

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

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 363 Carolina Back Road  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Charlestown State RI Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 02813-3810

County Washington County

Telephone (401) 364-7716 Fax (401) 633-7078

Web site/URL https://charlestown.chariho.k12.ri.us E-mail jennifer.poore@chariho.k12.ri.us

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\* Mrs. Gina Picard E-mail Gina.Picard@chariho.k12.ri.us  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Chariho Regional School District Tel. (401) 364-7575

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

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

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

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

## **PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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

1. 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

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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):
- 4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 1 K-12 schools
- 7 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	0	0	0
K	25	19	44
1	18	27	45
2	35	20	55
3	20	24	44
4	31	26	57
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	129	116	245

\*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):
- 5.7 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 0 % Asian
  - 0.8 % Black or African American
  - 2.9 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 90.6 % 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: 4%

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.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	6
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	3
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	9
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	245
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.04
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	4

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 0 %

Total number students who qualify: 0

8. Students receiving special education services: 13 %

31 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>6</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>5</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>11</u> Developmental Delay    | <u>5</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>0</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: 10

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:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	14
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	10
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	11
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 17:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	96%	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.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes  No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

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

Filling Sails with Knowledge and Character for a Successful Life Voyage

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

## **PART III - SUMMARY**

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Charlestown School is a public K-4 school located in beautiful, coastal Charlestown Rhode Island. Charlestown is a rural town in southern Rhode Island with a geographical size of 59 square miles. The population of Charlestown is approximately 8,000 and current enrollment at Charlestown School is 245 students. The Chariho Regional School District was established in 1958 and is named by the first few letters of the member towns: Charlestown, Richmond and Hopkinton. The district includes four elementary schools, one middle school, one high school which includes a technical school, and an alternative education school for students in grades K-12. The socioeconomics of the student population vary with approximately twenty percent of students receiving free or reduced lunch. While most of the students in the school are white, there are students with other ethnicities including several students who are Native American. The Narragansett Indian Tribe is located in Charlestown and positive connections have been made to increase culturally responsive teaching practices in our school.

The mission of Charlestown School connects with its coastal location, “Filling Sails with Knowledge and Character for a Successful Life Voyage.” The staff members are exceptionally collaborative and have a shared vision of helping all students to demonstrate personal academic and social growth. The environment is a safe and happy learning environment. Daily attendance rates are exceptionally high for both students and staff. Substitutes, new families and visitors often compliment our culture. Families care deeply about our school. Parent Teacher Organization meetings are well attended and events planned are ideal family experiences. Staff exhibit camaraderie and provide professional and emotional support to colleagues.

Charlestown School has experienced consistent growth over the last ten years and has moved from good to great. The school has been recognized as “Commended” multiple times by the Rhode Island Department of Education. Staff have made positive transitions to the Common Core State Standards and two different state assessments, PARCC and RICAS. Student performance on the 2019 RICAS was exemplary, with 74 percent of students meeting or exceeding standard in ELA and 65% of students meeting or exceeding in Mathematics. Twelve percent of students exceeded in the area of ELA and eleven percent of students exceeded in math. Significant time and focus has been placed on deep analysis of content standards, instructional practices and the use of data to effectively guide instruction. During this same time period, the Response to Intervention model has been introduced, refined and nearly perfected. Students experiencing academic or behavioral challenges are identified early and are effectively supported. Interventions match student needs and interventionists are methodical in their approaches to support struggling students. Growth for all students is monitored closely through the use of shared data collection and review. District common assessments in reading, math, and science are used to closely monitor student mastery of content standards. Universal screening tools, including Renaissance STAR assessments and district created assessments for kindergarten, are used to identify students who need support and to monitor students who are being supported through R.t.I. and special education.

Perseverance is a school wide focus. Teachers nominate students for the Student of the Trimester recognition program. Students are nominated by teachers for demonstrating perseverance. They are invited to attend recognition breakfasts with their families. Students who are demonstrating proficiency are challenged to continue to excel in their learning. Unique to most schools, students in grades one through four are regrouped for daily reading instruction based on their current reading levels. Many students have a different grade level teacher for reading and are provided with targeted instruction, with similar performing peers, that matches their needs. Students who need further enrichment participate in a highly capable program taught by the school librarian. Research topics, which align and move beyond current units of study, are selected by students. Following extensive research, students share their learning with grade levels peers, teachers, and parents.

Charlestown School has established a school speciality in the area of outdoor learning. The P.T.O has been incredibly supportive, both financially and by dedicating their time through volunteer hours, to create outdoor learning spaces behind the school. Some of the current areas include flexible teaching spaces, a nature trail, weather stations, paved areas for collaborative games and a rain garden with native Rhode Island plants. Additional funding is sought annually to work to further enhance the spaces and materials for student use. Teachers use the spaces to enhance student learning in all subject areas. The location is also used as a secondary recess space, particularly for snow play during the winter. Students help to clean and maintain the spaces while demonstrating both respect and pride for their outdoor learning areas.

## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.**

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

Charlestown School follows district curricula with alignment to national and state standards. Each of the district fourteen curricular areas is reviewed in a five year cycle. Teachers and administrators review and update the curriculum and also create curriculum aligned resources for teachers. After the curriculum revisions are completed, they are shared with the District Curriculum Planning Council, which includes teacher and administrator representatives from various schools and grade levels. This team validates and approves any curricula changes before they are presented to the Chariho Regional District School Committee for adoption.

Elementary teachers help to create math and English language arts common assessments used districtwide and administered during each trimester. Teachers plan their units and lessons aligned with the district curriculum. They are guided to select resources that are of high quality and that directly align with content standards. District purchased instructional resources are vetted for their efficacy and must be research based. Blended learning strategies are used to enhance instruction. Younger students, in grades K-1, use ipads at a ratio of one device for every two students. Older students, in grades two through four, use chrome books with the same ratio. Older students also have google accounts and use google classroom for completing some independent and small group assignments and assessments. All instruction is supported by the use of direct instruction, independent practice, and cooperative learning. Teachers provide small group instruction to differentiate student learning based on skill acquisition and need for remediation. Teachers meet weekly during grade level common planning time to discuss their lessons, units and assessments. School improvement efforts are focussed on the use of district curriculum, district and state assessments, and formative assessments. Teachers review and discuss student data during common planning meetings, faculty meetings, and early release day meetings. They also meet several times each year during district grade level meetings.

**1b.** Reading/English language arts

Charlestown School follows the district adopted and Common Core aligned curriculum for English and language arts. Teachers reference the curriculum, scope and sequence, units of study calendar, standards descriptors chart, and suggested curricular resources when designing and implementing their lessons. The ELA curriculum was recently updated with the 2017 Massachusetts State Standards. The new state assessment, RICAS, is the same as the Massachusetts State Assessment, MCAS. A balanced literacy approach is used by teachers when teaching ELA. They select their own instructional materials and resources and use the Consortium for Reading Excellence program to help guide literacy instruction, particularly in the younger grades. A literacy library, housed in a previously empty classroom, is used by teachers as a location to store and borrow leveled books to enhance their instruction. Daily literacy instruction, beginning in grade one, is organized into reading class tiers with students regrouped together who are at a similar independent reading level. This organizational system helps to provide more targeted instruction to students as there are greater similarities amongst the students who are placed in the same reading tiers.

Daily reading instruction is focused on phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. The building schedule is developed to prioritize reading instruction by providing reading support through the use of the two reading specialists who are assigned to support specific grade levels during daily ninety minute instructional blocks. Students in the lowest reading tier, called Intensive, are provided with reading instruction by both a grade level teacher and a reading specialist. The class size for this struggling group of readers is also decreased to provide students with more adult support and targeted instruction to help close achievement gaps and move these students towards performing on grade level. Reading data is collected and reviewed regularly and student reading tier placements are adjusted based on growth or the need for more targeted assistance. Types of data used regularly include running records,

phonics screenings, sight word inventories, spelling inventories, STAR Reading benchmarks and probes, and district created common assessments.

Daily writing instruction is either taught as part of the daily English language arts block by the reading teacher or is taught separate from this block by the homeroom teacher. Grade level teachers have annual autonomy to determine when writing will be taught for the upcoming school year. Writing instruction is closely connected with the writing that is completed in science, therefore many teachers prefer to teach writing thematically and during various content areas with their homeroom students. Individual and class writing pieces are often reviewed and discussed at grade level common planning time and school based meetings. Teachers score and analyze student Writing growth using the Delaware Writing Rubrics and use these tools to help chart progress for students who have individual writing goals and interventions.

### **1c. Mathematics**

Charlestown's mathematics curriculum is district adopted and aligned with the C.C.S.S., Massachusetts 2017 State Standards and the RICAS assessment. Helpful guides and resources are created, vetted and used by teachers including scope and sequences, units of study calendars, and standards descriptor charts. The tools are helpful when assessing students for mid-trimester progress reports and end of trimester standards based report cards. These resources are aligned with the current math resource, Ready Common Core, for easier planning. Ready Common Core has been closely analyzed and vetted for program effectiveness and C.C.S.S. alignment.

Charlestown School teachers plan mathematics lessons independently and with their colleagues. Some supplement with additional paper resources, videos and the use of online programs. Most math classes are designed in a rotation model to provide small group instruction or reteaching, independent practice, and paired or small group work. Emphasis is placed on content standards, math practices and fact fluency acquisition. Teachers model new concepts and skills during whole group or small group lessons. Students engage in both guided and independent practice with new skills. Spiraling of content is used to help increase and maintain student mastery of previous standards. Students practice math facts and chart their independent growth.

In the area of mathematics assessment, formative assessment practices are strong and teachers use student tasks, quizzes and end of unit assessments to help plan their daily math instruction. End of trimester math common assessments have been created by district teachers, vetted and are used across the district. Older students are also assessed in the areas of math fact fluency and math computation. End of trimester assessments were recently moved to an online platform, called Performance Matters, which links to our school database. Younger students take math common assessments on paper or interview style. Students in grades two through four take online math common assessments. Scoring is expedited and data is reviewed quickly. Students who are not demonstrating proficiency are provided with remediation. All students complete a universal math benchmark assessment three times each year. In grades one through four, STAR is used and a district created assessments are used in kindergarten. Referrals to R.t.I. are made following each benchmark and at other times during the year when teachers notice that a student continues to struggle, despite their remediation attempts. A full-time math specialist supports students with tier three math R.t.I. plans. He also assists new teachers in a grade level with learning and implementing curriculum and co-teaching lessons. A before school math support program is offered to students who would benefit from additional math practice and support. These identified students are offered the opportunity to attend two thirty-minute sessions before school to use a paid program called DreamBox. The students are also encouraged to use the program at home and students also use the program during math rotations in their classroom.

### **1d. Science**

The science curriculum is written and vetted in collaboration with a partnership with GEMS-Net, Guiding Education in Math and Science Network, a program at the University of Rhode Island. The GEMS-Net Program matches scientists and science educators with teachers in public schools. The curriculum has been updated to align with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and also aligns with the State Science NBRS 2020

Assessment that students take beginning in grade five. Charlestown teachers are provided with access to numerous online guides and materials including pacing guides and strategic research strategies. They also attend ongoing professional development at U.R.I. to strengthen their understanding and teaching of each science kit and to effectively engage students in science writing. Each grade level has three instructional units each year and the kits cover life, earth and physical sciences. Student materials are kept in the classroom and consumables are replaced at the end of each school year.

Science instruction is inquiry based and the use of focus questions helps to guide student learning and engagement. Some of the included science practices include asking questions, defining problems, using models, planning and carrying out investigations, analyzing and interpreting data, constructing arguments using data, and designing solutions. Students work in cooperative learning groups to design and carry out investigations. They are guided to use their learning and vocabulary to explain their thinking and results. Following each investigation, students use their data to engage in significant writing regarding the process and their results. Science notebooks are maintained by all students and serve as an assessment tool for teachers regarding student thinking and understanding. Other assessment practices include the use of short formative assessments and online end of unit assessments for older students. Flexibility exists regarding the length of each unit, which helps teachers to provide reteaching and remediation based on student performance.

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

Social Studies is an important area for student learning. District teachers help to write and review the social studies curriculum and help to create resources for teachers. Student learning at each grade level moves through the progression of self, family, neighborhoods, communities, and Rhode Island. The instructional units allow for in-depth study, spread across the school year. Teachers select their own instructional resources and work collaboratively with colleagues. Emphasis is also placed on geography and current events. Supplemental resources, such as Time for Kids and Scholastic News, are used to help enrich student learning and to make connections with local, national and world events. Geography skills are also reinforced during world language classes as students learn to identify countries where Spanish is the primary language. Teachers have autonomy regarding when social studies is taught each week and throughout the school year. Students engage in active learning and have some choice in their learning. Teachers provide remediation as needed and can differentiate their lessons to meet the needs of students. Connections are made and reinforced with real life issues and dilemmas. Primary resources are used to strengthen and authenticate student learning and teachers develop their own assessments. Independent projects are also used to help increase student understanding and engagement. Examples include creating family trees in first grade and community maps in grade three. Fourth graders learn about Rhode Island history with significant thematic teaching in Reading and Writing. They read historical pieces about their state and participate in field trips to Slater Mill and the Rhode Island State House.

#### **1f. For secondary schools:**

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

### **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

All Charlestown School students participate in weekly or bi-weekly unified arts classes. These classes are important parts of the Charho curriculum and each area is reviewed at the district level in a five year cycle. The offerings and related opportunities for learning are fairly expansive and help to support students' acquisition of essential skills and knowledge, including in the areas of reading, writing, listening, speaking, mathematics, science, social studies, and use of technology.

Art classes are held weekly for all students. Learning is focussed on art history, concepts, techniques and application of skills when creating individual art pieces. Students have choice in their work and some elect to try a more challenging piece or technique with teacher guidance. Student work is often displayed in the school for others to see. Additional enrichment opportunities for art are held after school hours. Some students have painted a mural in the hallway that includes various native Rhode Island species.

Music classes are also held weekly for all students and student learning progresses from rhythm and note reading to students independently playing recorders in grades three and four. Weekly music classes often include student choice and collaboration. Students share their learning with others and formative assessments help to guide lesson planning. Connections are made with mathematics when counting notes, with reading when singing and writing lyrics for songs, and with technology when using laptops for instructional resources. Older students participate in a program with the Rhode Island Philharmonic and learn specific recorder pieces that they play in unison with the philharmonic during an out of school field trip each spring. Students can also earn “Recorder Karate” belts for correctly playing pieces with increasing difficulty. Fourth graders have the opportunity to join the 4th grade chorus with performances held in school as well as at Artessy, a day long celebration of all unified arts programs in the Chariho Regional School District.

Physical education classes are scheduled bi-weekly and are held outside when possible. At the beginning of each class, students engage in stretching exercises and work towards increasing their cardiovascular endurance during sustained running. Various skills are taught in the prepared units and students chart their progress with skills each month by posting their data on the gym wall. Examples include students charting the number of sequential jumps they attained during a jump roping unit and the number of sustained minutes of running. Students participate in weekly health classes that are taught by both the physical education teacher and the school nurse teacher. The curriculum begins in grade one with a focus on teaching students about social and emotional health through the teaching of the Zones of Regulation program. Zones Instruction is repeated annually in each grade level and other important units of study include safety, nutrition, and body systems.

World Language classes are held bi-weekly and are taught by a certified Spanish teacher. The elementary World Language program was started about eight years ago. One weekly session is focussed on new skills and the other is embedded practice during a class meeting. Students are provided with opportunities to practice some of their conversational skills, such as greetings and calendar. The homeroom teacher is present during both classes and helps to support the instruction.

Library classes are held weekly for most students and bi-weekly for kindergartners. Students learn how to locate and check out their own books in the library. Younger students listen and respond to picture books read by the librarian. Students also engage in activities that help to strengthen their literacy, library, and technology skills including the use of websites for sight words, coding, typing, and library organization. Older students chart their library progress using a digital badging system created and maintained by the librarian. Students often have some choices regarding their learning.

Additional learning opportunities are planned for students through school-wide performances and for specific grade levels through collaboration with district colleagues and high school students. Examples include third graders learning about fingerprinting from students in the Criminal Justice Program at Chariho Tech., fourth graders creating holiday centerpieces with guidance from students in the Floral Design Program at Chariho Tech, and all students learning about the importance of reading and writing from a guest author sponsored by the Parent Teacher Organization.

### **3. Academic Supports:**

#### **3a. Students performing below grade level**

Students who are below grade level in reading are provided with support as part of their placement in the Intensive Reading tier. This smaller class is co-taught by a grade level teacher and a reading specialist. A teacher assistant also supports the instruction. Many of these students also have individualized reading goals and spend additional time working with a reading specialist and/or special educator. A summer slide remedial reading program is offered to third graders who are not reading on grade level in June. Similar supports are offered to students who are below grade level in math. Students are invited to attend a math program called Dreambox. This program is supervised and supported by the school math specialist. The program determines student deficits and guides students through a progression of individualized practice.

Participants attend two weekly before school sessions and are encouraged to use Dreambox during Math rotations and at home. Classroom teachers provide other remedial supports such as through Math R.t.I. interventions and tutoring sessions.

The R.t.I.model at Charlestown is effective. The academic team reviews all pertinent data and writes detailed plans that include an intervention strategy that has been vetted and made available for district use. The behavioral team reviews data collected by the teacher and artifacts including discipline referrals and observations. Interventionists collaborate with classroom teachers to select intervention times that do not impact core instruction. They consider combinations of students and try to group students by needs. Data is collected and data points are graphed and analyzed. Progress review meetings are held every six to eight weeks. The team analyzes data and discusses next steps for the student. Interventions are changed if students are not making adequate progress with a specific strategy. Intervention time and frequency is also adjusted to match student needs. The team considers when and if a student should be referred to special education.

### **3b. Students performing above grade level**

Charlestown School has a Highly Capable program for students who need additional opportunities for enrichment. The program is facilitated by the school library media specialist. Twice each year, the librarian works with classroom teachers to identify students who need enrichment and who are likely to meet the district criteria. Rubrics have been created district wide using report card scoring, benchmark data, a parent questionnaire and teacher referral. Parents can also refer their child to the program and the same scoring rubrics are used. Once the participants are selected, the librarian notifies the parents and the teachers and schedules times for the students to work in small groups. Students select a research project topic that advances current units of study. Some students work independently and others choose to work in pairs or small groups. The librarian guides students in their research and helps them to use technology to share their learning. Parents, classmates and teachers are invited to watch student enrichment presentations at the end of the research process.

### **3c. Special education**

Special education is an umbrella under which students are supported. Charlestown school has a resource teacher and a self-contained teacher for an Autism program. Both teachers are dynamic and collaborative with grade level teachers. Special education support staff include two speech therapists, an occupational therapist, an adaptive physical education teacher, and a physical therapist. While all of these support personnel are part-time, they demonstrate teamwork and flexibility with meeting the needs of our students and effectively planning with colleagues.

Some students come to Charlestown School with previous preschool plans and fall under the category of developmental delay. Significant transition planning takes place for these students. Charlestown School kindergarten and special education teachers often attend preschool transition meetings. Some of these students transition into a self-contained autism program. Many of these students increase their inclusion and academic time and some transition from the self-contained class to our resource model.

Many special education students were referred by the Response to Intervention team and found eligible. Our goal is to remediate these areas and help students to perform on grade level. Several students are exited from special education annually due to growth. Special education teachers are skilled in planning specialized instruction for their students. Programs are vetted for use and routinely analyzed for effectiveness. Special education goals are data driven and connected to content standards. Data is reviewed regularly and parents are provided with written progress notes at the end of each trimester. Individualized education plan meetings are collaborative with families and educators also focus on the importance of writing appropriate modifications and accommodations. Teachers review and reference the plans and seek assistance for clarification and assistance. Staff recognize the achievement gap that exists for special education students as noted on state assessments. Therefore, the resource teacher collects and analyzes data weekly. Special education data is also analyzed by the school principal and district special education administrators help the teacher to analyze student data during scheduled case conferencing meetings.

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

Currently, there is only one English language learner at Charlestown School. In previous years there have only been a small number of students who met this criteria for additional learning support. An assigned district teacher works with students one on one and in the classroom to support learning. Assessments are used to monitor student progress and parents are updated regularly regarding their child's progress.

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

## **PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE**

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### **1. Engaging Students:**

Student engagement is extremely important and is a primary focus for all staff members at Charlestown School. Teachers begin the school day with class morning meetings using the Responsive Classroom program. Students greet each other and teachers share information about the upcoming school day. At the beginning of the school year, classroom rules are written by the students and they also share their hopes and dreams for the upcoming school year. Teachers help students to reflect on classroom rules and hopes and dreams throughout the school year. Students are held accountable for being active and supportive members of their learning community, both in the classroom and in their school. When classroom rules are broken, students are asked to consider how their breaking a rule has impacted the learning of others.

Lessons and activities are planned to increase student understanding and engagement in their learning. Students work cooperatively in all content areas and have choices in their learning. Learning is focussed on personal growth rather than competing with peers. Data is focussed on learning targets and meeting or exceeding standards. Students set personal goals and track their data, such with fact fluency and sight word acquisition. Teachers support and complement students for their engagement and effort. They nominate students who have demonstrated perseverance at the end of each trimester. These selected students attend an appreciation breakfast with their parents and siblings. Nominations written by teachers are read to all in attendance. The experience is inspirational for students, parents, and educators.

There are some students who are not as actively engaged in their learning due to other concerns. Some students struggle socially or behaviorally and need in-school supports to help them to improve in these areas. Goals are often written in student plans to help increase student positive engagement in learning. Many of these students have behavior intervention plans that help them to actively reflect on their own days while also providing data for educators to analyze. Some students work with the school psychologist one on one or in small groups to improve their social and emotional learning and self-regulation. Students are recognized for demonstrating kindness towards others, without being asked, as part of the Bright Shining Stars program. Staff members nominate students and the nominations are read on the intercom during pre-dismissal announcements. Written nominations and student photos are displayed in the hallway.

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

Charlestown School Teachers are focussed on establishing and maintaining positive relationships with parents. This process begins during spring kindergartners registration. Students engage in activities and meet new teachers. Families are provided with school tours guided by fourth grade Student Council members. During kindergarten orientation in August, parents learn about kindergarten schedules, learning, expectations, and family collaboration while students and siblings participate in a bus ride with the principal. Teachers reach out to their new incoming students over the summer to introduce themselves and share insights and enthusiasm for the upcoming school year.

When the school year begins, teachers establish parent communication systems. Using apps, they send daily messages and share access to digital portfolios. Parents and teachers also communicate privately to share information, questions and concerns. Email is also used for communication with families, particularly when collaboration is needed with additional staff members.

Open House Nights in September are attended by parents, grandparents, and siblings and students guide their families through classroom and school tours. Parent Teacher Organization representatives provide information. Many parents complete background checks and sign up to volunteer. Parents are invited to attend monthly P.T.O. meetings and class, grade level and/or school wide events. They are also asked to volunteer to assist in classrooms and on field trips.

Parents are provided with regular feedback regarding student performance. Written reports, in the form of progress reports and end of trimester report cards, are sent every seven weeks. Additional written reports are

sent home for students with special education and response to intervention plans. Teachers contact parents to schedule in person and phone conferences, typically held in late Fall and as needed.

Communication is initiated and maintained for students who struggle with behavior. Teachers establish classroom rules and expectations with students. When children continue to struggle, staff members complete written office referrals. Students share their side of the story and discuss the referral with parents. Meetings are scheduled for more serious infractions. While consequences may be issued, the focus is to improve student behavior. Plans for additional support, such as through behavioral plans and working with the school psychologist, are established.

Community partnerships have been established to enhance learning and to provide community aid. The fourth grade Student Council organizes food and hygiene item drives. An educator from a local tribal museum works with staff to plan and facilitate lessons that are culturally responsible and meaningful. Emergency responders share their roles with students during presentations, such as when reading to students during Reading Week.

### **3. Creating Professional Culture:**

The culture at Charlestown School is positive and professional. Teachers model their own growth mindset when reflecting on their own performance and learning new strategies and approaches aligned to student achievement. A district strategic plan is written every five years with input from staff, parents, and community members. The Charlestown School improvement plan is modeled from the district plan and is written by staff, parents, and members of the community. Current focus is placed on aligning instruction to content standards, enhancing learning with blended learning strategies and collaborating with families and members of the community. This school based team meets regularly to reflect on the goals of the plan with a focus on continued improvement. Leadership roles are offered and earned for participation on district committees, as induction coaches for novice teachers, cooperating teachers for student teachers and mentors for colleagues who need support.

Teacher collaboration is a strength as teachers plan and discuss student learning during weekly common planning meetings, faculty meetings, early release day meetings, and professional development days. Teachers collaborate on their own time, such as by engaging in summer book studies. Much focus is around pedagogy and refining instructional and assessment approaches to meet the needs of all students. Teachers have provided significant support to each when new initiatives were implemented, such as the Common Core State Standards and a new Rhode Island Evaluation System.

All teachers are provided with the opportunity to contribute areas of focus for future staff professional learning. District professional learning days are planned collaboratively by a committee of district leaders and teachers. A school data team, composed of the reading and math specialists, resource teacher and principal, meet regularly to discuss student growth and to help plan for school based professional learning. This team closely analyzes local benchmark, state assessment, and local assessment data to identify gaps, trends, and to identify students who may need additional support. Data analysis is also completed regularly in small groups and teachers share and reflect on strategies they have used in their classrooms. Teachers also consider new instructional approaches. Most teachers are comfortable sharing their knowledge and several share strategies during un-conference sessions, particularly in the areas of blended learning. Some teachers present their learning, such as from independent reading or work on a district committee, with others during staff meetings.

### **4. School Leadership:**

Charlestown School and Chariho District leaders are skilled, collaborative, and engaged with all stakeholders. The principal visits classrooms daily and forms positive relationships with students, staff and parents. An open door policy is evident as the principal meets with teachers daily when they have questions, concerns or need support. A collaborative approach exists and they effectively solve together and initiate plans for improvement. The principal also collaborates with other school leaders, including daily collaboration with the three district elementary principals. They serve as a professional learning community

for each other and help to maintain a cohesive and strategic focus on student achievement. All members of the district administrative team serve as sources of support with a shared drive and vision. The team meets monthly and agenda items are centered around improved student achievement.

The school principal is the leader of the school based Response to Intervention team. Members meet weekly to discuss student data and to implement and refine intervention plans. The leader participates in special education meetings, particularly for new student referrals and students with more complex learning or behavioral needs.

Teachers serve in some leadership roles. A classroom teacher serves as Lead Teacher. This educator helps to lead the School Improvement Team and also takes on a supervisory role in the building in the absence of the principal. Members of the school-based data team, which includes the math and reading specialists and resource teacher, help to analyze and guide the building with data based decisions. They support students with greater learning needs and share their instructional strategies and approaches with teachers. These educators also help to support new teachers by offering to help plan lessons and units and co-teaching lessons with teachers in new grade levels and buildings. Teachers are provided with district leadership opportunities, such as serving on committees and by sharing their teaching strategies with others while serving as master teachers, cooperating teachers, and mentors.

Parents provide a voice regarding school leadership. They are provided with an open door policy by the principal and often share their open feedback during unscheduled visits, emails and phone calls. Parents share their opinions and ideas for school-wide improvement at school improvement and parent teacher organization meetings. Their voice is important and helps to guide the next steps of the school.

Students also take on leadership roles, including fourth graders escorting kindergartners to class, volunteering in younger classrooms, and assisting in the library. Fourth grade Student Council members organize fundraisers for local agencies, promote spirit weeks, and provide tours for incoming kindergartners and their families.

## **PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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An important and integral strategy for academic success at Charlestown School, directly aligned to student performance on state assessments, is the use of tiered reading. This district model, developed more than ten years ago, is focused on providing reading instruction in more homogeneous groupings. At the beginning of each school year, data is analyzed by teachers in grades one through four. Many teachers use updated data, such as reading levels, to guide their reading placement decisions. Students are grouped into reading classes based on their current reading levels. Grade level teachers select which reading tier they will instruct, referred to as intensive, on level, and advanced. Appropriate staff are identified and assigned to support students in each tier. A reading specialist and teacher assistant support students in the intensive reading tier. Teachers assistants are assigned to support students in the on grade level tier and sometimes assist in the advance tiers. The assistants often move with the same reading students to the next grade level. They understand the learning and behavioral needs of each student and share this knowledge with the new grade level teacher and reading specialist assigned to work with these students. The two reading specialists also work with the intensive reading groups in a cycle of every other year. They enjoy seeing the growth of students and knowing them as learners.

The tiered reading model complements the work of the response to intervention team. The reading teachers plan and implement daily reading class lessons with the grade level teachers in the intensive reading tiers. They know their students as learners and can accurately describe student strengths and challenges during intervention review meetings. The same reading specialist also works with these same students for tier three R.t.I. interventions.

Another strength of the tiered reading model is the ability for teachers to align their instruction based on the strengths and needs of the students in their reading classes. Less differentiation is required as students are at similar reading levels. Students benefit from this model both academically and emotionally. Struggling readers appear less embarrassed about their reading challenges as they are placed with others who also struggle. They seem less inhibited to read aloud and to ask for help in front of peers. Students also exhibit a sense of pride and accomplishment when they move up to the next reading tier. Ongoing review of local and state assessment data justifies that the tiered reading model is having a substantial positive impact on the percentage of students who are performing on grade level.