

U.S. Department of Education
2016 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 Mr. Seth Danner

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

Official School Name Dr. Charles Barnum Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 68 Briar Hill Road

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

City Groton State CT Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 06340-2651

County New London County

Telephone (860) 449-5640 Fax _____

Web site/URL
http://www.groton.k12.ct.us/Domain/628 E-mail sdanner@groton.k12.ct.us

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. Michael Graner E-mail mgraner@groton.k12.ct.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Groton Public Schools Tel. (860) 572-2100

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. Kim Shepardson Watson
(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 (per district designation):
- 7 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 10 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. 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	49	40	49
K	38	26	64
1	29	30	59
2	27	21	48
3	17	25	42
4	24	17	41
5	20	20	40
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	204	179	383

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 3 % Asian
 - 6 % Black or African American
 - 15 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 67 % White
 - 8 % 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: 34%

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, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	57
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	63
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	120
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	358
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.335
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	34

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %
2 Total number ELL

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

German, Tagalog

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 37 %
Total number students who qualify: 142

8. Students receiving special education services: 16 %
61 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.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <u>2</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>6</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>5</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>3</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>14</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>2</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Mental Retardation | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities | <u>27</u> Developmentally Delayed |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 1
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	2
Classroom teachers	18
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	15
Paraprofessionals	21
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

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 22:1

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	98%	97%	97%	97%	97%
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 No X

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

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

In partnership with our community, we provide a safe, nurturing and challenging learning environment so all students develop to their fullest potential becoming productive/responsible citizens.

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

PART III – SUMMARY

Dr. Charles Barnum Elementary School serves approximately 400 students, 75% of whom are military dependent students. Charles Barnum is located approximately 2 miles from the main entrance to the United States Submarine Base in Groton. Barnum recently celebrated its 50th anniversary in June 2015. We held spirit days for the week and culminated our celebration with an assembly featuring songs, clothing, and performances from 1965.

CB has many traditions we are proud of. Our First Day of School Celebration brings parents to the school on their child's first day for refreshments, a parent assembly, and a planned activity in the child's classroom. An annual back to school picnic has been held since 2001 as close to September 11th as possible. It allows families to meet with staff members on a more informal level and brings the community together. Our Veteran's Day program is very involved due to the nature of our relationship with the military population. We have invited political dignitaries, the Commanding Officer of the US Sub Base, Central Office personnel, and all current serving military members of our school community. Barnum holds a Veteran's Day Essay contest for students and participates in the Operation Caring Classroom Veteran's Day program through the Armed Forces Foundation.

The Mission Statement of Dr. Charles Barnum Elementary School is to provide a safe, nurturing and challenging learning environment so that all students develop to their fullest potential and become productive and responsible citizens. We continue to promote a positive school climate through a variety of student-centered character building activities and recognition so that students are motivated to learn.

Charles Barnum has a strong connection with the military. Partnerships with numerous Commands from the US Submarine Base have remained consistently positive over many years. We are also fortunate to have a Military School Liaison Officer to increase the family and school support for children connected to the military. Military volunteers for events such as readings, fundraisers, school assemblies and family events are recruited through our school community coordinator. In collaboration with the US Submarine Base Fleet and Family Support Center, we offer students the opportunity to join our Deployment Club. The focus of the club, which meets on a bi-weekly basis, is to assist students in learning age-appropriate methods of adjusting to the changes that come with the deployment cycle.

The adjustment time for students is almost non-existent for the high mobility rate we have at Barnum. Our school is unique because 'new' students are difficult to identify as you walk through the school. This is due to many procedures we have in place to acclimate students and families to Barnum upon arrival. We pride ourselves in making transitions seamless for new families. From the first encounter in our office, to meeting the teacher, and touring the building, families are treated to a warm welcome in a very organized manner.

Milestones that have been achieved include a recognition of achievement for math proficiency on standardized testing. This garnered a personal telephone call from the US Secretary of Education, a mention on the Capital Floor from a US representative and a letter to Charles Barnum from the First Lady. As a school community, we are very proud of these accolades.

Here at Barnum we collaborate on a consistent basis. We hold regular meetings for student success through a variety of teams that involve numerous staff members. The collaboration through these teams allows us to adjust instruction and provide enrichment activities or support to those students in need. All staff are equally invested in providing and integrating all available services to ensure student success. Fluidity and communication to accommodate student needs is one of the key elements for our success. We also believe that high behavior expectations lead to high student achievement. This allows for effective teaching and learning to occur through the use of our Positive Behavioral Intervention Support program.

A culture of collaboration and teamwork permeates all that is done at Dr. Charles Barnum Elementary School and is student centered at all times. The recently retired principal has led the team for over 25 years and established this trust and family relationship. The foundation built at Barnum is strong enough to seamlessly handle another transition and keep the family atmosphere thriving while maintaining high expectations for student achievement.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Dr. Charles Barnum addresses all areas of the Language Arts Common Core State Standards. A balanced literacy program of shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, writing about reading, phonics, and word study is utilized. Students are given daily opportunities to read closely and deeply from among a range of quality literary and informational texts at their instructional level. Students also are given multiple opportunities to write routinely for a range of purposes and audiences. Our current practice is to utilize the techniques from the Units of Study developed by Columbia University's Reading and Writing Project. Teachers encourage students to take part in a variety of conversations- whole class, small group, and with partners in order to develop appropriate speaking and listening skills. Foundations provides a systematic and explicit approach to reading and spelling with phonics in the primary grades. Our technology includes programs such as Lexia, which is personalized learning on fundamental literacy skills. The school also participates in multiple LEARN (Regional Education Service Center) grants such as 'Authors and Amigos,' a literacy based inter-district partnership.

The CB mathematics curriculum is based on the NCTM standards and the Common Core standards. It is designed to create powerful young mathematicians who will learn to value mathematics, become confident in their abilities, become problem solvers, learn to communicate mathematically, and learn to reason through mathematics. These standards require a fundamental shift from emphasis on rote learning (for mastery of skills) to conceptual understanding in real life problems solving situations. Math Expressions has been used most recently and working on math application problems has been a focus for our school. We have created 'sets' of application problems for students to practice and study.

There has been an increased use of technology including, computer software and web-based programs to enrich the quality of our mathematics program. An integral part of our success is the fidelity of the implementation of ST Math (personalized learning that promotes mastery based learning to improve conceptual understanding and problem solving skills).

The elementary science curriculum is a comprehensive program which reflects National Science Standards and the Connecticut State Department of Education science Frameworks. The content of the program includes yearly study in the specific areas of physical, life, and earth science. Instructional strategies include a rich assortment of hands-on activities to actively engage students in the learning process. For example, we incorporate science 'kits' that are hands-on, inquiry based labs. They are accompanied by leveled readers that correspond to the different science standards. Exploration provides opportunities for students to develop questions that require interpretation and conclusions. Instruction is exploratory and cooperative. The infusion of hands-on materials enriches the quality of the program. Project Oceanology (study of ocean life) has been an integral component with grade 4 involving experiential learning and field trips. Grade 5 completes a volcano project that is shared with families and the rest of the student body.

The purpose of the social studies program is to gain a better understanding of people and the way they live. The study of the past, as well as the present and future, is essential to this understanding. Prentice-Hall textbooks, along with other materials, are used to teach the areas of geography, history, economics, sociology, and government as they relate to our society and our local community. Examples include a Pizza box US States project that students design and create in order to present to peers and families. Numerous field trips are taken at all grade levels throughout our community such as touring the Sub Base Museum, Nautilus Submarine, Mystic Seaport, Planetarium and Aquarium. Second grade students visit the textile Museum in Windham County.

Classroom teachers and math and literacy specialists collaborate to discuss student progress and to adjust instruction and grouping as needed. Tier I instruction through the classroom teacher is differentiated to meet the abilities and varying needs of all students. CB provides enrichment activities for students in need of an additional challenge. At the same time, CB provides support for those students experiencing difficulty. The end result is to develop students who are independent lifelong readers, writers, mathematicians, and learners

at all levels.

CB offers 4 year old students a PreK program designed to support school readiness. Barnum also has an integrated preschool designed to provide programming and special education services to eligible 3-5 year old students. This combines children with special needs and typically developing peer models. Both programs are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and provide high quality learning experiences that address: language and literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development. Both curricula are aligned to the CT Early Learning and Development Standards and the Creative Curriculum for Preschool.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Each K-5 student receives 40 minutes of general music instruction once per week. Fourth and fifth grade students have the opportunity to join chorus which is held for 45 minutes per week. Enrichment instruction in Orff playing techniques is also offered to students who desire an extra challenge in music. Students are taught how to read rhythms, pitches, and words in their music books or on the Promethean board. All third grade students learn how to read music and play the recorder. Fifth graders learn how to “listen” to music written by great composers and write about what they are listening to in their music journal.

Fourth and fifth grade students have the opportunity to play a band or orchestra instrument. Students receive instrumental lessons for 30 minutes and perform in the band or orchestra once a week for 45 minutes. Chorus, Band, and Orchestra students host performances in the winter and spring as well as for Veteran’s Day and for Flag Day.

Kindergarten through grade 5 students receive forty minutes of Art instruction weekly. We strive to provide opportunities for students to experience art media, techniques, and processes in an age-appropriate structured sequence. Art instruction facilitates the selection and application of subject matter, symbols, and ideas for problem solving, fosters the development of the visual arts in relation to history and culture and develops the students’ ability to analyze, interpret and assess their work and the work of others. A visual and literary-rich environment provides a range of creative art experiences. Instructional techniques include grouping strategies to meet the needs of varied student learning styles in a diverse and very transient student population.

Barnum's elementary health curriculum consists of nine 40-minute lessons for each grade, (K-5). Concepts of physical health taught are disease prevention, hygiene, safety and injury prevention, drug abuse prevention, nutrition, and fitness. Social and emotional health is incorporated in Health class with topics such as self-esteem, assertiveness, managing feelings, conflict resolution, bullying, empathy, goal setting, and decision making. The Health Curriculum allows students to acquire increasing levels of independence. These skills help students analyze health risks, practice making safe and healthy choices, and help resolve issues in healthy ways. This increases their social well-being, contributes to a safe school climate, and helps students to thrive in our multi-ethnic and diverse society.

Physical education is an integral part of the students program and is held for 40 minutes per week. The PE program provides a balance of activities which reflect and challenge the divergent needs of students in the psychomotor, cognitive, and affective domain. The program aims to provide enjoyable and successful experiences by offering activities appropriate to the students’ physical and mental abilities. We also participate in Jump Rope for Heart, Art and Wellness Night, and Field Day.

We strive to improve individual growth and development through the teaching and assessment of a sequentially progressive program of sport and health related physical activities while integrating literacy, math and health. All of these benefits ultimately results in healthy lifestyle and a lifelong productive use of leisure time.

Social and emotional health is incorporated in Physical Education class with topics such as self-esteem, conflict resolution, goal setting, respect, decision making and critical thinking.

All K-5 students visit the media center each week for 40 minutes. Students receive lessons in literature appreciation, accessing/evaluating information, and ethical use of resources. Grades 4 and 5 are instructed in Google's Apps for Education which consists of Google Classroom and Google Docs. World Book Online is regularly used to complete research projects starting in Grade 2. Kindergarten and Grade 1 also use the computer program Pixie to complete assignments. All grades have lessons on digital citizenship and Internet safety from the Common Sense Media curriculum. In addition, students are introduced to Type to Learn, Brain Pop, Discovery Education, and Book Flix and are provided with the log-in information to use these programs in their classroom and at home.

Charles Barnum Preschool and Pre K students receive 20 minutes of instruction in general music, art, PE and the media center each week.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

All Charles Barnum staff are equally invested in providing and integrating all available services to ensure student success. Flexibility and communication among staff members to accommodate student needs and implement service delivery is a key element for our success at Barnum. This 'shared responsibility' model begins in Tier I and is tailored to meet the varying needs of all our students. Tier I instruction is differentiated and flexible grouping is used when possible. Students receive instruction that is direct, focused, and sequenced. We also provide opportunities for practice and application of skills and concepts through a variety of project based lessons. Progress monitoring is used to assess our students' academic progress and evaluate the effectiveness of our Tier I instruction.

Support staff work regularly with the classroom teachers to generate accommodations for all students. As the levels of support increase to Tiers II/III, students are matched with the most appropriate group for their learning needs, not based on a service implementer. It is common for a regular education student to work with a special educator in a more intensive academic group, while a student who receives special education is able to work with a reading/math interventionist on higher level skills. A self-contained Intensive Behavior Support program shares service implementation with a resource room teacher to provide instruction in the least restrictive environment. This 'shared responsibility' model helps students progress academically, which leads to more emotional stability. Another example of shared responsibility is when a military child transitions into the building with identified needs: the team meets to collaborate on instruction and service delivery. In addition to the Tier I instruction from the classroom teacher, the child may also be serviced by the reading interventionist as well as a resource teacher through this 'shared responsibility' model.

Additionally, our Speech Pathologist co-taught specific skills with a regular education teacher, benefiting not only the identified student(s), but the entire class. Our School Psychologist consults with teachers to address classroom and individual social-emotional concerns. At the Tier II level, informal counseling services are provided to students and individualized behavior plans are created. The school psychologist also co-leads a weekly 'Deployment Club' with a social worker from the Groton Navy Base. This club provides a safe environment for those military students struggling with their parent's deployment and/or reunification.

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

Grade level teams and specialists analyze historical and current data from standardized and district assessments to identify strengths and needs of students in reading and math at the start of the school year. Based on analyzed data, instruction is differentiated at appropriate levels, independent projects and strategies are utilized to engage students. Grade level data teams meet weekly to review student work, performance assessments, performance tasks, and pre/post-tests. Standardized assessments such as MAP and SBAC are also studied for program review, monitoring growth and individual student goal setting. Progress monitoring is ongoing and instruction is adjusted accordingly after consistent review.

A School Improvement Plan is created by the school data team after analyzing school achievement data (both academic and behavioral). Needs are identified, goals are established, strategies are researched, and results indicators are developed. The school data team comprises classroom teachers, specialists, support

personnel, and administrators; this team meets periodically throughout the year to review progress and make needed adjustments to the School Improvement Plan.

Instructional rounds are conducted by the CB Data Team throughout the year. We use this practice to focus on internal accountability, which in turn improves our teaching and learning at Barnum. On another level, the Superintendent, along with other Central Office administrators, conducts informal classroom walk-throughs with the building administration. Debriefing sessions are immediately held with administrators and classroom teachers to reflect on current practice.

Parents are informed on a regular basis of student progress through emails, trimester report cards, and bi-yearly conferences in order to increase the support from home. The Central Office and the Board of Education are also informed of student progress on district and standards-based assessments through administrative reports.

New students transitioning into Barnum are assessed immediately by the classroom teacher, literacy and math specialists. Previous school records are reviewed in a timely fashion in order to ensure proper placement within the school and appropriate programming for the new student. CB has fine-tuned the process for students entering the school throughout the academic year; the average number of transitioning students can approach 50% on a given year. The Charles Barnum staff believes the constant reflection and review of our student achievement is paramount to our success in moving students forward.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Dr. Charles Barnum believes that high behavior expectations lead to high student achievement and allows for effective teaching and learning to occur. Barnum manages student behavior through a program called Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS). In addition to learning character education through the 'Six Pillars of Character,' students are also rewarded individually and as a class for exemplifying school-wide expectations. Individualized reinforcement of expected behaviors in the form of a SAIL card (SAIL Cards are a 3x5 printout with 25 nautical flags worn on a lanyard) with built-in incentives. Students engaging in appropriate behavior can receive 'star punches' on their SAIL card. Students receive punches when they are 'caught' following our schools' behavior expectations.

Once all the flags are punched on the SAIL card, students are awarded a certificate and recognized at our monthly assembly. Individual classes can earn SAILS (sailboats) for following class-wide behavioral expectations and earn class rewards. The school holds monthly assemblies to recognize individual and class achievements based on SAIL cards and SAILS. Grade levels take turns presenting a Character Pillar in a creative and engaging method.

Regular meetings are held to review behavioral data and identify students struggling to make good choices. Students placed on an individualized plan may receive interventions such as counseling, check-in/check-out, mentors, or a goal with reinforcements. Behaviors of one student not only impede that individual's ability to access learning but can impact the class as a whole. A decrease in student incident referrals not only showed an increase in academic performance for that individual but for all students who were impacted by the student's behaviors. Data is also analyzed to determine if modifications are needed at the school or class level. For example, recess was revealed as the time of most referrals. In response, teachers organized games which promoted cooperation and team building. The reinforcement of expected behaviors has created an environment of connectedness throughout the school.

We realize that because of the transient nature of our student population, the staff must continue to uphold high behavioral expectations. With the extremely high 'buy-in' from the staff, the consistently implemented behavior management program has become very successful. These same expectations we hold for students at Barnum are the same expectations that we show one another on a daily basis. This climate fosters and encourages positive interactions between all levels of staff members to make sure everyone in the building feels supported.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

CB prides itself on being a family friendly school. We understand the unique circumstances of our families who are moving in from all over the country and often from overseas. We feel that first impressions make a lasting impression. The principal as well as the student's teacher greets the new family in the office. The family tours the building and is escorted down to the new classroom by the teacher. An extra desk and all curriculum materials are always readily available in each classroom and a classroom buddy is assigned.

We strongly believe that parental involvement is critical to student achievement. The school hosts a 'meet and greet' prior to the opening day of school in which parents are invited for classroom visitations. A family picnic the second week of school helps set the tone for a great year. Weekly newsletters and the school website keep parents apprised of what is happening at the school and in their child's classroom.

A Curriculum Night provides parents with an overview of what their child will be learning throughout the school year. 'Cookies and P.J.s' and 'One Author, One School' are family activities designed to encourage reading. A Family Math Night is held to share math ideas and games. A 'Celebration of Arts and Wellness' showcases our students' musical and artistic talents as well as their writing abilities.

CB has a strong connection with the U.S. Submarine Base and has developed a number of partnerships with various commands. A Deployment Club meets to support those students whose parents are deployed. In celebration of Veteran's Day, we are host an assembly to honor our Veterans. We invite our families' to come in uniform and sit with children as a thank you for their service!

Our CB Cares program allows children to get involved in a hands-on way to help CB families within the community. Our three-week Reading Challenge has students earning donations for minutes they read. Monies collected (week 1) are donated to non-profit organizations connected with the school. Pet items (week 2) are donated to the Groton Animal Shelter and non-perishable food items (week 3) are delivered to the Groton Food Bank.

Our school is very fortunate to have a strong volunteer program including an active PTO. Parents, community members and Navy personnel donate hundreds of hours of their time volunteering in classrooms, on field trips, at school functions and on special projects.

3. Professional Development:

CB takes professional development very seriously. We feel that teaching is a fluid process and we never stop learning ourselves. The CB staff continually strives to improve our teaching methods and techniques in order to better benefit the students.

Professional Development at CB takes many forms. We attend district and out-of-district sponsored professional development given by noted professionals on specific topics. We do our best to incorporate the new strategies and techniques we've been exposed to and share them with our colleagues. We also strongly believe the most valuable and knowledgeable experts are working within our own building and district. Time is provided to engage in meaningful conversation about teaching techniques and student work. Opportunities for ongoing collaboration are built into our schedule and are always connected to our students' academic and social growth.

The district calendar provides teachers with numerous opportunities for personalized professional development throughout the year. Aside from four full days of PD, teachers have after-school collaborative and department meetings to ensure we work together on a variety of levels. Five early release days permit staff to collaborate with grade level teams and specialists to discuss student progress, curriculum and share instructional strategies. Teachers are also encouraged to attend professional development in their area of interest.

Members of the CB school data team received training in Instructional Rounds and we have been using this process to facilitate discussion among ourselves. We use the dialogue to set goals and review methods we have in place. The PBIS team received training in positive behavior interventions and then the team trained the entire staff.

Recent PD has focused on writing instruction as we implement the Units of Study in Writing as developed by the Reading and Writing Project, Columbia University. Groton Public schools has received a DoDEA grant that provides for Teachers College Reading and Writing Project presenters to work with staff on implementation of the Units of Study. We have also implemented a lesson study model, a meaningful and sustainable professional development strategy. In this model, grade level teachers convene to plan the lesson and then observe their colleague teach the lesson. The team then reconvenes to share observations and, if necessary, modify the approach. Another member of the team teaches the revised lesson as colleagues observe. This collaborative process continues until the entire teacher community is utilizing the best possible method for their student population.

4. School Leadership:

CB administrators set the tone for our entire building by having high expectations for students, staff, and themselves. We feel the element of trust and mutual respect that is evident between the administrator and staff is an essential part of the school's success. Teachers feel supported, are encouraged to try new things

and feel comfortable sharing their views and ideas with administrators. We believe positive relationships between staff and administrators and staff member to staff member are reflected in the success of our students. Staff morale at CB is extremely high and we maintain a warm and inviting school environment. A survey asking staff about administration noted that the principal ‘trusted you to do the job, believed in us to do our job well’ and ‘the principal makes it seem like a family here at work; she respects us and we respect her.’

The principal is a strong instructional leader who is dedicated to motivating the staff to try their best. The expectations encompass not only academic standards but expectations about the school climate. The principal always states that we need to be welcoming, positive, and sensitive to the unique needs of our transient population. She stresses that we cannot make excuses because we have a mobile population; we just need to work a little harder! The administration also makes sure we celebrate our successes as well as learn from our failures. Self-reflection is encouraged and constructive feedback is provided on a regular basis.

Positive, effective and open communication is essential to our success. Staff, parents, and students feel comfortable approaching administration. The administration also expects staff to communicate clear expectations to students and families on a regular basis. We are constantly assessing our performance and looking at ways to improve. Grade level collaborative meetings, faculty meetings, and the CB School data team are all avenues through which the administration and teachers review data, programs, teaching strategies, and share concerns and suggestions.

A culture of collaboration and teamwork permeates all that is done at CB and is student-centered. The CB staff considers themselves to be a family and we work hard to maintain this atmosphere. We truly enjoy working together and are a true professional learning community.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

CB has many practices that contribute to the success of the school. We feel as a staff that the ability to address the academic and social-emotional needs of the ‘whole’ child is important. The entire CB staff feels it is their responsibility to make sure our students achieve and it is our failure if they don’t! If a student is not achieving, we will continue to try numerous techniques and strategies in order to find an approach to help the student become successful.

The school’s motto, C.B. T.E.A.M. (Together Everyone Achieves More) says it all. The CB staff is a true team that stretches through the paraprofessionals, teachers, administration and other staff members; the feeling is, ‘We are all in this together.’ This feeling is prevalent throughout the building and has been noted in school surveys on a consistent basis. It is never ‘your’ student, but rather ‘our’ student.

We realize due to the transient nature of our student population the staff often does not see the fruits of its labor. A student whom we are working with to achieve academic success may transfer out before meeting goals we set for them. We often cannot follow our students’ success once they move and this can be unfulfilling. This is why it is so important for the staff to validate and celebrate each other’s success on a regular basis.

Student, staff and parent relationships are a major key to Barnum’s success. Each person of the school community is valued and we are always seeking input to make things better. A parent survey requesting input on school environment, communication and academic achievement is sent out each May. Staff and students participate in a safe school climate survey each spring in reference to the climate of our school. We take the results seriously and look to make adjustments and plan programs in response to the school community feedback.

We are proud of what we achieve at our school and refuse to become complacent or satisfied with the status quo. We continually look for ways to achieve our goal of doing what is best for children by setting high expectations for everyone at Dr. Charles Barnum Elementary School and by building positive relationships with all members of the school community.