

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

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Schuylkill Haven Area Elementary Center  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 701 East Main Street  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Schuylkill Haven State PA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 17972-1433

County Schuylkill County

Telephone (570) 385-6731 Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Web site/URL <https://www.shasd.org/o/ec> E-mail dellusoj@shasd.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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Superintendent\* Dr. Shawn Fitzpatrick E-mail fitzpatrick@shasd.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Schuylkill Haven Area Tel. (570) 385-6731

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. Scott Jacoby  
(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**

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

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

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**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):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)  
1 Middle/Junior high schools  
1 High schools  
0 K-12 schools
- 3 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	82
1	101
2	83
3	83
4	85
5	0
6	0
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	434

\*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
  - 0.5 % Asian
  - 0.5 % Black or African American
  - 9 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 87.5 % 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 2021 - 2022 school year: 5%

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	13
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	10
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	23
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	434
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.05
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5

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

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 2 %  
7 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 53 %

Total number students who qualify: 230

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 24 %  
Total number of students served 104

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>8</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>15</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Developmental Delay	<u>38</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>29</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>2</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>9</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 1 %  
Total number of students served: 6

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 5

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	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	21
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	12
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	7
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

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 19:1

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	93%	95%	95%	95%	95%
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.

The mission of the Schuylkill Haven Area School District, in partnership with the community, is to empower each student to embrace the challenges of the future in an ever-changing global community.

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

[https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded\\_file/1726588/Non-discrimination\\_Policy.pdf](https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/1726588/Non-discrimination_Policy.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

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The Schuylkill Haven Area School District is located in Schuylkill Haven, Pennsylvania. This small, rural community of approximately 5,300 residents, in Pennsylvania's Coal Region, has a proud heritage and history exemplified by the motto, "the little town that could!" As is the case for many Schuylkill County communities that found prosperity and growth at the turn of the 20th Century, Schuylkill Haven has seen a slight population decline over the following decades. However, Schuylkill Haven has maintained a true hometown pride which is reflective both within the community and school district.

As a primarily middle-class district, much of this pride has been established through the generations of families that have not only called Schuylkill Haven home, but have themselves received an education and now see children, grandchildren, and generations receive their education within the Schuylkill Haven Area School District. The sense of community is strong, because it has been established long ago, and continues to hold on to the values of education as we move through providing for new generations.

It is important to note, that though a foundation of community is not new to the town of Schuylkill Haven, changing demographics have helped the community evolve and take shape to the welcoming environment we see today. The Schuylkill Haven Area School District has been instrumental in continuing this tradition of community, and more importantly prides itself on welcoming not only students, but all stakeholders on campus. In many ways, the district campus acts as a central hub for community activity. In 2022, the district with sponsorship with local health networks, built and opened a new indoor sports facility. It is not only essential in the physical and mental wellbeing of students during the school day and afterschool extra-curricular activities, but also open in the evening to community members to "walk the track" free of charge each evening. Likewise, the school auditorium is not only used for school productions and musicals, but is also used by local churches for their holiday services, or small entertainment productions of local plays.

As should be the case in all education, and as noted in the examples provided, the Schuylkill Haven Elementary Center strives to meet students' needs regardless of ability: academically, socially, and emotionally. The primary development of early literacy and math skills are foundational and must be established for future success at the middle and high school levels. In order to differentiate instruction, we use a variety of resources and teaching methods to promote this early success. Through a balanced literacy initiative, incorporating appropriate leveled texts using strategies established by Fountas and Pinnell, we meet students where they are academically, in order for them to grow. Our method incorporates the notion that skills are built upon each other, closing the learning gap takes time, and students cannot succeed until all academic needs are established. This requires both patience, targeted focus, and data! Our Title I team are pivotal components of this notion. By incorporating Orton-Gillingham strategies, provided by Orton-Gillingham trained teachers, we believe to have established a holistic approach to early literacy.

Social-emotional skills are also incorporated through recently implemented unique and simple strategies. Our school counselor has made this a priority for all students and is influential in seeing that it is done with fidelity. Each school week begins with a Mindfulness Monday announcement. During this time students (and staff) take a moment to learn and practice a new breathing or focusing strategy. By presenting them in elementary age-appropriate language, students not only begin their learning with a relaxed, yet focused, mindset, but they also have a strategy to use if overwhelmed in or out of school. It is not uncommon for our counselor to remind students of these techniques during small group meetings. Our counselor has also established a yoga club for students throughout the week, to promote mindfulness.

Even with social emotional learning, the school has prioritized strategies and data to reflect the needs of the students. During the 2022-2023 school year, the district has invested in the Rhithm, social emotional tool, which allows students to "check-in" virtually their emotional mood at a given moment. This data is essential in providing immediate support, if needed, and having a more robust snapshot of the social emotional health of students.

It is evident that the Schuylkill Haven Area School District has and will continue to evolve in a way that provides a well-rounded education for students. As academic and social needs change, we have proven that



we are able to adapt to provide for these needs. Yet, we are able to do so in a way that retains and promotes the small town pride our community was founded as this community grew.

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

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

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

The Schuylkill Haven Elementary Center's primary focus at the foundational level is to provide a differentiated experience for students to account for the multiple reading levels focusing primarily on the essential components of both comprehension and fluency. We have found success in a balanced literacy approach, not only in how students learn, but also how our teachers teach. Through guided reading the teacher works with a small group of students who are reading at a similar level. The teacher selects a text that is at the students' instructional level and helps them develop strategies for reading and understanding the text. The teacher also teaches comprehension strategies and supports students in applying these strategies to the text. Through shared reading, teacher texts are read to our students in whole group settings. By expertly modeling fluency, expression, and comprehension strategies, the gradual release method of "I do," "we do," "you do" is established. Comprehension discussion following a format incorporating depth of knowledge questions is essential. This approach helps students develop their reading comprehension and fluency skills. Independent reading with teacher oversight and guidance if needed allows students to select books that are at their independent reading level and read them independently. Teachers support students by providing books that match their interests and reading level and by providing time and space for independent reading. Teachers also conference with students to monitor their progress and provide feedback.

We incorporate the Words Their Way word study program that further individualizes the way students learn to spell words. It is a hands-on approach to practice spelling patterns in words. It allows students to manipulate words and/or pictures into different categories. This sorting process helps students analyze and examine, compare and contrast, and differentiate the patterns in words.

Step Up to Writing is an organizational program that teaches explicit writing strategies within the writing process (pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, final copy, proofreading, sharing) to help students organize their thinking and their writing which will allow the student to develop and compose an organized, clear, and coherent composition. This program will emphasize the three main types of writings – informative/explanatory, argumentative, and narrative writing.

Our third and 4th grade teach, collect data, and progress monitor with Curriculum Associates CARS and STARS program.

Components of the multisensory process found in the Orton Gillingham approach also supplement our reading, writing, and spelling curriculum. During this whole group block, Orton-Gillingham trained teachers push-in to the classroom in kindergarten and 1st grade for a daily 40 minute block of time. Components of Heggerty Phonic Awareness instruction also round out our ELA instruction.

Formative assessment is essential with the balanced literacy approach. Teachers use observation, as well as, regular progress monitoring to assure all students are leveled with text appropriate to their skill level. Acadience Benchmarking in ELA is administered at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year. Classroom Diagnostic tests are also administered bi-yearly in both 3rd and 4th grade to assure that assessment anchors and standards are comprehended by our students.

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

The Schuylkill Haven Area Elementary Center has relied on McGraw-Hill's Everyday Math as the primary comprehensive math program for all grades, kindergarten through 4th grade, for the last three school years. Success was gauged as our 4th grade class piloted the program during the 2018-2019 school year. As progress was developed, it was decided to implement schoolwide. Much like our ELA curriculum and expectations, our primary focus was to include a program that is designed to provide a balanced approach to mathematics education that focuses on developing both computational and problem-solving skills.

As our primary math program teachers incorporate the traditional resources including student textbooks, journals, and HomeLink books. Since our school was able to move to a 1:1 technology device school during the 2020 school year, the online resources that providing a range of activities and lessons designed to engage students and develop their math skills have been an essential component of learning.

In addition to classroom instruction, the Everyday Math program also includes a variety of assessment tools for both formative and summative assessment such as homework assignments, assessments, and progress monitoring tools to help teachers track student progress and identify areas where additional support may be needed.

A key component that has proven to be effective is the spiral instruction aspects of the Everyday Math curriculum. Frequent opportunities for students to review and practice previously learned skills helps to reinforce these skills and keep them fresh in students' minds. New concepts are also presented gradually. This helps build on previous learning. Everyday math revisits concepts throughout the instructional year giving students multiple opportunities to practice and reinforce what they have learned. For example, students may learn about fractions early in the year, and then revisit the concept multiple times throughout the year in different contexts. The program emphasizes making connections between different concepts and skills, which helps students develop a deeper understanding of how math works. For example, students may learn how to use multiplication to solve a problem, and then use that knowledge to help them understand division. Using this example, it must be noted that a variety of strategies allow students a variety of ways to solve the same problem how they understand it best. While one student may check a long division with partial quotient problem using lattice multiplication, a peer may use multiple addition.

To ensure that Everyday Math is aligned with state and national standards, the program includes a detailed scope and sequence that outlines the topics covered in each grade level.

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

The Schuylkill Haven Elementary Center believes that a proactive and progressive approach to evolving curriculum expectations, both district and state mandated, is essential to preparing students in order to achieve success. Incorporation of the Next Generation Science Standards into our science curriculum framework has been an important initiative during the 2022-2023 school year. Inquiry based learning, is key in promoting student ownership, autonomy, and motivation during the learning process. Our teachers work as learning facilitators, while science lessons begin with an inquiry-based investigation. An overall question sets expectation that requires higher level analysis and critical thinking skills to be the heart of the lesson. Student exploration establishing the purpose of scientific content is essential.

A prime example of this occurs during our 3rd grade's force, motion, and magnets unit. Students are asked: what can magnets do? They are then shown a short video of a paper clip seemingly levitating in the air. Students are given the resources needed to replicate this phenomena and then allowed time to explore focusing on key guiding questions: can you make a paperclip float? Can you make a magnet float? Collaboration and communication skills are an important facet of the science lesson. While students explore, interaction with peers help to develop and test different hypothesis. Teachers also assess students' understanding in ways that demonstrate an understanding of the concepts in a variety of ways including summative assessment and the ability to demonstrate their understanding through discussion and application of the activities.

The Schuylkill Haven Elementary Center has invested in the Mystery Science program for many of these inquiry-based lessons. The lessons, resources, and activities promote connection to prior knowledge while investigation deepens their problem-solving skills. Mystery Science provides assessments that are designed to measure student progress towards the NGSS standards. These assessments help teachers gauge student understanding of key science concepts and adjust instruction as needed.

As changes to Science curriculum grow, we feels it is important to support our teachers as their delivery and assessment of science evolves. During the 2022-2023 school year, the STEM representative of our local

intermediate unit met to discuss expectations during a faculty meeting. They are also scheduled to meet with individual grade level teams to help review and support our science education.

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

At the elementary level it is imperative that students are introduced to the concepts of citizenship in order to understand the importance of cooperation and communication that is necessary not only in school, but also as they learn to interact with society. Though it is not necessarily a key Social Studies curriculum component, the HERO expectation of Helpfulness, effort, respect, and on task behavior is a key facet that underlines this importance.

The primary initiative at the primary elementary level is to build a foundational skillset for early literacy and math skills. At this primary level of kindergarten and 1st grade, Pennsylvania standards for social studies are introduced, promoted, and embedded in content in a way that allows for comprehension and analysis of the social studies lesson focus while still exposing students to fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension skills.

As was noted in the ELA portion, guided reading is a fundamental process used at the elementary center. By incorporating texts with a social studies focus, aligned with the standards for both ELA and social studies, students are asked recall and higher-level questions regarding the social studies text, while also sharpening their reading skills.

As students progress to 2nd through 4th grade, social studies lessons and units, while continuing to expand on reading and comprehension skills, incorporate a more traditional social studies lesson “block” into the schedule. Higher level depth of knowledge discussions, projects, and assessments are a key component to this method, that allow for a strong foundation of knowledge prior to middle school.

Motivation to think through the lens of a historian or a citizen with future civic responsibility can be challenging to promote at this age level. At the Schuylkill Haven Elementary Center we strive to allow and create experiences for students that establish an appreciation for content taught within the social studies curriculum. Our 4th grade class, having learned about 20th century Pennsylvania history, visits a real “mining village” each year. In the coal region of Pennsylvania, we are fortunate to be able to bring our local history to life for our students. 3rd grade also does a walking fieldtrip through Schuylkill Haven stopping at the many landmark places to learn and discuss their importance to the town’s history.

As was noted, the connection of school content and the community are imperative to the culture created in the Schuylkill Haven Area School District.

#### **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)**

At Schuylkill the Haven Elementary Center, all students in grades kindergarten through 4th grade receive a dedicated 40-minute art class once during our 5-day cycle. One of the primary focuses of this related art is not only to build an appreciation for creativity, but also help provide students with resources that may instill and nurture artistic talent. Our experienced art instructor does fantastic work with building this interest even in the first weeks of kindergarten. While concepts and strategies are set for foundational art understanding, NBRS 2023

freedom and autonomy to complete art works are given to all students. Imagination and creativity are promoted.

In 3rd and 4th grade, art education focuses on cultural awareness and art history. Our instructor facilitates discussion, stating facts, providing examples, and posing higher level thinking to help guide students to an understanding of an artist's genre and purpose. For instance, during a recent class, our instructor began with a biographic overview and interpretation of Frank Stella paintings. Students then moved to replicate, and/or create their own art using this style with compass and ruler.

A proud culmination of our art class's progress is held each May. During this time, families and community members are welcomed into the school for an "art walk." Our building halls are lined with student work, much like an art gallery or museum. Students are recognized and congratulated for their creativity done throughout the year.

At the Schuylkill Haven Elementary Center, all students in grades kindergarten through 4th grade receive a dedicated 40-minute music class once during our 5-day cycle. While this class primarily focuses on developing musical skills, enhancing cognitive skills, fostering creativity and introduces cultural diversity through exposure to different ways of thinking revolving around global music history and tradition, we believe that our music department, in certain ways, acts as a representation of our school building.

We are extremely proud of the popularity, success and dedication of our Little Hurricanes choral program. This 3rd and 4th grade group of students not only perform during their yearly concert, but have performed at annual local events, including Christmas tree lightings, varsity sports competitions, Veteran's Day Ceremonies, but have also proudly sung the national anthem at professional sporting events. Their enthusiasm and pride in both music and their school help us to showcase the skills, expectations, and positive behaviors fostered in our school building to the community and beyond.

## **2b. Physical education/health/nutrition**

At Schuylkill the Haven Elementary Center, all students in grades kindergarten through 4th grade receive a dedicated 40-minute physical education class once during our 5 day cycle. Our physical education class's primary goal is to introduce a mindset that promotes a lifestyle of regular exercise, importance of healthy eating habits, and the risks associated with unhealthy habits and behaviors. Our physical educator is also responsible for facilitating a "health" class for all students that is scheduled once per 5-day cycle, per marking period. This helps build an association with traditional physical education, and healthy decisions.

The cognitive development associated with physical education also reinforces the problem solving and critical thinking skills also necessary in a traditional academic setting. Social development and teambuilding during group activity is constant.

Our district facilities used during our physical education classes also help promote school pride and builds on the promotion of possible extra-curricular activities during middle and high school years. Our district recently invested in an indoor practice facility. Many of our physical education classes are held on the building's turf field. Students have an opportunity to exercise on the school indoor track, or kick soccer balls into goals set-up for our school's soccer team. All of this on the same field labeled with a blue and yellow Schuylkill Haven "S" and "H." School pride, physical education, and establishing future athletic goals are all central to this related subject.

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

## **2d. Technology/library/media**

At the Schuylkill Haven Elementary Center, all students in grades kindergarten through 4th grade receive a dedicated 40-minute library class once during our 5-day cycle. As was noted in our overview of ELA

expectations, student interest and reading ability play a huge role in our academic success. By sharpening reading and information literacy skills, students are taught to locate and analyze texts in our library special, and in-turn use this skill in the classroom. We rely on the digital literacy components of POWER Library to help these research skills.

As the internet capabilities grow, we feel it essential to promote research skills that are based on credible information that have been reviewed by experts. Power Library's credibility helps hone skills of evaluation and trust within a source. Power Library also offers a vast range of content that helps build inter-disciplinary thinking. Analyzation, evaluation, and connection among related and unrelated subject areas is a task that students will be required to master if they are to find success in any future tasks or aspirations. While the library class is in many ways traditional to any elementary center, we feel the Schuylkill Haven Elementary school offers a related art subject that truly helps their future academic growth.

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

### **3. Academic Supports**

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

The Schuylkill Haven Elementary Center realizes that support for all students is essential to academic and social growth. In order to assure that supports are adequate, effective, and progressive we have implemented a detailed and extensive data collection process that allows for regular communication between the school personnel, and more importantly, home. Over the last five years we have revamped our "Hero Success Team Referral" (HST) process to assure that a complete assessment of a student's needs are determined and underlined. Homeroom teachers typically begin this process with communication with families. It is expected that teachers communicate with home three times to share concerns and offer teaching techniques that may help address the concerns with home prior to beginning the HST referral process. From there, teachers are responsible for an assessment of the student's classroom experience. Options range from academic (below benchmark in reading levels, poor test scores, etc.) to behavioral (disruptive, withdrawn, work refusal, etc.).

Teachers must account for services students already receive (title I math, social work, etc), and also report specific deficits (does not understand abstract math concepts without concrete examples, does not use spelling rules, cannot tolerate changes in routine, etc). Strengths are also considered (initiates positive attitude towards school, motivated, etc). Tier one, teacher initiated supports (close proximity to the teacher, use of frequent praise, etc.) and interventions/ accommodations are considered (tests read aloud, small group testing). This "student snapshot" enables our team to create accommodations and goals that, with data, may lead to progress or the need for further intervention. Over the initial ten-week HST period, parent conferences are held to discuss the plan and parents are kept updated as their child works toward their goal. Following this ten weeks, goals are modified if progress is noted, students are dismissed from the program if extensive progress is achieved, or further evaluation with the possibility of more extensive supports are suggested if academic regression exists.

We understand that all students' academic needs are fluid, and that strengths in content areas fluctuate for each individual student. By accepting this reality, and offering mass customized instruction whenever possible to meet student needs, we feel that we are better equipped to differentiate for a unique school experience for every student.

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

The Schuylkill Haven Elementary Center incorporates a variety of services and supports for students that are learning above benchmark. Much like services and accommodations underlined in the Hero Success Team process, if student accomplishments and data suggests that they would benefit from a more rigorous challenge, students are referred for the process, parents are notified, a conference is held, and goals are

established. As with students that need additional support for deficits, if challenges are not rigorous enough after the ten-week initial plan, further challenges and goals are established, with an evaluation for giftedness remaining a possibility.

We also invest in a curriculum that allows for flexibility while still maintaining the essential elements of Pennsylvania state standards. As noted previously, balanced literacy in our ELA curriculum and spiraled instruction in math allow for challenges appropriate for students at any learning level or academic capability.

We also invest in a variety of supplemental resources that are geared toward meeting students at their level and accelerating learning if and when needed. A key example of this is our investment in the Imagine Learning Language and Literacy program. This program provides personalized instruction that is tailored to each student's unique needs and abilities. For students who are learning above grade level, this can mean accelerating their learning and providing them with more advanced instruction that challenges them appropriately. Imagine Learning Language and Literacy offers a variety of enrichment opportunities, including engaging, interactive activities that can help students deepen their understanding of literacy concepts and skills. This can be particularly beneficial for students who are learning above grade level and may need additional challenges to keep them engaged and motivated. Imagine Learning Language and Literacy offers differentiated instruction, meaning that it adjusts the level of challenge based on each student's abilities. For students who are learning above grade level, this can mean providing them with more challenging content that is appropriate for their advanced level of learning. Imagine Learning Language and Literacy emphasizes the development of a deep understanding of literacy concepts and skills, rather than just memorization or rote learning. This can be particularly beneficial for students who are learning above grade level, as it allows them to develop a more nuanced and sophisticated understanding of language and literacy.

### **3c. Students with disabilities:**

The Schuylkill Haven Elementary Center assures that the free and appropriate educational setting is an inclusionary experience within the least restrictive environment to meet all student needs. Instruction, interventions, and assessments are tailored to meet the diverse and individual needs of students with special education needs and disabilities. Our Individualized Education Programs (IEP) is developed by a team of educators, parents/guardians, and is reviewed and updated annually. Differentiated instruction adapts learning to meet the individual needs of students. Modification and adaptation of the content is done collaboratively with both the regular education and learning support teachers. Assistive technology also allows for a unique and appropriate learning experience. The elementary team invests in assistive technology for students creating further potential to broaden their ability to learn. A prime example of this greatly helped a student with limited mobility and communication skills. They were able to progress both socially and academically after the school invested in a Skyle for windows eye tracking communication device. This investment greatly helped the student's potential to participate and learn.

The elementary center employs one learning support teacher for each grade, 2nd through 4th. An additional learning support teacher is responsible for servicing special education students' needs in kindergarten and 1st grade.

The elementary center also offers supports for students on the autism spectrum with a dedicated autistic support classroom. Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) techniques, provided by an ABA trained teacher, are used regularly for students that have needs requiring this approach. By identifying specific behaviors and analyzing the environmental factors that contribute to them, we work to increase students' ability to communicate in an efficient, appropriate, and effective manner.

The elementary center also has a dedicated life skills teacher and offers related services within the elementary setting.

Adapted related arts are also provided for students that learn best with support in a small group or individual setting. This is true for all core specials including physical education, music, art, and library.

One of the most exciting initiatives currently being planned, is the addition of an inclusive playground for students. Using a poured rubber surface, the planned project will have adapted equipment and sensory components allowing for every student to enjoy the recess experience.

### **3d. English Language Learners:**

SHAEC tailors their instruction, interventions, and assessments for English Language Learners (ELLs) in a variety of ways to meet their diverse and individual needs. We use standardized assessments such as the WIDA Access for ELLs to determine students' English proficiency levels. The results help teachers to understand the students' current level of language proficiency, which helps in designing instruction, interventions, and assessments that are appropriate for their language level. Our teachers differentiate instruction by modifying materials, activities, and assessments to match the needs and levels of individual ELLs. The classroom teachers often use visuals, manipulatives, graphic organizers, and other strategies to support the ELLs' comprehension and engagement with the content. We offer ELLs language support for all students, kindergarten through grade 12, through programs such as English as a Second Language (ESL). Our teachers use various language development strategies such as explicit vocabulary instruction, sentence frames, and contextualization of language. Interventions aim to provide additional support to ELLs who are struggling with English language acquisition or academic content. We offer interventions such as small group instruction, technology-based programs that provide additional support, and an after-school ACHIEVE program. We collaborate with families and communities to support ELLs. We offer translation services through our local intermediate unit, provide translated information on school events and happenings, and hold parent-teacher conferences as needed to discuss the student's progress and goals. The Schuylkill Haven Elementary Center adapts instruction, interventions, and assessments to meet the diverse and individual needs of ELLs by using a range of strategies to lessen the learning gap. Our school identifies their language proficiency levels and provides them with language support, differentiated instruction, interventions, and collaboration with families and communities.

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

As was noted in the explanation of our 3 tier PBIS supports program, we are fortunate to have a school based behavioral health (CSBBH) program available for students at the Elementary Center. Offered through Childrens Service Center, students that qualify for services are provided social-emotional and therapeutic counseling support from three mental health professionals. Though they are not Schuylkill haven School District Employees, their participation and visibility within the school building are paramount to helping a select subgroup of students cope with adversity both within the school building and while they are at home.

The professional relationship established with our school personnel and the behavioral health team assures that, while working collaboratively, student's needs are met within the classroom. This classroom push-in of services greatly minimizes the time students spend away from academics, and allows them coping strategies geared to making their academic and social interactions stronger.

The CSBBH team also provide at home family sessions, which has strengthened family trust, communication, and cooperation with the school. The Elementary Center understands that all facets of a student's wellbeing must be considered and supported. The CSSBH team are an essential component in attaining and maintaining this goal.



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

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

We are proud of many initiatives at the Elementary Center, however one of our proudest accomplishments is the success of our PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) Program. The 2022-2023 school year marks the sixth year that we have transitioned to all things HEROes. As Haven HEROes, students are reminded of the importance of being helpful, giving their best effort, being respectful, and on-task. By incorporating this common theme, and language into nearly every aspect of the student's school day, we have built an attainable and consistent behavior expectation. Students begin each year with a PBIS Celebration kick-off assembly. This pep-rally-like atmosphere including teacher participation, principal talk, high school band, and a visit from our mascot Captain Cane, builds motivation and establishes the importance of HERO behaviors. Students are taught mini-lessons on HERO behavior in the hallway, classroom, playground, bus, and even at home.

As is true for most successful PBIS programs, three tiers of supports are embedded to assist with students that need them for negative behaviors. This includes a check in check out system as a tier II intervention, and a School Based Behavioral Health program for our tier III students.

In order to motivate students to be successful academically and socially, however, we pride ourselves on the success that we have seen with our three tiers of supports from a positive behavior standpoint. In tier I, all students are rewarded with a token system for positive behaviors throughout the day. This incentive has made making appropriate choices following the HERO rules a common occurrence. These small victories are also celebrated with quarterly celebrations. Whether it is a glow dance party, or school-wide bingo called by the principal, a message of appreciation and motivation to continue is shared.

Our tier three support is one that is reserved for students that consistently display our HERO behaviors. HERO club students are chosen throughout the year. These students are our grade-level and school leaders. The pride with sharing the designation with families and on our social media page, seems to motivate peers to attain this same recognition.

Students are also provided with a before and after-school program that promotes cooperation and learning through STEM focused activities. The ACHIEVE program has been established at the Elementary Center for the previous four years. Regular attendance by over 40 students is consistent.

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

The Schuylkill Haven Area School District is fortunate to have support both from district families and the greater community. To foster this relationship, the elementary center has a dedicated goal of frequent communication. As communication technology advances, we have prioritized sharing of news and positive aspects of our daily school accomplishments on our school webpage and Facebook page. Whether it is a picture of newest HERO Club members, or a short video of our 4th Grade Little Hurricane chorus, it keeps us connected with our families.

Our strong relationship with the Parent Teacher organization is a testament to the level of support we have from our families. This partnership assures that parents are present for many activities, whether it is school fun day or simply to help with remediation sessions with our struggling learners, volunteer parents are a constant. At a recent PTO basket raffle, the community supported the school allowing for over \$81,000 to be raised for our students. We also include the Watch DOGS (Dads of Great Students) program at the elementary Center. Each Friday, a student's father is welcomed into the elementary center to shadow his child's day. Teachers also schedule help from our Watch DOGS dad so he is familiar with the building. During a visit in March, a dad was responsible for leading our students on a leprechaun search!

Our students have also benefited greatly from the care and generosity of the Schuylkill Haven Community. Each year our school counselor coordinates a "backpack" program that allows a portion of our student

population to take food items home with them over the weekend. We are fortunate to have a local church donate \$10,000 dollars in coordination with a local food bank to make sure this is possible, and students and families that need help the most do not go without, even when not in school.

The Elementary Center is excited to be well into the preliminary stages of renovating our school playground. This safe and more inclusionary playground project is only possible because of local businesses and organizations who have reached out and donated funds to make it a reality.

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

Student achievement is not possible without the tireless efforts and dedication of our faculty and staff. Challenges in having students reach their full potential always exists. However, the challenges that education has faced in adapting and pivoting to meet the needs of students in a post-COVID society have arguably never been greater. As a school district, we have faced this challenge, with the understanding that teacher support is needed now more than ever. To begin the 2022-2023 school year, the district's primary professional development focus regarded our staff's social, emotional, and physical wellbeing. During our beginning in-service, the entire staff participated in a "wellbeing" day. During this time, the staff moved from a variety of stations in our sports performance center. The objective was not related to curriculum initiatives, but instead set a tone for the new school year focused on team building. Stations included yoga, a pound class, kickball game, motivational speakers, and relaxation. The goal was to allow the staff to realize that their efforts, during a very uncertain time was appreciated and deserving of gratitude.

The concept of trust with a level of autonomy for our teaching staff is not new to the district, however. Our professional development model also allows teachers the freedom to work collectively and/or individually while they grow in the profession. Five "exchange" days are granted each school year. Teachers provide a short narrative framework of how they plan to prepare for the upcoming school year. With administrations' support, teachers then work on their established goals, on their own time, during the summer months. This preparation helps establish their goals in anticipation of the upcoming school year. In-service dates are still scheduled during the school-year calendar. However, If exchange time is complete, teachers do not report to the school building on that date. This has not only acted as an incentive with flexibility in professional development but has also led to many student-focused initiatives.

Our PBIS team at the Elementary Center also acknowledges teacher achievement and dedication. Regular "shout outs" are shared during faculty meetings thanking specific teachers and teams for their hard work. We also have a colleague recognition program where teachers recommend their peers for recognition, and a small prize is given by administration.

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

Our school district's success is more readily and efficiently achieved when a clear vision of attainable goals are underlined and understood by all stakeholders. While it is evident that our school's true success is measured in student achievement, that achievement is only possible when educators, as well as students, strive to assure that it becomes a reality. We strongly believe that this motivational attitude is more contagious when it is not only promoted by the administration, but also evident in the administration's actions. At the Schuylkill Haven Elementary, teachers have a shared voice with administration. Monthly advisory committee meetings and grade-level meetings, allow for discussion and framework for cooperation and change if needed.

Administrators have the responsibility to make observations of the school's climate to gauge the overall morale of faculty, staff, and students. These observations allow for a reflective approach to build upon the positive aspects of the school, while contemplating possible positive change in areas that need improvement. This observation should not be confused for an authoritative approach, instead it must be understood as one which incorporates the importance of suggestions and open-dialogue between administration, staff, and students. Success is present because listening and observing co-exist.

This established approach ultimately has led to a strong foundation for a goal-oriented school atmosphere.

As a school leader it is our responsibility to underline a comprehensive, yet concise plan of action for achievement. Ambiguity is not present within these goals. By taking a simple, straight-forward approach of creating, planning, and implementing a vision of academic and professional success, the established expectations are not only essential, but more importantly attainable. Creating realistic goals are vital to assuring cooperation and compliance.

In order for this approach to be truly advantageous all stakeholders are incorporated in the action plan. If attention is given to one subgroup, while oversight exists for another, true inclusion is not obtained. We feel that an administration remembers that the fundamental importance of a school district is the personal and academic success of the student. By underlining goals that promote a comfortable yet challenging learning atmosphere for students, administration helps create a school district that expects academic excellence. Regardless of the student's learning capacity, goals must act as motivational tools for the student to reach their highest academic and personal potential.

In order to nurture a student's full potential, a strong alliance and professional bond with the staff and administration has been established. This collaborative approach assures that the leader of the school not only understands the diverse opinions of the staff, but also maintains that the staff comprehend the expectations of the school leader. This approach allows for the academic and professional goals of the school to remain clear and essential in the minds of the staff and administrator. It also creates a level of trust that is necessary in any professional relationship. By creating an atmosphere of trust, are more easily able to promote the importance of motivation for the staff to achieve goals that are set for students and themselves professionally.

We believe that a leader's qualities should be positively reflected in the perception that citizens outside of the school district have toward the school building, its staff, and its students. The goals that are underlined within the school are easily acknowledged and perceived by parents, the board of education, and other community members. By incorporating goals that look to benefit students, staff, and the collective whole of the community we have been able to successfully implement a vision of shared success that is achieved through the cooperation of all stakeholders.

## **5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:**

The Schuylkill Haven Elementary Center understands the importance of equity and respect in the classroom as it pertains to the emotional and social growth and wellbeing of all students. The Schuylkill Haven Elementary Center has established a strong Positive Behavior Intervention and Support Program. In order to present the expectations at an elementary age appropriate level, we have incorporated the Haven HERO rules and expectations. As HEROs we promote that students are helpful with peers, they display effort in all that they do in the school, they are respectful of others' thoughts and opinions, and on-task during their academics and participation in and out of the classroom. This inclusive approach is committed to an equitable learning environment for all students.

By promoting this common language and terms for understanding, we have attempted to build a welcoming learning environment both within the school building and while interacting with peers and family members outside the building, too. HERO expectations and positive behaviors are rewarded if students exemplify this philosophy of helpfulness, effort, respect, and on-task behavior both school-wide and individually. HERO Club members are chosen by teachers if they feel an individual student consistently display HERO attributes. Quarterly School-wide "celebrations" also act as incentives to promote cohesion and cooperation. By establishing a level of pride associated with the HERO initiative, students are more readily associating inclusion and respect with expected behavior.

The Pennsylvania Positive Behavior Support (PAPBS) has recognized our schoolwide PBIS program for meeting the criteria for implementing School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports with fidelity at Tier 1. We are currently working to attain Tier II recognition.

As a district, we also understand that education and training in inclusion for our teachers also helps them to be supportive of the diverse student needs, regardless of their background. During the opening school in-

service of the 2021-2022 school year, we welcomed Liz Bradbury the director of the Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center, to our building to present on inclusive best practices for students.

Our school counselor is an essential professional providing services and support for student daily in the elementary center. She not only provides lessons on inclusion, kindness, and empathy, but also incorporates individual small group instruction for students targeted to their needs regarding social acceptance and kindness.

## **PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE**

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The Schuylkill Haven Area School District faculty, staff, students, and community pride themselves on an often-used term: "The Haven Family." As a relatively small and rural district, with a proud history in the heart of Pennsylvania's hardworking Coal Region, we understand that continually maintaining a student first focus is imperative to our success. But it is equally important that we maintain a sense of community within the district. Academic initiatives that promote student growth will only see success if all stakeholders not only value their importance, but more fundamentally, believe that they could be achieved. As a district, we understand this perception, and strive to promote what we believe establishes this success -- the quality of personnel providing this support. Simply put, the faculty and staff within the Schuylkill Haven Area School District are the primary reason for our continued growth. That is not to say that surrounding districts would not feel this exact sentiment for their personnel. However, the dedication, diligence, and pride associated with the "Haven Family" thought is unique to our community and district framework.

Our teachers understand that their professional growth is a direct reflection of the academic and social growth of our students. As pedagogies and best practices evolve, so do teacher expectations. The educators at Schuylkill Haven Elementary have proven that they welcome the challenge, especially if it has potential to help students. The recent implementation of the Orton-Gillingham approach to early literacy best exemplifies this challenge. As data suggested that incoming students were arriving in kindergarten with fundamental deficits in phonemic awareness, we realized a need to change how we delivered foundational content. Teachers volunteered to be trained and certified in the Orton-Gillingham method. This labor intensive and time-consuming process speaks to the dedication, diligence, and pride of the "Haven Family" way. To date, over one dozen teachers are certified or soon to be certified in providing Orton-Gillingham instruction. Daily, systematic and multisensory, whole group lessons for every student in kindergarten and 1st grade using the Orton Gillingham approach began in the 2022-2023 school year. Second grade instruction will begin in the 2023-2024 school year.

This exemplifies the way that the Schuylkill Haven School District looks to evolve as students' need change. But the practice and promotion of teacher collaboration and ownership, with each other and with administration has long been established, and will continue. We are confident that student growth will continue the "Haven Family" way.