

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. Rick A. Walsh

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

Official School Name Wexford Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 250 Brown Rd

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

City Wexford State PA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 15090-8558

County Allegheny County State School Code Number* PA000007996

Telephone 724-935-4631 Fax 724-935-3733

Web site/URL http://www.pinerichland.org/Domin/276 E-mail rwalsh@pinerichland.org

Twitter Handle https://twitter.com/PRSchools Facebook Page http://www.facebook.com/PRSchoolDistrict 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*Dr. Brian Miller E-mail: brmiller@pinerichland.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Pine-Richland School District Tel. 724-625-7773

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. Peter Lyons
(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):
- 4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 6 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

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. 6 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	52	36	88
1	43	51	94
2	62	42	104
3	61	45	106
4	0	0	0
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	218	174	392

5. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 6 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 1 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 90 % White
 - 2 % 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: 5%

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	14
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2012 until the end of the 2012-2013 school year	5
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	19
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1	407
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.047
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5

7. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 2%
6 Total number ELL
 Number of non-English languages represented: 5
 Specify non-English languages: German, Spanish, Arabic, Russian, and Chinese
8. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 4%
 Total number students who qualify: 14

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: 14 %
54 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.

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 9 Autism | 0 Orthopedic Impairment |
| 0 Deafness | 9 Other Health Impaired |
| 0 Deaf-Blindness | 10 Specific Learning Disability |
| 2 Emotional Disturbance | 21 Speech or Language Impairment |
| 1 Hearing Impairment | 0 Traumatic Brain Injury |
| 2 Mental Retardation | 0 Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| 0 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	17
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	11
Paraprofessionals	6
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 23:1

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	96%	97%	92%	96%	96%
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_ No X

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

PART III – SUMMARY

“Rooted in Caring, Reaching for Excellence”

Wexford Elementary School is home to 400 students in Kindergarten through third grade, 24 teachers, and more than a dozen support and administrative staff. Part of Pine-Richland School District, Wexford is located north of Pittsburgh in Allegheny County in southwestern Pennsylvania. This region has seen rapidly expanding suburban development in the past 20 years and the district’s enrollment has more than doubled in that time. Because of this growth in enrollment, Wexford has been remodeled to double its physical size and fourth and fifth grades have been moved from Wexford and two other elementary schools to create an upper elementary school for the district. Thanks to strong collaboration among students, parents, teachers, administrators, and school board, Wexford has managed its rapid growth while maintaining the warm, caring environment of a close-knit community with a tradition of academic excellence.

The faculty, families, and students at Wexford Elementary integrates our school’s promise to be “Rooted in Caring, Reaching for Excellence.” This pledge is reflected in the demeanor and respectful language every member of staff uses with our students. A high level of parent and staff collaboration and involvement in the school demonstrates that “all children are our children.” High expectations for student learning and ethical behavior characterize our approach at Wexford. Noticing and nurturing the whole child is central to our culture.

Wexford Elementary has created a school-wide focus on positive behavior that uses “universal intervention” to motivate students and to address minor misbehaviors proactively, positively, and consistently. We know that behavior and academic success are inextricably linked. Staff members promote our focus on positive behavior first at a “kick-off” assembly at the start of each school year. We use Carol McCloud book, "Have You Filled a Bucket Today?" as our theme. Students are bucket fillers who create, every day, a positive, caring, friendly school climate. Students recite this pledge daily: “I’ll care for myself and others, too. I’ll expect the best in all I do. I’ll fill a bucket every day by doing things the Wexford way!” With the support of staff and parents, students as bucket fillers create a warm, effective, and caring learning environment at Wexford.

In addition to developing positive, caring behaviors and maintaining a tradition of strong academic achievement at Wexford, we emphasize excellence in learning through hands-on experiences. We provide a wide variety of programs that feature project-based learning, many that involve collaboration with persons outside the school. For example, as part of our Science Technology Engineering Arts and Math (STEAM) initiative, friends, family, and community members routinely come into school for “Careers A-Z”. On these days, guest speakers share their careers with students so that they begin to consider the connection between school and work. Displays of the speakers’ occupations including biographies, illustrations, and photographs are created and posted in the hallways. As another example of collaboration with persons outside of the school, students from Slippery Rock State University’s School of Education team with our faculty to help students create engineering and design projects. Creating aluminum boats and towers of spaghetti lets our students test scientific concepts that connect to real world applications. A third project-based learning experience was created in conjunction with real world artists from the Gateway to the Arts program. That year, students sculpted life-size birds from our western Pennsylvania region which are currently on display at the entrance of our school.

Wexford Elementary has a tradition of academic excellence. Our 2013 Pennsylvania “School Performance Profile” of 96 points out a possible 107 points was one of the highest in the region. In 2013, the school was ranked 15th out of 83 elementary schools in the region by Pittsburgh Business Times. This represents an increase in our ranking: last year we ranked 41st. While we are proud of the recognition of our academic achievement, we know that true excellence involves the growth of every child. Throughout the year, students can face many difficulties and challenges. Our staff strives every day to assist students in overcoming obstacles. Our staff is equipped to provide any level of intervention necessary to ensure the success of every child. One of our teachers recently received the “Making A Daily Difference Award”

award from the “Fund It Forward” Board of Directors in honor of her outstanding contributions to the lives of children with special needs.

Wexford Elementary School embodies in every aspect of our operations our pledge of “Rooted in Caring, Reaching for Excellence.” Students, parents, faculty, support staff, and principal have together built a culture of caring and engaged learners. We hunger for excellence and strive to challenge and inspire children daily. In addition, we never forget to care for, support, and nurture each other as well.

PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

(A) Wexford Elementary School holds high expectations for our students to master state standards. All third grade students are required to take the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) tests in Reading and Mathematics. Student scores fall into one of four levels: Advanced, Proficient, Basic, or Below Basic. These levels are identified as:

Advanced: Reflects superior academic performance with an in-depth understanding and exemplary display of the knowledge and skills included in the Pennsylvania Academic Content Standards.

Proficient: Reflects a satisfactory academic performance with a solid understanding and adequate display of the knowledge and skills included in the standards.

Basic: Reflects a partial understanding and limited display of the knowledge and skills included in the standards with a need for additional instructional opportunities and/or increased student academic commitment.

Below Basic: Reflects an inadequate academic performance indicating very little understanding and minimal display of the skills included in the standards. There is a major need to additional instructional opportunities and/or increased student academic commitment to achieve proficiency in performance.

(B) Averaged over the past five years, 96.6% of Wexford's third grade elementary students have scored at Proficient or above on the PSSA Mathematics test. Of those scoring Proficient or above, an average of 73% scored Advanced in that time period. Performance results for the PSSA Reading test show an average of 90.6% of third grade students scored Proficient or above over the past five years with an average of 45.2% scoring Advanced.

Wexford Elementary has always focused on building floors to support students and removing the ceiling to allow our students to reach their potential. We are currently working to increase the performance of our students on the PSSA reading and math tests and know that we have work to do to increase the number of students scoring at the Advanced level.

Although Wexford Elementary School is an academically high performing school with a strong tradition of excellent student achievement, the faculty and administrators are not content with just maintaining the status quo. Our goal is to identify strategies to help all our students reach newer heights. One area for growth centers on the achievement of our Special Education students.

In the 2012-2013 school year, 71% of our third grade Special Education students scored proficient or above on the PSSA Reading test. However, this performance is 23 points below the 94% of general education third grade students who scored proficient or above. Yet, the 2012-2013 gap in reading scores is a much smaller gap than the performance gap reported in the 2011-2012 school year. That year saw a 51 point gap between the percentages of special education students scoring proficient and advanced in reading versus the general education students. While we are proud that the gap in reading achievement between Special Education and general education students has been almost cut in half, the gap has not altogether closed and continues to be a focus for our faculty.

A smaller performance gap exists in mathematics between special and general education students. In the 2012-2013 school year, the performance gap of scores proficient or above was 9 points with 88% of the Special Education students scoring proficient or above compared with 97% of the general education students. Like our gap in reading performance, our gap in math performance has also closed, in this case by more than half. In 2011-2012 the gap between Special Education and general education students was 22 points in math performance at the proficient and above level.

Closing this achievement gap for our Special Education student population was accomplished through several strategies. The master schedule was changed to increase the time for language arts instruction to 120 minutes daily and 60 minutes of mathematics instruction daily. Additionally, students have 30 minutes for daily “customization” time. During this period, students who are not meeting or who are exceeding expectations for achievement receive additional instructional time or opportunities for enrichment.

Third grade performance results on end of year PSSA tests provide information to us about the effectiveness of our curriculum, instruction, and assessment over students’ four years at Wexford. Individual student performance on the PSSAs follows them on to fourth grade in the upper elementary school. At Wexford, the scores provide us an opportunity to reflect and make decisions about meeting the learning needs of all students. We use assessments benchmarked to the state standards in the earlier grades to determine whether students are making adequate progress towards mastering the state standards. When we collaboratively review this formative and summative assessment data, we decide what interventions, accommodations, and strategies needed so that all students are making progress towards mastering the standards.

2. Using Assessment Results:

Wexford Elementary continuously monitors the progress of all students so that students who are not meeting grade level standards are regularly and routinely identified. First, classroom teachers daily monitor students with their own formative and summative assessments. Second, grade level, weekly meetings between general education and Special Education teachers identify interventions, modifications, and strategies that may meet student learning needs. Finally, monthly Response to Instruction and Intervention meetings between teachers, the principal, and the guidance counselor review progress being made with the interventions.

All teachers at Wexford have access to the district’s assessment database which is part of its student information database. The assessment database contains students’ performance results on PSSA tests, AIMSweb assessments, and locally made curriculum-based assessments. Teachers use this data to inform their decisions on their next instructional steps that will best support student learning. For example, the PSSA scores can be examined to determine which curriculum anchors are less well mastered than others. AIMSweb tests on reading fluency and comprehension are administered and reviewed three times a year as are Fountas and Pinnell benchmark assessments given to establish the reading levels of students. Additionally, students who score below benchmarks in math are further assessed with AIMSweb math assessments in order to identify areas that need supplemental support.

The needs of highly achieving students are met first with flexible grouping and differentiation from the classroom teachers before being recommended for screening for identification for gifted education. Students who score well above benchmarks on the assessments are challenged in higher level reading groups led by the school librarian. Students are pre-tested per unit in math and those who have substantially mastered the content are provided enrichment math by the gifted education teacher.

Wexford has a strong tradition of collaboration among staff to work together to support student learning. From the days of “Instructional Support”, a school-based team led by the principal, facilitated by the counselor, joined by a school psychologist, and attended by general education, Special Education, Speech and Language Teachers, and Reading Specialists has been in place. Today, the same emphasis on collaboration continues in Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTII) meetings. The use of the RTII model helps us to conceptualize interventions according to how many students receive the intervention, how long the intervention lasts, and who administers the intervention. Further, we have broadened our identification of students who need assistance from those with solely academic needs to students with behavioral, social, and emotional barriers to learning as well. We use researched-based interventions, train our teachers in their use, and implement the interventions with fidelity.

Wexford uses data analysis, research-based interventions, and a collaborative approach to promote student achievement and growth towards mastery of academic standards. While we respect one another as playing

an important part in student achievement, we also believe that parental involvement and communication are critical components in improving student learning.

3. Sharing Lessons Learned:

Wexford Elementary School shares lessons learned in ensuring the achievement of all students in two major ways. First, parents are considered to be our partners and are kept informed of their children's progress throughout the year. Second, neighboring school districts and universities visit to observe and share work with children.

To encourage parents to be engaged as partners in their children's learning, several strategies are employed. First, parents have electronic access to data about their children including grades, attendance, and discipline. Second, test results of AIMSweb, Fountas and Pinnell reading levels, and curriculum-based assessments are sent home three times a year along with guidelines about how to interpret the scores. Third, teachers meet with parents for individual conferences about their children's progress after the end of the first quarter of the school year. Teachers and parent discussion focus on the whole child's progress towards goals. Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled as needed throughout the year as well. Fourth, a night in early September is held for parents to meet the teachers while another night in spring is held for parents to see the work their children have done throughout the year. Fifth, our teachers have web pages on the district's web site and communicate daily with parents through email. The more our parents are aware of the expectations for student learning and the progress their children are making, the better our students achieve.

Wexford shares its success with student learning with other districts and universities. Teachers from Southwestern Pennsylvania have both observed our guided reading program and the implementation of our Literacy Book Room. School Districts have visited to see how we integrated the use of interactive white boards and our math program with flexible groups for enrichment or re-teaching. Wexford has a rich history of working with Slippery Rock University's School of Education to provide pre-service teachers the opportunity to experience the link between educational theory and practice. A highlight of the relationship includes planning special events for Read Across America. Working with Wexford teachers, the students from Slippery Rock plan a series of developmentally appropriate, multi-sensory literacy stations for all grade levels.

4. Engaging Families and Community:

Rooted in Caring....

Involvement with our parents and community are paramount at Wexford Elementary School. Teachers regularly provide newsletters to parents to share details of curriculum activities and classroom updates. Weekly, parents receive the Wexford E-News Flash. Teacher email and grade level WebPages are available daily. District communication electronic blasts are sent as needed, at least, every two weeks. More than one third of our staff live in the community and have children who attend or have attended Wexford. Our staff is truly part of the school community and share its belief in the excellence of Wexford Elementary.

Our parents have averaged over 3,000 volunteer hours to Wexford during the last three years. Numerous activities before, during, and after school rely on volunteers, including Book Fair, Holiday Shop, Math 24 Challenge, New Family Orientation, Family Outreach, School Store, and Spirit Day. Additionally, parents tutor small groups of children before school starts to reinforce math facts and vocabulary. Parents sign up to be "Royal Readers" and visit classrooms weekly to read to students. Parents help maintain the 13,000 books in the Literacy Book Room as well as re-shelving books in the library. Parents that work behind the scenes to copy cut, and laminate classroom materials help all teachers. After school activities facilitated by parents and community partners include art and design projects, science experiments, Lego building projects, intramural sports, and martial arts.

The Wexford Parent Teacher Organization partners with KDKA-TV and PNC Bank to raise money for the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank. Students take financial pledges for every minute they read in order to provide Thanksgiving dinners for families in need. With 100% of their funds matched by PNC, our students have raised over \$132,000 during the last eight years. This special opportunity allows students to link their love of reading with memories of helping less fortunate members of our community.

Our PTO sponsors assembly programs that enhance curricular and positive behavior programs. Over the last two years, the PTO has brought in programs such as the BMX Bike Racers, the World's Strongest Man, the Jim Basketball Jones motivational program and an anti-bullying musical troupe, Josh and Gab. Cultural assemblies such as Roots of American Music have highlighted diversity and differences among people.

Wexford's staff and families value school, home, and community connections. Our exceptional partnerships among teachers, parents, and community members are always growing and open to emerging opportunities.

PART V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

... Reaching for Excellence

Teachers at Wexford Elementary have embraced the school’s promise, “Rooted in Caring, Reaching for Excellence” and provide rigorous curricula in every class for all our students. Learning to read is at the forefront of our curriculum. We use Fountas and Pinnell leveled readers, Foundations Wilson Language Basics for an explicit, systematic phonemic approach to reading and spelling, and Harcourt Brace publications as a resource for the development of language skills. The “Daily Five” method of Gail Boushey and Joan Moser provides a classroom management tool for implementing our guided reading practice and RAZkids to allow students to have an online source of leveled readers accessible both at home and at school. The teaching of literacy is differentiated, and students work at a variety of levels based on strengths and needs.

Through enVision Math by Scott Foresman, students explore math concepts and problem-solving skills through manipulatives, whole class activities, small group games, and individual work. Students and parents have access to the curriculum online as well as through hardcopy text.

Our science curriculum exposes students to a wide range of topics in the areas of earth and space, life, and physical sciences. Students at each grade level participate in hands-on science modules through the ASSET program which introduces students to the process of scientific method, prediction, and exploration.

The Houghton Mifflin social studies program is sequenced to build major skills and understandings that focus on people, places, and time in the areas of geography, history, government, economics, and culture. Charting, graphing, and citizenship skills are emphasized at each level as are PA Career Education and Work standards.

Students take weekly classes in Music, Art, Library, Computers, and Physical Education. Each class is 40 minutes long and runs all year. The primary school music program uses singing, movement, and instrumental play to build skills in rhythm, melody, and harmony. Students are provided with opportunities to appreciate and discriminate among the works of composers, time periods, and style. Musical culture and diversity is celebrated annually with our Seasons of Celebrations program in December.

The art education program offers a planned sequential curriculum in design, drawing, painting, print making, clay, crafts, and sculpture. Through the use of a wide variety of tools, materials, and techniques students can visually express themselves. Student work is continually on display throughout the school.

Computer technology is taught as a stand-alone class, as well as being integrated into the classroom as a tool to enrich, extend, and supplement curricular content. Staff members share the responsibility for delivery of the Internet Safety Program. We provide appropriate resources for children, review ground rules for safely surfing the web, and teach effective strategies to combat cyber-bullying.

During their weekly library class with the school librarian, students have the opportunity to sign out books to read. The librarian guides all students into experiencing all forms of literature and basic library skills. Students learn forms of research including information retrieval. The library has a computerized circulation system, a computerized card catalog, and internet access.

Students take two physical education classes each week that provide activities that encourage movement, cooperation, physical fitness, and learning skills that can promote a healthy life style. Students have a daily 30 minute period of recess to practice these skills.

In addition to these customized curricular elements of our program, Wexford provides other differentiated instruction throughout the day. Two special education teachers and six para-educators engage students with

disabilities in a combination of push-in and pull-out interventions. Many students are supported with weekly, specially designed “Social Language” instruction from speech and language therapist and our school guidance counselor. Services provided by reading support, reading enrichment, math enrichment, gifted education, speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and English language learning all differentiate to meet the learning needs of individual students.

2. Reading/English:

At Wexford Elementary, our goal is to provide a comprehensive reading program that integrates all aspects of reading so that each student develops a love of reading and lifelong literacy independence. To create an environment that fosters this goal, we integrate both whole and small group instruction which focuses on the five essential elements of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.

While our teachers still provide whole group lessons, Guided Reading is the framework we use to differentiate the development literacy skills for each student. The process of Guided Reading delivers research-based reading strategies that improve comprehension, accuracy, fluency, and expression. Benchmark assessments are ongoing and allow for flexible grouping throughout the year in which students are placed at the appropriate independent and instructional levels. Using a test level gradient, teachers use specific strategies and create small groups focused on the student’s instructional reading level.

Those students performing below benchmark engage in small group instruction with a Reading Specialist. They use interventions such as the Soudy System, Leveled Literacy Intervention, Read Naturally, Repeated Oral Assisted Reading, and Foundations. To meet the needs of our high level readers, students participate in a Reading Enrichment Literacy Group facilitated by our school librarian. Students use higher order thinking skills in their verbal and written response to literature.

At Wexford we work closely with our parents and community to promote and model a lifelong love of reading. In addition to the activities previously mentioned, the PTO arranges for authors to visit our school and share with our students what inspires them to become writers. Our second grade students travel to our middle school to hear original stories and puppet shows created by our middle school students. Victor Hugo once wrote, “To learn to read is to light a fire; every syllable that is spelled out is a spark.” The teachers of Wexford Elementary strive to light the reading fire in all of our students now and in the years to come.

3. Mathematics:

Wexford uses enVision Math by Scott Foresman as its math text. The program promotes deep conceptual understanding of math concepts, uses high-order thinking skills, and encourages students to interact with, visualize, and practice math topics. We teach math by making interdisciplinary, real world connections, integrating digital technologies, and differentiating to meet the needs of all learners.

Learning math is more meaningful when interdisciplinary connections are drawn between math and other subject matter, especially literature. For example, to understand reflection as a flip in the opposite direction, Kindergarten students recite a poem that includes the line, “Let’s flip like a pancake, flip”. In later years, students read *The Hungry Caterpillar*, by Eric Carl, to reinforce calendar concepts and the idea of bigger and more. *A Remainder of One*, by Elinor J. Pinczes, is used to understand division with remainders.

Real world experiences also make learning math more meaningful by illuminating the math present in our students’ own lives. To make math relevant to students, teachers use situations from daily life such as fixing dinner, shopping, or putting gas in the car. Many classrooms use parent volunteers to run a market or classroom store. The purpose of the store is not only motivational but also instructional as students learn the economic principles of saving, budgeting, and using addition and subtraction in a real life setting.

To increase student engagement while learning math, we integrate digital technologies with our more traditional teaching strategies. Teachers differentiate whole group lessons through interactive whiteboards. In addition to the online resources of the text, we use a software application called First in Math for students

to explore and practice a wide range of math topics at their own pace. Another digital resource, Rocket Math, provides opportunity for students to review and practice their learning.

Supplemental materials are used to differentiate instruction for students who struggle to learn math as well as those who highly achieve. During customized time in the general education classroom, teachers use sequential visual aids, Touch Math, and researched based interventions. Students are pre-assessed at the start of a concept so that highly achieving students can receive math enrichment both inside the general classroom and in a weekly small group, pullout session with the gifted education teacher. These flexible groups of advanced students work in small homogeneous groups to solve problems that require critical thinking, collaborative problem-solving, and a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

The Science program at Wexford Elementary incorporates a hands-on, minds-on approach to learning. We use a philosophy of inquiry-based learning which helps students develop lifelong skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and teamwork. Our students are engaged in the scientific process of observation, discovery, and reasoning. Our science program is characterized by the use of science concepts in other subject areas, an appreciation for the natural world surrounding the school, and learning opportunities that integrate Science, Technology Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM).

Science is not an isolated discipline but, rather, is woven throughout the curriculum. In language arts students read and respond to science-related topics in the books they read such as “Fishing Bears” and “Nature Detective”. Students develop thinking skills by writing responses in their scientific journals. In art classes, students learn how pottery glaze turns into color by crystallizing at certain temperatures. Drawings and paintings of animals emphasize characteristics of the animals’ bodies and habitats.

Wexford has a nature trail located on the school’s property which is used by students and the community for several science-related activities. Over the years, students have adopted trees to identify seasonal changes, identified insects to observe their growth and development, and located seeds to determine how they disperse. Students annually celebrate Earth Day by engaging in earth-friendly activities. Past examples include receiving seedling trees from the Pennsylvania Game Commission to plant at home and school and decorating paper bags to be used at a local grocery store reminding shoppers to Recycle, Reuse, and Reduce.

Our STEAM initiative includes “Careers A to Z”, after school science and engineering-based activities, LAB Ratz, and Lego-building projects. Wexford participation in the “Weather Bug” Program is a real-world weather station connected to the National Weather Service and serves as a resource for our local community. The web-based program that accompanies the weather station incorporates science, mathematics, geography, technology, and programming into lessons and interactive tools for classroom use. Students experience the ever-changing impact of weather on our world by reading a thermometer, demonstrating the water cycle, tracking the path of air fronts, calculating total inches of precipitation, detecting weather patterns, documenting seasonal changes, and deciding how to get dressed in the morning.

5. Instructional Methods:

Wexford’s teachers create a school environment that enhances student achievement and develops enthusiasm for learning. In our classrooms, teachers provide a variety of whole group, small group, and individual instruction to reach the needs of all learners. On any given day, teachers incorporate direct instruction, classroom discussions, instructional games, independent student projects, mini-lessons, paired peer learning, individual student conferences, and one-to-one teaching. Formative assessments and pre-testing assist to provide the achievement data needed for appropriately, flexibly grouping students. Teachers also consider students’ diverse learning styles and interests when developing groups and customizing learning plans for them.

Each day, Wexford devotes a block of 120 minutes for core language arts instruction and another block of 60 minutes for core math instruction. The uninterrupted blocks allow teachers to develop differentiated

lessons that meet the learning needs of individual students and to collaborate to meet student needs. Student-focused learning centers that promote critical and meta-cognitive thinking skills provide focused instruction for multiple small groups. Kinesthetic experiments, projects, games, and activities are often used in science and social studies classes. Digital tools supplement the core curriculum with differentiated lessons for students.

A daily block of 30 minutes for customization gives teachers the opportunity to meet with small groups to re-teach, enrich, and extend learning. Our struggling readers receive focused, small group instruction in research-based reading interventions from a reading specialist during this period. Our highly achieving students participate in pull-out, flexible groups for a more challenging level of reading and math enrichment during customization. Students who are eligible for gifted education services have an additional period each week with the gifted education teacher to meet their individualized goals in their Gifted Individualized Education Plans.

Teachers use a variety of digital tools to motivate and engage students in learning. Each classroom has a band of computers used as a learning center and for re-teaching and enrichment in the general education classroom. Teachers may schedule a mobile cart of laptops to use in their classes for whole group instruction online. Every classroom has an interactive whiteboard with student voters to engage students in their learning. Several curriculum materials are available electronically both at home and at school.

Our English Language Learner (ELL) students receive focused instruction adapted from our core curriculum as well as English as a Second Languages services to provide additional opportunities to hear and interact with the English language.

6. Professional Development:

Teachers at Wexford possess a high degree of professional knowledge. Most of our teachers hold multiple certifications and have experience teaching beyond the primary level. They also either hold or are currently working toward masters degrees. However, we are not satisfied with prior knowledge and skill. We continually seek to improve our professional craft. We annually create a reflective professional portfolio, identify areas for professional growth, and engage in professional development opportunities. Teachers have customized and differentiated opportunities for professional growth. Opportunities are provided for teacher training outside of the district, at other schools within the district, and at Wexford itself.

Wexford teachers have attended training from regional organizations such as Gateway to the Arts, ASSET Science, the Western Pennsylvania Writing Project, Carnegie Museums, Jennings Nature Reserve, Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Readers, and an array of specific interventions. Within the recent past, the district has trained all teachers to access and interpret summative achievement data, administer and interpret formative assessments, align courses to PA Core Standards, develop resiliency in students, and meet federal requirements for children with exceptionalities. Additionally, the district has trained some teachers in verbal and physical de-escalation procedures, conducting behavior assessments and creating positive behavioral plans, voice amplification systems, gross- and fine-motor strategies used in occupational therapy, and using data to write IEP goals for gifted students.

Wexford provides ongoing internal professional growth opportunities throughout the year. A book club facilitated by our school counselor meets throughout the year. Topics studied have included research-based Tier II and III behavioral and social strategies for students with self-regulation weaknesses, meeting the learning needs of students with executive functioning difficulties, developing habits of mind that will serve students as lifelong learners, and strategies to foster social and emotional health in all students. In addition to our book club, we meet weekly as grade level professional learning communities to discuss student progress, interventions for those who struggle, and strategies to enrich those who are highly achieving. In order for teachers to learn best practices collaboratively with one another, these meetings demand mutual openness, trust, honest communication, and a willingness to share both what went well and did not go well with students. Because we share our knowledge and skills with one another at these weekly meetings, we

continuously enhance our skills to meet the needs of our students and to better understand our colleagues and our mutual goals as educators.

7. School Leadership

Wexford Elementary recognizes that the primary responsibility of the principal is to work with all stakeholders to foster a culture of growth. DeFour and Marzano (2011) demonstrate that effective principals do not attempt to lead alone. Rather, they inspire shared leadership by identifying and supporting stakeholders to lead collaborative teams. Wexford Elementary presents a unified, child-centered environment focused on student success that is supported by a team of leaders, including building administrator, teachers, support staff, and parents.

At Wexford Elementary, the primary responsibility of the principal is to serve as the school's instructional leader and to improve and sustain student achievement through effective teacher supervision and evaluation. Each teacher is annually evaluated based on formal lesson observations, informal classroom walk-through observations, and anecdotal notes. Teachers are mentored and supported in their ability to reflect on their practice and ability to modify instruction so that student learning is increased. The emphasis of the teacher evaluation process is, through collaboration with the principal, for each teacher to identify areas for continued growth and development of professional practice.

All stakeholders are leaders at Wexford. Faculty participate in decision-making for the school, establishment of learning support systems, collaboration in curriculum mapping, mentoring of inexperienced staff, selection of instructional materials, creation of integrated digital learning activities, and development of curriculum-based assessments. Staff members are leaders when they volunteer for school teams like the Crisis De-escalation Team that trains other staff members in the appropriate use of verbal and physical de-escalation strategies for students in crisis. Staff members are school leaders as volunteers on the School-wide Positive Behavior Team used for all students. This team has created a "placemat" which defines behavioral expectations for all students, including the "encouragements" used to solicit the behaviors and the "enforcement" hierarchy needed to redirect behavior.

At Wexford Elementary School, we believe that stepping up and going that extra mile for every child, the whole child is a part of our choice to be educators. We will never finish the journey of helping children become fully themselves. Through our daily efforts at Wexford Elementary, we are each a leader sharing responsibility for implementing our school promise of "Rooted in Caring, Reading for Excellence."

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Math

Test: Pennsylvania System of School Assessments (PSSA)

All Students Tested/Grade: 3

Edition/Publication Year: 2013

Publisher: DRC/PDE

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Apr	Mar	Mar	Apr	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	97	97	98	95	96
% Advanced	78	85	78	59	65
Number of students tested	123	112	121	126	112
Percent of total students tested	99	100	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment	0	1	1	0	0
% of students tested with alternative assessment	0	1	1	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
2. Students receiving Special Education					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	88	81	91	73	90
% Advanced	41	56	52	27	40
Number of students tested	17	16	23	22	10
3. English Language Learner Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. African- American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	97	98	98	95	100
% Advanced	78	86	76	56	68
Number of students tested	109	100	100	111	99
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Ethnicity - Asian, African Americans, Hispanic, and Multiracial					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	93	92	91	100	77
% Advanced	79	67	91	80	54
Number of students tested	14	12	11	15	13
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: Missing information indicates data not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested.

Pennsylvania reports data by combining results of students who take the PSSA and PASA (adapted assessment).

Super-group indicates the combined data of all ethnicity at Wexford Elementary. These groups alone were not large enough to report a subgroup, but together provides a complete picture of student achievement data.

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading/ELA

Test: Pennsylvania System of School Assessments (PSSA)

All Students Tested/Grade: 3

Edition/Publication Year: 2013

Publisher: DCR/PDE

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Apr	Mar	Mar	Apr	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	94	92	93	83	91
% Advanced	47	58	40	39	42
Number of students tested	123	112	121	126	112
Percent of total students tested	99	100	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment	0	1	1	0	0
% of students tested with alternative assessment	0	1	1	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
2. Students receiving Special Education					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	70	63	70	32	60
% Advanced	29	31	9	9	30
Number of students tested	17	16	23	22	10
3. English Language Learner Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. African- American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					

% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	95	93	94	83	94
% Advanced	49	60	40	39	43
Number of students tested	109	100	110	111	99
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Ethnicity - Asian, African Americans, Hispanic, and Multiracial					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	86	83	91	80	69
% Advanced	50	42	36	47	31
Number of students tested	14	12	11	15	13
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: Missing information indicates data not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested.

Pennsylvania reports data by combining results of students who take the PSSA and PASA (adapted assessment).

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