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

[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 8622 Route 414
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Liberty   State PA   Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 16930-9669

County Tioga County

Telephone (570) 324-2521   Fax

Web site/URL https://www.southerntioga.org/schools/liberty-elementary-school/   E-mail egraham@southerntioga.org

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

_____Date_____
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Mr. Sam Rotella   E-mail srotella@southerntioga.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Southern Tioga SD   Tel. (570) 638-2183

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

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

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

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

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

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state's performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.

2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2020 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.

3. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.

4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2014 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.

5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, or 2019.

6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award.

7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.

8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.

9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.

10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.

11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2019-2020) unless otherwise stated.

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

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

                                            5 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
   [X] 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	14	13	27
1	21	9	30
2	12	9	21
3	14	20	34
4	16	12	28
5	10	11	21
6	22	20	42
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	109	94	203

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

4.   Racial/ethnic composition of   0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
     the school (if unknown, estimate):   0 % Asian
                                           1 % Black or African American
                                           2 % Hispanic or Latino
                                           0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
                                           94.5 % White
                                           2.5 % 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: ≤1%

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

     Mobility rate is less than 1%

     This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred *to* the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred *from* the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	0
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	0
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	0
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	<.01
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	<1

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

     There are 0 ELLs in the school.

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

                                                         0 Total number ELL

7.   Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 58 %

                 Total number students who qualify: 117

8. Students receiving special education services: <u>18</u> %

           <u>36</u> Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

<u>1</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>7</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Developmental Delay	<u>14</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>3</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>9</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>2</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: <u>1</u>

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

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	10
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	5
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	3
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1   <u>20:1</u>

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

Required Information	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	95%	95%	96%	96%	95%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2019.

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

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.
Yes _ No 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.

Learner-driven.

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

Liberty Elementary School is a small, rural school located in north-central Pennsylvania. With strong community roots, Liberty maintains a strong parent organization as well as family-school connections that encourage open communication. Families historically come from agrarian backgrounds and have powerful work ethic and pride in their community. A large geographic area makes travel to the school nearly an hour in one direction for many families, but attendance is consistently high and education is valued.

With strong district leadership and a vision that is focus on being learner-driven, the curriculum is being rewritten to support student-learning through inquiry and discovery based on strong foundations. Simultaneously, the faculty is being developed through coaching models and provided with peer-leadership and professional development time that encourages growth that directly affects student academic growth and achievement.

To support students, the school has maintained supports for student specifically by maintaining counseling staff and bringing a full-time social worker on staff.

Innovative programs include a library that has become rich with discovery as a media center allowing students to work with tech tools and hands-on programming preparing them for 21st century skills that are not traditionally a part of the community make-up but require the soft-skills their families value.

The community and school of Liberty are rich with tradition. The school is forward-thinking housed within a district that is forward-thinking in preparing students for the 21st century in skills, technology, critical-thinking and adaptability. The partnership creates students who have a foundation that is future-focused with a strong work-ethic.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

The district has taken a learner-driven approach where students are given choice and voice in their learning and ways of demonstrating their acquisition of learning as aligned to standards of the PA Core. This is established and practiced from an early age in primary as students are guided through centers and allowed autonomy within balanced choice. As they progress through their school career, students are integrated into the district decision-making process and supported in designing projects that showcase their passions and skills learned throughout their careers. Learner-driven, teacher-supported and future-looking is the philosophy of the district.

Embedded formative assessment has been a critical approach in determining student understanding on a daily basis. This guidance allows the standards to be measured and for small group instruction to be utilized on a need-basis and extension to occur as appropriate.

1b. Reading/English language arts

Reading is established upon the five core areas as the foundation skills with a comprehensive literacy approach and a strong focus on writing within the primary grades. Critical thinking in reading and writing is further developed as students grow in their skill and ability to encourage students who are able to interact with texts in both thought and written form. These skills are encouraged to be utilized and embedded across the curriculum once learned and solidified within the ELA curriculum.

DIBELS is used as the core assessment in determining foundational reading skills at the primary level. Student data is analyzed to determine immediate need and school data is collected and analyzed to determine effectiveness of programming. Current structures are showing the benefits of recent years of curriculum design and are now directing the district towards specific strategic interventions for isolated skill sets.

1c. Mathematics

Mathematics is a focus on core skills allowing students to develop a strong foundation. A focus on math fluency is also established to allow for ease in manipulation as critical thinking is developed and application of skills is used to allow students to discover math through manipulation, reading and writing. The development of critical thinking in math allows students to more deeply understand math and its inner-workings and not simply see it at face value allow for further and deeper understandings as they progress into more academic math at higher levels.

1d. Science

The focus of science is an inquiry-based philosophy where students are exposed to questioning, discovery, and learning where they are increasing their communication skills. Through discovery, they are supporting their findings and through writing they are then backed by scientific evidence through a process of CRE (claim evidence reasoning) which allows a continuation of literacy themes. This also allows for the learner-driven process to continue as students are given freedom to develop their personal opportunities of discovery increasing their curiosity of the world in which they live.

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

The focus begins with the social being and establishing the expectations of being an individual and a positive citizen. Caring Communities is used to develop students understanding of their own and others social and emotional well-being.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Special areas including art, music, library, STEM, physical education and social/emotional learning are all a part of weekly lessons for students with additional learning brought in from outside resources including drug and alcohol awareness, disability and differences acceptance learning and academic extensions including fine arts & agricultural experiences in the forms of field trips and mobile lab visits to the school.

Art employs an embedded literacy concept through instruction and teaches all students to be artists instead of isolating those with natural talent. Students are taught specific skills and are then taught to build upon those to create large projects. Additionally, they are taught to display, present and take pride in their items as they become the fabric of the school through many display functions and public events.

Music is a critical component in complementing and enhancing the early literacy development of the primary students. Word play and phonemic awareness are incorporated seamlessly into the instruction while students also develop motor skills. As skills increase, performances are also held as full classes perform for the entire school on a variety of instruments at various times through the year learning performance skills as well as rhythm and tone.

Library and STEM allow for discovery in a variety of ways for all students as the library is the hub of the school. The flow of books is constant and the opportunity to work with tech tools and hands-on programming gives students access to items that would not often be found in their homes.

Physical education is a valued component of the curriculum that has also incorporated a class pet and modeling lifetime fitness in a variety of avenues for students.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

Students performing below grade level are given in classroom supports which begin with Title I in kindergarten. By beginning with identifying needs in reading at the beginning of school careers and providing intensive services, the goal is to decrease need with age. However, supports remain and are determined to increase if needed in the form of special education if needed .

Supports offered are on an individual basis and being implemented with more specificity in the future as the curriculum has now been in place for three years and is showing specific areas of need.

3b. Students performing above grade level

 A gifted program is offered allowing for opportunities of extension to all students through engagement in the classroom and specifically designed projects such as designing the perfect slime with a marketing campaign outside of the classroom with an instructor who has an engineering degree. The program allows students to think and create based on product design as well as business and marketing. Teachers also have the opportunity to partner with this teacher in a cooperative, coaching model in the classroom allowing for further extension and enrichment for all students . For example, the 2nd grade has always hosted a carnival with games allowing students to come in and play to raise money for Shriner's Hospital. The gifted instructor has partnered with the teacher to allow for an engineering design process to be implemented in designing these games with 2nd graders to walk them through the process of failing and rebuilding.

3c. Special education

A full range of services both within and outside of the district allow students to be met at all instructional levels in their least restrictive environment. At Liberty Elementary specifically, itinerant and supplemental

services are offered for learning support which may include behavioral support or para-professional support as necessary. The full complement of related services including speech, OT, PT is available at an itinerant level as required by student need. Every attempt is made to serve student at their neighborhood school when possible providing a sense of community .

Further interventions include behavior charts and modified schedules and instruction within the school. If a student needs more intensive supports that cannot be provided within the school, then a district school with a greater spectrum of supports is looked at with the IEP team and determined whether it will be effective. This could include an emotional support classroom, life skills classroom and a variety of other supports.

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

The Southern Tioga School District operates a "Mixed-classes with English-only Support" Language Instruction Education Program that utilizes both the Pennsylvania (LIEP) English Language Development Standards Framework (PA-ELDS) and the WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework (ELDS) (Appendix A) which focuses on developing literacy in English through the use of ELD pull-out instruction and/or ELD push-in instruction as deemed appropriate to student needs. Students identified as in need of program instruction will receive varying amounts of direct instruction in English as well as push-in supports and monitoring and accommodations for their success in content area subjects.

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. **Engaging Students:**

Southern Tioga School District supports a learner-driven model that engages students in a multi-faceted manner. Student voice and choice within the classroom to drive curiosity in their surrounding world is established at a young age and cultivated throughout their academic career. Students are supported in their learning through inquiry-based opportunities across the curriculum and brought into meetings in making school and district-based decision in everything from food choices to creating independence through transitions to the high school.

Learner-driven works because students are given autonomy in their learning. By being given voice and choice they take ownership in their learning and when they do this, they take interest. They seek out experts in the staff to support their learning and our staff continues to support them. Effective questioning by the staff stimulates their interest and fuels their desire and drive to learn.

2. **Engaging Families and Community**:

Families and communities are engaged through frequent and open communication and support groups such as LAPAT that provides extension opportunities in academics. Volunteers are found in the building on a frequent basis supporting in the classroom and providing activities for students otherwise impossible due to financial funding. The district also encourages family and community engagement by openly inviting all stakeholders to work groups as district visions are designed and established.

3. **Creating Professional Culture:**

The professional culture has been established over multiple years by establishing a strong coaching-model including gallery walks and peer-observations. The foundation is started through the teacher induction program over two years of mentor-mentee partnerships and professional development. Additionally, weekly meetings that span the building and district as departments, grades and strategic teams allow for professional discussions that follow protocols and invest teachers in decisions that guide district movement as well as individual student goals and adjustments needed to meet those goals. Collaboration is a critical skill that is taught and expected in all faculty.

4. **School Leadership:**

School leadership is expected to be transparent and have integrity in their decision-making. Students are meant to be at the center of all decisions with their learning and personal growth. The administrative team works together as a team with strong communication and partnership using the varied strengths of each member to benefit the whole school and district.

Every decision that is made at the leadership level is filtered through the 7 Guiding Principles. If the decision does not fully reflect the mission and vision grounded in these principles then it is reworked so that it is fitting with them to focus on student growth, achievement and learning.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The district has been engaged in intensive curriculum writing in all content areas for the past five years. The emphasis has been instructional delivery and embedded differentiation. Guided reading and writers' workshop have been a critical component in establishing the foundation of the curriculum for all learners to create a community of learners who are able to read and write across all content areas.

In supporting these areas, Title I in reading supports has been continued to establish supports allowing for students to succeed in an environment that provides them with the needed tools. Areas of need, such as oral language, have been specifically targeted with tools such as Heggerty's Phonemic Awareness, to allow for a full-scale approach to allow all learners to have supports built in for success and growth.

Another critical component in establishing academic success is by maintaining student engagement in learning. This has been embedded in curriculum and learning from early grades by allowing students voice and choice in selections and options with teacher guidance. This grows into larger decision-making opportunities within more content areas as they move into inquiry-based science and text analysis requiring them to reason and explain their critical-thinking process. By having choice, their investment maintains their engagement and encourages their continued participation and excitement in learning.