

U.S. Department of Education
2017 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 Ms. Kristen Hughes

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

Official School Name White Street Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 300 White Street

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

City Springfield State MA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 01108-2174

County _____

Telephone (413) 787-7543 Fax _____

Web site/URL <http://www.springfieldpublicschools.com/schools/white-street> E-mail hughesk@springfieldpublicschools.com

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. Daniel Warwick E-mail warwickd@springfieldpublicschools.com
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) m

District Name Springfield School District Tel. (413) 787-7100

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

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

Date _____

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

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

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

Part I – Eligibility Certification

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

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. 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 and all subgroups, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2017 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.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2011 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, or 2016.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. 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 (2016-2017) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 34 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 14 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 10 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 58 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
 - Suburban
 - Small city or town in a rural area
 - Rural
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2016 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	48	35	83
1	39	38	77
2	31	39	70
3	36	39	75
4	38	34	72
5	38	34	72
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	230	219	449

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 7 % Asian
 - 16 % Black or African American
 - 69 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 7 % White
 - 1 % 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 2015 – 2016 school year: 39%

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, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	99
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	43
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	142
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	364
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.390
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	39

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 24 %
110 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Spanish, French, Arabic, Nepali, Somali, Swahili, Tigrinya, Vietnamese

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 100 %
Total number students who qualify: 449

8. Students receiving special education services: 19 %
86 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.

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

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 4
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	18
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	16
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	6
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

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 25:1
12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012
Daily student attendance	95%	95%	95%	95%	94%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**
Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2016.

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 X
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.

We strive to develop students that will achieve academic excellence and demonstrate caring, accountable and respectful behavior as they become college or career ready.

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

At White Street Elementary School we strive to develop students that will achieve academic excellence and demonstrate caring, accountable and respectful behavior as they begin their journey to being college or career ready. The school is located in the Forest Park section of Springfield, Massachusetts and serves approximately 450 students from diverse ethnicities, all of whom qualify for free and reduced lunch. The student body is made up of 24% English Language Learners with a variety of first languages and 19% Special Education students with varying disabilities. We believe in academic excellence for ALL students and we constantly refine our teaching practices to meet our diverse needs and to raise student achievement.

White Street School (WSS) was identified by the state of Massachusetts as a Level IV School, one of the lowest performing schools in the state. The school received a School Redesign Grant to create dramatic school turnaround. For the first two years of Level IV status, WSS implemented a turnaround plan that yielded no increased results. On the verge of state takeover, a new principal was placed at the helm to turn around the school and remove it from the consistently failing list. In just two years, the new principal, along with the leadership team and staff, not only turned the school around and exited Level IV status, but the results turned WSS into a Level 1 Elementary School!

The new leadership team was charged with revising the school turnaround plan with the expectation that dramatic results in student achievement would happen quickly for all students or the possibility of state takeover was probable. It was determined that a focus on four key areas would produce results: shared leadership and coaching; intense focus on instruction grounded in common core standards and explicit instruction; academic intervention; and Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) for all students. It is these four principles that continue to be the foundational strategies at WSS.

The first, shared leadership, coaching and collaboration, is the primary focus at WSS. Horizontal and vertical teams, strong coaching supports from administrators, Instructional Leadership Specialists (ILS), and Effective Educator Coaches (EEC) provide teachers with avenues to develop professional knowledge. With the support of the administrators and coaches, a team based approach to planning, problem solving, data analysis and professional development is in place. Teachers meet in common grade level teams three times a week for planning and data analysis. A Numeracy and Literacy Team meet to collaborate and develop a deep understanding of new and effective literacy instruction and mathematical practices in order to further the achievement of students at the school. A team of administrators, coaches and teachers also make up a school-wide Instructional Leadership Team that oversees all school-wide data, develops school-wide actions, communicates initiatives, and makes decisions within the school to lead and coordinate school initiatives. As a result, teachers are committed to a collaborative approach to coaching, planning, data analysis and professional development and the belief that these efforts will continue to move students to high levels of achievement.

In collaborative planning, teachers develop lesson plans that are grounded in Common Core State Standards which form the foundation of our second area of focus, explicit instruction. Curriculum mapping at the beginning of the year serves as a guideline for what standards, concepts, skills, and themes will be taught and assessed. During weekly common planning time and PLC's, grade level and content teachers meet to plan out daily lessons, share ideas and resources, develop common assessments, and look at student work and data in order to inform upcoming instruction. As a result of this strong collaborative planning at WSS student instruction is scaffolded and gradually allows for engagement in rigorous material that has led to high student achievement.

Our third area of focus is academic intervention. WSS implements both Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions during the math and English Language Arts blocks. Student needs are determined through analysis of results on both formal and informal assessments, and based on these results, teacher teams determine the appropriate intervention for each student. The staff at White Street embrace the belief that all students can learn and it is our responsibility to meet each child where they are in order to close gaps.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

When the new leadership team arrived in 2013, there was an intense focus on interventions throughout the school, however, core instruction was not a priority. Our belief was that all the interventions in the world were not going to help if we were not providing high quality core instruction to every child, every day.

At the onset of the school year, grade level and content teachers meet together with ILSs and administrators to pace out standards that will be taught throughout the year. Calendars are created and themes are decided upon to ensure a clear direction. Weekly common planning time (CPT) happens in all grade levels and all content areas. During CPT, teachers and coaches craft lessons based on a gradual release model so all students will find success. Through this approach we have increased student achievement across all grades and continue to close achievement gaps for our students.

Transformation in reading and writing instruction began by implementing a workshop model and building a literacy resource center full of authentic literature, engaging informational text, leveled readers, author study bins, and content rich text sets. Teachers focus on providing well-structured, whole group lessons and guided reading group lessons. During the workshop, whole group lessons are delivered through an explicit instruction model by using a think aloud approach. Conversations within lessons are grounded in accountable academic talk. Students expand their learning by practicing and discussing within their cooperative groups and through structured independent work time. Independent reading time happens daily and teachers confer with individual students to analyze their reading processes, set goals and determine individual needs. Guided reading instruction, using the Fountas and Pinnell protocol, takes place daily for all learners. Teachers use the Continuum of Literacy to plan for daily guided reading instruction in order to strategically increase students' reading levels as well as content knowledge.

At WSS in our mathematics block, we utilize explicit instruction within the workshop model which is broken into very specific components, including review, fluency practice, Number Talks, whole group, guided and independent practice, reflection and assessment. We provide students with math instruction that incorporates conceptual, procedural and application level lessons in order to meet all aspects of rigor. Students learn math concepts using manipulatives and a hands-on approach, which builds students' conceptual understanding of foundational math concepts. We also incorporate daily small group instruction that is flexible and based on formative and summative data. Science is integrated into the ELA block and taught as a self-contained science block in the Science Lab. The Massachusetts Science standards are paced on a year-long calendar for each grade level.

Science content is taught using the readers' workshop model as described above, however in the lab an inquiry based, hands-on approach is followed. The combination of a literacy focus and inquiry based lessons to implement science allows our students to delve into science concepts deeply. This learning is more meaningful and prepares students to succeed with a greater insight into the nature of science and engineering. The WSS 4th and 5th grade students attend Environmental Center for Our Schools (E.C.O.S). Students engage in a 2 day environmental education program which is located at nearby Forest Park where they explore the natural world through scientific inquiry. Students learn to develop a respect for their natural world and become environmentally responsible citizens.

Social Studies curriculum is delivered in all classrooms daily during a 40 minute block and during ELA. Students engage in social studies by questioning and drawing conclusions to better understand people and events of our world. Students learn through collaborative group projects incorporating technology. Unit themes in the ELA block enable students to build background knowledge related to history, civics and government or economics. Via a school-created grant, all 4th graders have the opportunity to leave the inner city and actively participate in a three day overnight trip to Red Gate Farm. Each student joins in caring for animals, nurturing the land, and building for the future. The intent is each child will build a connection with the land that sustains them and the natural world that surrounds them. Our integrated social studies and civic learning teaches students that they are part of a community and their actions directly impact the world

around them. Through our understanding of the Common Core Standards, implementation of the workshop model in all curriculum areas, and a combination of explicit and inquiry based instruction, we have transformed student achievement in all content areas as evidenced on the MCAS and district based assessments.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

White Street School implements a standards based Visual Art Curriculum in a self-contained Visual Art classroom. Art is scheduled weekly for grades Kindergarten through five. Students engage in inquiry-based Visual Art lessons through analysis, interpretation, art history, artist's contributions, and hands on learning. The art program allows students to question, understand and reflect on the role of an artist in the community as well as the world around them. Student explore the concepts through drawing, painting, sculpture, collage, and multimedia techniques. Students are encouraged to be inspired by previous artists but are taught to develop self-expression in their own work. Students are taught to use line, shape and color to express an emotion or feeling. All students learn and benefit from a visual arts program. Students have the opportunity to attend the Art Club, this is an opportunity for students to explore interests and talents outside of the school day and provides enrichment to possible future artists! Students work to publish final pieces for display at our local mall, local businesses and our school department. As a result. the students of White Street School view themselves as contributors to their local community.

White Street School implements a standards based Physical Education Curriculum in a self-contained Physical Education block. Physical Education lessons are aligned with the current Massachusetts Physical Education standards. This program provides all learners with the opportunity to explore movement through various loco-motor, manipulative, and non-manipulative activities. Students receive explicit instruction in skills such as throwing and catching, hand dribbling and tumbling. In addition to movement skills, students are delivered the concepts of Wellness and Fitness. The Health program goes hand-in-hand with Physical Education, and students learn the benefits of physical fitness to good health and the behaviors that contribute to wellness. Students learn the value of personal hygiene, how to prevent and treat illnesses, proper nutrition and how their body works in relation to physical activity.

Over the past two years, we have begun to expand our use of technology in the classrooms to expose students to curricula beyond the walls of the classroom. In the past, we have used technology as a replacement to motivate students. We have moved beyond this and are developing activities that could never have taken place without technology. We are using programs like Padlet for students to communicate to the whole class simultaneously, we are using Movie Maker for students to create live products to share work with each other and the global community, and most recently we have used Brightspace in all classrooms. Brightspace is our school data base for students to upload work, access links and materials that teachers have posted, and complete online assessments just to name a few. Most recently staff have been accessing the Technology Integration Matrix (TIM). This matrix provides a framework for the use of technology to enhance learning. The TIM combines descriptors of meaningful and effective classroom environments and a hierarchy of technology integration. We are now moving from entry level technology activities to activities that transform the classroom. Most recently all grade levels worked to create lessons that include higher level thinking and learning activities that may not be possible without technology. They then shared their lessons at a whole school PD. Our fourth grade students created Podcasts of book reviews that students could watch to help them make book choices. In second grade, students were put into groups to record themselves teaching measurement strategies. The movies were uploaded on the class Brightspace page for students to watch at home or in school as a review for an assessment. Technology use across WSS has increased student engagement and motivation and has provided students with learning activities that link learning to the world beyond the classroom.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

At the onset of the year careful attention is given to pacing each of the grade level standards for all subject areas into calendars. The knowledge and skills within standards are unpacked and are paced with a gradual and incremental growth toward mastery. Teachers continue, on a weekly basis, to collaboratively construct lesson plans that target the determined objectives for the standards within the calendar during weekly

Common Planning Time.

At WSS we draw upon Anita Archer and Charles Hughes' explicit lesson framework to develop well-structured lessons with challenging, measurable objectives and appropriate student engagement strategies, pacing, sequence and groupings. Explicit instructional lessons include the following lesson components, differing along the gradual release continuum in all lessons every day at WSS; Connection, Teaching Point, Active Engagement which include a clearly defined I Do, We Do & You Do, and a Link to application. Each of these lesson components form the framework for all lessons in all subjects daily at WSS. Our school has developed blocks of learning for all subjects that follow a workshop model. Standards are taught through an explicit whole-group lesson at the onset of the block which is referred to as "crafting." When student mastery is assessed and determined, students are released to work independently on a follow-up task in the portion of the block referred to as "Composing Meaning." During Composing Meaning, teachers and paraprofessionals provide small-group differentiated instruction and students work on deepening understanding through independent work which is often technology based. Small-Group instruction is planned in advance and based on formative and summative assessment data.

At WSS the data inquiry cycle is used to inform instructional practices in all grade levels and all content areas throughout the year in order to determine mastery of the standards being taught. We partner with the Achievement Network (ANet) utilizing their interim assessments and data cycle of analysis. The data cycle at WSS is defined as the actions of planning from standards and assessing standards taught, looking at and analyzing student data, framing and reframing questions and issues of practice, action planning, collecting data/artifacts, and re-analyzing data during a reflection meeting. The teachers are led through this process in data meetings, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), and grade level meetings. Data informs all planning practices at WSS.

In English Language Arts, additional assessments are administered. Daily running records of performance during Guided Reading, Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment four times a year, sight word inventories, analysis of writing against rubrics and Words Their Way assessment. In mathematics additional assessments include daily formative assessment aligned with the standard being taught, student performance on composing meaning, and unit assessments. Grade level teachers, interventionists and Instructional Leaders, meet up to six times per year to use the results of assessments to identify any at-risk students in need of interventions. During these data meetings students are identified, skills needed are determined and intervention groups are formed. All students receive daily small group instruction that is targeted to meet specific needs to continually perform at or above their instructional level in core subjects. In addition, at-risk students receive the targeted small group instruction plus a specifically determined intervention to close the gap that is identified. Interventions used are Leveled Literacy Intervention, Early Reading Intervention, Sonday, I-Ready, after school tutoring, Math Recovery, and Dreambox Learning.

It is the consistent commitment by all staff, every day, to provide high quality explicit lessons based on mastery of all grade level standards within a block that provides all students tiered instructional support and strict time on task that continues to allow White Street students to maintain their high levels of achievement. Assessment and planning from standards has been integral to our school success. These approaches have helped us to increase proficiency in all content areas over the past four years and continues to propel us forward.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Our school provides many activities that engage and motivate students. We celebrate learning! In school, teachers make conscious decisions and plan purposely for student engagement in their lessons. Our students live by our motto to be “Caring, Accountable, and Respectful...every day at WSS.” This is not just about creating good citizens, but also about creating students who care about their education and learning environment, who are accountable for their learning and progress, and respect themselves enough to work towards a successful future. In addition, we have events like field day, academic field day, community read aloud volunteers, grit awards, ELA Extravaganza, Math Mania, and Mad Science...just to name a few of the students’ favorite activities.

White Street provides an environment that focuses on the whole child. There are high expectations for all students. Academically, students are pushed to challenge themselves and to persevere when things get difficult. Achievement awards are given to recognize both proficiency and growth. We aim to acknowledge the hard work our students put forth. We recognize that many of our students come to us with social and emotional challenges that impact their learning. A large part of our progress is due to the vigilant work of our PBIS team. Teachers create a positive environment for all students. Students feel a deep connection to the caring and energetic counselors. Our counselors help students receive wrap around services and do whatever is necessary for our students, including home visits and even bringing students to doctor appointments. We have attendance initiatives: 8:50 is nifty, an individual on time incentive, classroom perfect attendance pizza, and family movie nights. We hold our students to high expectations, and realize that they must be supported not just academically, but socially and emotionally as well.

There is an air of collegiality and commitment between teachers and staff that has helped to promote the upward growth of our school. The cohesive staff maintains a high level of collaboration. They share ideas, best practices, meet with mentors and coaches, and share a mentality that our students truly are ALL of our students. Teachers are valued and supported and they understand that they are responsible for the trajectory of our students and if we all work together, we will not fail. There was an understanding from the very beginning of our metamorphosis-failure was not an option. Students, teachers, and administrators made this happen because they believed whole-heartedly in another one of our mottos: “Believe to Achieve!”

2. Engaging Families and Community:

At WSS we value our parent and community partners and attribute our school’s success to the inclusive and welcoming environment we have created. White Street has a wealth of traditions parents are welcomed to each year.

We host an annual Open House. During the spring we provide a “Math, Science, and Literacy Night” for families. Our art teacher puts on a winter art show each December. A Grade 5 Step-Up Ceremony takes place on the last day of school. We’ve also held coffee hour in the mornings throughout the school year for parents to come in for an open forum type discussion to express needs, concerns and questions to administrators. In addition to these traditions, parents are invited to many classroom displays and performances throughout the year. One of our most beloved traditions is “One School, One Book”. We purchase the same book for every family, to be read each night according to a calendar. Children engage in activities beginning with a kick-off and ending with a culminating event. Last year, after reading the Lemonade War, each grade level created a concoction of their own original lemonade recipe for a school wide tasting that parents attended. Another beloved tradition by families, community, students and staff is an Author’s Parade that takes place each June in the neighborhood. Parents and community partners flank the sides of streets in our neighborhood as the whole school parades wearing hats that reflect favorite books. The Forest Park Civic Association provides the funding for this project and attends the events and activities!

We have allocated funding for a full-time Parent Liaison who is charged with parent communications via

flyer, email, phone messenger, as well as organizing parent conferences, facilitating engagement events, and planning fundraising at the school. In addition, we have allocated funding for a full time City Connects Coordinator who is charged with connecting parents to organizations, supports and events across the community. Teachers also visit student homes throughout the year to further strengthen the family school relationship through our Home Visit Project.

WSS is continuing to expand our community relationships by developing strong ties with outside community partners. Partners join us in providing school volunteers for monthly read-aloud, college campus visits, and more recently college scholarships to six of our students each year. In addition, we have had AmeriCorps members working in our school for the last six years supporting students. Our families and community partners are an integral component of our school that is key to our overall success.

3. Professional Development:

Our primary focus in increasing student achievement is to continue to strengthen and build the capacity of our teachers, administrators and paraprofessionals. Our coaching staff is made up of two full time Instructional Leadership Specialists (ILSs) and four identified Effective Educator Coaches (EECs). Administrators are instructional leaders who oversee all professional development and its' impact on teachers craft and student achievement.

Our professional development model starts with a keen look at data to identify areas to plan professional development from. Workshops are held during seven teacher workshop days, two extended day meetings a month, and weekly PLC meetings. The district offers a variety of professional development staff may attend throughout the year and has monthly workshops for administrators, ILSs and EECs to consistently refine their leadership, coaching and pedagogy. Our PD over the past four years has focused on Explicit Lesson Planning, Student Engagement, Data Analysis, Workshop Model, Close Reading, Conversations, Writing to Text, Math Conceptual Understanding, and Technology Integration. Our whole school professional development model has impacted staff and students as evidenced by our increased student achievement data over the past four years and has propelled us to a Level 1 School. We have clear and consistent practices, strategies and modes of instructional delivery implemented with fidelity across the school. Teachers know what is expected of them and students receive highly effective instruction daily.

Our embedded coaching model has been our most impactful form of professional development. Administrators, Coaches and ILSs not only spend their time providing whole school or grade level PD, their time is spent in classrooms working side by side with staff on a daily basis. Co-planning, modeling of lessons, specific and targeted feedback based on content understanding, student participation and work are provided so teachers can take immediate steps towards their improvement and the improvement of students. The Springfield Educator Development System is a two-way evaluation system between educators and administrators based on self-assessment, goal setting, progress monitoring, evaluation and formative and summative assessment. Evaluation is done with teachers instead of to teachers. Ratings of teacher performance are based on a variety of observations, conferences, artifacts, and progress monitoring of student learning goals and professional practice goals.

Our professional development also includes Literacy, Numeracy and Instructional Leadership Teams that continue to research new and innovative best practices which build the knowledge of all teachers through action research and by presenting to all staff to further school-wide learning.

4. School Leadership:

Our focus at WSS has been to develop collaborative and data-driven Professional Learning Communities, with teacher leadership, shared decision-making and clear avenues of support. Foremost, we have implemented team-based approaches to data-analysis, decision-making and leadership responsibilities. Our Instructional Leadership Team (ILT), which includes the principal, ILSs, EECs, grade level representatives, special education and ELL teachers, lays the ground work for all instructional policies within the school. Subsets of the ILT work on content specific initiatives (Literacy Team and Numeracy Team), school operations (School Centered Decision Making Team- SCDM), and school climate (PBIS Team).

The Literacy Team plans and supports all school-wide reading related initiatives and participates in book studies to support literacy development of our students. Practices described from this research is implemented in classrooms. In addition, all members are responsible for facilitating meetings throughout the year to distribute the leadership responsibilities.

The Numeracy Team plans and supports all math related initiatives and researches best practices to enhance our mathematical instruction. The past two years, our Numeracy Team has been digging deeply into conceptual math learning to give students a sense of relationships, connections and ideas in math to help them understand why something works rather than just how. The PBIS Team has been instrumental in improving the culture and climate at WSS.

The PBIS Team developed strategies to enable the school to develop high and consistent school-wide behavioral expectations, and to help teachers become more skilled in building relationships, engaging students, and managing behaviors so we see an even greater increase in student engagement, student time on task and increased student achievement. The team meets monthly to analyze data of all students, but specifically our Tier 3 students who need individualized plans to support social emotional needs. The team revises plans as needed and supports teachers to implement the plans. Our SCDM Team consists of the elected teachers, paraprofessionals, and parents, as well as the principal and community partners. We follow a process founded in consensus from all individuals who may be affected by actions created by the team. Consensus is gained via polling, surveys, speak out and voting by team members to ensure all voices are heard and considered when making school-wide decisions about budget, schedules, staffing, curriculum resources, or professional development.

It is through this team and this process that all stakeholders' ideas and opinions are heard and considered when making decisions on what's best for WSS.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The most impactful practice that we at White Street School have wholeheartedly embraced is Creating a Culture of High Expectations with a BELIEF that ALL students can and will be highly successful. This belief is embedded in everything we do, every conversation we have and every lesson we deliver. Our school motto has become, “Believe to Achieve!” As a school community, we have studied what it looks like, sounds like and feels like to have and communicate high expectations to students so that our belief in them is evident and they in turn believe in themselves. Students living in poverty don’t always come to school with this belief system and we have learned over the past four years the most important part of our job is to communicate high expectations to all students and to believe deep down that they can be successful.

Talking about having high expectations and telling students you believe in them is just not enough. We have adopted specific strategies and non-negotiables in order to create this culture. One of the strategies of this practice is that we have no-secrets classrooms. Communicating clear and consistent expectations for appropriate behavior and quality work is key to students being able to meet high expectations. We do this by developing the expectations, modeling them, providing examples, developing and using rubrics, providing feedback on how to improve behavior or work, and acknowledging and rewarding students for meeting high expectations.

We value and believe in the growth mindset and that effective effort is a key indicator to success. We instill this in our students. We teach how to put forth effort by giving them strategies to be successful and by delivering messages of “you can, if you try”. We believe and communicate that “we are not born smart, we become smart” and that we grow if we use strategies, persevere, question, learn from mistakes and fix them. We praise students for effort and for using strategies rather than solely how they got an answer. We reward and recognize both achievement and growth throughout the year. After each interim assessment, we hold an award assembly and acknowledge students who reach proficiency and who have shown growth from one assessment to the next.

We fully expect that no matter where our students come from or what their socio-economic or cultural backgrounds are, they will be successful, productive citizens on their journey to becoming college or career ready.