

U.S. Department of Education
2023 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Philip R. Smith Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 949 Avery Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City South Windsor State CT Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 06074-0000

County Hartford County

Telephone (860) 648-5025 Fax (860) 644-4020

Web site/URL https://prs.southwindsorschools.org/home E-mail mdixon@swindsor.k12.ct.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.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent* Dr. Kate Carter Ed.D. E-mail superintendent@swindsor.k12.ct.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name South Windsor School District Tel. (860) 291-1205

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.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. Craig Zimmerman
(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.

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

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, leave blank.*

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 2023 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 must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2018 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2022.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 or 2022.
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. The nominated school has, or is subject to, a nondiscrimination policy (provide either a link to the policy or submit a text of the policy), is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff consistent with applicable law and does not have any outstanding findings of unlawful discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

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.

The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if one of these eligibility requirements is later discovered to have not been met or otherwise been violated.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the current school year (2022-2023) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools. For charter schools: If a charter school is part of the public school system, information should be provided for the public school district. If a charter school is considered its own district or part of a charter district, the information provided should reflect that.)

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

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. **Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not for the district.**)

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 in the school as of October 1, 2022 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Students
PreK	0
K	73
1	70
2	91
3	69
4	85
5	79
6	0
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	467

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 21 % Asian
 - 4 % Black or African American
 - 11 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 58 % White
 - 6 % 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 2021 - 2022 school year: 3%

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	11
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	2
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	13
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	451
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.03
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

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

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 12 %
56 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 4 %

Total number students who qualify: 18

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 9 %
Total number of students served 44

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. All students receiving special education services with an IEP should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

<u>5</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>6</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>7</u> Developmental Delay	<u>8</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>17</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>1</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 6 %
Total number of students served: 30

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 11

11. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	27
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	13
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	10
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

12. 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 20:1

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

Required Information	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
Daily student attendance	95%	98%	95%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

14. **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 2022.

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%

15. 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.

16. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

Philip R. Smith Elementary School Vision Statement: Together at PRS we... DREAM Always, ACHIEVE Continuously, INSPIRE Endlessly.

17. Provide a URL link to the school's nondiscrimination policy.

https://cdnsm5-ss13.sharpschool.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_239916/File/Board%20of%20Education/2019%20Board%20Policies/2021-2022%20Updates/1003%20Non-Discrimination%20Community%20Approved%2011.23.21.pdf

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

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

The town of South Windsor is a wonderful, diverse and growing community. It is an amazing place to raise a family with high achieving schools that focus on the success of all students. The community has a strong commitment to education and has shown this dedication through a ten-year facilities plan to build four new elementary schools.

As a school we are committed to student engagement, empowerment, social consciousness and resilience. Our schoolwide vision is Together at PRS we...DREAM Always, ACHIEVE Continuously, INSPIRE Endlessly. Philip R. Smith students and families are at the center of everything we do. Staff, students and parents take pride in our school and all decisions are made based on students' social, emotional and academic development. Our parents are active in our school community and very supportive of our teachers and their children's education. Philip R. Smith is a place where people work together and take care of each other because our common goal is the success of our students.

Philip R. Smith offers a welcoming, calm and positive atmosphere for our students. With a focus on a learner-centered environment, we get to know our students and build on their strengths and interests. Celebrating successes is a very large part of the Philip R. Smith culture. We are always looking for ways to positively reinforce our students in a variety of ways. When our students set and meet their goals, we recognize them for their accomplishments. When students earn a raffle ticket because they showed kindness, integrity or demonstrated exceptional effort, we recognize them through a raffle and incentives. To build a positive home-school connection, we often reach out to families to extend the recognition so that our students feel a sense of pride here at school and at home.

At Philip R. Smith, we have many systems in place to foster a community for our students to thrive. With a strong focus on Tier I instruction, we utilize a math curriculum that ensures high expectations and access to meaningful mathematics learning for every student. Our math instruction and the tools we use ensure implementation of the Standards for Mathematical Practice to develop processes and proficiencies in mathematics. In addition, our math curriculum incorporates 21st century skills and technologies, resulting in relevant and meaningful instruction and high student achievement. In alignment with our mathematics curriculum, we utilize data to make decisions that inform our instruction and improve student learning.

Teachers meet the needs of learners by creating a community in which students are engaged in transforming information and experience into knowledge and understanding. In each classroom, students have access to a variety of fiction and nonfiction, and leveled texts for independent reading. Our teachers use a workshop model, gradually releasing responsibility to students. Teachers incorporate varied and strategic instructional strategies to support the individual needs of students. Students practice and apply literacy skills and concepts to texts chosen based on interest, reading level, and/or thematic relevance. Students construct and share meaning derived from texts through discourse and written response. Extended written pieces are developed through a process, including prewriting, rehearsing, composing, conferring, revising, editing and sharing.

We know that academics are only one part of our work with students. With a commitment to developing the whole child, we utilize multiple resources and tools to teach students how to be positive members of the community, as well as strategies to help regulate emotions and solve problems. In addition, we have many opportunities throughout the year to recognize and celebrate the beautiful diversity of our students and families so that all members of our school community know that they are welcome, included and accepted.

Another very effective system that we have in place at PRS is the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). This tiered approach focuses on reading, math, attendance and behavior. The MTSS team meets weekly to discuss students. We also meet at the end of each cycle of intervention to dismiss students from tiered supports, change their plan, or add students who need a Tier I, II or III plan. There is always a conversation about what each student's individual learning needs are and we match the support with the student. While a student has a tiered plan, we progress monitor to ensure that learning is being accelerated.

Our students deserve the best Tier I instruction, so all teachers have access to a Reading Consultant and a Math Coach for in-class coaching. Our coaches work collaboratively with every teacher to support their professional growth and build capacity. Teachers have the autonomy to think about what support and learning they need to meet the needs of all of their students.

Philip R. Smith staff understands that everyone wants to feel connected and part of a community. We have established a “Pick Two” initiative that has every staff member identify two students that they connect with regularly. In addition, to help the staff to feel connected, we have asked teachers to identify a workplace bestie and we frequently check in with new staff to make sure that they feel supported, connected and have what they need to succeed.

We choose three faculty meetings where data is shared with the entire staff. Our commitment is the success of all of our students so it’s important to share and think about how we are progressing towards our school goals. The data shared at the three faculty meetings is aligned with our school goals and provides fall, winter and spring student data. The data includes academic, attendance and discipline, looking for trends, celebrations and to identify next steps. During these meetings, we also remind ourselves of the goals we are working towards, as well as the action steps we are taking to meet those goals.

To set our K-5 students up for success and investment in their own learning, we have them set personal goals. These goals can be weeklong or long term and can focus on any area of improvement. In addition, each student sets a reading goal and when the goal is met, they can “shop” at the school’s book vending machine. Our Library Media Specialist provides a list of the most frequently checked out books from the library and we purchase those books for the vending machine. Students are very motivated to meet their goals and pick their books. Once students have read their book, they are given the option to donate their book to our lending library.

At PRS, we are always on the lookout for students being kind, showing integrity and putting forth their best effort. One way we celebrate our students is by providing a raffle ticket when we notice these character traits. We have a weekly raffle where twelve students are selected and can choose from a variety of activities. We have 10 incentives available to students. A few options include a celebration phone call home, lunch with the principal, extra recess, designing a 3D print, or time to read to a therapy dog. Students are so excited when they win the raffle.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

1a. Reading/English language arts curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

The South Windsor elementary literacy curriculum is aligned to the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and further developed in alignment with the South Windsor Teaching and Learning Framework. The Teaching and Learning Framework is framed around the following core concepts or pillars: evidence-based practices, challenging and high expectations, learner centered environments, culturally sustainable approaches, and deep student engagement.

The comprehensive literacy block includes explicit instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics, comprehension strategies, and writing skills with an emphasis on the transfer of these explicit skills to independent reading and writing. Our teaching methods are designed to foster independence and to develop lifelong readers and writers. The model develops a community of readers and writers who know and support each other as literate people.

A range and variety of appropriately complex, high-quality texts create the foundation of our comprehensive literacy block. Utilizing a gradual release approach, teachers model skills and strategies that support learning, provide guided practice and shared reading opportunities, and assign differentiated independent practice to all students. Read-aloud opportunities feature a variety of complex texts (narrative and expository texts above grade-level) to develop background knowledge and vocabulary in a variety of subject areas. Read-alouds offer teachers an opportunity to provide vocabulary instruction including robust conversations in order to support an understanding of literal and inferential comprehension of word knowledge within text. Thoughtfully selected shared and mentor texts provide students with a wide variety of models for reading and writing. All students work with meaningful, grade-level fiction and nonfiction texts, in addition to practicing and applying literacy skills and concepts to other authentic texts, chosen based on interest, reading level, and/or thematic relevance.

Strategic guided and small group reading pairs students with texts at their instructional level and provides a ladder for continuous literacy progress. Small group instruction takes place via guided reading/writing/phonics and/or strategy groups. The teacher supports students' reading development by focusing on effective strategies for processing texts at increasing levels of difficulty and writing development by focusing on effective strategies to improve each stage of the writing process. Small group instruction includes teacher-led modeling, oral reading by students, and immediate feedback to foster reading fluency and automaticity. In the lower grades, letter naming fluency is developed through small group instruction for the students learning letter names and sounds.

Students construct and share meaning derived from texts through discourse and written response. Extended written pieces develop through a process, including prewriting, rehearsing, composing, conferring, revising, editing and sharing. Teachers incorporate varied and strategic instructional strategies to support the individual needs of students, continually scaffolding learning to involve reading and producing increasingly complex texts.

Students' independent reading materials include a range and variety of appropriately complex high-quality text and provide consistent and sustained opportunities for practice. Independent reading time at home and school provides an opportunity to apply skills and strategies that are introduced and taught during phonics lessons, teacher read-alouds, shared reading, and guided reading. Students become confident, enthusiastic and motivated readers.

Our curricular model provides rich, standards-based literacy instruction aimed at increasing student achievement, engagement, and joy in equal measure. Daily practices of setting goals with students that place a share of the responsibility for growth in their hands, allows for student agency in their own development. Research by John Hattie (Visible Learning, 2008) and others shows that one of the methods of

teaching that accelerates a learner's progress more than almost anything is the provision of feedback. Teachers confer with students while they are practicing skills which allows them to assess students' reading and writing ability, while also providing time for explicit feedback and individualized or small group instruction. In addition to this ongoing formative assessment, teachers regularly use curriculum-based measures, milestone tasks and performance assessments that are aligned to standards to determine mastery. Our district assessment calendar includes benchmark assessment for phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension. Student outcomes are analyzed during data team meetings and supported by Multi-Tiered Systems of Support that match learners to appropriate interventions.

1b. Mathematics curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Elementary students experience math content fully aligned to Connecticut Common Core Standards. The standards outline both the content and approaches used within the mathematics classroom. Learning experiences for students are grounded in content standards, while the math practice standards provide guidance for the approach in creating a learner-centered experience.

Within each grade level, learners explore mathematical ideas, apply skills to real-world contexts, and engage in problem solving. These practices spiral around five domains throughout the elementary experience: counting and numbers in base ten, operations and algebraic thinking, numbers and operations with fractions, measurement and data, and geometry. From kindergarten through second grade, there is a heavy emphasis on addition and subtraction, and applying strategies using a concrete-representational-abstract process. In grades three, four, and five there is an emphasis on multiplication and division of whole numbers and fractions while continuing to use concrete and representational strategies.

While the content standards drive what is taught in each grade level, the math practice standards outline the approach. Classroom norms based on the practice standards are present in all classrooms. They help create a classroom space that promotes discussion and collaboration, encourages the use of multiple strategies and representations of mathematical ideas, stimulates inquiry, and creates a safe environment for risk-taking, which develops perseverance. Students regularly work in collaborative groups and engage in academic talk around mathematical tasks and ideas. Lessons typically begin with a low-floor, high ceiling task related to a given scenario, and invite students to engage in conversation and share a variety of strategies, bringing all voices into the space and allowing each student to see him or herself as a mathematician.

Assessment to improve student and school performance is integrated regularly. Each unit is framed around four real-world tasks which incorporate both the content standards and math practice standards. These tasks invite students to use a variety of strategies to create a solution. Each task is designed to incorporate a blend of skills, conceptual understanding and problem solving in real-world contexts that inform instruction as students enter the next learning series. Teachers monitor student work through an analysis of performance on the embedded tasks, as well as by conferring with students as they approach and explore learning activities.

Each grade level engages in professional learning communities that launch units by considering each embedded task, what teachers anticipate seeing in student work, preparing how to support students who struggle or demonstrate misconceptions, and how teachers plan to integrate strategies to support student learning. Classroom teachers use the tasks formatively to adjust instruction to meet the needs of the full class, small groups, or individual students in demonstrating mastery of concepts.

The school uses school-wide screening tools and multiple measures to determine the type of support needed for individuals and small groups. Universal screeners are present in all grades; kindergarten and first grade students participate in interview-based assessments, Universal Number Sense Screeners, and benchmark assessments. After screening assessments, students who elevate as part of a data review participate in diagnostic assessments that are used to help identify a precision problem statement to support student learning needs. Additional assessment tools are used to help inform decisions about student needs and instructional strategies to support student learning. Intervention supports are tailored to support priority grade level concepts and skills, so that students are receiving needed support, but also building access to grade level content.

1c. Science curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

The South Windsor Public Schools Science curriculum is aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards. Curriculum is developed using the Understanding by Design model, focusing on real world essential questions and enduring understandings for each unit of study.

The elementary science units are grounded in the 3 dimensional instructional model proposed by NGSS. Students experience learner-centered, hands-on, inquiry-based science lessons that use the 5E structure to ensure that students are actively engaged in the learning. Each lesson starts with students engaging with a relevant phenomena. Students are provided with opportunities to explore, explain and elaborate on the content and skills associated with the phenomena, before evaluation.

Common assessments are given to measure progress and adjust instruction as necessary. Common rubrics have been developed using learning outcomes that are directly connected to the science standards. Interim Assessment Blocks are given to students in grades 4 and 5 as another measure of student learning.

Students are able to demonstrate an understanding of skills and concepts in the areas of life science, physical science and earth and space science. The science and engineering practices and cross cutting concepts are embedded in these daily science lessons. Skills such as modeling, analyzing data, graphing, asking questions, designing solutions, and constructing explanations with evidence are revisited throughout the year, at each grade level. Students engage in experimental design, data collection and supporting claims with evidence starting in kindergarten. The science curriculum has a strong focus on students asking questions about the world around them. These questions are used to drive learning experiences.

1d. Social studies/history/civic learning curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Social Studies is integrated with literacy, both reading and writing, across grades K-5, as part of a Humanities curriculum. The Social Studies standards are aligned with the CT Social Studies Framework and the C3 (College, Career, and Civic Life) Framework, addressing core concepts and themes at each grade level, with an emphasis on local history and community partnerships. Within each grade level, all students are provided opportunities to demonstrate knowledge and skills in the areas of history, geography, civics, and economics.

Topics across Kindergarten through 5th grade include; myself and my community, rural, urban and suburban communities; cultural awareness and celebrations; local heroes and history (South Windsor and Connecticut); Indigenous peoples; regions of the United States; Colonial America; the American Revolution and foundations of government. Students engage in the inquiry process which includes developing questions, engaging with sources, using evidence, and communicating conclusions and taking informed action. For example, 5th grade students participate in the voting-only CT Kid Governor unit to better understand CT government and voting processes. They also explore and identify topics they are passionate about and have the opportunity to research later in the year.

In all units, students engage with informational texts that align with both Social Studies topics and opportunities for voice and choice. Additionally, students participate in field experiences at local sites. For example, students visit the Wood Memorial Library and Nowashe Village to learn about Indigenous history in Grade 3 and the CT Historical Society to learn about what makes a community in Grade 2.

Student assessment in Social Studies is also integrated within the humanities curriculum. Students are assessed on their application of knowledge and skills through opportunities to share with their peers, other audiences, and through summative assessments such as writing pieces and other choice products. Assessment is both holistic, using unit specific rubrics, and aligned to literacy skill development assessed through district and school benchmark assessments and standardized assessments.

1e. For schools that serve grades 7-12:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)

The music program at the elementary level provides a solid musical foundation by providing students with a balanced curriculum based on the National Core Arts Standards. Based on these standards, through four integrated units, students are given a platform to perform, respond, create and connect to music in varying ways, such as singing, movement, cooperative games and playing classroom instruments. The curriculum at the elementary level also makes frequent cross-curricular connections to literature, history and culture. Students in 4th and 5th grade can explore their musical talents further by participating in our instrumental music program and all students in 5th grade synthesize the skills learned in general music by performing in chorus during the winter months.

Art education is designed to expand students' means of expression and communication, stimulate the imagination, and provide insight into the contributions of others. We strive to stimulate other areas of learning in all students while providing opportunities to identify and cultivate artistic skill sets and capabilities. The art program provides each student with instruction in the basic elements and principles of art, as well as inspiration for each student's creative and aesthetic needs. Visual arts instruction teaches skills and techniques using a variety of media, with experiences in all dimensional modes. In addition, the art teacher uses methods for increasing perceptual and motor skill abilities, utilizing a variety of approaches.

The elementary art curriculum is both experiential and developmental in nature. Emphasis at the elementary level is fundamentally placed upon exploration and exposure to materials and methods, while building skills and techniques over time. Further, it allows for students to simultaneously build their conceptual/skill/technique understandings, and to develop their own unique creative form of self-expression, with opportunities for public exhibition and competitions on the local, state and national level.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

Our elementary PE curriculum is based on the National and Connecticut Content Standards and designed to support the development of physically literate students who possess the knowledge and skills necessary to engage in a lifetime of health-enhancing physical activity. Our goal is to provide psychomotor, cognitive, and affective content and learning experiences that promote optimum personal development through quality curriculum and instruction, provided in a safe and supportive environment.

Instruction is aimed at developing motor skill performance, engaging in physical activity and fitness, displaying responsible personal and social behavior that respects self and others, and valuing physical activity for health, enjoyment, challenge, self-expression, and/or social interaction.

Units throughout the year focus on locomotor movements, fitness, and manipulative and striking skills in a variety of sport activities. Our curriculum includes cooperative games, a whittle unit that involves physical fitness using a variety of gymnastic-type equipment, field day and a national walk to school day, with assistance from parents and teachers.

In addition, we offer Adaptive PE and a modified-unified program where adaptive students work with able-bodied students and the PE teacher to develop muscle strength and motor skills.

In Grade 4, students are introduced to bicycle safety instruction, with three days of safety review and bicycle maintenance, culminating with an in-town ride and earning a certificate upon completion of the program.

Grade 4 students also take the CT Physical Fitness Assessment (CPFA) on two different occasions during the year.

2c. Foreign language(s), if offered (if not offered, leave blank)

The exploratory early start Spanish program introduces students to a variety of cultures, perspectives, products, and peoples from around the world. Created to integrate with literacy, social studies, math, and science, the Spanish program utilizes proficiency-based thematic units that immerse students in language learning. Starting in Grade 1 and continuing through Grade 5, students have Spanish weekly for 30 minutes. The objective of the exploratory early start Spanish program is to create students who are able to communicate at the novice mid to novice high level, and are able to compare and contrast their own cultural practices with those they are learning about. The Spanish program provides students a rich opportunity to create with the language, while immersing them in culture using authentic resources, games, music, art and literature.

2d. Technology/library/media

Philip R. Smith Library Media Center develops students as enthusiastic readers, as critical consumers of information, and as responsible digital citizens. A full-time library media specialist uses read-alouds to introduce Kindergarten students to picture books and to authors during weekly, 40-minute periods. Students in Grades 1 through 5 are also guaranteed one 40-minute visit in the library each week. In addition to author and genre studies, students in Grades 1 through 5 participate in a research project that affords opportunities to practice accessing databases, using effective search strategies, and following processes for evaluating information and media. In Grade 3, the library media specialist teaches students to follow the Stripling Model of Inquiry, which asks students to Connect, Wonder, Investigate, Construct, Express, and Reflect.

In addition to providing direct instruction to all students, the library media specialist plans a number of programs to encourage literacy. For instance, students are introduced to the Nutmeg book nominees each year, and they select at least one title for independent reading. In fourth and fifth grade, students use Padlet to record book recommendations that other students can access anywhere and anytime. The library media center also celebrates Read Across America week, Children's Book Week, and diverse heritage months, including Hispanic Heritage Month, Black History Month, Women's History Month, etc.

2e. Any other interesting or innovative curriculum programs you would like to share

In addition to science, South Windsor's K-5 students partake in STEM class once a week for 40 minutes. Beginning in Kindergarten, students start developing critical thinking skills while learning about the engineering design process through the use of the Project Lead the Way Launch curriculum. This curriculum integrates the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics using elementary appropriate, real life problems to solve. Students experience a range of topics and learning activities that are directly aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards and the Connecticut Common Core for ELA and Math. For example, in second grade, students are faced with the problem of how to best keep a popsicle from melting on a hot day. Through the use of experimentation, data collection and analysis, material research and modeling, students determine the best solutions to try as a class before revising their final idea.

STEM is a project-based class focused on collaboration, creativity, science literacy, reading and writing code, and the engineering process. Students frequently work in groups, which helps them develop collaboration and teamwork skills. Students learn how to share ideas, listen to others, and respect different perspectives.

Student progress is measured through the use of common rubrics that assess students on various science standards but also allow an opportunity for students to reflect upon their own progress. A student's ability to work on a team, utilize the engineering design process and effectively collaborate to solve real world problems is also addressed.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Our Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a prevention framework that ensures we proactively meet all students' academic, behavior, social-emotional, and attendance needs through early identification and intervention. This strengths-based approach is our commitment to meeting the needs of all learners through a continuum of tiered support. The greatest consideration is that we minimize barriers for children by designing action plans that address the whole child.

At Philip R. Smith, ALL students have access to high-quality Tier 1 instruction, effective teaching and learning, high expectations and the support and resources needed to maximize their learning potential. Students are closely monitored through benchmark assessments, progress monitoring and daily independent practice. When teachers notice a student struggling in one of the four areas of concern, they meet with a point person. Collaboratively, they integrate multiple data sources into decision making in response to needs and ensure employment of support with focused action plans. Progress monitoring is done on a regular basis to determine the success and to make adjustments as necessary, while using evidence-based practices that are implemented with fidelity to sustain student growth. These supports are supplemental to high quality Tier 1 instruction.

At the end of an intervention cycle, meetings are held with the principals, reading consultant, reading and math interventionists, math coach, school psychologist, and school counselor. The meetings are held to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention. We review students MTSS plans, progress monitoring, and other data points to determine the student's progress. Decisions are made to continue the student's action plan, revise it with a new goal to address concern, change the instructional practices or program, or increase/decrease intensity of the intervention.

Additionally, our MTSS team engages in weekly solutions-based conversations to identify student strengths and needs by reviewing data, responding to teacher requests for student supports, and determining coaching support, so all staff are equipped with tools and resources to support student growth towards individual goals. Collectively, we are a team of PROBLEM SOLVERS.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Tier 1 instruction at Philip R. Smith has differentiation woven throughout the curriculum. When students have demonstrated mastery of skills, our teachers offer extended learning opportunities. WIN (What I Need) periods allow all students differentiated support, including enrichment where students pursue learning based on their own interests or strengths, or study concepts more in depth.

Offered in our math curriculum are a number of ways differentiation is built in to the instruction by having tasks with multiple entry points, including Math Talks, Daily Routines, and Learning Stations. Learning stations, especially in the primary grades, are in the form of games, where students can get extended by moving from more concrete and representational to abstract, such as using a dot die to using a numeral die. Extension tasks and opportunities are included for most lessons, where students engage in tasks with higher depth of knowledge skills, such as reasoning and problem solving.

Students who are meeting goal at the end of unit assessments and scoring in the exceeding band on STAR and other data points, will participate in enrichment activities, such as project-based math menus, partner work problem solving tasks, and adaptive technology.

The Reading and writing workshop at Philip R. Smith offers students instruction and authentic learning experiences in which they can meet and exceed grade level expectations. Differentiation is embedded in our reading and writing workshop because students have agency in joyful literacy experiences. Students have choice and voice in the books they read, multiple opportunities to read a variety of genres, make book recommendations, and respond to books in a variety of ways.

At Philip R. Smith, not all readers are the same. Our teachers use small group instruction to focus on effective strategies for processing texts at increasing levels of difficulty, and writing development to

improve each stage of the writing process. Using various models, teachers adjust their pacing to offer acceleration of skill practice and/or extension experiences. Additionally, students may engage in supplementary activities such as adaptive technology, differentiated menu of authentic, literacy-rich activities, or self-selected project-based learning opportunities. Interest centers allow students to create ways to show their mastery of the curriculum. In one classroom recently, students wrote and performed a play about a historical event they learned about in Humanities.

Our school also offers after school activities and clubs for free, to extend students interests and abilities in multiple subjects. The after school math program offers two sessions in both grades 2/3 and 3/4/5. This program engages in hands-on math that allows students to build on their math skills from class and extend on those skills as well. The after school science program is offered in two sessions, K-2 and 3-5, and has a collaborative, hands-on approach to solving problems.

3c. Students with disabilities:

At Philip R. Smith, all staff are dedicated to ensuring the success of every student. Our students with Individualized Education Plans (IEP's) are supported in meeting their individual goals and objectives through a combination of integrated push-in services, as well as small group pull out. Special Education teachers, and related service providers such as the Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, Social Worker, School Psychologist, Behavior Analyst, and/or Speech and Language Pathologist, work collaboratively with general education teachers to see that students have adequate supports in place to ensure their success in every aspect of the school day. Whether providing testing accommodations, modified classwork, small group instruction targeting a specific skill, or supporting social and behavioral goals, the team works to ensure that all students are getting what they need to be their personal best every day.

The Special Education staff and related service providers understand that relationships are key to creating and developing robust IEP's and supports to meet the needs of the individual. As a result, the staff at Philip R. Smith proactively build relationships with students and families throughout the school year, not just at the time of annual meetings. As such, families are actively involved in all aspects of their child's education. Families are encouraged to participate fully in the planning and placement team (PPT) meetings, but more importantly are given strategies to support learning at home, and are encouraged to visit the classroom and provide their perspective on what would make the school experience even better for their child. At Philip R. Smith, our students are taught that they can achieve at high levels and our students are invested in personal growth through goal setting and regular celebrations of success. These celebrations vary from earned incentives, to positive phone calls home, to sharing their success with other students or adults in the building.

3d. English Language Learners:

Philip R. Smith has a diverse multilingual and multicultural student population. The Multilingual/English Learner program at Philip R. Smith services over 60 students from all over the world, with more than 19 different languages spoken. Identified English Learners are able to access curricular content as a direct result of a strong focus on Tier 1 instruction that utilizes culturally sustaining practices, student-centered learning, and evidence-based instructional strategies.

To ensure that each student receives academic language instruction and support, Philip R. Smith offers a combination of models including push-in classroom instructional support and pull-out instructional sessions. Student services and instructional sessions are based upon English proficiency levels as identified by the LAS Links state assessment and/or the LAS placement tool. The EL teacher is an integral member of the Philip R. Smith community; attending intervention meetings and collaborating with classroom teachers as needed during professional learning community meetings.

The EL teacher closely supports classroom teachers utilizing a variety of communicative and coaching strategies. The Multilingual/English Learner program has taken on hosting monthly cultural events to celebrate our students. For example, this past September and October we spotlighted Hispanic Heritage month and Diwali, where students of Hispanic and Indian descent taught their classmates about their

traditions, during assemblies. The Multilingual/English Learner program at Philip R. Smith highlights the assets that our students bring to their community and opens doors to the world PRS students and staff might not otherwise have known about.

3e. Other populations, if a special program or intervention is offered:

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Philip R. Smith staff is committed to developing the whole child based on their interests and motivations. We offer opportunities for students to gain leadership skills through a very active Student Leadership Team. Our Student Leadership Team is composed of twelve students who go through an application selection process. The team is then trained and organizes many community-based activities, throughout the year. Their focus is on providing opportunities for our students to help others. Some of the activities the Student Leadership Team has organized this year are: collecting items for our local senior citizens and homeless animals, planning a Kindness Month, and setting up spirit days to fundraise and support local charities.

We also have a team of 10 students who are trained as Peer Mediators. This group of students also has to go through an application process and a full day of training. Our Peer Mediators are students in Grade 5 and are advised by one Grade 5 teacher and our social worker. If students at Philip R. Smith have a low-level conflict with another peer, the Peer Mediation team is notified, and using their conflict resolution protocol, helps the students come to an agreed upon resolution.

There is a team of students who are a subcommittee of our Equity Team. They meet monthly to plan for a cultural slide presentation, which is shared at our monthly assembly. The subcommittee helps provide student insight into our school expectations. The students on this committee are enthusiastic, come to meetings with great ideas, and are dedicated to making our school a safe and caring place for all students and staff.

Another very important student-based team is our Tiger Time Committee. Each month, they practice their scripts and introduce presenters. The students emcee our whole school assembly. The team helps prepare for the assembly by supporting students and staff in any way needed to prepare for the show.

For extracurricular activities after school, we offer Math and Science programs. In addition, students in Grade 5 can choose to participate in a Science Olympiad competition.

Another way we support students is through goal setting. Students have choice and voice when setting their personal goals. There are incentives to help motivate and encourage the accomplishment of their goals. Through this process, we foster a positive environment, growth mindset and continued engagement of our students.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Our school has a very active Parent Teacher Organization. They organize one large jogathon fundraiser. The students receive a marathon number, punch card, and pedometer, and spend their recess walking, jogging or running around a track. We have family members volunteer and come out to cheer on the students. The students know that their efforts translate into funds that pay for their field trips, cultural arts performances, and special grade-level activities.

The PTO also plans several other fun events to bring our school community together. These opportunities include book fairs, a bingo and movie night, as well as an end of the year carnival. In addition, there is no shortage of appreciation from our community when it comes to taking care of our staff at Philip R. Smith. The PTO helps to facilitate many fun and exciting ways to spread love and gratitude to our staff.

The South Windsor Youth and Family Services is another important partner to Philip R. Smith Elementary School. They are an active organization within the town and offer many supports for our families. Each year, members of the Youth and Family Services speak to our PTO and staff, letting us know what services they can offer the school and families. They align with our school so that families have the resources (classes, services, and newsletters) they need to maintain personal and social wellbeing.

The South Windsor Parks and Recreation Department is another close partner to our school. We house a before and after-school program that is organized by the Parks and Recreation Department. This allows our students to remain at school, making it easier for the children and their families. We also provide a variety of communications regarding camp and sports programs that are offered by the Parks and Recreation Department.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

It is important for us to retain our amazing teachers, so we look for ways to celebrate teachers strengths, offer teachers what they need to meet the needs of their students and provide leadership opportunities. Our students benefit when teachers feel happy and have the tools they need to be successful. We know the importance of working together and are committed to giving our teachers a variety of learning opportunities to develop new strategies and methods for teaching and supporting our students.

Teachers have a weekly Professional Learning Community (PLC) meeting that focuses on a variety of topics and subjects, all with the same goal in mind...student success. In addition to having a weekly PLC, we make every effort to create a schedule that offers common planning time for grade-level teams. Throughout the year, we meet with teachers individually to look at student data and have discussions about next steps and how we can support their efforts. We have a Reading Consultant and Math Coach who step in to provide what teachers need to make sure that all of their students are receiving instruction that targets needs and accelerates learning.

Philip R. Smith also has additional time built into the schedule each day for teams of teachers to meet and talk about students. This time is often used to discuss students that see multiple teachers. The collaboration time gives teachers a chance to talk about what they are observing, how the student is progressing, and ultimately what the next steps should be for individual students.

We are also very fortunate to have built-in professional development seven months out of the school year, on Wednesday afternoons. The focus of this professional development depends upon the grade level and individual teacher. All professional development is intended to provide teachers with what they need to meet the needs of the students they service. We offer choice and voice, and solicit feedback from teachers to plan for future professional learning. At times, teachers have a chance to engage in individualized learning where they have autonomy in their learning. Other times, the building administration provides professional development in alignment with the school goals and action items.

4. School Leadership:

The most effective leadership philosophy includes a shared leadership approach because it is the collective group's knowledge and experiences that truly makes the difference for our students. A common question asked at Philip R. Smith is what is the best decision for our students? We make decisions that are student centered and benefit our students socially, emotionally, and academically.

At Philip R. Smith, we have several committees that teachers can join, and in many cases step up as a leader in our school. The committee work includes an overarching team that reviews our Building Development Plan to make sure that we are working towards the goals, through the action steps highlighted, on the plan. The Equity Team meets regularly, and a subcommittee has been developed from the initial committee. We have a team of teachers who plan multiple morale-building activities throughout the year.

We have staff, students and parents who participate on committees to reach all stakeholders. We utilize surveys for staff, students and parents to get input from various perspectives, so that we know where our strengths lie and what our areas of focus should be.

Our work is very complex and important. Therefore, we must operate as a cohesive group working towards the same goals. This includes building leadership, teachers and staff, students and their parents. Our students win when everyone is working together with them at the center of all decision making.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

A large part of our work is ensuring that all of our students are in a safe and inclusive environment, where they can be themselves, and we celebrate the gifts that each child and staff member bring with them to school each day. Our teachers have been learning through professional development opportunities to build their capacity around this important work. We have a districtwide Equity Council that is the steering committee for the district, and then at the school level we have an Equity Committee. This committee works together multiple times throughout the year, to take stock of where we are in this process and what else we need to do. All of our professional development is designed to support teachers to meet the needs of ALL of our learners.

In addition, we have many ways in which we celebrate our staff and students. Each year, we host a Cultural Celebration where families create a trifold board with their culture, traditions, holidays or anything else they would like to share. They also bring in artifacts and some bring in a snack to share. During this fun evening, we bring in a professional performance that highlights a different culture. We've had Bollywood dancers, Chinese acrobats and African drumming, to name a few.

Each month, we gather together as a school community, and one of the student presentations is focused on a holiday or theme associated with celebrating diversity and learning about different cultures. Also, during Tiger Time, culturally diverse gifts of literature are presented to teachers and students (one per class,) which can be read in each classroom.

We utilize a family survey to learn about various cultures in our school, and invite parents in to share their traditions, dress, food, holidays, etc. This helps our students and staff build an understanding and appreciation of each other. In addition to the family survey, we have hosted a Welcome Walk Through, made up of a team of students, staff, parents and community members, to learn from different perspectives how welcoming our school is in appearance and practices.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

We feel strongly that Tier I instruction needs to be our top priority and where we put most of our emphasis to meet the needs of all of our students. Having a Tier 1 focus reduces the number of students receiving Tier 2, 3 or special education services. We are very strategic about our master schedule, which allows us to maximize Tier 1 instruction. Our biggest priority is to establish a “What I Need” block for reading and math which is a differentiated time for students. If students do need to leave for tiered intervention, they go during this time so that they are not missing any Tier 1 instruction.

We use the Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS) as a structure for providing tiered intervention in reading, math, behavior and/or attendance. The MTSS process also helps us to target students who just need a little extra support with a targeted plan, through Tier I. Our MTSS team receives a referral from a teacher who has identified a student having a need for Tier I support. The team then meets to create the targeted plan and determine how long this instruction will be provided; and what progress monitoring tool will be used. With this process, we meet the needs of most of our students without going to Tier 2, 3 or special education.

Another way we work to ensure that our Tier I instruction is meeting the needs of our students is through embedded instructional coaching. Our Reading Consultant and Math Coach work with all of our teachers to provide professional development that is aligned to the needs of the students in front of them.

As a school, we have engaged in a book club that focuses on what we are teaching, why we are teaching it and how we will know that students have learned what we are teaching. We use learning intentions in our classroom so students know what they are learning and why they are learning it. In addition, we identify success criteria so as teachers we know what students need to do in order to demonstrate success. The success criteria is also shared with students.

We use data regularly to drive Tier I instruction. In our weekly Professional Learning Community meetings, we look at authentic student work to identify which students need enrichment and who needs some acceleration. We also meet with individual teachers to look at their student’s data each benchmark assessment cycle. This is another opportunity to think about how to meet the needs of the students through Tier I instruction.

At Philip R. Smith, we have a team of teachers and staff that are committed to students and excellence. This incredible team is open to try new ideas and strategies in our mission to meet the needs of all of our students.