

U.S. Department of Education
2014 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Dr. Wendy Hancock

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

Official School Name Nitrauer School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 811 Ashbourne Avenue

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Lancaster State PA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 17601-4703

County Lancaster County State School Code Number* _____

Telephone 717-569-4239 Fax 717-569-7973

Web site/URL https://www.mtwp.net/schools/nitrauer-elementary/ E-mail hancocwe@mtwp.net

Twitter Handle _____ Facebook Page _____ Google+ _____

YouTube/URL _____ Blog _____ Other Social Media Link _____

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Mr. Michael Bromirski E-mail: bromirmi@mtwp.net
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Manheim Township Sd Tel. 717-569-8231

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. Bill Murry
(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 that it is accurate.

Date _____

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

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

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

Include this page in the school’s application as page 2.

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, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made its Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) or Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state’s AMOs or AYP requirements in the 2013-2014 school year and be certified by the state representative. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2008 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, or 2013.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

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

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

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
 - Suburban
 - Small city or town in a rural area
 - Rural
3. 1 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.
4. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	33	34	67
1	52	67	119
2	40	93	133
3	49	48	97
4	47	49	96
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12	0	0	0
Total Students	221	291	512

5. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 10 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 10 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 72 % White
 - 7 % 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.)

6. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2012 - 2013 year: 7%

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, 2012 until the end of the school year	16
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2012 until the end of the 2012-2013 school year	15
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	31
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1	472
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.066
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	7

7. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 4 %
19 Total number ELL
 Number of non-English languages represented: 5
 Specify non-English languages: Spanish, Vietnamese, Italian, Chinese (Mandarin) & Arabic
8. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 22 %
 Total number students who qualify: 107

If this method is not an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

9. Students receiving special education services: 10 %
45 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 5 Autism | 0 Orthopedic Impairment |
| 6 Deafness | 9 Other Health Impaired |
| 0 Deaf-Blindness | 6 Specific Learning Disability |
| 1 Emotional Disturbance | 16 Speech or Language Impairment |
| 0 Hearing Impairment | 1 Traumatic Brain Injury |
| 6 Mental Retardation | 0 Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| 1 Multiple Disabilities | 0 Developmentally Delayed |

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

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers	19
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	11
Paraprofessionals	12
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 25:1

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

Required Information	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	97%	96%	0%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools)**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2013

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

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

Yes_ NoX

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

PART III – SUMMARY

Nitrauer Elementary School, home of the Nitrauer Knights, is a close-knit school family set in Lancaster, PA. With 475 students K-4, and approximately 4 classes per grade level, Nitrauer has a longstanding reputation for academic excellence, industrious school culture, and parent involvement.

Written in 2010, the school's mission statement is: The mission of W.E. Nitrauer Elementary School, in partnership with home, community, and its students, is to develop and strengthen the academic, creative and social potential within every child by providing a safe, stimulating environment that promotes excellence, appreciation of the arts, individual effort and achievement, wellness, responsibility, and respect for self and others.

Because there is a new principal and several new teachers at Nitrauer, the school staff recently reviewed the mission statement and reevaluated its message and wording based on our current beliefs. Together they created a new collection of beliefs in March, 2014. This collection served as the first step toward revising and/or creating a new mission statement. First, Nitrauer educators believe that we must give children opportunities and information to improve their lives in the present and the future. Second, Nitrauer educators must help all students realize their potential. Additionally, we must ensure that every student can achieve success in their own way and we must celebrate that success. We must treat students fairly and teach them to do the same with each other. Also, we must invest individualized energy/attention to all students and remember that fair is not equal. Importantly, we must always hold that all students can learn and grow (academically, socially, emotionally) in a safe learning environment. Finally, we must accept everyone and teach children to do so; all children have something to add to the learning environment.

At a May, 2014 comprehensive planning meeting, team members used the faculty's collection of beliefs to create a new mission and vision statement for Nitrauer. The mission statement or the path we are taking to realize our vision is as follows: "Nitrauer's mission is to provide opportunities for students to realize their potential and achieve individual success in a safe, fair, and accepting environment." Our vision, or our ultimate goal to which the path leads is that "All Nitrauer students are learning, growing, and positively contributing to our school community." These new statements will be shared with the entire faculty in June as we map our future steps as a building. Although as a staff we continue to strive to improve ourselves and the job we are doing as educators, many practices at Nitrauer will continue as they have, as they are integral to our success.

Nitrauer's students experience a wide variety of activities that showcase their many talents and skills. This year we had the privilege of hosting an Artist in Residence for nearly 8 weeks. Mr. Tom Jolin, a folksinger, songwriter, and musical instrument maker, joined the Nitrauer Knights for an intensive period in which he met with each class in every grade level at least 3x. He spent additional time with 4th graders who had the chance to create and/or learn to play a mountain dulcimer. The culmination of Mr. Jolin's residency was an all-school "hoedown" in which every Nitrauer Knight sang, danced, and played a homemade instrument. We hosted two performances for families, both of which were standing room only.

Each year we host our Project Fair and Art Show with the help of our PTO. This event is offered to all students K-4 and provides an opportunity for students to develop a project (for example, a science experiment or study) or create an art piece and share it with visitors the evening of the show. Many students sign up to share their hard work and many families attend the event to see the students' hard work for themselves.

Another yearly event that lends to the industrious culture of the building is the yearly talent show or play. In alternating years, students are invited to try out for a musical or talent show, each run by parent volunteers and facilitated by school staff. Most recently, our school hosted a talent show in which students displayed such talents as karate, singing, dancing, multi-cultural instrument playing and dancing, as well as, guitar, piano, and violin playing. The performers practiced for several weeks and produced a show that was anything but elementary in its display of talent and overall production.

Without question, parents are an essential part of the Nitrauer's culture. In fact, many of Nitrauer's activities both during the school day and after school would be impossible were it not for active parent participation. Not only does parent involvement contribute to our high achievement, it also lays the foundation for the culture of learning in the building. Every day, for example, you will see parents volunteering in classrooms, working with students in the hallway, visiting to be the Mystery Reader, decorating the cafeteria, and helping with office and classroom tasks like copying and laminating.

Our PTO events also rely on significant parent cooperation and participation. The activities include our late summer ice cream social, fall festival and parade, holiday craft house where students paint pottery for holiday gifts, Bingo night, annual May Fun Fest, as well as the Talent Show/Musical and Project Fair and Art Show previously mentioned.

Additional examples of our industrious culture include our before-school 24 Game Club for third and fourth graders, our Odyssey of the Mind team (who is competing at the State level this year), our after-school Art Club, and our Girls on the Run Club.

This year our school wide positive behavior support plan was based on the book "One," by Kathryn Otoshi. The book discusses bullying prevention, inclusion, and kind, supportive interactions. Referencing the book, which was shared at a schoolwide assembly and then given to every classroom teacher for shared reading, we have been identifying students who are kind and helpful with each other, or who help to prevent bullying. Each week students from every class in the building are recognized and rewarded for their good citizenship.

Finally, our fourth graders act as safety patrols during arrival and dismissal each day. Over the summer they receive a day of training from two supervising staff members and AAA, as well. They help supervise students in their bus lines in the hallways, lead students to their buses, and help students who walk to school and are car riders. With these helpers, our younger students have an organized, supervised method for movement during our busy transitions. The additional benefit is that the fourth graders take their jobs very seriously, which adds to their pride of being a Nitrauer Knight.

Hanging in Nitrauer's lobby are nine signs demonstrating as many years of achieving Adequate Yearly Progress (from 2002-2012, the year AYP reporting ended). Indeed, Nitrauer's accomplishments include its steady achievement on PSSA testing. In 2013, 91.5% of students were proficient/advanced on PSSA in reading and 94.8% were proficient/advanced in math. Another accomplishment is the fact that according to PVAAS, Hispanic students, L.E.P. (Limited English Proficiency), and students with IEPs in the below basic category, all exceeded the standard for a year's worth of growth in reading. Also, Nitrauer's Hispanic, African-American, and Multi-racial populations have consistently strong achievement scores on PSSA five years in a row.

Excellent test scores and academic growth notwithstanding, one of the greatest accomplishments of Nitrauer is the student body. Discipline issues are minimal here. Most problems are handled effectively by a discussion with the student and/or call home. Much more striking than any disciplinary difficulties is the culture of cooperation, kindness, and politeness throughout the building. This positive tone by students is evident the minute you enter Nitrauer. Students greet adults with warm hellos and will routinely say, "Have a great day" or "How are you?" They will, unprompted, go out of their way to help a peer or adult in need. We have a Life Skills class in this building and never is the gentility of the students more obvious than when included students are supported by their peers. Truly, this school has an extraordinary supportive tone that is heralded by its uniquely wonderful students.

The final and most critical pieces of Nitrauer's positive culture and success are the teachers who work with children each day and who are responsible for the education of their students. Teachers spend hours of their own time before and after school and on weekends preparing for lessons, learning new materials, and attending professional development sessions. When someone in the building needs help, they need only put out a request, and within minutes, staff volunteers will offer their services. It is very common to have staff

members volunteer to decorate blank bulletin boards in the hall, stay after with students, or collaborate with a colleague — again, beyond the hours of the school day. There is a culture in this building of professionalism, hard work, and determination. Teachers take what they do seriously and, in turn, get results from their students. Nitrauer’s long history of tirelessly dedicated teachers lives on today.

What makes Nitrauer so successful and worthy of a Blue Ribbon is the culture of the school, which extends from its busy and productive scheduling, active participation by parents, continued high achievement on PSSAs, outstanding students, and its devoted teaching staff. There are many schools that have one or two of these key components for success, but few have evidence of all of them. Even fewer demonstrate true excellence of each component. Nitrauer is an exceptional school.

PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

a) The Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) is divided into four categories of performance: Advanced, proficient, basic and below basic. The expectation in our school and district is that all students score proficient or higher and that all students show positive growth on PSSAs. While the scores have been traditionally high at Nitrauer, the entire staff is motivated to help ALL students reach their potential. Past PSSA scores show areas where there are trends of achievement, as well as areas where improvement is needed. To determine strengths and weaknesses and to reflect on teaching practices, teachers perform a close analysis of PSSA results, specifically examining school/class/student performance on State standards and associated sub-skills. Teachers ask, "In order to work toward all students being proficient or advanced and to ensure that all students are growing, what do we need to do differently?" A specific finding of Nitrauer's PSSA analysis was that all students were not growing, especially those in the proficient/advanced categories. This lack of growth has become a priority during instructional discussions and decision-making.

This school year (2013-14) marked the beginning of the School Performance Profile (SPP) issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Nitrauer's S.P.P. was 86.7, which was lower than other schools in the district whose scores were 90 or above. While Nitrauer has high PSSA scores, the school's lack of student growth from one year to the next is the primary area of need. Indeed, the chief reason for Nitrauer's lower score was its lack of growth in its prof/advanced students on PSSA from third to fourth grade.

b) For the past five years, Nitrauer's achievement on the state test, PSSA, have yielded extremely high percentages of proficient and advanced students. Specifically, about 100 third graders have taken the math test for the past five years and between 89.6% and 98% were proficient/advanced every year. In the same group between 83.3% and 97% were proficient/advanced on the reading test every year. In fourth grade, where there have also been about 100 students taking the test each year, the percent of students scoring proficient/advanced has ranged from 82.8% and 99.1% on the math test and 75.8% and 91.5% on the reading test for the past five years.

One trend in the data is the lack of growth in the percentage of students performing at the advanced level on PSSA. From third grade to fourth grade in the area of reading, the percentage decreases. See the "School Leadership" section of this application for a description of how the school is addressing this issue.

Another trend in the data is the greater-than-10-point difference between the school as a whole and the subgroups "Students Receiving Special Education" and "English Language Learner Students." Although only the former had enough students in it to qualify as a subgroup, achievement of both groups has been analyzed and discussed at Nitrauer. To close the gap with each of these subgroups, we have looked at our instruction in reading and math and have made adjustments including the following: incorporating more writing into E/LA instruction, ensuring that authentic texts are used in addition to scripted programs, and having classroom teachers collaborate with the learning support and ESL teacher to determine the best course of action for students. To address math achievement differences, teachers are expected to meet with small differentiated groups, as they do in reading, in order to give all students the instruction they need. In one grade level, math remediation (a version of math RtII) has been started to further support students.

One qualifying group, "Hispanic or Latino Students," has been successful at maintaining high levels of achievement. In fact, the difference between the school/separate grade levels and the subgroup has been less than 5% in math and reading every year since 2009-2010.

Finally, the largest qualifying subgroup from Nitrauer, "Free/Reduced-Price Meals; Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students" has performed successfully over the past five years--increasing scores and, thus, decreasing the gap between them and the school as a whole.

2. Using Assessment Results:

a) Nitrauer uses a variety of data points throughout the year to guide instruction. These assessments include PSSA, 4Sight, DIBELS, GRADE, district English/Language Arts and math assessments, writing samples, classroom assessments including DRAs, and reading and math chapter tests. Other data points include progress monitoring in reading and math.

Benchmark assessment takes place district-wide three times per year in September, January, and May. After each benchmark assessment period, teachers meet to look at how each grade, class, and student performed with regard to standards/benchmarks.

Nitrauer's W.I.N. meetings provide one specific use of data. W.I.N. stands for "What I Need" and refers to a 30-minute time block each day where students receive remediation, enrichment, or continued practice-- basically Tier 2 in the RtII model. To place students in the correct W.I.N. groups, grade level teachers, learning support teachers, the principal, and the reading specialist meet every 4-6 weeks to analyze student data and decide appropriate reading interventions/enrichment for every child. Some students may require remediation in phonics or fluency, while others may need enrichment comparing/contrasting three different texts. W.I.N. groups are fluid; they change as W.I.N. teams analyze new data.

Another example of data-driven instruction is the half-days intermediate teachers spend analyzing and data-mining 4Sight results. On these days, classroom teachers, the learning support teacher, and the principal look at 4Sight results to best understand trends, strengths, and areas of need for student learning. Teachers create learning goals and instructional plans for their students—by class, group, and individuals, as needed. For example, when the data showed that identification of types of figurative language was a need for all students in grades 3-4, daily announcements by the principal began to include a "Figurative Language Challenge." When data showed analyzing non-fiction texts was a deficit for many students across reading levels, teachers looked at their classes and formed groups for intensive small group reading instruction during English/Language Arts time. Conversely, if data shows a strength or mastery of a skill, for example, symmetry, the skill is no longer a focus for the teacher.

All grade levels at Nitrauer are also asked to create data-based goals tied to classroom assessments, district assessments, and any previously mentioned assessments. 4th grade math teachers found consistent grade level weaknesses in students' open-ended responses on classroom and district math assessments and decided as a grade level to focus their small group math instruction on open-ended problems and to have students revise open-ended problems to proficiency. In first grade, teachers noticed that DRA retell scores were largely not proficient. As a grade level, first grade teachers decided to focus their small groups instruction on building comprehension using retelling strategies. First grade also noticed deficits in phonemic awareness based on classroom assessments, and as such, focused small group instruction in reading on practice deletion, substitution, and addition of phonemes.

Finally, Nitrauer is working to complete a comprehensive plan. In order to create needs and subsequent goals, the comprehensive planning team looked closely at PSSA and PVAAS data. From the data, the team created action plans to focus on deficits. Because one area of concern is lack of growth for proficient/advanced students, the team determined that greater rigor needed to be included in questioning, writing, reading, and problem-solving. As such, the team suggested that teachers use more reciprocal teaching, incorporate writing across subjects, purchase more challenging non-fiction texts with open ended questions, and present students with more challenging open-ended math problems.

b) Teachers meet with parents in the November to discuss student data and methods the teacher is using to address student needs. With many forms of progress monitoring throughout the year, teachers also keep parents abreast of concerns and meet with them as needed to discuss areas where growth is not occurring. Teachers graph student progress (e.g. WCPM on DIBELS) and share with students their growth. Finally, the principal shared the basis for the School Performance Profile score at the November PTO meeting. At that time, she explained to parents areas of need (lack of growth in proficient/advanced students), as well as the comprehensive planning team's goals for improvement.

3. Sharing Lessons Learned:

After analyzing the fall 4Sight data, the fifth grade team of teachers (5th grade was still part of Nitrauer up to 2011-12) initiated "reciprocal teaching" in their classrooms. The fifth graders showed such a dramatic improvement on their PSSA scores that the teachers continued using the strategy as well as made improvements and additional resources. The teachers shared their materials with their school and district colleagues via their web site and at district conferences and in services.

Nitrauer has shared W.I.N. (What I Need) intervention resources and strategies with school and district colleagues on the school server. This school server space also housed a user-friendly data analysis of student needs as well as strengths that was a model for other schools.

Nitrauer also shared school management strategies that included dismissal of over 500 students (13 buses) in a quiet and efficient manner, safety practices (evacuation plans), etc.

Finally, Nitrauer has shared small group instruction ideas at district wide grade level ideas. In particular, third grade teachers described to their grade level partners their model of incorporating skill level math groups during their 90-minute math block.

4. Engaging Families and Community:

Nitrauer families have found many ways to work with families. For example, teachers generate volunteer schedules for daily tutoring, math facts practice, small group help with math stations and reading skill practice (fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, etc.), classroom activities, and classroom reward stores. Volunteers include parents, grandparents, retired community members, and former teachers. Schedules are online and easily accessible and maintained.

In addition, the school is fortunate to have a collaborative and active PTO that has worked with school staff to provide numerous academic and social programs to enhance student background knowledge and build a cohesive school community. Examples include the annual project/art fair, book fair, fall festival, family holiday pottery workshop, musicals, talent shows, and sponsored assemblies (math, fine arts, reading/authors). Two years ago, the PTO worked with students to design and fund a new playground.

Families were part of the school-wide initiative, "Get Caught Caring, connecting, creating or celebrating!" Anyone could nominate someone they saw exhibiting one of our 4 "C's." These people were acknowledged daily and at the end of each month a student, staff and community member received a reward.

Finally, the school publishes a monthly newsletter, "Nitty Gritty," which includes school events, as well as reading, math or writing updates and suggestions for families. Updates about school-wide behavioral initiatives are also mentioned in the monthly newsletter. Recently, additional communication to families has included more regular electronic "eBlasts" about school updates. For those who do not have the technology, or who prefer to not receive such electronic correspondence, the school still sends home hard copies with some students.

PART V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

The schools/district curriculum is aligned to our new state standards (PA Core Standards). We have taken the standards and our program materials and developed new curriculum guides for our teachers.

Our reading guides are unit based around a central idea and essential question. They include approximately six literature selections. Teachers incorporate trade books to supplement the core program. These trade books help build student background knowledge and enrich students' individual needs. The actual guides include the foundational skills, the fiction/non-fiction selections, vocabulary, writing, connection to content, connection to the arts, and assessment measures for the unit.

Our math guides begin with the prerequisite learning for the specific unit or content. This is important so our teachers understand what they can provide in terms of instruction if students are not proficient with the background knowledge. For each guide, we identify the big ideas, from the SAS website. In addition, teachers are provided an essential question for the unit. The unit is then broken down into several smaller chunks. In each of these sections, we provide teachers with an overall concept, the standards and eligible content, lessons and key questions, vocabulary, connections to our core program, activities outside of the core program, and additional materials and resources that may be needed. Each guide also includes a section for adaptations and enrichment/extension resources. Our plan this summer is to add a section that addresses common student misconceptions concerning the content for each guide. We believe this will help teachers anticipate student errors and understanding as they are planning and preparing their lessons.

Our science, social studies, health, and arts guides mirror the same format as our math guides. While we are still in the process of developing the guides, our teachers regularly use the guides to assist them with their daily lesson planning. We have seen an increase in the amount of collaboration and consistency between grade level classrooms as a result of our new guides.

2. Reading/English:

The reading program is a comprehensive reading program built around the PA Core Standards. Our core program, Story Town, with alignment to the PA Core Standards is the foundation to the reading, writing, speaking and listening process. Teachers incorporate trade books to building students' background knowledge, enrich their thinking, and meet their individual needs. The reading curriculum is designed in units and it building around a central idea for each unit. Each unit has approximately six core pieces of literature. Teachers focus on all modes of writing that include, narrative, informational, opinion, and responses to reading.

Instructional methods focus on student needs. Necessary foundational skills, direct and explicit instruction, guided practice, and independent work drive all instructional decisions made by teachers. The instructional English/Language Arts block is a minimum of 120 minutes. This time also includes a 30-40 minutes tiered intervention time (known to us as W.I.N – What I Need).

Along with instruction in the core program, WIN provides an opportunity to improve the reading skills of students performing below grade level and to extend those students who are performing above grade level. Teachers meet at least monthly to review progress-monitoring data and revise student placement in WIN groups and instructional plans.

3. Mathematics:

The school/district math curriculum is standards-based and aligned to the new PA Core Standards. We have realigned our instructional schedule and now provide a minimum of ninety minutes of mathematics to all students beginning in first grade. This allows teachers to deliver short, focused whole group instruction followed by formative assessment. Then, targeted small group instruction occurs. Students who are not

working with the teacher in a small group are working on meaningful tasks at their workstations. Our math block ends with a sharing and reflection time where students share what they have learned with their classmates. In addition, the students also reflect on their own learning.

Students are involved in rigorous tasks with high cognitive demand. Math tasks are crafted to include multiple entry points, various solutions strategies, higher-order thinking, opportunities for synthesizing information, and opportunities for justification or explanation.

These instructional methods were chosen to more fully engage students in mathematical thinking, to increase student ownership on their own learning, and to place a heavy emphasis on problem solving.

In many grade levels, students are flexibility grouped for a portion of the math block. During the heterogeneous portion of the block, students receive participate and instruction in basic facts and participate in a student-led distributive practice program which gives students an opportunity to learn from their classmates. During the homogeneous portion of the block, teachers are then able to focus on the specific needs of the students performing below grade level. The teachers are also able to provide enrichment experience to students performing above grade level.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

We have been working on the integration of the arts into the core curriculum. While teaching skills in isolation (i.e., the arts) provides students with classroom instruction, the actual integration of the arts into core instruction provides students with the opportunity to transfer their learning. In addition, it increases the level of student engagement throughout the lesson. Our teachers have been collaborating as grade level teams to design the arts integrated lessons. They have also worked along side of the arts teachers to align the instruction to the arts standards. This is a key piece to arts integration.

In addition, our science curriculum provides opportunities for hands-on learning. We have been working to provide integration opportunities between our content areas and our literacy instruction. This allows our students to strengthen their literacy and content knowledge while addressing our new state standards.

5. Instructional Methods:

At Nitrauer there are students of many levels and needs. Our school is home to the district life skills class, as well as many students with learning disabilities and English Language Learners. Due to the diverse needs of our students, regular education staff must work closely with special educators, speech, occupational and physical therapists, ESL teachers, and the reading specialist to coordinate efforts and instructional plans for students. This collaboration and dove-tailing of efforts is demonstrated not only at MDE and IEP meetings, but also at grade level meetings, W.I.N. meetings (previously mentioned), and numerous informal teacher-teacher meetings throughout the year.

One outcome of this collaboration is the sharing of a modified curriculum. Over the summer the special education teacher and district special education consultant modified the Social Studies and Science curricula for students in grades 1-4. As a result of their work, the learning support teacher and life skills teacher can now connect with regular education teachers to determine how students' learning needs need to be addressed during particular units of study.

This year, the principal purchased two iPads for the two special education classrooms (one of which is the life skills class). The purpose for the purchase was to help support non-verbal or semi-verbal students by giving them alternatives to respond to instruction via educational apps. The principal also had teachers of included students visit another district's classroom in order to see a "3D" model of best practices. Teacher returned with ideas of how better to meet their students' needs.

Teachers are required to look at data, collaborate with each other and special educators, ESL teachers, and reading specialists to best understand their students' diverse learning needs. There are 4 half days

throughout the school year, as well as monthly grade level meetings in which teachers can spend time planning instruction for their learners of varied levels. Specifically, teachers create small groups in reading and math based on the data and other teachers' input (e.g. IEP goals and SDI). Progress monitoring, classroom and district assessments guide instruction and are used to determine if students' needs are being met.

Nitrauer identifies and provides gifted services for students who have met the set criteria. The EXCEL teacher meets with students 1-2x/week on problem-solving, and open-ended research projects. We also identify students who have learning or emotional needs. These students may see the learning support teacher daily for reading remediation or social skills support. Finally, students may have identified reading needs (based on data) and may qualify for reading support. These students may see the reading specialist 1-2x/daily for reading assistance (W.I.N. team as described earlier). Differentiation in the regular education classroom rests on teachers' collaborating, using data to create small instructional groups, and the principal checking in regularly to make sure the aforementioned is occurring with fidelity.

6. Professional Development:

We have taken a multi-faceted approach to professional development for our staff and parents. Three years ago, our district facilitated a district-wide professional development conference that focused on differentiated instruction. We utilized staff from our district (teachers and administrators) as well as outside speakers to facilitate sessions. Every session had a direct connection to differentiated instruction. At the conclusion of the conference, teachers developed a goal-based action plan, which focused on using differentiated instruction in their classroom. The following year, the professional development conference focused on using assessment in a differentiated classroom. We followed the same format with presenters and the action plan.

Last year we were able to provide sessions, but only on a much small scale. We offered sessions on Rigor, Arts Integration, and Writing. We continued to maintain the underlying theme of differentiation. As a result of the last three years, our teachers understand the importance of designing lessons that are based on the needs of the students. Furthermore, they are more confident in their abilities to differentiate the learning because their background knowledge on how to engage students in the lessons is strengthening.

Teachers also meet regularly with their grade level teams and as a building; monthly professional development meetings focus on instruction. Teacher knowledge of data analysis has also grown over the last few years.

As we move forward with professional development offerings for our teachers, we are focused on connecting our learning from the past and aligning it to future session. We believe it is important to build on initiatives from the past and provide the necessary time for teachers to develop their own knowledge base. In turn, this will have a direct impact on student achievement.

7. School Leadership

The school leadership of Nitrauer changed in July, 2013. Up to that point and for the 7 years prior, there had been the same principal leading Nitrauer. Until the 2012-13 school year, there was also an assistant principal assigned to the building.

The leadership in the building before and since the change of principal in July, 2013 has been characterized by hands-on action and visibility throughout the building and in every facet of school life. The principal has been a manager of daily operations, instructional leader, cheerleader for students, supporter of teachers, facilitator for professional development, and liaison to parents. Further, the principal has been an ambassador for district initiatives.

Recently, the principal has spent a great deal of time furthering professional development within the building. This is based on PVAAS data showing, for example, the need to grow advanced students, who

showed negative growth from third to fourth grade in reading. The principal guided grade level teams into delving into data (PSSA, 4Sight, classroom data, district assessments) to find specific areas of weakness and writing goals accordingly.

Based on findings from the data and multiple walkthroughs and classroom observations, the principal noticed the need to strengthen reading instruction, particularly small group reading instruction. She purchased \$2000 worth of nonfiction texts to be used with small group instruction. These were books that offered increased rigor in comprehension and vocabulary. The principal secured substitutes for grade level teachers so they could collaborate and develop questions and activities for the new books, which would corresponded with the district curriculum guides. Additionally, during faculty meetings the principal shared videos of model lessons and exemplary practices, had teachers share ideas, and shared best practices in literacy instruction. To facilitate ongoing professional development and utilize in-school and in-district resources, the principal offered and arranged for teachers to observe and help each other with areas of needs. She, herself, covered classes for teachers so they could visit other classrooms. When teachers wanted to observe others for extended periods (other schools or districts), the principal secured substitutes. After each visit, the principal debriefed with the teachers to help them process what they saw and how they could apply their new learning to their own classroom. Finally, the principal modeled lessons herself, mainly in literacy.

Strong instructional leadership has been the rule for Nitrauer principals in the past several years. This model has directed Nitrauer to successful student achievement.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Math

All Students Tested/Grade: 3

Publisher: DRC

Test: PSSA

Edition/Publication Year: 2013

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Apr	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	95	97	98	90	92
% Advanced	68	80	77	57	65
Number of students tested	97	113	99	96	99
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	0
% of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	90	87	88	76	73
% Advanced	58	59	59	40	46
Number of students tested	19	16	16	25	11
2. Students receiving Special Education					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	40	75	75	77	69
% Advanced	20	50	50	31	15
Number of students tested	5	11	7	13	13
3. English Language Learner Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	75	75	0	80	33
% Advanced	25	50	0	20	0
Number of students tested	4	4	1	5	3
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	89	89	90	93	75
% Advanced	56	56	80	33	25
Number of students tested	9	9	10	15	8
5. African- American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	100	100	50	100
% Advanced	20	75	50	17	50
Number of students tested	5	4	2	6	2
6. Asian Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	100	100	100	83
% Advanced	100	100	100	71	17
Number of students tested	10	8	8	7	6
7. American Indian or					

Alaska Native Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
% Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
% Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
9. White Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	96	98	99	95	94
% Advanced	71	85	78	68	72
Number of students tested	68	86	73	62	82
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	80	86	100	50	100
% Advanced	40	29	33	33	100
Number of students tested	5	6	6	6	1
11. Other 1: Other 1					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

NOTES:

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Math
All Students Tested/Grade: 4
Publisher: DRC

Test: PSSA
Edition/Publication Year: 2013

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Apr	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	95	96	83	99	92
% Advanced	77	45	61	74	63
Number of students tested	117	90	98	107	87
Percent of total students tested	99	100	100	100	99
Number of students tested with alternative assessment	0	1	4	1	0
% of students tested with alternative assessment	0	1	4	1	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	87	82	68	100	57
% Advanced	61	80	36	67	21
Number of students tested	23	14	27	11	14
2. Students receiving Special Education					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	77	67	64	100	46
% Advanced	31	17	55	25	18
Number of students tested	13	5	7	7	11
3. English Language Learner Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	100	0	75	50
% Advanced	67	100	0	25	25
Number of students tested	3	2	1	3	4
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	90	92	79	100	50
% Advanced	70	92	36	71	40
Number of students tested	10	12	14	6	10
5. African- American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	100	67	100	100
% Advanced	50	100	67	100	0
Number of students tested	4	1	5	1	1
6. Asian Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	100	80	89	100
% Advanced	75	100	60	44	67
Number of students tested	8	8	4	9	9
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
% Advanced	0	0	0	0	0

Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
% Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
9. White Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	96	97	88	100	98
% Advanced	82	84	68	78	70
Number of students tested	89	67	64	89	63
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	83	50	63	100	75
% Advanced	33	50	38	50	25
Number of students tested	6	2	8	2	4
11. Other 1: Other 1					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

NOTES:

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading/ELA
All Students Tested/Grade: 3
Publisher: DRC

Test: PSSA
Edition/Publication Year: 2013

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Apr	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	95	93	97	83	91
% Advanced	55	50	56	47	43
Number of students tested	97	113	99	96	99
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	99	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	0
% of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	90	87	88	76	73
% Advanced	58	59	59	40	46
Number of students tested	19	16	16	25	11
2. Students receiving Special Education					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	60	58	75	62	54
% Advanced	0	25	38	8	15
Number of students tested	5	11	7	13	13
3. English Language Learner Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	75	25	0	40	0
% Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	4	4	1	5	3
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	89	78	90	73	63
% Advanced	33	44	60	13	25
Number of students tested	9	9	10	15	8
5. African- American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	80	50	100	50	100
% Advanced	0	0	0	33	50
Number of students tested	5	4	2	6	2
6. Asian Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	100	100	86	67
% Advanced	80	40	63	43	17
Number of students tested	10	8	8	7	6
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
% Advanced	0	0	0	0	0

Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
% Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
9. White Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	97	95	99	92	95
% Advanced	62	55	60	58	46
Number of students tested	68	86	73	62	82
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	80	100	83	50	100
% Advanced	0	43	17	33	100
Number of students tested	5	6	6	6	1
11. Other 1: Other 1					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

NOTES:

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading/ELA
All Students Tested/Grade: 4
Publisher: DRC

Test: PSSA
Edition/Publication Year: 2013

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Apr	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	92	87	76	91	87
% Advanced	50	45	44	56	52
Number of students tested	117	90	98	108	87
Percent of total students tested	99	100	100	100	99
Number of students tested with alternative assessment	0	1	4	0	0
% of students tested with alternative assessment	0	1	4	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	83	87	57	83	57
% Advanced	35	13	11	25	21
Number of students tested	23	14	28	12	14
2. Students receiving Special Education					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	54	67	64	63	46
% Advanced	31	17	55	25	18
Number of students tested	13	5	7	7	11
3. English Language Learner Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	67	0	0	25	0
% Advanced	0	0	0	25	0
Number of students tested	3	2	1	4	4
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	92	86	86	60
% Advanced	20	42	29	43	40
Number of students tested	10	12	12	7	10
5. African- American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	75	100	50	100	100
% Advanced	0	0	17	0	0
Number of students tested	4	1	6	1	1
6. Asian Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	88	80	78	67
% Advanced	75	75	80	44	56
Number of students tested	8	8	4	9	9
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
% Advanced	0	0	0	0	0

Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
% Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
9. White Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	91	87	80	92	95
% Advanced	53	44	50	58	57
Number of students tested	89	67	65	89	63
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	83	50	38	100	75
% Advanced	50	0	25	50	0
Number of students tested	6	2	8	2	4
11. Other 1: Other 1					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

NOTES: