold objectives provide a clear link between students who are successful in pre kindergarten and K - Grade 3, which plays a big role in their future success. A very important indicator of the impact of early education on school

readiness and success in the primary grades would be the LEAP test results from Grade 3 at Stephenville Elementary. A majority of our students are scoring mastery or above in ELA and math when they reach the third grade which is a wonderful achievement. In 2018, our third grade class had seventy one percent of its students scoring mastery or above in ELA and seventy six percent of its students scoring mastery or above in math. In 2019, sixty four percent of students scored mastery above in ELA and eighty six percent of students scored mastery or above in math.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Stephenville Elementary is a small school that has one teacher for each grade level (Pre-k through eighth grade), one special education teacher, and one foreign language teacher. With twelve teachers in total, we do not have as many elective courses to offer; however, our small staff does provide opportunities in other curricular areas outside of ELA, math, social studies, and science.

For most of its history, Stephenville Elementary has offered French as a foreign language to all students from kindergarten through the eighth grade. This area has a strong relation to the Cajun French culture. Many of the students' families have French ancestry, and most students have older relatives that can speak Cajun French. It has been an important tradition of Stephenville Elementary to continue to offer French education to all students. Students have French every day for at least thirty minutes. They begin in kindergarten learning their colors, numbers, and basic salutations, and their knowledge slowly and steadily grows. Finally, in eighth grade, all students who participated in French have the opportunity to take a French I and French II high school credit exam. Over the past three years, more than seventy five percent of our students have attained high school credits due to our French program.

Our students also have physical education every day. We believe that it is very important for students to engage in physical activities every day. Over the past three years, the administration at Stephenville Elementary altered the schedule to increase and decrease the amount of time for physical education. The teachers, students, parents, and administration all came to an agreement that students were more attentive during class when they had more opportunities to be active. During P.E. class, students also learn about health and nutrition. Each grade level uses the Second Step program to learn about health and nutrition for sixteen hours per school year. During these lessons, students cover topics such as eating healthy, proper hygiene, drug education, and emotional health.

Students from kindergarten to third grade also take part in the Action for Healthy Kids program. This program has a representative come to our school once each month to teach a lesson about health to our younger students. The representative also collaborates with teachers, especially those who teach P.E., to help provide activities for students during P.E. The representative also provides resources for students and teachers about health.

Eighth grade students are also offered one additional elective in which they can gain a high school credit. This year, eighth grade students took an I.B.C.A course where they worked with Microsoft Word, Microsoft Powerpoint, and Microsoft Excel. The course trained and certified students in each individual program. Students who were successfully certified in any of the three programs received a certificate that could be used on their resumes when applying for jobs. If students successfully passed certification exams, they received a high school credit for the course of Introduction to Business and Computer Applications.

Eighth grade students who have demonstrated high levels of achievement in math throughout middle school are eligible to take an accelerated math course that replaces the traditional eighth grade math class. The course teaches many concepts and standards from the traditional eighth grade math course and Algebra I. At the end of the school year, students who have taken the accelerated math course can take the high school End of Course test in Algebra I. With a passing score on the End of Course test, students in eighth grade gain the high school Algebra I credit. This has been offered for the past two years, and so far, every student who has taken the accelerated course has completed the course, passed the End of Course test, and gained an additional high school credit.

With our small faculty, I am proud to say that we are able to offer students the opportunity to gain high school credits in French I, French II, Algebra I, and Introduction to Business Computer Applications.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

Stephensville Elementary tracks student progress frequently throughout the year. When we notice that students are starting to fall behind, we enroll them into the Response to Intervention (RTI) program. This program is a three tier program that aims to intervene when students are struggling academically. Tier one interventions happen in the classroom and are implemented by the classroom teacher. Tier one intervention examples include, but are not limited to, small group pull outs, study buddy, and diversified instruction in lesson plans utilizing the diverse learners guide from the Louisiana Department of Education. Tier one interventions happen swiftly in order to catch students before a large gap can form.

Diversification in lesson planning takes individual student needs into account. At the beginning of each year, we make goals for all of our students. We use baseline data from the previous year's LEAP test and current classroom grades to determine what level of instruction individual students should receive. Weekly assessments help us to determine if students are likely to meet their goals. If assessment data suggests that a student is not on track to meet their goal, we intervene with rapid remediation within the next lesson cycle. This is a huge part of our tier one intervention. Our goal is to intervene quickly so that students never reach tier two RTI.

If tier one interventions aren't enough, students are moved into tier two where they would get specific tutoring based on their academic needs. Students in tutoring experience a combination of Louisiana Department of Education resources and a program called iReady. iReady helps to further diagnose student strengths and weaknesses. Based on the diagnostic result, students are prescribed lessons that aim to teach students in a way that helps to bridge gaps in knowledge. The RTI interventionist and the classroom teachers collaborate to create a plan that will best assist each particular student who is enrolled in the RTI program. Progress monitoring in tier two takes place every other week to determine which strategies are most effective. All decisions regarding a student's academic course of action are made based on data from class assessments and progress monitoring results.

A student would then be moved into tier three RTI if there has not been adequate growth while in tier two. In tier three, students have additional time with the RTI tutor. Collaboration continues between the RTI interventionist and the classroom teachers. Students in tier three could potentially require an academic evaluation if progress is still not adequate which could result in Special Education needs.

We have been closing the achievement gap between elementary and middle school. The early elementary grades achieve higher than the middle school student historically. Over the past few years, the gap has been significantly lowered. We were able to close the gap by hiring highly qualified teachers, ensuring that the standards and curriculum were being covered appropriately and within specific timelines.

Our ultimate goal is to identify students who need interventions as early as kindergarten so that they will be able to bridge any gaps in knowledge quickly to be on grade level.

3b. Students performing above grade level

Teaching students who are performing higher than their current grade level is an area that we have been trying to improve. We have noticed that a large majority of our students reach grade level by the end of each grade, but we have struggled to push those students into even higher levels of achievement. In order to address the needs of students performing above grade level, we are restructuring the way that we implement diversification into our lesson planning. To do this, we are focusing on a backwards design strategy. We are now starting off by planning the assessment at the end of a lesson cycle. The assessment will have questions that are below grade level (approaching basic), nearly on grade level (basic), on grade level (mastery), and above grade level (advanced). The difficulty level of these questions are determined by the

Louisiana Department of Education's Achievement Level Descriptors. Going through this process not only gives us great data to determine how well students are doing on a particular standard, it also ensures that all assessments are directly in line with the standards that must be covered within the year.

The data that we receive from these assessments helps us to create a plan of action for all students. If a student is in the high mastery range, and we want to push that student into the advanced range, the assessment will clearly show us if the student is reaching his or her goal. In the event that a student whom we predict will make advanced is only scoring mastery on classroom assessments, we can implement rapid remediation for that student. The remediation will be specifically focused on advanced questions so that we can effectively plan strategies to encourage student growth.

Another benefit of this process is that it improves the amount of information that we have for each individual student. We are finding that teachers are teaching lessons with greater intent, and it's even helping to hold students more responsible for reaching their goals.

3c. Special education

The special education department at Stephenville Elementary serves students from kindergarten through eighth grade. Students who qualify for special education are identified as early as possible so that interventions can be put into place. Students entering into the special education program receive individualized goals that they work towards throughout the year. Our special education department works diligently and intentionally to achieve these goals through a variety of strategies.

All students in the special education program receive individualized tutoring daily with the special education teacher. The material covered in daily tutoring sessions takes into consideration several factors including IEP goals, benchmark data, collaboration between the general and special education teacher, and parental input. The focus of the daily tutoring sessions aim to close gaps in knowledge so that he or she can succeed in the general education environment. One strategy that we like to use in tutoring sessions is frontloading. We try to give the student information about what they will be covering in the general education classroom before the general education class delivers the lesson. At this time, the special education teacher also covers concepts from previous years that students have not yet mastered. This helps our special education students to feel more confident with the material in the general education class. This confidence increases their participation during class and aids in mastery of standards.

Students also benefit from push-in services where the special education teacher assists a student in the general education classroom. This has proven to be effective as it focuses on what the students should be mastering at their specific grade level. We aim to support our special education students so that they can be successful at grade level.

3d. ELLs, if a special program or intervention is offered

3e. Other populations (e.g., migrant), if a special program or intervention is offered

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Teaching students that academics is their current job has helped students to take a new look at education. We treat our students as if they are professionals, and we highly encourage them to act professionally while they're in class and on the school grounds. We want to train them to be professional because one day they must all become professionals in their chosen career.

If they can learn to act professionally early in life, we can foster good habits that will benefit them in high school, secondary education, and their professional careers. Since we live in a small community, being respectful is extremely important because word travels quickly. If anyone gains a negative reputation, it's hard to wipe the slate clean. Having respected teachers within the community helps to encourage student behavior both in and out of school because, in many cases, students look up to their teachers, past and present, and they want to make them proud. This type of relationship will, hopefully, be replicated when students enter into their chosen professions. The culture that we have worked to create fosters characteristics such as loyalty, dependability, respectfulness, and honesty.

Since we have such a small school, it's easy for teachers and staff to detect abnormal student behavior. We schedule meetings with the school counselor for students who are having emotional struggles, and we contact parents to discuss how we can best support students while they are at school. We also work with the counselor who can help parents to support students at home as well.

We also set high expectations for all students. Classwork is rigorous, on grade level, and aimed at mastery or above. We believe that all students are capable of academic growth, so we only accept the best of what all students are capable of. We also have high expectations for students with discipline. We are firm, yet fair with our discipline policy. This stance on discipline has served us well. We have few major disciplinary issues each year which is largely due to the excellent work of the teachers at Stephenville Elementary.

The teachers at Stephenville Elementary are all very professional. Many of the teachers who have been here for longer than a decade have set the bar high for professionalism. Overall, the staff here is punctual, respectful, hardworking, and dependable. Furthermore, teachers here have a genuine interest in their coworkers' well-being which creates a wonderful network of support. The professional culture of Stephenville Elementary is attributed to the consistency of the staff which then affects the students and even parts of the community.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Including families and the community has proven to be a great benefit to our school over the past few years. One of the most important things that we do each year is to have an annual survey that lets parents give honest feedback. We take all feedback seriously, and we have implemented changes thanks to suggestions and valid concerns from parents and students.

We make communication a priority with parents. This past year, the St. Martin Parish School District has enrolled in the Remind app which greatly helps teachers and parents to communicate. Currently, text messages seem to be the primary way that many people communicate. The Remind app communicates primarily through text messaging. Upholding strong, two way communication between the school and parents helps us to communicate concerns, relay messages, and celebrate student achievement both academically and socially. Communication has been a strong tool to aid in student success.

Parents are also invited to attend meetings at school to help in decision making. At most Association of Parents and Teachers (APT) meetings, a representative of the school will bring forth plans, budgets, or other school related business. Parents are asked to give their opinions on these matters because we want them to feel like they have a say in the education of their children. The APT also does fundraising events

throughout the year which helps them to put on events at the school. These events are run by parent volunteers. The events have had great turnouts in the past few years. While parents attend these events, we are able to talk about what's going on in the classrooms and offer information that's beneficial to student academic success.

We are also in communication with the St. Martin Parish Library in an effort to increase student and family reading capacity. The librarians come down to visit each year and display online resources that are available to students and families in Lower St. Martin Parish.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Stephensville Elementary is a unique school. We serve a very small community that is geographically isolated from the St. Martin Parish School Board Office. We are approximately one and half hours driving distance away from most of the other schools in the district, so it would be easy to adopt a lazy mentality where we could do what we want because we're difficult to monitor due to logistics. Fortunately, the teachers themselves would not allow for such nonsense, so it was quite easy to develop an approach that would help to build teacher capacity.

Data analysis and data based decisions have been centric to our professional development. In our meetings, we would focus on which data we should track and why and how to make decisions based on the data that we feel is most important. We also focused on appropriate strategies for remediation that would fit into our school day without interfering with our core, on grade level instruction. Once we set out a clear path for the year, everyone would come to the weekly professional learning community meetings ready to work.

Our professional development plan consists of focusing on truly understanding the standards that we are aiming to teach in the next lesson cycle and ensuring that the entire standard is taught within the school year. We read through the standards carefully and we identify the parts of the standard that are week's lesson cycle cover. This lets us know we have taught and what we still need to cover in order to say that we have taught a particular standard.

We also create or modify assessments to fit the needs of our specific classes. While creating the assessments, we use the achievement level descriptors resource from the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) to ensure that we can gauge how well our students are performing on a particular standard. If the student's assessment indicates that he/she is on track to reach their goal, based on baseline data and the growth to mastery prediction from the LDOE, we then know that we taught the standard well and that the student made the appropriate connections. On the other hand, if a student's assessment shows that he/she is not on target, we can plan for remediation within the same week.

The principal makes it a point to tell teachers that he believes in what they are doing. He wants his staff to feel validated and valued. The public education world has changed much in the past ten years and it is easy for teachers to feel like people are out to get them with all the observations, walkthroughs, and evaluations. He always makes sure to leave positive feedback.

4. School Leadership:

Stephensville Elementary is a small school that serves pre kindergarten through eighth grade. The principal is the only administrator in the building, and directly oversee all aspects of the school. His philosophy as a school leader is to build the capacity of the teachers so that they can be leaders in their own right. He believes that empowered teachers have the tools at their disposal to make decisions on their own in most cases. Giving teachers as much autonomy as possible allows teachers to truly invest themselves into the school, and when teachers feel valued and invested, they want to do an excellent job. We have a shared sense of ownership at Stephensville Elementary. We want to be successful for the sake of the community that we serve, so we work diligently to accomplish our shared goals.

The principal's, primary focus is to support the teachers with whom he works so that they can maximize student achievement. He understand that the teachers in the classrooms are the ones who can make the

biggest difference, so he spend a majority of his time with teachers in their classrooms. During my time in classrooms, he observe teachers, collect data, and help students one on one. He analyze the data that I collect and provide feedback to teachers to help maximize student achievement. This cycle is repeated many times throughout the year.

Professional development is another core value at our school. Our school system provides frequent opportunities for professional development, and we take advantage of it. The staff at Stephenville Elementary attends many professional development courses. The information gathered is shared with all teachers during professional learning communities so that we can expand the knowledge and build capacity of all teachers. Professional development gives our teachers the tools that they need to maximize student achievement.

As a principal, he feels that it is very important to include stakeholders in decision making. The school leadership team, which includes all teachers and members of the Parent Teacher Association, assist in making financial decisions and local policy changes to ensure that student success remains centric. This provides opportunities to build relations with the community, and it allows the community to feel confident that the school is using its resources to benefit students.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The most important changes that we have made that lead to our school's success in the past year has been to ensure that all students are receiving on grade level instruction, and that each grade level covers all grade standards within the school year. In other words, all third graders must see and work with every third grade standard in ELA, math, social studies, and science. The curriculum was then used as a vessel to ensure that all grade level standards were taught as well as we could within a school year.

Without exposure to grade level standards, students will likely not reach mastery at the end of the school year when taking the LEAP test. In many cases, classrooms were remediating below grade level more often than they should have. This was because teachers thought that students needed additional help because they didn't quite master what was expected in the previous grade. Unfortunately, this only creates more and more gaps. If in second grade, too much time is spent remediating, students won't be ready for third grade. Students would then enter third grade with a gap. If third grade then spends too much time remediating, we end up losing even more time, and the gap only widens. If this process is repeated over and over again, students can't possibly meet the criteria for college and career readiness.

We like to see our students making A's and B's on tests and report cards, but if those grades come from assignments that are not rigorous enough, the grades are inflated and don't truly represent what they should. A big shift was made to have grades represent only what is indicative of the standards addressed in the curriculum. Once we made that shift, we started to see a correlation between classroom grades and LEAP achievement results. Ideally, if a student made an A throughout the year in math, it should result in an Advanced score on the LEAP test. Conversely, if a student made a C throughout the year in math, it should result in a Basic score on the LEAP test.

We also had to adjust the school's schedule to address the issue. In the amended schedule, we made sure to include ample time to have all students engage in on grade level standards. We also included a separate time where we could remediate students when necessary. In our schedule, we allot thirty minutes per day for remediation.