U.S. Department of Education
2016 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Anna Reynolds Elementary School
　　　　　　(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 85 Reservoir Road
　　　　　　(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Newington　　　　　State CT　　　　　Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 06111-1025

County　Hartford County

Telephone (860) 521-7830　　　　　Fax　(860) 561-9725

Web site/URL　http://www.ar.npsct.org　　　E-mail　jsmith@npsct.org

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, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Date
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Dr. William Collins　　　　　E-mail wcollins@npsct.org
　　　　(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Newington Public Schools　　　Tel.　(860) 667-2000
I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Date
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mrs. Nancy Petronio
　　　　　(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

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

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

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

Part I – Eligibility Certification

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

1. 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 public school has met their state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) using the most recent accountability results available for the year prior to nomination.

3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) for the year in which they are nominated (2015-2016) 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 2010 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: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, or 2015.

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

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2015-2016) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district   4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
    (per district designation):   2 Middle/Junior high schools
                                          1 High schools
                                          0 K-12 schools

                                          7 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
    [X] Suburban
    [ ] Small city or town in a rural area
    [ ] Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2015 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	15	9	24
K	36	52	88
1	39	42	81
2	51	40	91
3	49	54	103
4	39	47	86
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 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	229	244	473

4. Racial/ethnic composition of
the school:

0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
12 % Asian
3 % Black or African American
19 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
62 % White
4 % Two or more races
100 % Total

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2014 – 2015 school 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 *to* the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	25
(2) Number of students who transferred *from* the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	6
(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, 2014	456
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.068
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	7

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 8 %
   38 Total number ELL

   Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
   Chinese, Filipino, Malayalam, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Urdu, and Vietnamese

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 22 %
   Total number students who qualify: 106

8. Students receiving special education services: 13 %
   60 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 conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

5 Autism	0 Orthopedic Impairment
0 Deafness	8 Other Health Impaired
0 Deaf-Blindness	7 Specific Learning Disability
0 Emotional Disturbance	18 Speech or Language Impairment
1 Hearing Impairment	0 Traumatic Brain Injury
3 Mental Retardation	0 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
1 Multiple Disabilities	17 Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: <u>6</u>

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

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers	22
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	19
Paraprofessionals	22
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   <u>22:1</u>

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

Required Information	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	97%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**
    Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2015.

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 <u>X</u>   No

    If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. <u>1993</u>

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

Partnering with families and community, we strive for rigorous, relevant learning within a safe and supportive environment. We seek problem solvers and creative, critical thinkers.

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

Anna M. Reynolds Elementary School is the largest of four elementary schools serving children from grades pre-kindergarten through 4 in the town of Newington, CT. The school has a present enrollment of 481 students. Newington is a suburb of Hartford, CT, with a population just over 30,000. According to the 2010 United States Census, the population is 86.5% white, 7.6% Hispanic, 5.7% Asian, 3.5% black or African American, and 2.0% who identify as being two or more races.

In 1955, Northwest Elementary School opened its doors to the children in the northwestern corner of Newington. The school was renamed in 1980 for Miss Anna Reynolds, the school's first principal.

In 2000, an addition to the school was completed, connecting two wings and creating an enclosed courtyard for explorations in nature, play, and gardening. Also added in this renovation were a preschool classroom, two kindergarten classrooms, a new media center, and six new classrooms.

Traditions are important to the school community. Families and community members attend events during and after school. In the spring prior to a new school year, students who are entering kindergarten and their parents attend Kindergarten Visitation allowing the students to have a "mini"-kindergarten experience, while parents learn valuable information about our school and their child's future experiences. In August, incoming kindergartners visit prior to the first day to ride a bus, visit their classroom, and meet their teacher. Grade 1 and preschool teachers offer a Meet and Greet so parents and students can meet teachers and see classrooms. Open House/Curriculum Night for parents is in September. Parent/Teacher conferences in September, December, and March help our parents remain informed. We conduct a Veterans' Day assembly in November; a school-wide sing-a-long in December; winter and spring concerts; field day; Celebration of Learning awards day for all students with a special assembly honoring significant award winners; and an end-of-year slideshow with photos of all classes, learning experiences, and events. We also feature a step-up experience known as "Aloha Day" on the last day of school, where students see their next classroom, classmates, and teacher.

Our Parent Teacher Organization, which provides support for our programming and teachers, sponsors traditional school-wide events. These include a Father/Daughter Dance, Mother/Son Sports Night, End-of-Year Picnic, Holiday Craft Fair, and Talent Show.

Academically, learning targets are clearly articulated across all instruction, and success criteria allow students to understand quality work. A trimester math problem-solving initiative requires children to work collaboratively on a rigorous and involved math problem, which is differentiated by math ability level and thus improves students' critical thinking, social, and communication skills. Our semiannual Reynolds Writers contests allow students to develop their creativity through writing pieces which span across different genres. With our new curricula, students are exposed to more real-world problem solving with high levels of rigor through anchor experiences, which require application of multiple skills. Technology in the classroom provides students with an extraordinary range of learning opportunities. SMART Boards and Google Apps for Education are utilized by all grade level teachers. Students in grades K-2 use iPads to extend learning through motivating apps. Students in grades 3-4 have Chromebooks for school and home use, allowing real world connections, research opportunities, and increased collaboration.

We also utilize a Positive Behavioral Supports (PBS) structure, as well as many other initiatives and programs, to assist our students' socio-emotional growth. In addition to the many formal programs to be described later, informal interactions among students, staff members, and parents create a feeling of warmth, family, and connectedness. New families to our school often remark about the welcoming "feel" of our school.

The school was recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School in the 1993-94 school year. The celebration with students, teachers, administrators, town dignitaries, and other community members included a parade around town and newspaper articles. A great deal of pride was associated with the achievement, as evidenced by teachers proudly wearing tee shirts commemorating the award over many years and the

display of a recognition banner on the front of the school for about ten years. It has been said that many families moved into the Anna Reynolds section of town due to this recognition.

The principal at the time, Richard Frank, believed that this recognition increased the confidence and motivation of the primarily young teaching staff, propelling the school to even higher heights through harder work, greater dedication, and stronger desire to learn and grow. Staff members increased in their collegiality and focus, expanding their desire to improve beyond just their own teaching responsibilities and classrooms. Further, the students and parents involved during these years had great pride and confidence that they were part of something special, and their subsequent work at the school seemed to support this belief.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

The written curriculum is based on state standards, which are organized into units of study based on specific topics or themes. Each unit includes enduring understandings and essential questions to provide a big picture for the purpose of learning. This approach was chosen to ensure that standards are taught in a rigorous and relevant manner versus in isolation. Standards aligned to each unit are unwrapped to clearly indicate what students need to know and be able to do. The curriculum also includes suggested resources to meet the standards. The curriculum determines what to teach, while the teacher determines how to teach.

In reading, the curriculum moves from the most foundational skills toward the most rigorous. Through guided reading, and within a readers' workshop model, these skills are taught at the developmentally appropriate time. Students read at their instructional level for many reading tasks, independent level for individual reading, and complex text level for close reading tasks. Units of study focus on both fiction and informational text. Recently written curricular units integrate science and social studies content with English Language Arts (ELA) instruction.

In writing, students learn to write for different purposes, including expository, opinion, and creative writing. Again, a workshop model is used to differentiate instruction and allow teachers to confer with students about their writing. Students are taught mechanics and usage through the workshop model and application to their own writing pieces.

In mathematics, flexible groups are used to target student needs in Tier I. The primary grades focus on building strong number sense and computation strategies. Thus, manipulatives are provided often, consistent with our philosophy that students must deeply understand math concepts beyond the execution of an algorithm. This philosophy continues in the intermediate grades, when students are asked to solve problems in multiple ways and represent solutions with models, rather than just complete calculations to arrive at an answer.

The social studies and science curricula include specific units of study aligned with state standards. In social studies, students engage in the inquiry process in their study of civics, history, geography, and economics. Content study focuses on their place in the world, from the classroom community to neighborhood, community, state, and regions. The science curriculum is based on content and inquiry standards that focus on earth, life, and physical sciences. Specific topics include properties of matter, energy transfer, forces and motion, ecosystems, life cycles, earth's systems, and science and technology. These content areas are increasingly integrated with ELA. Integrated units provide opportunities for students to authentically apply skills and strategies for reading informational text in their study of the content.

The early childhood program is a self-contained preschool for 3- and 4-year-old students with special needs. The program also includes some typically developing peers. Personal, social, adaptive, motor, communication, and cognitive development are addressed. The Connecticut Early Learning and Developmental Standards and the Preschool Assessment Framework are used to guide planning and assess student learning. Small group and/or individual instruction in the preschool program has shown a positive impact on students' readiness to acquire early kindergarten skills. Some students with special needs have been able to exit from special education or related service supports prior to kindergarten or shortly after their entry into kindergarten.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Students in grades K-4 access our special areas (music, art, wellness, library media, and technology) weekly, with wellness classes meeting two times weekly, while all other special areas meet once weekly. With the exception of the second wellness meeting, which is for 30 minutes, all other special area classes are 45 minutes in length. Each area is governed by district-wide curricula, which are based upon state and/or national expectations and standards within these disciplines.

In music, students learn foundational concepts such as rhythm and reading notation through explicit instruction and the regular production of vocal and instrumental music. Rubrics created by the district-wide elementary music teachers' professional learning community are used to assess students' skills. General music classes are participatory, with both individual and group performing required of students. Experimentation with instruments also occurs in the upper grades, culminating in the opportunity for grade 4 students to play an instrument in either the orchestra or band. Further, grade 4 students have the opportunity to participate in the chorus. In the general music and performance areas, there are numerous cross-curricular connections. For example, mathematics concepts are reinforced through the study of rhythm, time signatures, and meter. A literacy connection is the study of lyrics, including the frequent use of rhyming words in song lyrics and poetry.

In art, students are taught the elements and principles of art as foundational concepts. Such foundational skills include techniques for shading to create value, figure drawing, perspective, proportion, and color theory, all with immediate opportunities for application to comprehensive projects. Students have projects that require them to paint, draw, sculpt, and build, among other mixed media techniques. Students are taught to appreciate the artwork and styles of various famous artists as well as historical and cultural art influences. Then students use the same media techniques or artistic style to create their own works of art. Student artwork is celebrated and featured around our school and at Newington Town Hall, both from current and former Anna Reynolds students. Again, cross-curricular connections abound with assignments incorporating both the National Core Arts Standards and the Connecticut state standards. These include visual-spatial connections to geometry, such as drawing an object to scale; 2-dimensional versus 3-dimensional shapes; drawing with perspective; incorporating patterns; and using grids to copy pictures. Literacy connections include comprehension from visual stimuli and reading and comprehending informational text.

In wellness, students learn and practice skills that will help them to lead healthy lives. Students learn the discrete skills of playing sports and remaining fit, such as the correct techniques to throw and catch a ball, complete a forward roll, or execute a push up. In addition, time in each class is devoted to fitness-based conditioning, such as running, stretching, and strength training with body resistance. Students also spend a portion of each class applying these skills and improved fitness to game situations, learning to cooperate with teammates and resolve conflicts with others.

In library media, students visit the media center to learn how to access information and develop a love of reading. Each week, students check out books for reading at home. The curriculum in library media is evolving to meet the demands of the 21st century and therefore includes helping students to acquire digital literacy and citizenship skills, including how to evaluate the credibility of sources and respecting copyright by avoiding plagiarism of sources. An important aspect of the Library Media curriculum is to support our curricular standards in English Language Arts, especially through the research process.

In technology education, students learn many discrete technology skills, which include the use of software products, Google Apps for Education, and typing programs. The emphasis of our technology program is the use of technology to access and share information, as well as research and communicate findings. Teachers collaborate with the technology teacher so that current curricular topics and units of study can be enhanced through technology integration. For example, students use technology specials time to complete a research project related to an integrated social studies/English Language Arts unit.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

For reading, writing, and mathematics, a workshop model allows for the most individualized and differentiated instruction and promotes student independence and ownership over learning. Flexible groups help meet individual student needs. These groups can take the form of traditional guided reading or math groups, or they can be based more upon specific strategies students need to acquire. Through the workshop model, all students will experience daily mini lessons; small flexible groups; various stations, centers, or literacy/math tasks (i.e., word work, fluency tasks, independent reading, partner reading, listening to reading, writing, skill maintenance practice, math fact practice, challenge stations, competitive games, etc.); and whole-group sharing and self-assessment to conclude the workshop. Throughout the instructional

period, opportunities for student-to-student discussion are provided. Through the use of questioning techniques and discussion protocols, students are encouraged to ask questions, analyze their own thinking, and share their ideas. Differentiation within the workshop model includes both remediation for students with skill deficits and challenge for students already performing at grade level expectations.

Technology application, specifically iPad usage in grades K-2 and Chromebook usage in grades 3-4, is embedded throughout the curricula. For example, students practice math facts and solve math problems collaboratively through technology, and writing pieces are composed with increasing frequency on Chromebooks. Student research is now often conducted via technology.

For students performing below grade level expectations, which we determine in part through universal screening assessments given three times a year, we undertake a tiered response to intervention approach, utilizing research-based programs and strategies. Beyond Tier I, teachers differentiate within the Tier I structure, which is aided by the workshop model. If Tier I differentiation is unsuccessful, Tier II intervention is provided, which involves providing small group remedial instruction. If Tier II intervention is unsuccessful, intensive Tier III interventions are provided. Tier III intervention is individualized and always provided by our support reading or math staff. All students receiving Tier III intervention are monitored by our Early Intervention Planning Team, which consists of teachers, support staff, and principal. If Tier III intervention is unsuccessful, a referral to a Pupil Placement Team is undertaken to evaluate the need for special education services.

For students performing above grade level, classroom differentiation is the most frequently utilized approach. However, we also have a talent pool program, known as Explore, whereby students showing great aptitude and interest in their learning can be accepted and join the group for topics of interest. This program is open to students in grades 2-4.

4. Assessment for Instruction and Learning and Sharing Assessment Results:

Formal and informal assessments are used to determine students' growth and performance. Formally, we administer district-wide assessments three times a year to determine students' progress with respect to reading, mathematics, and writing. Universal screening assessments are administered tri-annually to assess foundational skills. These data initiate conversations about which students might be in need of intervention services. In addition, benchmark assessments, such as the nationally normed Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) and our district-created writing prompt, measure students' growth and assess their learning with respect to our curricular standards in reading, mathematics, and writing.

Analysis of student scores on screening and other assessments is conducted via grade level data review meetings. Students are sorted into quadrants/categories based upon their needs to create intervention plans. Students scoring below the benchmark are progress monitored weekly via screening assessments probes. Interventions and progress monitoring data are warehoused in a district-created website called "NPS Data."

On a more granular level, grade-level data teams use data driven decision making to improve student learning in narrow areas of focus. Grade level teams, which meet weekly, use common formative assessments (CFAs) to elicit students' levels of knowledge and skill. A pre- and post test model is used to evaluate students' growth over several weeks. On a larger scale, our school-wide data team meets monthly to examine school-wide data, as well as to create, monitor, and adjust our School Improvement Plan, which has implications for professional development and practice.

Student progress is shared in various ways with students and families. Students are typically provided their results in real time, especially for screening and benchmark assessments.

Parents learn about their children's progress in several systematic ways. Each grade level created a reporting sheet they send tri-annually to share universal screening results. Also, MAP scores are printed and sent home, along with an interpretation guide for parents. Math unit assessments are often sent home, so that parents can see students' progress more regularly. Teachers also use informal methods of sharing students'

progress, which include sending home corrected work or individual data sheets and direct communications with families.

Data often reveal achievement gaps for subgroups of our population. Aside from providing an accessible curriculum, we examine subgroups' data through our district-wide and school-wide data teams, and our entire staff is exploring cultural proficiency, in an effort to meet all students' needs.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

At Anna Reynolds Elementary School, we strive to surround our students with positive academic and social-emotional messages. We want students to believe in their ability to achieve academic success through hard work and to feel safe, supported, and part of a family-like atmosphere. All expectations are communicated through our Positive Behavioral Supports (PBS) strategies, by which we teach and reinforce expected behaviors and dispositions. Our PBS structure will be described fully in Part VI.

Academically, students are challenged on a regular basis to persevere. Our vision statement calls for rigorous experiences that engender deep thinking, problem-solving, and lifelong learning. To accomplish our vision, we provide students with rigorous math problems to collaboratively solve through our Trimester Math Problem-Solving Initiative. We offer Reynolds Writers school-wide writing contests to provide students an open-ended opportunity to create. We use curricularly based anchor experiences where students can show their learning in real-world contexts.

Socio-emotionally, we support our students in many ways, such as our PBS structure, School Families, Bucket-Filling metaphor, and many other ways, which will all be explained in detail in Part VI.

As will be discussed below in Question 4, the committees and teams to which our teachers belong allow for a distributed leadership model where many perspectives are shared and valued. Each year, three major principles of our work are shared with all staff. They are: "1) Empowerment: Our staff members feel competent and believe that they are equipped to make decisions in the best interest of our students and school. Our teachers have sound ideas that can improve what we do; 2) Collegiality: Our staff works together to solve problems of practice. We do not work in isolation. What we learn, we share; and 3) Risk Taking: We do not advance if we do not try new things and experiment. We are not afraid to do things differently." With these principles in mind, our team works together for the betterment of all students and staff.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Anna Reynolds Elementary School has positive relationships with its community at large. There are formal and informal ways in which this relationship is fostered and maintained. First, there are district-wide opportunities for parental involvement. These include: parent teacher conferences in September, December, and March; Open House/Curriculum Night; Kindergarten Visitation for incoming kindergarteners' families in April/May; Kindergarten bus ride just before school begins in August; Grandparents' and Special Friends' Week; Town Wide Art Show; and winter and spring concerts; among others. These provide our families regular opportunities to come to our school and interact with staff to learn about our programs.

Aside from the district offerings, our Parent Teacher Organization, which meets monthly and opens its meetings to all parents and teachers, provides our school with many more opportunities for community events. These events are opportunities for students, parents, and staff members to interact in a casual and social way, building rapport and strengthening connections. Some of these events were outlined in Part III. This group also raises money to fund many special purchases that are outside our usual budget. Such purchases have included: science enrichment presentations; cultural enrichment presentations; authors-, writers-, and artists-in-residence; playground equipment; and new chairs for our cafetorium.

Also, our school has some traditional community-building events, many of which were discussed in Part III. We also have a One Book, One School program, whereby each family receives the same book annually from our school. Families read the book at home with their children, and teachers continue the conversation at school. Our student news program, WRSN, provides families information. Another aspect of our community involvement is our volunteer network. This extends to our nearest collegiate partner, Central Connecticut State University, from which we have received student interns who volunteer their time in our classrooms. Also, we regularly host student teachers and administrative interns from local universities, so

we can help to educate and welcome the next generation of educators. We also have many family members volunteer at our school. Volunteers regularly assist in our daily operations with such tasks as: shelving books in our media center, hanging decorations for our concerts, and practicing sight words with children. Finally, we have many guest readers come to our school, including bus drivers, parents, our principal, superintendent, and state representative. Our children learn that literacy and having fun together are important to all members of our community.

3. Professional Development:

Professional development (PD) at Anna Reynolds Elementary School takes many forms. There are district-wide, school-wide, and individual PD opportunities. Some opportunities are for all to experience, while others are optional and attended by choice.

At the district level, PD opportunities are overseen by the Office of Human Capital Development (HCD). This office plans and coordinates PD opportunities that are provided to all on designated PD days in the calendar, as well as many optional opportunities, including outside workshops that teachers can attend. This office also allocates an amount of PD money for each school. This money is typically used to reimburse teachers who attend an outside conference. District-wide Professional Learning and Strategic Planning Committees provide recommendations to HCD about upcoming PD opportunities and needs.

At the school level, the Strategic Planning Team meets monthly to plan PD opportunities for our school based upon needs identified by our School Improvement Plan (SIP). This team facilitates the action steps of our SIP coming to life. In this year's school calendar, there are 16 early-release Tuesdays that allow for 90 minutes of educator PD. These are sometimes used for district-wide learning. However, most often, they are planned by our school based upon current needs and SIP action steps.

A structure known as Collegial Visits enhances teacher collaboration and learning from one another. During a Collegial Visit, a grade level teacher or coach will host the other members of the grade level to view a portion of a lesson. This viewing typically follows some formal learning by the teachers about an SIP-connected topic about which the team wishes to know more. After viewing the lesson, the entire team meets together to debrief what was seen and what implications can be made for practice.

Vertical conversations are used to enhance our knowledge of curricular standards and expectations. These conversations are typically conducted on the early-release Tuesdays referenced above and have included sharing student work and unwrapping standards. Thus, our teachers better understand the student expectations of grades surrounding theirs.

Our coaching team provides many optional PD opportunities, many of which are embedded into the workday. For example, teachers learn about rubrics as they need to create one for a short-cycle assessment during a weekly grade level data team meeting. Further, the coaches have provided optional, curricularly based sessions before and after school, and they work with teachers individually to provide focused PD.

4. School Leadership:

Leadership at Anna Reynolds is distributed amongst many individuals and groups. Various committees and teams help the school function at a high level. Most teams meet monthly.

The School-Wide Data Team is charged with analyzing school-wide data and creating and monitoring the School Improvement Plan (SIP). This team consists of the grade-level data team facilitators, so that issues related to the functioning of the grade level data teams can be discussed together. This team also reviews recommendations from the district data team in order to determine if patterns found at the district level apply to our school.

The Strategic Planning Team is charged with operationalizing the academic portions of the SIP. The team unpacks the academic action steps in the SIP to create meaningful professional development opportunities for teachers and provide students with rigorous experiences. They organize the Collegial Visits, vertical

conversations, early-release Tuesday workshops, and Trimester Math Problem Solving Initiative (See question #3). A subset of this team, the Strategic Planning Leadership Team, meets over the summer to plot out a draft view of the learning needs and experiences for the year. The coaching team meets weekly with the principal to fine-tune the professional development plans on an on-going basis.

The Positive Behavioral Supports Committee (PBS Committee) serves to ensure that our school's climate is positive and supportive for students. They plan the explicit lessons we teach to students each year for our behavioral expectations, and they operationalize the action steps of the SIP related to school climate. Two groups who work closely with the PBS Committee are the Student Council, which consists of student representatives from each classroom, and our School Families Committee. Both of these groups help to put into motion SIP school climate action steps.

The Decision-Making Team creates systems for efficient and safe operations at our school. The members or principal can bring needs to the team, which will work together to create solutions. This team also provides budget leadership, facilitating conversations at the grade or specials team level and entering initial requests into the budget system.

Our Crisis Intervention and Psychological/Physical Management Training Teams both serve to help our school maintain safe operations in the face of emergency situations and behavioral episodes. Members of each team are trained to act on behalf of the school to identify and mitigate threats to safety.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Our school's success is based upon educating the whole child. Most notably, we promote positive citizenship and climate through our Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) structure, among other strategies aimed at socio-emotional growth.

Annually, our PBS Committee outlines a structure for explicit teaching and reinforcement of expectations. This outline is based upon our School Improvement Plan. The PBS structure is launched via a principal-led assembly, where the "ABCs of Reynolds Respect" are explained and illustrated through examples. The ABCs are: "Always do your best; Be respectful and safe; and Care for yourself and others." Students are reminded about other touchstones of our PBS structure, such as the Platinum Rule, which states, "Treat others the way they want to be treated." The emphasis is on the word "they," since treatment should be viewed through the eyes of the beholder.

We utilize a metaphor for treating others nicely called "Bucket Filling." Essentially, everyone carries an imaginary bucket with them. When others do and say kind things, the bucket is filled. As an ancillary benefit, one's own bucket is filled when one does or says kind things to others. When others do and say mean things, we call this bucket dipping. Even our youngest students understand this simple metaphor. We ask students to evaluate their choices with respect to bucket filling or dipping behavior.

We reinforce bucket filling in many ways, from giving children fluffy pom poms to put in their classroom bucket; to empowering students to recognize others' bucket filling by sharing a bucket-filling bracelet; to eating lunch with the principal; to getting special recognition from our resident superhero, Captain Kindness; to recognizing students on our news program, WRSN; to tallying kind comments in each classroom; and to recognizing students in myriad other informal ways.

Various other programs and initiatives help to contribute to our students' socio-emotional growth. Our School Families program, whereby each adult in the building meets monthly with a group of 12-15 students across grades K-4, teaches socio-emotional topics. Classrooms conduct a daily meeting, consistent with Responsive Classroom ideals, to help students to problem solve and become a cohesive learning community. Our health curriculum includes use of the Second Step program to teach prosocial skills. We are also using Yoga 4 Classrooms to teach students healthy ways to manage stress. For students with increased socio-emotional needs, we have a Helping Hand Mentor Program, as well as individual and group counseling.