

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

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

School Mailing Address 100 Union Hall Elementary Circle  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Chatham State VA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 24531-5043

County United States

Telephone (434) 724-7010 Fax (434) 724-1850

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Web site/URL https://uhe.pcs.k12.va.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. Mark Jones E-mail mark.jones@pcs.k12.va.us  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Pittsylvania County Tel. (434) 432-2761

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. Calvin Doss  
(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):
- 11 Elementary schools (includes K-8)  
4 Middle/Junior high schools  
6 High schools  
0 K-12 schools
- 21 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	14
K	31
1	26
2	26
3	32
4	24
5	26
6	0
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	179

\*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
  - 1 % Asian
  - 25 % Black or African American
  - 7 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 64 % White
  - 3 % 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: 13%

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.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	11
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	13
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	24
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	179
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.13
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	13

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

Spanish, Pusto, Urdu

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 3 %

5 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 64 %

Total number students who qualify: 114

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 11 %  
Total number of students served 19

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

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.

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	13
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	6
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.	1

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 14:1

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%	93%	96%	95%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2022.

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

15. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes X No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2017

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

Union Hall's mission is to provide a quality education to all students in a caring and supportive environment.

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

<http://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/pcsva/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=C3HMZJ5DAD82>

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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Union Hall Elementary is situated among farmland and pastures in the rural countryside of Pittsylvania County and is one of twenty-one schools in the division. Union Hall serves as the heart of the close-knit community and is a source of pride to the area. The welcoming, family-oriented atmosphere brings joy to all who learn, work, and grow at our school. Our school was built in 1964, and was consolidated with six other schools in the surrounding area. A large number of our parents attended Union Hall as a child and have fond memories of their years spent at the school. While many families have a long history in the community, families new to the area are happily received and welcomed as a Union Hall “Hornet” upon arrival. Union Hall’s sustained record of student success and achievement can be attributed to the close working relationships that have been built over the years between the faculty, staff, students, parents, and community. The community support for our school is outstanding. Businesses and numerous local churches work tirelessly to meet the needs of our school and our students. Additionally, the congregation members encourage the faculty and staff throughout the year by their many acts of kindness.

At Union Hall, all students are encouraged and challenged to develop to their full potential. The student focused, extremely talented faculty holds high expectations for all and works tirelessly to guide students to success academically, emotionally, physically, socially, and culturally. The school’s family atmosphere creates a sense of belonging for students. From the classroom teachers, resource teachers, special education teachers, to the bus drivers, cafeteria staff, and custodial staff, all who work at Union Hall play a role in the growth of our students. Recognizing the benefits of early intervention is a hallmark of the instructional practices at our school. Students benefit greatly from the numerous opportunities for tiered, small group instruction. Students are assigned to small groups based on data, and groups remain fluid throughout the school year. These small group opportunities allow for remediation or enrichment to meet the students’ specific needs. As we continue to address the learning loss caused by the pandemic, the small group instruction has assisted many students in catching up and closing their learning gaps.

As we seek to prepare our students for their future in a global world, technology plays a key role in instruction. All students access one-to-one devices as part of their daily instructional routine. Kindergarteners to fifth graders use an online platform aligned to our standards which provides independent practice of skills, and the data is used to address instructional needs. Assignments are completed in Canvas, Google Classroom, and Easel to foster independence and to create a differentiated learning environment. Students can be observed using technology to collaborate, create, and communicate. The school’s newly created STEM lab enables students to engage in kinesthetic learning and to synthesize classroom learning. Our STEM lab allows students to think critically and creatively as they complete projects, such as coding games using Scratch and coding SpheroBots and Ozobots.

An outgrowth of the pandemic has been the implementation of a mentoring program at Union Hall. As students returned to in-person, five days a week instruction, the need to provide greater social and emotional support was recognized through the analysis of schoolwide discipline data, various test scores, and attendance data. Our mentoring program allows the school counselor and the resource teachers (the librarian, the music teacher, and the PE teacher) to serve as mentors for students who may need support in forming friendships, feeling more confident before a test, or improving study skills to those students who simply need a little more love and attention. The mentors meet with students two or three times a week or daily to review their goals and to assist the students in developing social and emotional skills.

Union Hall was recognized as an Exemplary High Performing National Blue Ribbon School in 2017. The banner of recognition is proudly displayed in the main hall of the school for all faculty, staff, students, and visitors to see as they enter the building. The recognition fosters our deep desire to continue to achieve. Although the principal and eight teachers have changed since the nomination in the spring of 2017, the commitment to excellence has not diminished. This previous recognition has allowed our school to serve as a resource to other schools in our division and outside of it. Teachers from other schools have visited our classrooms to see the innovative and creative lessons our teachers provide daily to our hard-working students. Our teachers and principal have collaborated with our colleagues at other schools to share data



collection practices, scheduling methods, instructional strategies, resources, and techniques to enable other schools to grow academically and emotionally.

## **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:**

There are many important components in the development of literacy at our school. We use the science of reading to guide our daily reading instructional time. The first component of our reading program is the implementation of the five pillars of evidenced aligned reading instruction and Scarborough's Reading Rope. Small group instruction focuses on decoding and word recognition, whereas whole group instruction focuses on language comprehension. Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) assessments are administered in the fall and results from these assessments guide the formation of groups. After mid-year assessments are given, groups are reevaluated and any necessary changes are made.

The second component of our reading program is the use of explicit instruction. We find this method to be the most beneficial way to help students master reading concepts. Students are provided with numerous opportunities to practice skills and receive feedback. Explicit instruction is provided to individual students, small groups, and whole groups. The use of online computer adaptive assessments that align with our state standards give students the opportunity to practice skills learned and receive immediate feedback.

Another important component to our reading program is the integration of interdisciplinary content into reading instruction. This approach builds critical thinking skills and background knowledge, strengthens vocabulary, and sets an authentic purpose for reading. Different strategies are used in the classroom to support interdisciplinary learning. Some of these include summarizing, think-alouds, projects, and graphic organizers. For example, fourth grade students study animal adaptations. Students read and gather information from books and teacher approved websites. They compile their research, then prepare Google Slides to present to their classmates. Also, nonfiction passages based on science and Virginia Studies Standards of Learning (SOL) are used during reading instructional time to enhance both reading comprehension and mastery of content area standards.

Annotating has been found to be an essential component in our reading program. This strategy gives students ownership of their learning, improves comprehension and is fundamentally important in preparation for the SOL reading test. Numerous opportunities for modeling, discussion, and guided practice are completed before students master this skill independently. For example, students practice numbering the paragraphs, highlighting the headings and bold words, and summarizing each paragraph during reading assignments. Students take weekly formative and summative assessments where they practice this skill. Students practice and are provided feedback until mastery is achieved.

Lastly, the most important component in our reading program is instilling the love of reading in our students. We try to accomplish this through several ways. Students have an opportunity to make weekly visits to the library where they are exposed to different genres of literature and are encouraged to explore and read books of their choice. A computer reading program called Epic! provides books for students to read at both school and home. Students have participated in both schoolwide and classroom reading incentive programs. Most importantly students are required to Drop Everything And Read (DEAR) on a daily basis. Our goal is to create lifelong readers.

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

Mathematics teachers at Union Hall use local curriculum guides and the Virginia Standards of Learning to meet the needs of all students. The primary focus is to increase students' math knowledge and understanding while developing foundational and critical skills to close learning gaps. Schoolwide routines are implemented to ensure consistency throughout all grade levels. All math lessons include at least three of the following components: teacher-led, guided, and independent instruction, math discourse, mathematical reasoning, peer collaboration, and daily differentiated small group instruction. The consistent practice of using the same vocabulary and anchor charts from kindergarten to fifth grade, allow students to form

schema to build on their prior knowledge to be able to better make connections to learn new concepts and skills. Math teachers also provide hands-on manipulatives to engage kinesthetic learners. We have an extensive collection of manipulatives such as rulers, base ten blocks, linking cubes, clocks, money, geoboards, geometric shapes, pattern blocks, measuring spoons, counters, counting bears, fraction models, number lines, and an assortment of number charts.

Data collection and analysis is also an important element of the Union Hall math teachers. The Virginia Growth Assessment is given twice a year to gauge grade level readiness and to determine growth at the end of the academic year. Students also take three district created benchmark tests to ensure students are mastering and retaining skills acquired throughout the year. Weekly diagnostic tests are also taken to allow teachers to get a snapshot of our students' current needs in the five mathematical strands: number and number sense, computation and estimation, measurement and geometry, probability and statistics, and patterns, functions, and algebra. All of this information, in conjunction with formative and summative assessments given by teachers, is used to monitor student progress. During vertical grade level meetings, teachers use the data to drive instruction, identify learning gaps, and to deconstruct standards to address tiered support and interventions, differentiation, and adaptive learning. When teachers see that a student is not meeting expectations, students receive remediation, are retaught, and are given opportunities to practice math concepts with an Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) tutor.

At Union Hall math teachers encourage students to be fluent in all four math operations. Fluency of math facts is essential to student success. Fact fluency contributes to students being able to engage in more rigorous coursework, build their confidence, and prepares students to be successful in future math courses and careers. We use a number of online programs for students to practice. These research-based programs include Reflex Math and Frax. Both programs provide data that is reviewed and analyzed weekly to monitor growth and to celebrate student achievement. A friendly competition has developed among grade levels as students compete to have the highest accuracy each week.

To enrich third through fifth grade students, they visit the STEM lab at least once a month. While there, they are able to use knowledge acquired in the classroom to collaborate and create projects. The STEM lab also incorporates writing which allows students to compare and contrast concepts, create lists, and provide examples and explanations. Their designs and creations are then displayed around the school for students and parents to view.

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

To achieve science literacy, our school focuses on providing an environment that optimizes learning. Teachers aim to have meaningful conversations and engagement among students. They plan and implement lessons that enable students to both investigate and understand concepts taught. Students' active participation is of essential importance.

Students are given a variety of learning experiences to enable mastery of standards. These experiences may come from classroom activities, guest speakers, research projects, experiments, and visits to the school STEM lab. For example, we have developed a partnership with a chemistry professor from a local university who visits the school to conduct various experiments with students. The 4-H Extension Youth Development Agent from Pittsylvania County taught STEM activities. The Information Technology teacher and classroom teachers collaborated to teach STEM lessons that included scientific investigation, series circuits, electricity, measurement, and coding. Classroom teachers perform actively engaging classroom experiments that follow the scientific method. Students complete research projects and use technology to explain and share findings with their peers. The school STEM lab has been an essential part of the educational learning experience for our students. The science curriculum is enhanced with educational enrichment activities. Students enjoyed a field trip to a local farm on Ag Day, a visit from the Southside Mobile Dairy and a guest reader during Farm Literacy Week.

A variety of assessments are used to evaluate mastery of standards. Students are often asked to write a brief statement at the end of a lesson that states one thing they learned or one thing that they found interesting. This may also include questions when students need clarification on a topic. This enables the teacher to do a

quick formative assessment and reteach when necessary. Teachers also observe and assess student participation and documentation during science experiments. Summative assessments are used often to measure student understanding of concepts taught at the end of a unit of study.

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

Union Hall strives to teach the necessary knowledge and skills during history and social studies classroom instructional time that will prepare the students to successfully live in their communities and have a better appreciation of how different people and cultures helped shape our community, state, country and world. We want our students to be curious and excited about history and learn to be positive contributors to our society. We focus on teaching students about their local community, Virginia's rich history, important events in United States history, and ancient world cultures.

There are many classroom activities and strategies that are used to teach the history and social studies curriculum. Teachers use the textbook and resources provided by Five Ponds Press. They also incorporate Interactive Student Notebooks, timelines, flashcards, and technology into the daily instructional program. Technology is used to enhance student learning. Students use Google Maps to interpret maps and investigate places around the world. The computer program SOLPass is used to review specific information and concepts taught in the classroom. Technology enables students to go on virtual field trips such as a trip to Jamestown and Yorktown, Virginia. Students also use Google Slides as a tool to document and present information learned. History is brought to life with a visit by a guest speaker from the Jamestown/Yorktown Foundation.

Teacher created formative and summative assessments are used to assess student growth and progress. Writing is often used to assess students' understanding of concepts taught. Students write short reports to review and reinforce topics such as short biographies about famous Americans, compare and contrast First American groups, and the description of the life of a Virginia colonist. A project based assessment is completed in third grade on ancient civilizations.

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

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

At Union Hall, we have one four-year-old preschool class that can have a maximum of 18 students enrolled. The teacher uses the HighScope preschool curriculum to guide her instruction. HighScope is a research-based program that is focused on building children's foundational learning skills. Through the use of the curriculum, students are encouraged to use their creativity, are given opportunities to boost their confidence, and are allowed to develop a sense of independence.

During the school day, preschool students work on skills to build a foundation of learning in a relaxed environment. There is little to no use of direct instruction, instead preschool students learn through exploration and play. Students interact with letters, numbers, shapes, and colors daily. These interactions take the form of songs, crafts, dances, and other hands-on activities. Stories, nursery rhymes, and poems are used to facilitate literacy development. The focus is on developing oral language skills, knowledge of letters and sounds, and print knowledge. Other activities such as counting, observing shapes and sizes, and recognizing and using patterns helps preschoolers develop foundational numeracy skills. Students are expected to learn to count and to recognize numbers and shapes. They practice these skills by sorting, ordering, and comparing various objects.

A big part of the preschool program is social and emotional development. This time allows students to understand their identity, feelings, and learn expected behaviors when interacting with their peers and teachers at school. They also learn about being a good friend and how to exude self-control.

We also have a Preschool Family Coordinator who provides monthly workshops for parents. These

workshops teach and expose parents to strategies they can use at home to enforce what their child is learning at school. The coordinator is also responsible for planning field trips for students to learn and explore the community and various careers.

Union Hall's preschool program lays the foundation for student success in kindergarten through third grade. Students who attend preschool are better prepared for kindergarten. They have a larger vocabulary, stronger math and literacy skills that are built on each year. Preschool students and their parents are also acclimated to the school environment and expectations. Overall, the preschool program establishes critical thinking and problem-solving skills for lifelong learning.

## **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

### **2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)**

The General Music program at Union Hall is an interactive course where kindergarten through fifth grade students actively engage in musical activities through guided practice and discovery. Lessons in music vary in topics that include, but not limited to, steady beat, rhythm, and melody. Lessons are also aligned with the Virginia Music Standards of Learning and based on the National Association for Music Education Standards. Musical activities often allow student creativity through movement and dance. Through this creative process, students begin to develop both their fine and gross motor skills. Other musical activities provide opportunities for performance on various instruments. With the introduction to small handheld instruments, students are continuing to hone their fine motor skills and form proper performance technique. As students move on to the higher grade levels of the program, students continue to develop their understanding of instrument families, music theory, and written notation. These grade levels feature ensemble singing and instrumental performance with percussion and/or wind instruments such as the recorder. Fourth and Fifth grade students are invited to audition for chorus, and several students are chosen to perform in a county-wide ensemble. On occasion, students are assessed through observation during various activities or through formative assessment to measure student growth. The ultimate goal of the General Music program is to provide students with positive and meaningful musical experiences.

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

Union Hall's physical education program is an academic subject characterized by a planned, sequential K–5 course of study that is aligned with the Virginia SOL and based on the national standards for physical education. Our physical education program provides cognitive content and instruction designed to develop motor skills, knowledge, and behaviors for physical activity and physical fitness. The program also provides opportunities for students to practice positive social skills like sportsmanship, teamwork, and goal setting. Students in the fourth and fifth grades are physically tested twice a year on five areas using The Cooper Institute's Fitnessgram Assessment as a testing tool. The five areas tested include the pacer test, which is a cardiovascular test, push-ups for arm strength, curl ups for abdominal strength, sit and reach for leg flexibility and trunk lift for back flexibility. Students perform a variety of different activities to incorporate practice exercises for such cardiovascular and muscular strength tests. On occasion, students are assessed by observation through a variety of activities or by using formative format using paper pencil to scan particular knowledge of skills learned. However, the overall goal of our physical education experience is to provide students with the ability and confidence to be physically active for a lifetime.

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

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

Union Hall Library has a collection size of approximately 5,000 items that support all reading levels and curriculum areas of the school. Students have scheduled library skills and book check out time weekly and open check out time daily to meet their reading needs. Circulation Statistics show an annual checkout of

around 6,000 items a year. The library provides enrichment lessons to all grade levels based around the Virginia Library Standards and Curriculum. The library is also a hub for enriching students' technology skills. Logo coding and Minecraft coding have been fun tools for the students to learn coding basics. The ultimate goal of the library program is to encourage students to develop a love of reading and technology. It provides a safe place where students of all abilities and levels can find a book that is perfect for them.

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

The Union Hall school counseling program provides classroom instruction, individual counseling, and small group counseling as necessary. Students learn about a variety of developmentally appropriate topics in classroom lessons to promote their academic, social-emotional, and college/career success. Social-Emotional lessons are aligned with the state SEL standards of Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, and Decision Making. Weekly classroom lessons allow the students to build strong relationships with their school counselor. With the COVID-19 pandemic, we saw an increase of mental health concerns and a close relationship with the school counselor is key to student outcomes. Attendance, behavioral, and academic data is regularly collected to guide counseling interventions. The school counselor collaborates with all school stakeholders to ensure students receive support appropriately.

## **3. Academic Supports**

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

The Virginia Tiered System of Supports (VTSS) is heavily relied upon to help us meet the needs of students performing below grade level. Union Hall's principal and teachers recognize that all students are capable, creative, and distinctive. Each student has a variety of academic needs which must be addressed in order to be a successful learner. At the beginning of the school year, students performing below grade level are identified through various assessments, then they are placed in tiered, small groups for remediation. On-going assessments throughout the year ensure that students receive instruction in specific areas, and our groups are fluid. There is an all hands on deck approach to small groups at our small school. The school counselor, the music teacher, the PE teacher, the librarian, and our paraprofessionals assist with small groups along with the classroom teachers. After-school tutoring is offered to students in the second semester.

Assessments such as PALS, Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), and SOL test data are used to identify students. All kindergarteners are assigned to a small group to receive reading readiness support. The teachers and paraprofessionals tutor our kindergarteners using a research-based program which addresses the components of the science of reading. They meet with their group of five or six students daily for 30 minutes of instruction. Students in first through fifth grades receive reading small group intervention as determined by on-going assessments. These students are also tutored using a research-based program which encompasses the science of reading components. In math, teachers review weekly data and create small groups to address specific skills. Students use a variety of hands-on materials to improve their understanding of mathematical concepts. An online learning platform that addresses our math standards is used daily.

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

Union Hall has a Gifted Resource teacher that provides pull-out services for fifty minutes once a week to sixteen students in second to fifth grades. All students are screened using MAP scores for reading and math. Students referred for testing are given the OLSAT 8 and KTEA-3 to determine qualification in addition to other criteria such as grades and the Renzulli-Hartman Scale Checklist which is completed by the classroom teacher. Student success is measured by the MAP scores given in the fall, winter, and spring of each school year.

Union Hall students who are performing above grade level are actively engaged in enrichment activities. Students complete novel studies on book titles such as Ghost Cadet, Merci Suarez Changes Gears, and Island of the Blue Dolphins. Students also participate in STEM challenges, Coding with Scratch, and Robotics which includes Ozobots and SpheroBots. Students have completed units of study on the human

body, energy, ocean ecosystems, and simple machines. Technology is also an important component in the gifted program. Students use Chromebooks, Lumio Lessons, Kiddle.co for research, Google Slides, and Google Documents.

Students experience real world learning through field trips. These trips allow students the opportunities to gain a better understanding of topics being taught at school and to access tools and environments that are unavailable at the school. Second grade students visited the Greensboro Science Center. Third grade students visited the Durham Museum of Life and Science. Fourth grade students visited the Virginia Museum of Civil War, and the fifth grade students visited the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences. To expose the students to art and different cultures, all grades attended the play Holidays around the World performed by the Bright Star Theater Touring Company. All of these experiences greatly enriched the students.

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

Union Hall has two outstanding special education teachers who work tirelessly to meet the individual needs of our students with disabilities. Our special education teachers work collaboratively with one another and with the classroom teachers. They receive ongoing professional development from our division which enables them to address academic and social-emotional needs. Our students with special education needs participate in core instruction where their accommodations are provided to them as much as possible. Additionally, they receive small group intensive instruction daily with the special education teachers to help them meet their goals in their Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).

Students with special needs with IEPs that address functional academic skills participate in a variety of hands-on, multi-modality activities. Kinesthetic learning emphasizes movement with videos focused on skills such as counting and letter identification. Students participate in nature walks and scavenger hunts on the school campus to explore their environment which activates multi-sensory learning and physical engagement. Visual schedules and guides are used daily as students acquire new skills. Students with special needs incubate chicken eggs in their classroom and greatly enjoy learning about the life cycle and how to care for small animals. They help to fill ice cream and snack orders each day for the classrooms which enables them to use their counting, sorting, reading, and social skills.

Students with special needs who exhibit behavioral and social-emotional challenges benefit greatly from time in “Chillville” as part of their daily routine. Chillville is a room with a soothing paint color, low level lighting, soft floor cushions, and a variety of objects which allow students with sensory needs to achieve balance. The room is equipped with social stories and numerous sensory activities which provide support for the students’ self-regulation.

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

Union Hall has five identified English Learner (EL) students who are actively served, and one student is monitored. EL services originate when the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) screener is given to any student who indicates a second language in the home upon registration. At the beginning of the school year, this must take place within 30 days. During the school year if there are new students enrolling, the screener must be completed within 10 days of enrollment. All actively served students are assessed using the WIDA’s spring Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State (ACCESS). It is a battery of four tests that assess proficiency in Reading, Listening, Speaking, and Writing.

Instruction given depends upon the scores from the previous spring ACCESS tests. A rubric is used to guide service minutes. This rubric takes into account ACCESS scores on a scale of 1-4.4, and the grade level of the student. The type of instruction given depends greatly on the general education teacher and the needs of the student. At Union Hall, a “push in” service model is used to provide EL students in first through fifth grade with support from the EL teacher. For the kindergarteners, a “pull out” service model is used, and the EL tutor provides thirty minutes of service each day.

The primary instructional focus is gaining English proficiency across all four domains with a concentration on developing content vocabulary. To gain proficiency, students use a variety of computer programs including ESpark, Freereading, Readworks, IXL, and WIDA Test Preparation. Students practice recording their voices using a headset to prepare for the Spring ACCESS test. All stakeholders have input when selecting classroom accommodations for EL students. To measure student success, a rubric is used for expected growth for ACCESS test scores. This growth varies depending upon the previous ACCESS score and the grade level cluster for each student.

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



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

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

Student engagement and motivation facilitates all forms of student learning at Union Hall. Each member of our faculty and staff seeks to build positive relationships with each and every student who walks into the building. We encourage each student to S.O.A.R, this is our Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) school behavior matrix. The expectations of Self-control, On-task, Achievement, and Respect are consistent and displayed in each space on campus. At the beginning of each school year, teachers focus solely on explicitly teaching these expectations and building relationships with their class. These attributes are geared toward empowering students to become productive citizens and leaders.

Each six weeks, students have the opportunity to become a member of the S.O.A.R. Kid's Club as an incentive for showing positive behavior and academic improvement. Classroom teachers choose one student in their class each grading period who has exceeded S.O.A.R. expectations. That student attends a breakfast with the school counselor and the other nominees. Students receive a membership card and are recognized on the morning announcements as outstanding student leaders.

Another way we engage and motivate students is through our school mentoring program. Grade level teams discuss observational, academic, attendance, and behavior data to identify students who may need extra encouragement in these capacities. Our PE teacher, librarian, music teacher, and school counselor become mentors for these students and meet with them at intervals determined case-by-case. The positive relationships formed between students and mentors help them meet their goals and feel a sense of connection within the school community.

The PBIS team plans school wide events and implements rewards to keep students engaged throughout the year. Some examples include dance, ice cream, and glow in the dark parties. School attendance is emphasized at Union Hall. Our school has maintained the best attendance in the county for several years. Each week attendance data is analyzed and the classes with the best attendance are rewarded. At the end of each grading period students with perfect attendance, good citizenship grades, honor roll, and principal's list receive rewards. The principal recognizes students whose test scores show growth on the afternoon announcements. These rewards were devised to be inclusive of all students and give each student a chance to shine regardless of ability. We go to great lengths to ensure each student's efforts are recognized at Union Hall.

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

Our small school is nestled in a close knit, rural community. Built in 1964, Union Hall is a pillar of the community and sometimes several generations of families attended the school. Community members and parents have fond memories of Union Hall, and they are eager to give back to the school. Through partnerships with community organizations, we provide access to necessities for our students along with learning opportunities. Some of our most prominent community partnerships are with area churches. We are fortunate to have formed partnerships with Liberty Baptist Church and Swansonville United Methodist Church who collaborate with our school counselor to provide weekend meal bags for twenty families each week. We are developing a program to supply basic hygiene supplies to students in partnership with these churches. Throughout the year, Liberty Baptist donates new clothes and sanitary items for our school nurse to use in the clinic. Marion Baptist donated school supplies at the beginning of the year and provided winter coats that the school counselor worked to distribute last winter. The school counselor works to coordinate a Secret Santa program for our students each year, with donations from local churches and charitable organizations to ensure students in need receive gifts during the holiday season.

We have also made several partnerships which enhance our students' academic experience. The Pittsylvania County 4-H Extension Youth Development Agent delivered a course of interactive STEM lessons to our students. Students engaged in such activities as homemade rocket launches, studying the parts of the flower with real lilies, and constructing a visual representation of the distance between planets. We have also

partnered with a Chemistry professor at Averett University, whose children attended Union Hall. She helps our teachers conduct chemistry experiments. Agriculture is a huge part of the community, and we partnered with a mobile dairy who taught our students about dairy cows and did a live milking demonstration.

Fostering positive relationships with families is something we strive to do at Union Hall because we know it is vital to student success. Parents are encouraged to complete an annual survey and provide feedback that guides our decision making and programming for the year. Open House is always well-attended, and teachers treasure the opportunity to meet their students' families. They stay in contact with families throughout the year with classroom newsletters and maintain personal contact through Class Dojo and other classroom messaging services. We plan several family nights and days throughout the year which serve to bring the whole Hornet family together for fun activities and relationship building. Parents are welcomed warmly into the building to eat lunch with their children. They are always eager to volunteer for special events such as field day or school trips. Union Hall is fortunate to have such a supportive community of parents.

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

Union Hall teachers strive to create an environment where teachers have the opportunities to learn, develop, and grow. There are many ways that we try to accomplish this goal. In order to grow, teachers must feel valued and appreciated. The community plays an important role in supporting and appreciating the teachers. Local churches regularly provide breakfast and lunch for the faculty and staff, and the parents and students often give teachers small tokens of appreciation. Appreciation is shown at school with every Friday being jeans and coffee bar day. Teachers also receive a back to school goodie bag each fall from the principal.

Professional development is a key component in teacher growth. Teachers participate in not only county wide professional development, but school wide professional development activities as well. We have completed several book studies that have been very beneficial. The concepts discussed and learned during a book study allows for immediate application in the classroom. One book study was *The Essential 55* by Ron Clark. We met regularly to discuss Ron Clark's three-prong approach to teaching which includes engagement, culture, and rigor. Another book study completed was *Dear Teacher: 100 Days of Inspirational Quotes and Anecdotes* by Dr. Brad Johnson and Hal Bowman. This book study was outstanding as it both encouraged and inspired the teachers. It validated why we as teachers are exactly where we are meant to be. The book studies promoted conversations among peers that lead to teacher confidence, higher morale, and the willingness to apply new concepts and ideas in the classroom.

To further create a successful environment at Union Hall teachers are given many opportunities to engage with colleagues. We have regular grade level meetings. This gives teachers the chance to collaborate, support each other, and reflect on practices and procedures that may or may not be effective during classroom instructional time. Teachers are also given the opportunity to complete peer observations. Teachers can learn from one another and acquire new ideas to implement in their classrooms. Experiencing new routines and approaches inspires the teachers to become more successful and confident teachers.

There is a support system at Union Hall between the teachers and administrator. Teachers are trusted and have the autonomy to create and implement lessons based on the individual needs of the students in their classroom. The teachers can make their own judgments on how to best teach the state standards. The administrator will provide assistance and make recommendations when needed and always works diligently to provide the necessary instructional materials desired by the teachers.

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

Union Hall's principal is a visionary leader who uses a transformational leadership style. At the start of an academic year, data is used to create goals that are clearly stated and shared. Later a strategic plan is outlined on ways to achieve these goals. Each member of our faculty and staff works together in professional learning communities to plan and implement strategies. The importance of working as a team and having the support of the principal creates an environment where teachers feel motivated and are willing to explore new strategies and best practices. They feel that their opinions are valued and important. The

principal encourages growth and risk taking among the teachers. All teachers become invested in the principal's vision of success for our students.

Our principal's passion for early intervention is seen throughout our school. The principal is constantly reviewing and analyzing data so that students are grouped properly to meet their learning needs. The principal is always looking to hire tutors and support staff to work with our students to close learning gaps. In addition to knowing the students' capabilities on paper, the principal spends as much time as possible getting to know them on a personal level. This enables the principal to advocate for their instructional needs. There is a feeling of accomplishment and pride in seeing our students' joy when they are successful and when they take accountability for their own learning and growth. The principal's drive to succeed is contagious with both students and teachers.

Union Hall has a leadership team that meets regularly. The team consists of the English, math, science, social studies, and special education liaison teachers, the PBIS coach, the special education coordinator, and the school principal. We discuss strategies that we want to implement to try to help us reach our academic and behavioral goals set out by the principal. In addition to instructional and behavioral concerns, the team plans school events and activities to motivate and cultivate a positive school climate. All members of the team are involved in the decision-making process. After the meetings, the team collaborates with grade level teachers. Teachers also have weekly grade level meetings which are also attended by the principal. Instructional practices and effectiveness, student growth, behavior concerns, and attendance concerns are addressed as continuous improvement and sustained academic success are the goals for Union Hall's students.

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

Union Hall recognizes that our students, families and staff have diverse backgrounds and experiences. All are treated equally with respect, inclusion, and equity as we learn from one another's cultures. Diverse backgrounds are celebrated and appreciated at our school.

Our school and community strive to ensure equity for all. All of our students are provided with school supplies, classroom materials, one-to-one devices, and engaging opportunities throughout the school year. Our school division provides free breakfast and lunch to all students through its Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). This program began in 2019, and it has enabled our school to have the highest percentage of students eating breakfast at school in the entire school division. On an individual basis, students are provided with weekend backpack meals, personal hygiene projects, and clothing by local churches and civic organizations. On an as needed basis, a translator attends meetings with parents to enable them to fully take part in the discussions and be an active participant in their child's academic and social-emotional growth.

Cultural awareness, customs, and holidays are recognized and studied throughout our classrooms. The school counselor created a digital classroom and Google slides for each heritage month. The students completed the lessons and selected books for the class to listen to and enjoy. Classroom teachers and students researched December and January holidays, and the students created anchor charts to share their knowledge with others. Through music, our students explore songs and dances of various cultures. These activities allow students to recognize commonalities and differences among cultures.

Respect is part of our PBIS matrix and is demonstrated each day at our school. It is reinforced by interactions among all members of the Union Hall family. Our students are guided by positive adult role models who teach them to respect others and themselves. We recognize that some families need a greater level of support and work to meet their needs. Our school counselor and the school division's Home School Coordinator work diligently to assist families with accessing mental health and counseling resources.

The Union Hall staff acknowledges that we must continue to grow and learn about the world around us. We seek to continue our work in recognizing the value and importance of all cultures. As we prepare our students for a global, connected world, we recognize we must continue to improve our lessons and the experiences that we provide.

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

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At Union Hall we work as a team. We consider ourselves a close family that cares deeply for our students. We work hard to make sure all of our students live up to their potential. We implement many strategies and practices to foster success, but we believe that the one most important practice implemented at our school is our daily small group reading instructional time. Our main focus during this time is the development of lifelong readers. Our goal is to help struggling readers become successful and acquire reading strategies that they can use throughout their lives. We also provide enrichment activities for higher achieving or above grade level reading students. For example, students enjoy the study of different novels. This provides students with the opportunity to develop both their reading and higher-level thinking skills.

Our school works tirelessly to accomplish our goal of creating lifelong readers. Many members of our faculty and staff contribute their talents and instruct students during small group instructional time. We utilize the classroom teacher, the Title I teacher, the PALS tutor, instructional aides, the music teacher, the P. E. teacher, the school counselor, and the librarian. This provides for a smaller student-to-teacher ratio. There is greater student engagement, participation, and development of communication skills. Students feel more comfortable to ask and answer questions. They are able to learn from their teachers and peers. Everyone is given a voice, and confidence is built which we believe leads to greater academic success.

Students are placed in small groups based on instructional needs. We use a variety of assessments to guide our groups and instruction. Reading groups change throughout the school year based on student progress. Instruction includes phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension activities. No two groups are the same. We work closely together as a team to determine what the groups look like and how they function. Groups may even consist of students from different grade levels. It all depends on where we believe a student will experience the most growth and success.

We believe reading is the essential building block for learning that students need in order to experience success in all academic areas. We also believe that the daily small group reading instructional time is priceless and we strive to make it a time where students feel empowered and valued. We want students to enjoy the learning process as they build a lifelong skill.