

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[X] Choice

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

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

School Mailing Address 99 John McCarroll Way
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Greenville State SC Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 29607-2283

County Greenville

Telephone (864) 355-4480 Fax (864) 355-4490

Web site/URL https://www.greenville.k12.sc.us/sterling/ E-mail jpatterson@greenville.k12.sc.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 Burke Royster E-mail broyster@greenville.k12.sc.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Greenville County Schools Tel. (864) 355-3100

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 Dr. Carolyn Styles
(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):
- 52 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 24 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 19 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 95 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	36
K	30
1	36
2	38
3	118
4	124
5	96
6	80
7	68
8	64
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	690

*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):
- 0.1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 10.7 % Asian
 - 25.5 % Black or African American
 - 3.5 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 54.3 % White
 - 5.9 % 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: 6%

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	15
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	31
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	46
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	731
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.06
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	6

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

Spanish, Tamil, Nepali, Gujarati, and Faroese

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 6 %
43 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 38 %

Total number students who qualify: 264

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 9 %
Total number of students served 64

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>7</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>3</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>3</u> Developmental Delay	<u>21</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>28</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 2 %
Total number of students served: 15

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 6

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	3
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	43
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	19
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	5
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	9

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	95%	95%	98%	97%	97%
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.

Sterling School is committed to the whole child by providing an environment in which each student receives a personalized educational experience which allows them to explore their world, be enriched, and allow them to excel both academically and emotionally as they prepare for challenges today and in the future. Nurtured by a supportive environment, students will surpass academic challenges, develop as leaders, form collaborative relationships with peers, and learn to lead. Our students will leave us as independent, productive, responsible, and creative individuals capable of making original contributions to society.

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

<http://go.boarddocs.com/sc/greenville/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=8PJQVB69ED2D>

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

Sterling School is a school of choice home to the Sterling Program and the Charles Townes Center for Highly Gifted Students. The Sterling Program is an elementary school program serving students from 4K through 5th Grades. Families apply and are selected on a first-come, first-served basis with priority going to families who live in an identified geocode in close proximity to the school, consisting primarily of Nicholtown, an historically African American community in Greenville. If space is available after accepting all students from the first choice geocode, students will be selected on a first come, first served basis from outside of the first choice area.

The Charles Townes Center is designed to have a capacity of 90 students per grade level for grades three through eight. Initial entry into the Center at the third grade is based on three student performance dimensions: reasoning ability as measured by nationally standardized aptitude assessments, achievement as measured by nationally standardized assessments, and classroom performance as a composite of four authentic student performance measures (reading fluency, writing benchmark, and first semester grades for reading and mathematics.) The student must meet the criteria in two of the three dimensions in order to qualify for admission to the Center.

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

The Sterling School contains two unique programs under one roof, the Sterling Program and the Charles Townes Center (CTC). As a school, the student population consists of a diverse group of learners. The Sterling Program, grades 4K-5th, features a more traditional community-based option, attended by many students within the local Nicholtown Community. The Sterling Program student population consists of 80.7% from poverty and 76% are from ethnic minorities. The Charles Townes Center, students identified as highly gifted in grades 3-8, is attended by students across the entire district. The student make-up includes 10.4% from poverty and 26% from ethnic minorities. School-wide, the student population consists of 38% from poverty and 45.7% from ethnic minorities.

The two programs are guided by unified beliefs, vision, and mission, but with differentiated methods for meeting the respective needs. Our unique type of dichotomy provides an opportunity to capitalize on student collaboration and teamwork delivered by hands-on, inquiry-based instruction, integration of the arts, and intense focus on research while utilizing current technology. Even though the demographics of each group are vastly different, students from both programs are afforded continued opportunities to engage and interact with one another. School leadership makes an intentional effort to unify the student experience while respecting the uniqueness of each program.

Resources are shared between programs and all students are offered opportunities to engage, challenge, and learn from each other in a manner that will be culturally/personally affirming and academically rich. Fostering a sense of community where each student, teacher, and parent knows they are respected and valued is critical. The programs take advantage of the opportunity to experience education at its highest level. By participating in a joint endeavor, all members of Sterling School deepen their understanding of issues, which influence our community and country, gaining a keen perspective of the diversity that characterizes our world. Additionally, there are frequent opportunities for students to contribute to the exchange of ideas and knowledge, both within and beyond their learning community. Beyond the academic statistics, it is the emphasis of the parents and community that all students will learn how to be leaders of their own lives, reaching their true potential.

At Sterling School, embracing the Whole Child Framework ensures a healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenging environment that provides the resources to meet our students' various and diverse needs.

Healthy: Spearheaded by our school's health and wellness team, faculty and students are encouraged to practice healthy behaviors including 60 minutes of physical activity each day, eat nutritious foods both in school and at home, and integrate a comprehensive health education curriculum and provide onsite mental health counseling and physical health services through our school nurse.

Safe: Faculty and staff have been trained in establishing a positive climate that is safe for all students through professional development in trauma-informed practices, implementation of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), a strong counseling department, a student advisory program, and social-emotional learning. The safety and wellbeing of our students is prioritized across our curricula and integrated throughout our practices.

Engaged: Through our school's multi-tiered, personalized framework which includes guided math, balanced literacy, project and inquiry-based learning, arts and STEM integration, and 1:1 technology, students are able to explore ideas and concepts at their own pace and skill level. Extra-curricular clubs and activities including FLL Robotics Club, a comprehensive field experience in community activism and economic development within the city of Greenville, and various other activities ensure that students are provided with opportunities to work with subject matter experts and work to address real problems within their local community. These components provide students the opportunity to engage in challenging, authentic tasks.

Supported: While data is used to help us inform our practice, the educators at Sterling acknowledge that our work must begin and end with meaningful relationships. Students have access to a multi-tiered system of support both in school and after school. This includes academic enrichment, acceleration, and/or

remediation of the general education curricula. Students have the opportunity to participate in an array of after school activities to enrich and support their physical and academic needs, while expanding on their interests.

Challenged: Sterling School students undertake a rigorous program of study that is designed around the College of William and Mary's Integrated Curriculum Framework for our highly gifted population and a guided framework for our general education students. Inquiry and project-based learning are utilized across both programs, including a self-selected curiosity project for third grade students and STEM/STEAM projects that incorporate makerspace, along with other creative ways to integrate the arts and engineering across our programs of study.

Our school's collective success is the result of a dedicated staff partnered with supportive families and community members, working diligently to provide opportunities that enable our students to achieve their fullest potential and prepare them for tomorrow's world.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

Sterling School's reading/English language arts curriculum addresses the South Carolina learning standards through a comprehensive instructional model built on our school's goal to develop lifelong readers, writers, thinkers, and communicators. It is our belief that students must be immersed in meaningful literacy experiences across all content areas in order to develop lifelong literacy success.

This development begins with creating and sustaining print rich classroom environments that cultivate meaningful literacy work and collaboration. Each classroom supports literacy engagement through whole group, small group, and individual instructional protocol that meets the needs of our diverse population of learners. Students participate in explicit word study lessons that follow a developmentally appropriate scope and sequence for language development. As students develop their word study knowledge, emphasis is placed on Greek and Latin stems. Students are able to apply their understanding of stems to determine the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary.

In addition, students actively engage in whole group mini lessons in both reading and writing that focus on specific skills related to grade level standards. This includes explicit teaching and active engagement time where students practice learning with classmates, and regularly involves experiencing richly diverse mentor texts. Students have protected independent reading and writing time to explore texts, practice comprehension skills, and strengthen writing skills. Independent learning is a crucial component of our literacy gradual release model because it transfers the responsibility to students. Teachers confer with students during independent learning to support student's individual learning goals.

Our intermediate students have opportunities to participate in book clubs and novel studies that encourage deep collaborative thinking around a specific text or author. In our upper grades, students study classic novels as well as contemporary literature. Teachers address specific learning needs through flexible guided groups. Teachers meet with each group throughout the week and guide students through a variety of texts in order to strengthen word study, comprehension, and writing skills. Student reading groups are determined by a benchmark system that assesses accuracy, fluency, and comprehension development. Groups move fluidly throughout the year based on student need. Guided writing groups are determined by student progress on specific writing techniques and skills. Students shift into different groups throughout the year based on student progress.

Teachers use a variety of assessments to monitor student progress in literacy. Reading benchmarks are completed at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year. Students often complete pre-assessments at the beginning of each unit so that teachers have a baseline of the overall strengths and weaknesses. Teachers also use formative assessments during units of study to assess student understanding and guide instruction. Teachers use this data to determine if students need additional support, enrichment, or continued classroom support. Additionally, teachers are able to assess student comprehension through conversations and reflection in small groups. These conversations support student literacy engagement, address communication standards, and help students articulate their thoughts as readers in a safe supportive environment. At the end of each unit, students complete a post assessment to provide evidence of their learning.

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

Schoolwide mathematics curriculum content is developed and implemented around the South Carolina state standards and follows a specific pacing guide created by our school district. The pacing guide provides consistency across grade levels with opportunities for vertical alignment, conversation, and collaboration. Our school's math instruction focuses on supporting students as they develop a deep understanding of foundational mathematical concepts within the classroom and subsequently, how those concepts connect to their world outside of the classroom.

Teachers create and sustain rich math communities within their classrooms using a variety of instructional strategies including number talks, student created anchor charts, interactive notebooks, hands on learning, and student discourse. Sterling's math instructional practices follow a math workshop model which begins with a whole group mini lesson focusing on specific standards-based skills. The mini lesson engages students by connecting past learning experiences to the new teaching of the day and explicitly models the math standards addressed in the lesson. After the mini lesson, students move into a series of learning experiences through rotations or math stations. Teacher-led guided groups, independent practice, math fluency support, and small group spiral review are incorporated into math rotations. Each of the stations or rotations support new content acquisition and strengthen previously acquired skills.

Manipulatives are regularly used in many stations to support the transition from concrete to abstract thinking. For example, during a first grade math unit, students use vertical number lines to support addition, subtraction, and to compare numbers. In addition, base ten blocks are used in guided groups to support student understanding of multiplying using area models. The base ten blocks provide a concrete representation of how each place value is affected when multiplying multi-digit numbers. The manipulatives provide a clear visual of the abstract mathematical process.

Games and collaborative activities are integrated into math workshops to support student discourse as well as ensure that students share ownership over their learning experiences. Collaborative activities also provide opportunities for peer teaching which strengthens student understanding.

Math rotation groups are formed using pre-assessment data and formative assessments throughout the unit of study. Teachers use formative assessments and observations to determine which students need more support and which students are ready to continue ahead in their learning. Teachers work collaboratively to design assessments that directly correlate to the standards taught in each unit. Assessments include various levels of depth of knowledge to provide students the opportunity to share their understanding in multiple ways. Performance tasks, error analysis, multi-step word problems, and basic computation questions are used to assess student understanding.

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

Sterling's science curriculum implements the South Carolina Science Standards and follows our district's pacing guide to ensure fidelity across programs. Each unit is grounded in an inquiry model that encourages students to develop their own ideas and questions to guide their learning. Teachers design a variety of hands-on experiments and simulations to engage students and ensure they play an active role in their learning. For example, during a recent science unit, third grade students used their knowledge of natural disasters to design model buildings that would withstand the weather conditions and destruction of specific storms. Students collaborated in groups to design, build, and test their models against various weather conditions. Students reflected on their learning and discussed how to improve their designs. This unit of study fully immersed students in the scientific concepts and challenged them to use their science knowledge to solve problems.

Our science instruction also immerses students through the integration of arts, technology, and literacy. During a recent unit on weather, our fourth grade students worked in groups to write a script for a weather forecaster based on concepts learned during the unit of study. Students then worked to design and draw a weather map which was used as a green screen background. Using green screen technology, students recorded the weather forecast and presented their videos to the class. This experience integrated writing, science, communication, and technology, and in doing so deepened student understanding of weather concepts. In addition to deepening understanding, this experience authentically assessed student knowledge.

Our teachers assess student understanding of science concepts in a variety of ways. Students complete formative and summative assessment which include multiple choice, written response, performance tasks, and projects. Assessments are developed to align with content standards, as well as provide opportunities to support student inquiry. Teachers work collaboratively to design and implement assessments that show depth of knowledge and understanding of science concepts.

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

Sterling's social studies curriculum implements the South Carolina Social Studies Standards and follows the district pacing guide. Our school's instruction seeks to meaningfully connect history and civic education to real world experiences throughout each unit of study. We do this through project-based learning, literacy integration, and partnerships with our community. Each of these components support student engagement and encourages authentic learning connections inside and outside the classroom.

For example, after learning about World War I, students in fifth grade designed and performed a living history museum using tableaux. Fifth grade students researched topics, collaborated with peers, and designed tableaux that appropriately represented key events. Students, faculty, and families were invited to view the performance to celebrate students' work and deep understanding of World War I knowledge.

Our fourth grade students experienced life on the Oregon Trail through an interactive simulation. Students traveled in groups and completed a series of tasks that modeled life on the trail. Groups even faced specific hardships that were common during pioneer life. These experiences provided students a personal connection to their historical unit of study, and made the learning more enriching and meaningful.

Our school's local non-profit partnerships also enrich social studies curriculum for our students. Sustaining Way, a local nonprofit, provides students with hands-on sustainable collaborative learning. Primary and intermediate grades travel to Annie's House, a local Sustaining Way location, and learn how each citizen makes an impact on his/her community. Our local partnerships enhance student learning so that students may deeply understand how history and civic learning connects to their lives.

Students regularly reflect on their learning and are supported as they develop connections to the world around them. Teachers use a variety of assessments to monitor student understanding of social studies content. Teachers utilize formative assessments to provide timely, specific feedback to students to monitor student progress. Teachers also create and use rubrics, objective benchmarks, and other formal summative assessments to measure student mastery of concepts.

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

The middle school program at Sterling (grades 6-8) serves students through full time gifted instruction. Students begin this full time gifted program in grade three and participate in a standards-based curriculum that is accelerated as well as enriched by exploring the content more deeply and broadly.

All teachers in our middle school program are gifted-endorsed and utilize a diverse means of engaging learners, supporting social emotional learning, and preparing students for life. Sterling middle school students have the opportunity to take a number of high school courses for honors credit including: English 1, Algebra 1, Geometry, Spanish 1, Spanish 2, Art 1, Band 1, and Orchestra 1. Students also have opportunities for study through a variety of other elective courses. Spanish is a core curriculum class so all students experience three years of quality Spanish instruction before entering high school.

Students have the opportunity to explore personal interests in addition to service learning through an activism project that is completed in 7th grade. These students work with community mentors to research, build awareness, and raise funds for a cause in which they are personally interested. Students are given guided autonomy with regard to projects and how they might demonstrate their learning. The students then share their experiences with the school and local community through individual booths/table presentations at a "public" event held at school but open to visitors.

Our middle school students have opportunities to consider their future through the information provided at our high school fair as well as career days. Former students return for "lunch and learn career talks" to help students understand what a particular field may entail on a day to day basis. Most of our students serve the school and community through Junior Beta Club. They learn both service and leadership skills as they volunteer in the community, provide support during school functions, and mentor the elementary students in our school.

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

The overall goal of our four year old kindergarten program is to build a strong foundation for children's understanding of the world and to strengthen their desire to continue learning, particularly for children who are identified as at-risk through universal screening criteria. Our Sterling program offers high quality, appropriate, intellectually challenging learning opportunities to help students meet state and district learning standards. The South Carolina Early Learning Standards which include language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, physical development, the arts, and personal/social development guide our instruction as children learn through integrated units of study. The four year old kindergarten curriculum facilitates a love of learning, supports social emotional development, encourages language and communication (speaking, reading and writing) as well as cognitive development through number sense, creativity, social connections, and scientific inquiry.

Student readiness and skills are monitored through a variety of methods including PALS-Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening, teacher checklists, anecdotal notes, and student artifacts. Students learn to read and write their name, recognize numbers and work cooperatively with their peers. Teachers use small group instruction to personalize learning as they teach, remediate, and accelerate instruction. The children in our four year old kindergarten program advance to five year old kindergarten ready and excited to continue their learning path.

Teachers collaborate with families to provide support, resources, and tools to increase family involvement. Parent-Teacher conferences provide an opportunity to discuss student progress, make data-informed decisions and offer guidance to continue student support at school and within the home.

Additionally, students are offered field trips to build real-life learning experiences that allow students to make authentic connections to their community. Likewise, home to school connections are fostered through celebrations of student projects created throughout the year. These projects introduce academic concepts and skills to support learning as outlined within state standards, thereby preparing students for five year old kindergarten success.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)

The visual and performing arts team works with both elementary and middle school programs to provide differentiated, equitable fine arts instruction in order to help students develop an appreciation for the arts and lifelong exploration and learning. Elementary students engage in a general survey of arts education once a week throughout the school year. Middle school students receive instruction every day for one semester. Teachers provide a wide variety of class offerings for middle school students including, but not limited to Music, Art, Band, Strings, Art 1 Honors, and Graphic Art.

Sterling's arts department collaborates with classroom teachers to integrate the arts into grade level instruction to deepen student learning and self-awareness. Many teachers utilize a Metropolitan Arts Council program that connects teachers with local artists-in-residence to provide meaningful integration experiences for students within the general education classroom.

The arts are also utilized to help students express themselves and self regulate their emotions. This effort is supported by the Whole Child framework. For example, our sensory wall allows students to visually and physically participate in an art-infused activity designed to help students self regulate and settle their emotions. The wall instructs students to breathe, move, and stretch as students work to regulate themselves.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

Sterling School provides a comprehensive physical education program that serves both elementary and middle school students. The program's goal is to provide opportunities for all students to develop healthy life-long habits. The physical education curriculum implemented at our school is based on South Carolina physical education standards, and incorporates the development of physical strength, coordination, endurance, and social and emotional wellness.

Our elementary students, four year old kindergarten through fifth grade, participate in physical education classes once per week for forty-five minutes throughout the entire school year. The main focus of the elementary instruction is to teach and strengthen locomotor skills through various collaborative and rigorous learning based activities. Students participate in active play to improve movement skills such as kicking, throwing, and striking and social emotional learning. As the students enter middle school, they further apply those skills in a more sports-based curriculum.

Our middle school students, sixth grade to eighth grade, participate in physical education for fifty minutes daily for one semester. Students engage in a variety of physical activities which include individual fitness training, individual sports, and collaborative sports activities. Lastly, middle school students also participate in health class once per week throughout the semester that focuses on nutrition and wellness.

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

All students in grades 6-8 take Spanish for all three years of middle school at CTC. Each class is a year-long course which is taught on a daily basis. The progression of instruction is as follows: Spanish Language and Culture in 6th Grade, Spanish 1 (for high school credit) in 7th Grade, and Spanish 2 Honors (for high school credit) in 8th Grade. Due to our unique population, students can delve deeper into the building blocks of Spanish than they could in a traditional school. To that end, the curricula encourage independent thinking, personal choice, and self-assessment.

Students are introduced to Spanish-speaking countries and cultures to encourage an understanding and appreciation of diverse populations. Each course targets meaningful communication and language as it is used in real-world situations. Students begin to develop cultural awareness and also develop insights into their own language through comparisons with Spanish.

Sixth grade Spanish focuses on basic vocabulary, language structure, and cultural backgrounds. Students begin the year by focusing on analyzing the language, and then themselves. Spanish 1 students begin the year by focusing on themselves and progressively move their focus outward to family, friends, and their surroundings. Spanish 2 builds upon the culture, communication, grammar and vocabulary learned in Spanish 1.

2d. Technology/library/media

Sterling School uses technology as a tool to expand student educational opportunities. In the media center, students acquire the essential skills of critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, research, and communication. Students in grades K4-5 visit the media center every two weeks and learn a variety of literacy skills through structured lessons. All students are taught to use various media applications to foster technology literacy skills and create new products that align with classroom learning targets.

MakerSpace encourages students to think “outside the box” to make something new from discarded items. They collaborate with their peers to build and create with Legos, Kinex, Tinkertoys, puzzles and craft materials. Design challenges encourage students to use design thinking and modeling skills.

Grades K4-5 have technology classes once a week for 45 minutes. Technology classes are aligned with the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) Standards. Students are supported as they gain understanding of word processing, spreadsheets, databases, presentation software, keyboarding, computer safety, hardware and software, coding, and other technology skills.

Middle school students can take Project Lead the Way's Gateway to Technology courses. For example,

students learn about programming for the physical world by blending hardware design and software development using microcontrollers in Computer Science for Innovators and Makers. App Creators introduces students to computational thinking and coding through the creation of mobile apps for Android devices.

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

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Students performing below grade level are provided with a variety of supports within the school to assist student growth. Each student is closely monitored by a team of educators including the classroom teacher, administrator, guidance counselor, and members of our intervention team. Students, who show specific areas of need according to specific benchmark data, are supported through our reading and math intervention programs. Students receive explicit whole group instruction within the classroom, small group instruction from the classroom teacher, and gain additional support each day through our reading or math interventionists.

Interventionists develop a specific plan based on student need which includes pushing into the classroom or pulling students out to provide support. Our math intervention program focuses on strengthening foundational math skills. Targeted instruction is tailored to reduce gaps in each student's knowledge of key mathematical concepts. Our math interventionists either co-teach through an inclusion model for students who require additional classroom support or pull students out for individualized instruction. Our primary reading intervention program supports students' phonics development through a systematic scope and sequence. Interventionists incorporate kinesthetic strategies to reinforce phonics skills and support students' literacy development. Our intermediate reading interventionist supports students' phonics development and uses a variety of texts to strengthen comprehension skills.

In addition to supporting students during the school day, our staff provides students with support outside of the school day and during the summer. Our school implements a tutoring program for targeted math and reading support. Teachers work with students after school to reteach and reinforce important grade level concepts in a small group learning environment.

Our school also hosts a summer program for grades kindergarten through fourth grade. Teachers work with students to strengthen math and literacy skills through hands-on and small group instruction. Students also participate in STEM, art, and social emotional activities. Our summer program helps reduce learning loss between one school year and the next.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Students who are performing above grade level are served in a variety of ways. In our community based program, students receive targeted instruction in guided reading and guided math as part of Tier 1 instruction. These school-wide non-negotiables are a critical part of our efforts to provide individualized instruction. In reading, students are challenged to read text on their level and to examine that text utilizing skills suited to their abilities. During math, students rotate through stations that are created to support, enrich and extend their learning. Math stations include a teacher small group where students receive targeted instruction at their level. High performing students may also receive tailored instruction that extends their thinking through complex questioning, inquiry based projects, and problem solving. In addition to tier 1 interventions within the classroom, students who need more advanced academic instruction may also be considered for movement to another class or grade level in order to meet their individual needs. Students who are classified as gifted receive additional support through a pull out gifted program. They receive between 125 and 200 minutes per week of gifted instruction by a gifted endorsed teacher. The instructional units are inquiry based and allow for practice with problem solving, research and application of new

information.

Students in our CTC highly gifted program receive targeted gifted instruction every day, all day, for all subjects. They begin our program in 3rd grade and engage with a curriculum based on William and Mary's Integrated Curriculum Model that serves to enrich, extend, and challenge their thinking. Math and language arts are accelerated by a year or more while social studies and science content are taught based on the grade level state standards; however, the content is explored at a deeper and broader level. The teachers in this program are highly qualified and gifted endorsed. Students remain in this academically rigorous program through middle school.

3c. Students with disabilities:

Sterling School serves diverse learners across both of our programs, including students with disabilities. Because each student is different, we implement a comprehensive special education program that addresses the specific needs of each student. Each individual plan is developed and reviewed by an IEP Team consisting of an administrator, school psychologist, classroom teacher(s), the student, the student's parent(s), and possibly the school counselor. Our special education team supports students in academic, emotional, and behavioral skills through pull-out, inclusion, and individualized check-ins.

General education teachers work collaboratively with our special education teachers to ensure all individualized education plans are implemented with fidelity and that students are receiving the services and support they need to be successful. For example, our fourth grade students who receive inclusion services work with a special education teacher inside the classroom. Students are able to meet in a small group in their least restrictive environment and also receive additional support during writer's workshops from their general education teacher. This model is also implemented in other grade levels and classrooms around the building. Our special education teachers work closely with our classroom teachers so that students' progress is regularly monitored and adjusted to meet student needs.

Some of our students who receive reading services are provided a systematic phonics program that targets missing reading skills. The special education teacher works with students in a pull-out resource class to strengthen these skills, and they also communicate the skills covered in the week to classroom teachers so that they are able to tie their word study instruction to the specialized instruction received in the resource class.

Students' emotional and behavioral needs are addressed through individual instruction or through social group instruction provided by our special education teachers and supported by school counselors. Student-teacher check-ins allow students to have individualized support. Teachers use a variety of strategies to help students build self regulation skills, executive functioning skills, and any other skill gaps addressed in a student's plan.

3d. English Language Learners:

Sterling School serves a small population of students in our multilingual program. Our goal is to provide our students with resources they need to be successful inside and outside of the classroom. Our multilingual teacher uses a district assessment program to determine the instructional plan for each student. The level of support provided to multilingual students varies based on reading, speaking, listening, and writing development. Some of our students are served directly through a pullout program facilitated by our multilingual teacher, and others are served indirectly through consultation.

All multilingual instructional support plans include consistent collaboration between the multilingual teacher and the classroom teacher. Our multilingual staff member works alongside classroom teachers to help provide strategies to encourage language development and understanding. For example, our teachers work together to develop and provide visuals in the classroom that help support vocabulary development for students. These visuals support educational content as well as environmental routines and procedures.

Students engage in a variety of word study and vocabulary rich activities across the content areas in order to

build background knowledge, support comprehension, and strengthen previously learned skills. In order to strengthen vocabulary skills, teachers often incorporate kinesthetic movements with vocabulary instruction to increase brain connections. In addition, our multilingual students are provided a computer based reading program called Lexia that scaffolds language and literacy skills. Our multilingual teacher and classroom teachers work collectively to encourage students to use the program. This program is used in the classroom as well as at home for additional practice and support.

Classroom libraries are culturally diverse to ensure students have access to texts that reflect their lives as well as expose them to new cultures. It is our goal to provide our multilingual students with opportunities to celebrate and embrace their culture while strengthening their English literacy and language skills.

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Sterling School is a dynamic and exciting environment to learn and grow. We seek to provide robust academic experiences through a personalized learning framework that embraces differentiated instruction, data-informed decision making, meaningful technology, arts and STEM experiences. We encourage an emphasis on the 4 C's (critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication) to further support a personalized approach to teaching and learning. Sterling provides a unique, innovative instructional program with grade level signature projects that students look forward to and are excited to complete. The positive environment at Sterling is maintained through a variety of opportunities to support and celebrate student achievement and the skills learned through real world application.

Student engagement begins in the classroom. Students start each morning or wrap up their afternoon with a class meeting. Meetings seek to support social emotional needs of students and strengthen classroom community. Teachers and students take part in a community greeting, share time, collaborative activity, and message. Each of these elements are designed to address specific topics that are relevant to the classroom community. Morning/afternoon meetings are a crucial component to developing and sustaining a healthy engaged classroom community.

Students who show potential for leadership are mentored through our Wings program. These small groups of students are supported and encouraged by an adult in our building who meets with them regularly to set goals, practice skills, monitor progress and encourage growth.

Our school also organizes Griffin Days where students are recognized for their efforts to serve as positive school citizens. Awards are presented for exercising our school character traits of Positivity, Respect, Integrity, Determination, and Empathy. Student achievement is also highlighted on a weekly basis through our Griffins Connect eNewsletter.

Primary students take part in career days that expose students to a variety of career fields and jobs. Community members partner with our guidance department to inform students about future career opportunities. Our middle school students take part in career lunch-and-learn sessions. Sterling School alumni share college, career, and professional training experiences. Middle school students ask questions and engage in discussions about potential paths towards college and careers. These interactive experiences help students to learn more about the real world and possible career opportunities.

As a school community, we are grateful for our wonderful, diverse context. Our unique dynamics provide us an amazing opportunity to capitalize on things we all value: kindness, collaboration, creativity, and an appreciation of differences.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

At Sterling, our students' collective achievement is a shared responsibility. Our school develops and maintains crucial partnerships among families and the community in order to support the development of the Whole Child. Prisma Health partnered with our faculty and staff to provide Mental Health First Aid training. Our teachers lead parent information sessions on topics including how to advocate for their children, how to help their children read, and navigate middle school. Our Parent Teacher Association and School Improvement Council meet monthly and foster parent/community collaboration in a variety of ways. Our annual family events like Digital Citizenship Night and STEM Night foster parent support around technology education. They also support partnerships for enrichment opportunities such as artist in residence programs.

Our community partnership with Mentor Upstate promotes the development of our school's mentoring program by recruiting and training volunteers and providing resources and support to mentors. At Sterling School, we have approximately twenty-five mentors annually. Mentors meet with mentees weekly during

lunch, recess, and other scheduled times to provide ongoing social-emotional support.

As a partner with Nicholtown Child and Family Collaborative, we developed Parent Café, a bi-weekly program that meets on our campus to empower parents, grandparents, and other caregivers with resources and strategies to support their child's early learning and development.

We collaborate with the Greenville Police Department (GPD) to host Cops on the Court and The Officer Allen Jacobs Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) Camp each summer. Cops on the Court is an initiative by the GPD to positively connect with area youth each week through basketball. Emphasis is placed on teamwork, sportsmanship, community, and self-discipline, while fostering a positive relationship with law enforcement. G.R.E.A.T.'s primary objective is to serve as a preventive measure to help students resist the influence of youth crime, drug abuse, violence, and gangs.

As we consider the future of education, we enthusiastically welcome pre-service teachers to our school through a unique partnership with Furman University's Department of Education. Over a period of several weeks, Furman students and Sterling School teachers undergo a practicum-rich experience in literacy and social studies methods. Sterling School teachers model lessons for practicum students, serving as a "lab experience" for best practices. In addition, Furman students participate in class sessions on campus and Furman professors form teaching partnerships with teachers in providing professional development and/or co-teaching experiences.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

It is our belief that building and sustaining an enriching learning environment for students is a collective effort, and requires consistent professional support for teachers and staff. Our Sterling School staff participates in professional learning experiences and committees that provide a platform for educational discourse and growth in order to support student success.

Representatives across both programs of our school regularly meet on our Whole Child Committee, but all staff members are invited to attend meetings. The purpose of the committee is to discuss and develop ways to strengthen school climate, student progress, and professional learning. Committee members use results from our school climate survey to develop a plan of continued growth across all programs. This process honors staff voices and reinforces our commitment to collective teacher efficacy. For example, our recent school survey indicated the need for revision of school discipline procedures. The Whole Child Committee gathered specific feedback from teachers and used the feedback to improve communication and consistency in the discipline process. The development, implementation, and ongoing evaluation of the school plan is a collaborative process.

In addition to the Whole Child Committee, our school supports teachers through professional learning opportunities. Each year we develop a school wide professional development goal using classroom observation data, teacher input, and current student achievement. In order to meet the learning needs and interests of our diverse k4-8th grade programs, our school provides teachers with professional development choices that connect to our school wide professional learning goal. This ensures that professional learning is both meaningful and specific to areas of need.

Teachers complete a professional development survey and are placed in learning cohorts. Members of each cohort engage in a number of learning experiences including book studies, peer observations, collective planning, and vertical discourse. For example, our CTC program is exploring standards based learning practices in order to increase student ownership of their learning. Teachers have partnered with the state department's personalized learning division to learn standards based practices and how to transition from traditional grading practices.

Teachers in our Sterling Program are exploring a variety of educational practices including guided math, explicit word study instruction, and the use of zones of regulation to support social-emotional development. Each cohort works extensively together to learn and develop new practices that will positively influence

student success. In order to increase capacity across programs, teachers share their learning in grade level professional learning communities as well as whole staff gatherings.

4. School Leadership:

At Sterling School, we embrace a culture of shared leadership. This is primarily accomplished through the trust we prioritize and cultivate among our school's core leadership team. Through shared responsibilities, we provide collaborative support through regular communication, direction, and accountability. It is the desire that this approach is modeled for faculty and staff to achieve high-performing Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) through collective teacher efficacy.

Our school's leadership team consists of the principal, two assistant principals, instructional coach, program coordinator, and literacy specialist. While each assistant principal is generally responsible for one of our two programs, the principal oversees the instructional and operational responsibilities of the entire school. The instructional coach, program coordinator, and literacy specialist function in a similar capacity. The program coordinator gives instructional oversight and direction to the Charles Townes Center while the Literacy Specialist works primarily with the Sterling Program. The Instructional Coach works to support each program, co-leading and supporting specific and collective efforts across the school.

Through the review of students' achievement data and the use of observational learning walks, our leadership team works collaboratively with teachers to establish annual instructional goals. These goals are supported by protocols such as coaching cycles, professional development, instructional rounds, and ongoing PLCs.

The instructional team partners with teachers to target specific student-centered learning goals through four-to-six week coaching cycles. Teachers and coaches work collaboratively to plan instruction, model best practices, co-teach, and share instructional strategies and resources. The teachers and coach use formative assessments to track student progress towards the learning goal.

Professional development is determined with input from the faculty and informed by identified areas for growth from student achievement data. Instructional rounds are then utilized for teachers to showcase what they have learned through coaching cycles and professional development. This process provides a pulse check on our progress toward achieving our instructional goals. Weekly PLCs further this effort by providing grade level teachers with real-time, formative data to align best practices to areas of need.

Additionally, the school's multi-tiered system of supports include a multidisciplinary team for each program that meets biweekly. The assistant principals facilitate these meetings with the counselors and teachers to identify students' various needs (i.e. academics, behavior, or attendance). The team works collaboratively to determine root causes and identify interventions to better support the students. With this approach, the team is able to provide individually tailored support to help every student succeed.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

We work diligently to meet the diverse needs of our students, families, and staff through our Whole Child initiative. Likewise, providing personalized instruction ensures that culturally responsive teaching and learning are woven into the fabric of Sterling's educational experiences.

Each year, all new faculty and staff are taken on a bus tour of the Nicholtown Community to learn more about the children and families we serve. We discuss the complexities related to poverty and how these realities affect our students, providing our teachers with great insight into developing early, meaningful student-teacher relationships.

The Compassionate School's framework (inclusive of research from Adverse Childhood Experiences) supports the need to improve education and behavioral outcomes for students by cultivating a trauma-sensitive learning environment through positive, secure relationships. Every faculty member participates in training offered by the Child Protection Training Center at the University of South Carolina Upstate,

followed by additional trainings such as signs of sexual abuse and mindfulness. Teachers are then equipped with the tools needed to support students as they build resilience.

While morning meetings and weekly guidance lessons are used at the elementary level, advisory groups are utilized within middle grades to address socio-emotional needs of our students. Advisories are facilitated by teachers to help students navigate middle school's complicated social atmosphere and give students the security to voice concerns and resolve issues. Four counselors, representing grade level bands across programs, and a state-provided building mental health counselor ensure that more of our students' diverse and developmental needs are met.

Our students' diversity is addressed through various instructional efforts. For example, third grade students wrote poems entitled "Where I'm From." This task entailed specific instructional goals with relevant texts and provided students the opportunity to build community in the classroom and neighborhood. Members of the local community were invited to Sterling to participate in a culminating poetry event where community members wrote and shared similar poems. Students concluded that knowing one another on a deeper level encourages relationships, develops empathy, and strengthens community.

Another culturally responsive instructional experience is a year-long focus on activism and service learning. Students work on a self-directed, project-based learning centered on one element of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals. Students identify a passion of personal interest to address a need and fulfill their desire to make a better world. Projects include a school backpack program that provides food for the weekend to families experiencing food insecurity, improving educational access by tutoring multilingual students, and teaching piano lessons to underprivileged youth.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

The one practice that has been the most instrumental to Sterling School's success is our collective focus on the development of the Whole Child. As a school, it is our mission to ensure that every child is healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged. This framework develops and prepares students for challenges and opportunities by addressing students' comprehensive needs through the shared responsibility of students, families, schools, and communities. We believe a Whole Child approach sets the standard for comprehensive, sustainable school improvement and provides for long-term student success.

We have a sense of urgency that propels our learning community to be progressive and forward-thinking, preparing students for careers and jobs that may not currently exist. We believe we must be a place where creative risk-taking, self-reflection, individuality, and diversity are valued and appreciated. This reality is noted in the everyday operations of our school, from ongoing student assistance team meetings, data-informed decision making, professional learning to equip teachers in best instructional practices and social emotional learning.

The implementation of our school's whole child approach began six years ago. To give emphasis to each of the five tenets, we began by establishing a strong foundation in the tenets of safe and supported to address the social-emotional needs and provide teachers with strategies to strengthen relationships schoolwide. To nourish our students' sense of belonging and to develop the areas of healthy and engaged, we worked to create opportunities for clubs, advisories, and mentoring. Teachers participated in professional learning to develop engagement strategies. This supported teachers in providing students with meaningful instruction and authentic learning opportunities with a focus on student choice, student ownership, and reflection. Students are challenged to think critically about content standards in order to transfer skills and understandings beyond the classroom walls. This is achieved by providing personalized learning experiences that are differentiated by integrating technology, arts, and STEM challenges in meaningful and authentic ways. These experiences provide a platform for critical conversations among peers and teachers as well as enable students to successfully connect their learning to the real world.

Through the collective work of staff, students, families, and community members, The Whole Child initiative has united Sterling School's diversely rich population of students. We believe children who feel safe, supported, healthy, engaged and challenged will have the tools to develop into successful individuals. By establishing and strengthening the five tenets of the Whole Child, Sterling School provides a pathway to long term student growth and school excellence.