

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

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

School Mailing Address 33 Bangor Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Easton State ME Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 04740-0126

County Aroostook County

Telephone (207) 488-7700 Fax (207) 488-2840

Web site/URL https://www.eastonschools.org/ E-mail erin.ireland@eastonschools.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. Roger Shaw E-mail roger.shaw@eastonschools.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Easton School Department Tel. (207) 488-7700

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. Thomas Osgood
(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):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 2 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	8	14
K	7	7	14
1	5	10	15
2	8	8	16
3	11	5	16
4	12	5	17
5	14	8	22
6	7	7	14
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	70	58	128

*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):
- 4 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 % Asian
 - 2 % Black or African American
 - 0 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 92 % White
 - 2 % 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: 15%

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

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	10
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	9
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	19
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	125
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.15
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	15

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: 39 %

Total number students who qualify: 50

8. Students receiving special education services: 28 %

36 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>1</u> Autism | <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>2</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>13</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>19</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.	8
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	3
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	8
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

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 16:1

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	96%	96%	95%	95%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 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.

Easton Elementary School is committed to providing all students with varied opportunities to gain knowledge, skills, and a love of learning in order to reach their ultimate potential.

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

Easton Elementary School is located in the small rural community of Easton, Maine. Easton is a six-mile square international border town, single township that services our own students as well as many other tuition students from surrounding communities. This also includes displaced students from a sudden private school closure. The school is a pre-kindergarten to grade six elementary school with an enrollment of 128 students. Easton is an agrarian based community that starts school mid-August in order to help local farmers facilitate the annual 3-week potato harvest in September and October. Easton is a school department that receives minimal funding from the State due to the support of two major industrial facilities in the town.

For a small elementary school in a small community, it is important that we are aware of all the services that need to be provided for our students. With that in mind, Easton Elementary School offers ancillary services on campus through local providers to meet the needs of our diverse school community. Speech and language, occupational therapy, physical therapy, nutrition, and counseling services all come to our school to work with our students so that families don't have to travel in order to get the support their child needs.

Each morning, students, families, and staff are greeted in the hallway by the principal. Students have the opportunity to go to breakfast, recess or the library for additional support to complete, revise, or make up work with assistance from Educational Technicians that have the same students in the classroom. Some students receive one-on-one tutoring on an as needed basis. The same opportunities are available to students at noon-time and after school.

Using the Standardized Test for the Assessment of Reading (STAR Reading), Standardized Test for the Assessment of Math (STAR Math), classroom observations, Maine Educational Assessment (MEA) results, student portfolios, and formative and summative assessments, plans are developed for seminars or interventions during the thirty to forty minute daily Response to Intervention (RTI) time. The same information is used to determine differentiated grouping for all academic levels. Students are challenged at their level of learning by all staff. We believe in the power of "yet". We have seen significant academic and social growth in all areas since embracing this format.

The Easton Elementary School has single grade classrooms kindergarten through grade six, as well as half day pre-kindergarten (pre-K). Our Special Education Program offers very inclusive services both in and out of all classrooms. We have a school Guidance Councilor, Librarian, several Education Technicians, a Music Specialist, a Physical Education Teacher, and a Visual Art Teacher. Easton has thriving sports teams, and an annual Elementary Drama production. Students participate in the Geography Bee, the Spelling Bee, Math Meets, a pre-K Christmas Program, Elementary Band and Elementary Chorus. There is a strong link between the Elementary School and the Town of Easton's very innovative Recreation Department. Easton is directly involved in programs offered by the Maine Winter Sports Center in providing regular opportunities for outdoor activity with Cross Country Skiing, Snow Shoeing and International and National Biathlon events held at the local Olympic Training Center. Grants have been awarded to the Easton Elementary School to provide snowshoes for students to use during recess and field trips. The Easton Elementary staff is committed to providing regular outdoor activities in recognition of the connection between a healthy lifestyle and educational readiness. Students are regularly transported to the Francis Malcolm Science Center for science enrichment activities. This facility includes a planetarium, interactive laboratory, and an outdoor nature learning area, and is right in Easton.

The Easton Elementary school is fortunate to have access to technology at a one to one level for all students kindergarten through grade six and several classroom devices in pre-K. This program, initiated by the Maine Laptop and Technology Initiative, has allowed for home school connections and develops vital 21st Century skills.

The Easton Elementary School is a community hub of activity, starting with an active Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). Their Harvest Party creates a safe space for Halloween activities, they provide an annual Christmas Bazaar, allowing all students the freedom to shop for special gifts for family members.

There are two book fairs as well as numerous fundraisers that directly provide for new playground equipment, scholarships for students, visiting artists, authors and theater productions, in addition to teacher appreciation recognition.

Easton Elementary School makes every attempt to provide a full range of tools for our students to succeed in school and in life as they move beyond the walls of this building. We strive to Prepare, Inspire and Educate for tomorrow's opportunities.

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

The Maine State Learning Results and the Common Core are the driving forces in our teaching and core curriculum. Seven years ago we, and all of the districts in our region, adopted the standards outlined in the Maine Cohort for Customized Learning (MCCL). These standards were reviewed and revised to meet the unique needs of our district. This became and remains the driving force for our curriculum development. At the same time, we started using the Marzano Taxonomy to determine depth of learning and rigor of teaching to guide our instruction. With the addition of our common planning time and RTI block, we are seeing marked improvements across the board because we are able to collaboratively differentiate instruction at all levels.

Four years ago, after using the AIMsWeb assessment system and finding it lacking in the necessary information, our district moved to a more comprehensive assessment system in STAR Math and STAR Reading. Based on the success one of the schools in our region had experienced with their STAR assessments, we invited Dr. Levesque Elementary in Frenchville to share some of their strategies with us. As a result of this meeting, we started our skill seminars and other academic supports to improve student achievement.

Our staff has weekly common planning time meetings to discuss student data and placement for academic supports both in and out of the classroom. These placements address the ever-changing needs of our students based on data analysis. Student success and achievement is celebrated in classrooms and school wide assemblies. Students at the upper elementary level set class and individual goals and chart the data to celebrate individual progress. In this way students are also able to see where they need to focus their efforts in the coming weeks.

1b. Reading/English language arts

The English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum for pre-K through grade six includes reading and analyzing authentic literary and informational texts, equipping students with the skills of vocabulary, decoding/phonics, fluency, comprehension, and understanding literary elements. It focuses on reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Every day, students are expected to read aloud and/or silently. Literacy instruction is differentiated based on student needs and includes whole group, small group and individual instruction, and provides clear alignment to Maine's Standards for ELA as detailed in the Maine Learning Results and Common Core. STAR Reading assists with this task.

Starting in pre-K, students are encouraged to convey a message in a written format. Proper grammar and spelling are expected components of the writing process as their skills develop. As students progress, their writing is supported through writing workshops, journaling, and creative writing prompts. Students are introduced to handwriting practices using Handwriting Without Tears for printing and Loops and Other Groups for cursive. Both programs approach handwriting by incorporating fine and gross motor skills.

Public speaking is practiced at every grade level throughout the year. Students have the opportunity to present written work, participate in performances and public events, and read aloud to classmates. Students have many opportunities to model appropriate audience behavior as they listen and respond during class discussions, presentations, and public events.

Historically, Easton's MEA scores have been high in the areas of reading and writing. When the MEAs were reinstated in 2015-2016, 59% of our students met or exceeded the state standards in ELA. Using the data from MEA and STAR Reading, we were able to pinpoint areas for improvement and intentionally develop seminars to address comma usage, summarizing, central idea, topic development, sequencing, and homophones. These seminars also enabled the development of more advanced practices on skills allowing

our students to achieve the next level. The thoughtful implementation of STAR Reading has enabled our students to rise above state expectations, as evidenced in the 2018-2019 MEA scores where 76.5% of our students met or exceeded state expectations. This placed our students second out of eighteen schools in our region for ELA.

1c. Mathematics

The mathematics curriculum for pre-K through grade six is designed for students to build foundational math understandings and skills in the operations of math. Students are taught to think mathematically, to use math vocabulary, and to apply math skills and concepts to solve complex multi-step problems. Each day, students practice analyzing their math understanding through writing, modeling, and discussion. In 2015-2016, only 44% of our students met or exceeded state standards in mathematics. Around this time we started new mathematics programs for grades kindergarten through grade six. The mathematics programs were chosen because they align to the Maine Learning Results and Common Core standards, support Easton's commitment to college and/or career readiness for all students, and requires students to apply math to solve multi-step and complex real-world math problems. In the classrooms, students are using manipulatives and mathematical discourse to: answer essential questions (ex. How do you add numbers?), investigate to extend learning (ex. drawing and analyzing line plots), and to solve "math in my world problems" (ex. finding the area of rectangle to determine flooring coverage). Formative and summative assessments, including unit assessments, math fact fluency, and STAR Math data, are used at the classroom level for differentiated instruction and acceleration, and at common planning meetings to ensure continuity of learning for students and guide instructional pacing. The implementation of STAR Math has enabled our students to rise above state expectations, as evidenced in the 2018-2019 MEA scores where 67.6% of our students met or exceeded state expectations. This placed our students first out of eighteen schools in our region for mathematics.

1d. Science

The science curriculum for pre-K through grade six is designed for students to experience earth and space science, life science, and physical science concepts through hands-on, inquiry based activities in which students investigate a claim by gathering evidence and using reasoning. Easton's curriculum was chosen because it aligns with Maine Learning Results and Next Generation Science standards, challenges students with real world problems, and requires higher order thinking skills. In the classrooms, students explore space through read alouds, research of constellations, and building models of the solar system. Students explore habitats by going out into nature and recording observations. We also encourage hands on experience when learning about life science by building greenhouses with our pre-K students. Our science teacher participated in writing the MCCL standards for science. Annually, she also takes grade 6 students on a 3-day/2-night educational field experience to Schoodic Point for an all inclusive life and earth science emersion. On average 85.4% of our students met or exceeded the state standards on the science MEA. This placed our students in third out of eighteen schools in our region in science.

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

The social studies, history, and civic learning/engagement curriculum for pre-K through grade six is designed for students to explore their communities, citizenship, celebrate diversity, character, culture, local, state, and world history, geography, and special observances and commemorative days. Specially themed days throughout the year such as Constitution Day, Veterans Day, and President's Day are filled with activities for students to learn about history and civics. This approach was chosen because it aligns with Maine Learning Results and complies with Maine Department of Education's mandate to teach selected Special Observances and Commemorative Days. The teaching of these subjects is cross curricular. Students have the opportunity during their elementary experience to travel to the state capital to visit the Maine State Museum and tour the State House in Augusta, Cole Land Transportation Museum in Bangor, the Presque Isle Historical Society, and participate in the Geography Bee where winners can move on to the regional and state competition level. In the classroom, students create salt maps when learning about elevation and landforms, create classroom expectations when discussing school citizenship, and write persuasive essays and letters when learning about the democratic process.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

Our pre-K program currently uses a wide variety of resources in order to ensure that we are meeting the needs of our children and aligning ourselves with standards that are age appropriate and integrate with the kindergarten standards. We implement the Maine Early Childhood Standards through play based, hands on learning activities that are cross curricular. Many of the Maine Early Childhood Standards align with the Common Core Standards and are built upon, starting in kindergarten and continuing through grade six. Our curriculum covers early language and literacy, health and physical activity, mathematics, social studies, art, music, and science. We currently use "Handwriting Without Tears" to teach children letter formation using simplified explanations of the letters by discussing and examining how letters have curves and lines and how those make up each and every letter. Each winter our pre-K students participate in a dramatization for their families of a seasonal story. The students create many of the props and decorations for this program. This has become a community favorite.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

The district has a comprehensive K-12 arts program that consists of both music and visual art. The goal of the arts program is to give students opportunities to develop technical skills as well as a background in history, aesthetics, and critique while developing their ability to connect their emotions to the world around them. Our art and music teachers deliver curriculum by meeting with students weekly for music and art instruction. Students are taught to create and perform to express ideas and feelings. In art, they learn fundamental concepts so they can use a variety of media to create their pieces. In music, they learn the elements of music (melody, rhythm, harmony, form, and style) so that they can interpret and produce a variety of musical genre. Students in grade six are able to work outside the box by participation in the modern band program supported by a grant and instruments from the national organization Little Kids Rock and Maine Kids Rock. This program is driven by student input in song selection and instrument choice between ukulele, guitar, electric guitar, electric bass, and drum set. Students learn the vocabulary of music and art, their elements, principles and structures that allow for communication of ideas, feelings, and moods. Students perform and display their artistic talents to the public throughout the year.

Physical Education (PE) and intramural sports are essential parts of the curriculum at Easton Elementary School. These areas provide opportunities for students to excel and develop positive self-esteem. In PE classes students in grades kindergarten through grade six acquire the knowledge they need to become physically fit. By playing sports in PE classes and through the community recreation program, students learn team-building and good sportsmanship. The PE teacher has hosted the Jump Rope for Heart/Kids Heart Challenge program for ten years. Our school raises over \$5000 each year for the American Heart Association. Easton Elementary School has also earned GOLD status in Aroostook County Maine for two years for its work embracing the 5-2-1-0 philosophy (5 servings of fruits and vegetables, 2 or less hours of screen time a day, 1 hour of physical activity a day, and 0 sugary drinks). Our students have many unique opportunities to learn and enjoy life-long outdoor activities such as snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and archery. These activities were made possible through grants and community connections.

The school librarian is a valuable resource for the entire school, and the library serves as a hub of learning for all students. The librarian assists teachers with selecting texts that are directly related to content areas. All students visit the library twice a week. During library time, the librarian reads a story aloud, instructs students on the use of the library and its technology, and then assists students with book selection. Students in grades K-2 have the opportunity to explore coding through Bee-Bots, and learning research skills is the focus for grades three through six. Our librarian also teaches digital citizenship to all students.

We work with the state of Maine's Cooperative Extension on nutrition; monthly classes are held for students in grades pre-K through 3. This interactive program teaches nutrition, food groups, food handling, My Plate, and basic hygiene. To help our students begin to understand finances, we partner with local banks to offer many activities for our students. We have an active Wellness Team that provides many resources and

hands on activities throughout the year to promote physical and mental wellness to our school community. These activities include theme days, a health fair, Red Ribbon Week, and the Pound and Zumba programs.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

Easton Elementary School strives to meet the needs of all learners, regardless of whether they are performing below, at, or above benchmark. Staff meets weekly to define and refine academic goals, review student assessments and data, and formulate RTI plans for both struggling and exceptional students.

The primary method of addressing individual student needs is through the following instructional framework: lessons begin with whole group instruction, the teacher reviews the learning target and performs quick checks of each student's understanding, students then work independently and in small groups based on their grasp of the content, the teacher monitors and differentiates instruction, and the lesson concludes with all students together for a summary and to share observations and reflections.

Struggling students may be referred for supports provided by the school-wide Title I or special education staff. These supports are offered individually or small group and take place in or out of the classroom. To tailor learning for each student, classroom teachers may also receive assistance from other staff members, including speech/language, occupational therapy, and physical therapy specialists. Students are able to receive special services onsite. Teachers also differentiate within their classrooms using flexible and tiered grouping. Other interventions used at Easton Elementary School include tutoring that takes place before the start of the school day, during lunch/recess, and after school. After trying several interventions, if students are still below benchmark, the school will hold a team meeting, which includes parents, teachers, and administrators to discuss and develop a plan to serve the students' needs.

A variety of assessments are used at Easton Elementary School. These include, but are not limited to, STAR, classroom assessments, MEA, Woodcock-Johnson, and KeyMath. STAR testing is administered monthly. Once students complete this test, teachers and students review their scores and set goals for the next test. Once scores from MEA tests are released to the school, teachers review and analyze how students answered questions and from there create learning opportunities targeting weak areas. The hope is the more students practice these skills the better the chance they will achieve higher scores on future tests.

The special education population is the only subgroup that has at least a 10-point achievement gap on state achievement tests as compared to the total school population. We are addressing this group with the same techniques as the rest of the student population: before school, lunch/recess and after school tutoring, differentiated instruction, and flexible grouping. Additional supports for this population include: one on one support and push-in special education support in the regular education classroom.

3b. Students performing above grade level

To meet the needs of exceptional students, teachers create differentiated instruction to extend and challenge their grade level learning using the data reviewed at weekly meetings. If a student is recommended for acceleration, the Acceleration Committee creates a plan for instruction. This plan often includes the student using an above grade level curriculum with a small group or independently in the student's own age-based classroom, supervised by the current classroom teacher. Programming and student needs are assessed regularly using STAR testings, classroom assessments, and MEA results. Plan re-evaluations are held annually, much like an Individualized Education Program.

3c. Special education

The special education population is the only subgroup that has at least a 10-point achievement gap on state achievement tests as compared to the total school population. We are addressing this group with the same techniques as the rest of the student population: before school, lunch/recess and after school tutoring, differentiated instruction, and flexible grouping. Additional supports for this population include: one on one

support and push-in special education support in the regular education classroom. This group also receives specially designed instruction based on their Individualized Education Program (IEP) that is developed with a team approach. Students receive instruction from a certified special education teacher and an educational technician. Our students' MEA scores have improved over the four years in ELA and Mathematics: 2015-2016 ELA score showed 46.7% meeting or exceeding State standards and mathematics it was 33.3%. By 2018-2019, our scores jumped to 53.8% in ELA and 38.5% in mathematics.

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:

Easton Elementary School starts the school year off on a positive note by reinforcing cooperation between students at all grade levels through welcome back activities such as Fall Fun Day. During Fall Fun Day, students are rewarded for summer reading by throwing water balloons at staff members and participating in a staff versus students soccer game, as well as many other physical activities which creates a spirit of community right at the beginning of the school year.

We believe it is important to create a positive environment for students. Each day begins with the principal and staff being visible, accessible, and setting an example for students. The principal and staff greet students every morning with a smile and encouraging words. The lobby of our school showcases positive class and individual successes. Additionally, students are met by staff members in the hallways and at their classroom door.

Students and parents can be surprised with a postcard recognizing positive attributes demonstrated by students. All staff (principal, teachers, and education technicians) can send these postcards home.

We hold bi-monthly assemblies to celebrate student successes in the areas of academics and social growth. Students receive “Way to Go” awards, academic achievement certificates, birthday pencils, and showcase classroom highlights. Once a quarter, students are nominated and recognized at a whole school assembly. Parents are invited to celebrate their child’s accomplishments as Student of the Quarter. Students of the Quarter are recognized on the school webpage, in the hallway, and often in the local newspaper. Every Student of the Quarter is invited to go to a local restaurant for a special treat with the principal.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

We at Easton Elementary School recognize that families and the community play a large role in our success. Our PTO supports us in many adventures: new playground equipment, cafeteria tables, stage curtains, book fairs, Christmas Bazaar, teacher appreciation week, a variety of performing arts programs, and classroom supplies and volunteers. They also organize room parents for each grade. Our outstanding Recreation Department offers students, families, and community members many enrichment activities, programs, and trips. The Maine Recreation and Parks Association has awarded the Easton recreation director the 2020 "William V. Haskell" Distinguished Professional of the Year Award.

We partner with the University of Maine at Presque Isle’s (UMPI) education department to offer family reading, math, and science nights. This is a time for families to come in and explore hands on activities with their child, teachers, and the pre-service educators from UMPI. Our close proximity to UMPI and Northern Maine Community College (NMCC) make Easton a destination for many student teachers and for student observations. This allows our staff to stay current on the latest best practices.

The Francis Malcolm Science Center offers many unique programs to our staff, students, and community members. These programs include: moonlit snowshoe walks on their community trails, wildlife watching, planetarium, apple cider press, touch tank, pond study, Native American sky legends, seed program, map skills, and bird identification and care programs. This partnership gives our students hands on science experiences that you cannot get from a textbook.

Each year, the Maine Masonic Charitable Foundation sponsors the Masonic Bikes for Books program to encourage students to read. Our second grade class participates annually in this program where the teacher sets a reading goal and students who achieve this goal receive a new bike and helmet from the local Masonic Lodge. The generosity of this program has encouraged on average 80% of our second graders to meet the goal each year. Our local Rotarians also support our students in ELA by providing a thesaurus to each third grade student and multiple copies of Maine Student Book Award books to the library. The Rotary encourages our students in service learning by participating in the Purple Pinkie Project for polio awareness.

Students bring a dollar to participate and the Rotary covers the cost for any student in need. This helps our students understand that there are others in the world in need of help, no matter how small the donation.

We feel service learning is an important aspect of a well-rounded education. Students are encouraged to support others in their community through donations to the local food pantry, collecting socks for World Down Syndrome day, Relay for Life, and Autism Awareness. These school-wide initiatives help our students prepare for service learning requirements at the high school level.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

We recognize that our staff members are professionals and they drive their own professional development. Many professional development opportunities are available to staff through webinars, Master Teacher, continuing education programs, and local collaborations with Central Aroostook Council on Education (CACE) and Northern Maine Educational Collaborative (NMEC). Staff are encouraged to set professional development goals in their personal growth plans. The Easton School Department supports individualizing professional development for each staff member.

Since our school district is small, being in partnership with CACE gives our staff the opportunity to collaborate with other local schools and access to national presenters. We have had several teachers present at CACE workshops to share their skills with regional schools. In-house professional development takes place on early release days so that staff has the opportunity to collaborate across the grade levels. Staff has input on how those days are organized to better meet their immediate needs.

New staff are welcomed to our district and mentored by a veteran staff member in the practices of our school. This is valuable professional development for both the mentor and mentee.

Staff view Easton Elementary School as a home away from home. This is evidenced by the number of Easton alumni who have come back for their professional careers in education. We organize special lunches and outings, themed days, and recognize staff celebrations. These activities help deepen the level of camaraderie. As the saying goes in Easton, "Once a Bear, always a Bear."

4. School Leadership:

The principal's leadership philosophy is centered on building relationships and having informal and formal professional dialogue around the individual needs of the students. The principal maintains an open-door policy for staff, students, and parents. The administrative team empowers teachers to be leaders with the classroom and involves teachers in the decision-making process so that the best interest of students is represented. The role of the principal is to ensure the core learning experience is met and individualized so that differentiation and acceleration is taking place for each student.

Easton School District's administrative team values professional development and provides classroom release time to work on these activities. Staff is encouraged to broaden their skill set and share their learning with their colleagues. This helps create a greater resource base for staff and improves student achievement. The size of Easton School Department gives us the unique opportunity to encourage staff participation in many leadership roles. This reinforces the collaborative climate of Easton Elementary School.

The third grade teacher serves as the chair of the Professional Leadership Certification Support System (PLCSS). The kindergarten, fourth, fifth, and pre-K/sixth grade teachers serve on the District Leadership Team. The fifth grade teacher is on the Technology Committee and leads mini-workshops in our school on the use of technology in the classroom. The third, fourth, pre-K/sixth grade teachers serve on the Performance Evaluation and Professional Growth steering committee. All in all, when a leader is needed...a teacher takes the lead and progress is made.

The philosophy of administration and staff is: "If I ask someone to do a job, I better be willing to do the task too."

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The one practice that has been most instrumental in Easton Elementary School's success is the shared concern for each student throughout his or her elementary school career. The moment students enter our system they become part of our learning family. As they move through the grades each staff member monitors them. Starting with the bus driver and cafeteria workers at the beginning of the day, the principal and staff members during the day, the recreation department for after school programs, and our active PTO throughout the year, bonds are formed that encourage the success of each and every student.

This little town loves their school system. They show this by supporting our school, despite the fact that we are the lowest subsidy receiving system in the state. In times of trouble the townspeople rally behind the school to make sure all the needs are met physically, emotionally, and financially. Many of our community members are alumni who chose to move back to the close-knit family community of Easton to raise their own children in the environment they found so nurturing.

Because of hands on experience with each child, sixth grade students leave us fully prepared for learning opportunities beyond the walls of our elementary school. We continue to follow their progress and celebrate their achievements, including graduation from Easton High School. During graduation week, seniors are invited to share their aspirations with the future Easton graduates and march through our halls while Elementary students and staff celebrate their successes with posters and cards, high fives are offered all around. A slide show of memories is also shared. This tradition shows the reward of our school pride.

We truly believe that "it takes a village" and we strive to be that village at the Easton Elementary School.