

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. Justin Horne

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

Official School Name Monroe Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 210 North Madison Street

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

City Hinsdale State IL Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 60521

County Dupage County

Telephone (630) 861-4200 Fax (630) 655-9716

Web site/URL http://www.d181.org/monroe E-mail jhorne@d181.org

Twitter Handle
https://twitter.com/ccsd181 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. Don White E-mail dwhite@d181.org

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Community Consolidated School District 181 Tel. _____ (630) 861-4900

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. Mridu Garg

(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
 - 0 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 9 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
 - Suburban
 - Small city or town in a rural area
 - Rural
3. 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	0	0	0
K	29	24	53
1	37	27	64
2	39	31	70
3	41	31	72
4	35	45	80
5	37	29	66
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	218	187	405

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 10 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 5 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 79 % White
 - 5 % 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: 3%

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	8
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	3
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	11
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	416
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.026
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %
2 Total number ELL

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

Lithuanian, Russian

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 0 %
Total number students who qualify: 4

8. Students receiving special education services: 12 %
43 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.

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

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 3
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	19
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	18
Paraprofessionals	7
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	97%	97%	96%	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

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.

To provide a premier educational experience that teaches students to be critical thinkers and enables them to achieve their full potential - academically, socially, and emotionally.

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

Walking through the halls of Monroe is a journey through the history of the neighborhood’s deeply rooted commitment to the growth of learners. From the charming historic tiles in the original 1928 wing, through the series of seven community-supported renovations over the decades, it is easy to sense the continued dedication to nurturing young minds. The school’s motto, “Learning to Grow and Growing to Learn”, is embodied in the building and is at the heart of what is valued in the community.

During individual problem solving meetings, the social worker, art and PE specialists, or others are pulled into the team as needed. Curriculum planning is also a team approach as differentiation is addressed to meet student needs. Teams discuss how to implement Universal Design for Learning (UDL) methods across the school day to benefit all learners.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Monroe School utilizes a multi-disciplinary, data-based decision making process to address instructional approaches for core instruction, in addition to informing instructional differentiation for students with exceptional learning needs. Specifically, teacher teams collaborate with specialists throughout the school, including the reading specialist, instructional coach, differentiation specialist, school psychologist, resource teachers, speech-language pathologist, social worker, occupational therapist, English Language (ELL) specialist, Media Resource Center (MRC) director, principal, and pupil services administrator in order to identify specific strategies and approaches to instruct ALL students.

Monroe School and District 181 have adopted the new Illinois Learning Standards incorporating the Common Core along with the shift from procedural to conceptual mastery for each standard. The staff meets weekly to discuss student progress, maintain instructional alignment, and share strategies for success. Monroe utilizes technology to differentiate instruction and support engagement in all academic areas.

Language skills are integrated across the curriculum. Monroe's reading curriculum is guided by the Common Core Standards. Teachers use AimsWeb benchmarks, MAP data and the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System to inform their instruction and meet the individual needs of students. Explicit reading instruction at all levels includes whole-group genre studies, guided reading groups designed to target the specific comprehension and strategy needs of students based on testing data as well as individual teacher/student conferring. Using a workshop approach, teachers utilize short passages, leveled books, online text sources and full-length novel studies to engage students. All grade levels employ common language related to word study, fluency practice and comprehension-building strategies to empower students to develop as readers. The MRC and its director regularly provide students with opportunities to engage with a variety of multimedia resources that expand and inform the students' reading experiences. The reading specialist regularly meets with teachers to assist in identifying student needs and how to implement strategies to meet those needs.

Writing instruction is incorporated into all subject areas at Monroe. In order to meet instructional goals, teachers utilize materials and practices designed to target specific genres of writing including narrative, informational and opinion. Instructional strategies include resources to improve conventions, peer editing and the sharing of student work.

Monroe's math curriculum is guided by the Common Core Standards with a common focus on the Mathematical Practices throughout all grade levels. Teachers use pretests, MAP data, and AIMSweb MCAP (Math Concepts & Applications) data to inform their instruction. As mentioned above, Monroe utilizes specialized staff to support differentiated instruction and it is not uncommon to see two or three teachers in a classroom working with small groups of students at their level. These data-driven and team-based instructional practices have empowered the staff at Monroe to equip more of its students with the skills they need to achieve their learning goals.

Monroe's hands-on science curriculum engages students in the inquiry process and encourages experimentation. Topics cover life, physical, chemical and earth sciences. In addition to the core curriculum developed by the District, Monroe has an outdoor Living Classroom that was established in 1995. Staff members that planted the first seeds of this learning lab have designed curriculum incorporating the New Generation Science Standards (NGSS) utilizing its prairie, pond, official Monarch Waystation butterfly garden, and vegetable garden. Parents assist staff as they incorporate this unique feature and develop the children's appreciation of the natural world around them.

Students learn to appreciate US History through hands-on projects, building famous monuments, engaging in an Ellis Island simulation, dressing up and performing as an important figure in history, or performing musicals about the United States and the Civil War. To gain a global perspective and appreciation, staff and parents collaborate to provide students exposure to a yearly school-wide country study.

Across the school's curriculum, teachers and support staff strive to find ways for the students to develop ownership in their learning processes. The school continually seeks ways to weave District core standards and student goals, along with a sense of community awareness, into a seamless framework of learning.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Monroe School students continue to learn and grow through participation in an exemplary fine arts program, an award winning physical education program, a well-rounded Spanish program and a robust Media Resource Center (MRC) program. Students participate in these curricular areas in classrooms taught by certified, content area specialists. Students participate in music for 30 minutes twice a week, art for 45-60 minutes once a week, PE for 25 minutes daily, Spanish for 30 minutes three times a week and MRC for 30 minutes once per week.

The art program is aligned with the Illinois Fine Arts Standards. Students are exposed to artwork from a variety of countries, cultures, and time periods, as well as artistic careers and creative technologies. Student art is displayed throughout the school and community, including the Hinsdale Public Library, Community House, and the West Suburban Consortium of Academic Excellence K-8 Art show. The fifth grade students' culminating art experience also incorporate the skills of writing, research, and a presentation at the Art Institute of Chicago.

Music instruction is also based on the Illinois Fine Arts Standards. Students sing and perform on instruments individually and in groups, dance, compose, analyze, and study music history and culture. Each grade performs an annual program that integrates musical concepts as well as making connections to the Core curriculum. The annual Fine Arts night highlights the four artistic processes: Creating, Performing/Producing/Presenting, Responding, and Connecting. Students in fourth and fifth grade can elect to participate in orchestra, band, or chorus programs that provide both individual and group instruction.

The physical education program has received the Illinois Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (IAHPERD) Blue Ribbon Award. Monroe's standards based PE curriculum is driven by Illinois and the Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE) standards. Daily PE classes allow students to engage in physical activity that stimulate neural pathways, develop team-building skills, and maintain a healthy level of physical fitness. Social emotional learning standards are met by developing a culture of learning that fosters cooperation, risk taking, good sportsmanship, and fair play. Students requiring adapted PE instruction are provided with a supportive and appropriate curriculum that allows them to be active participants through a variety of services that include physical therapy and Response to Intervention (RtI).

The fifth grade Spanish program is aligned with the American Council of the Teaching of Foreign Language Standards (ACTFL). The program provides a foundation for further study at the middle school level. Instruction is based on the Multiple Intelligences Theory, which creates a high level of student engagement. The program is designed for students to speak the language, become familiar with the history and grammar of Spanish and to compare and contrast the myriad of cultures within the Spanish-speaking world and their own. Cross-curricular connections are also emphasized throughout the program. World Language Clubs (French, Mandarin, and Spanish) are offered to students during lunch.

Students engage in a standards aligned MRC program. This program develops 21st Century learners through the use of a comprehensive collection of literature, integration of technology, and community resources. The MRC director and faculty collaborate to create cross-curricular learning experiences. The MRC provides an array of special programs throughout the school year, including Battle of the Books, author visits and actively reading the Illinois Monarch and Bluestem Reading Award book lists.

Monroe School challenges students to grow as digital citizens through the use of various technology devices. All students utilize MacBook laptops, iPads, Smartboards, pedometers, and instapulse bars. As part of a pilot program, the fourth grade team has a total immersion experience with 1:1 iPads. Ongoing professional development is provided for teachers to enhance their technology skills.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

Monroe engages in instructional methods that reflect the district and school's mission to promote critical thinking and to enable students to achieve their full potential. Instructional approaches facilitate the student's academic, social, and emotional growth. Instructional methods and interventions follow this mission. Interventions are provided following a tiered instructional model commonly referred to as RtI.

Staff is fortunate to be able to utilize a quantity of high quality instructional supports. Material supports include technology items such as iPads, laptops, SMART Boards, Apple TVs, and document cameras. All students are able to benefit from a variety of technology devices. Technology use facilitates appropriate interventions and is also a medium for differentiating instruction. Personnel support is most valued. Monroe's four Response to Intervention (RtI) tutors are utilized to provide early intervention for students struggling in the areas of reading, writing, and math. These tutors, as well as the reading, resource, differentiation, and instructional specialists push into classrooms and help classroom teachers instruct in small group settings at the student's appropriate instructional levels. Monroe has chosen to place particular focus on this approach in grades K-2 to support strong foundational skills. It is not uncommon to see at least four staff members supporting one class at a time. This proactive approach helps students succeed versus waiting to react once students start to fall behind.

Tiered interventions provided are research based, data-driven, and time-bound so progress can be measured and the approach adjusted. The reading specialist hosts a reading club within the school day for students that have fallen behind their grade level peers. Bi-weekly progress monitoring ensures that this intervention meets the needs of the students and allows fluidity between the tiers. Before school, some students participate in Brain Organizational Boost (BOB) Club to build strategies for tasks requiring executive functioning skills. After school Homework Club provides time and assistance with work completion. Two differentiation specialists support classroom differentiation by meeting with flexible groups of students, modeling whole class instruction, and co-teaching with classroom teachers. The differentiation specialists host lunchtime professional development to share best practice techniques for meeting the needs of multiple levels and types of learners.

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

Monroe engages in a variety of differentiated instructional approaches to meet the needs of all students. Benchmark data, collected three times a year, is paired with periodic, formative assessment data to generate flexible instructional groupings and approaches based on student achievement levels, interests, and skill profiles. These measures maximize student potential, no matter where he/she is on the learning continuum.

Some examples of formal and informal measures include: AIMSweb Tests of Early Literacy, Tests of Early Numeracy, Reading, and Math Measures; Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System; Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) in Reading and Math; Common Writing Assessments; Unit Test Results/Item Analyses, Student Observations; PARCC Results; ACCESS testing data.

Teams of teachers meet weekly with select specialists to examine day-to-day student performance and plan for differentiation. A formal process is in place to allow for five targeted grade level meetings a year with building specialists, including the specialists outlined above in order to analyze and reflect upon the results of benchmark assessments. Student cohorts are studied for growth trends to support School Improvement Plan goal setting for the group as a whole, while sub-groups and individual student performances are inspected more closely to determine specific instructional needs. Obstacles to progress are identified and creative problem solving directly addresses the unique needs of each student.

The Individual Problem Solving (IPS) process is the vehicle for solving in-depth individual student concerns. Time is reserved weekly for smaller teams to utilize a strength-based approach to review the needs of individual students. This process results in a provision of supports that address needs in fine motor, academics, social-emotional functioning, speech/language and executive functioning. Advanced learners, ELL students, and individuals with technological needs are also supported through this process. Multi-disciplinary collaboration occurs to develop and implement a support plan. An invaluable side effect of this

collaboration is the growth that team members experience by incorporating the expertise around the table into their own practice. Ongoing data collection and team follow up every 6-8 weeks allows for adjustment to the plan for students and to closely monitor their progress toward independence. Parents are updated via a phone call, email, or letter regarding their child's instructional plan and achievements. The community is kept informed of academic achievement via school board reports, documents, and the annual report to the community.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Energetic, respectful, and student-led announcements set the tone for the day at Monroe School. A school-wide positive behavior program, Monroe Manners, has been implemented. The guiding principle is to “be responsible, respectful, and ready to learn.” Students are provided with clear expectations of what it means to be responsible, respectful, and ready to learn via a rotating assembly to teach the expectations that are specific to each area of the school. All staff actively looks for students that go above and beyond the minimum expectations and positively acknowledge their performance with WOW slips. Students can earn individual rewards in the form of a pin or backpack tag. In addition, the slips also build toward whole school celebrations that recognize everyone’s efforts to go above and beyond. The administration of WOW slips can be differentiated and strategically administered in order to increase the likelihood of meeting those behavioral expectations that may be challenging at times.

Student Peer Mediator volunteers are trained by the social worker and school psychologist to lead younger students in conflict resolution situations on the playground. Fifth grade Kindergarten Helpers volunteer to assist in kindergarten classrooms each day by helping prepare students for learning. A school-wide reading buddy system also helps students to value and learn from one another. These positive role models encourage both the volunteer as well as the students being assisted.

Teachers are empowered and valued at Monroe School. They are encouraged to take risks, be lifelong learners, and to share knowledge with one another. Faculty members share innovative instructional strategies through Differentiation Desserts, Tech Tuesday lunches, teacher led professional development such as Lunch and Learn book talks, plus grade level and specialist hosted faculty meetings.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Monroe School greatly values the involvement of its community. This involvement is a cornerstone of its success as a school. The active participation of parents as volunteers in the classrooms, as members of committees, and attendees at school events creates an environment of cooperation and shared decision-making at Monroe School. The Parent-Teacher Organization is a driving force. It supports teachers and students via fundraising efforts that provide equipment, technology, books, events, and building enhancements.

Engaging the entire family in school and community events is an important focus at Monroe. On International Walk to School Day, Monroe School students and their families are encouraged to walk or ride their bicycles to school. Parents are invited to participate in their child’s PE class on Walk to School Day and support International Walk to School Day by collecting used shoes for people in developing nations. Monroe School staff and families participate in the annual Hinsdale Rotary Run. Monroe also participates in Charlie’s Walk for Autism that raises awareness for children with special needs. The PTO sponsored Family Fun Run encourages staff and families to exercise together.

Monroe School has engaged community members in raising student awareness and participating in a school-recycling program. The Student Council reaches out to the community by entertaining at a local nursing home. The Parent-Teacher Organization sponsors Monroe Cares, a student committee to benefit local charities (food bank, toiletries for veterans/soldiers, making blankets for children with cancer, food and school supplies to its sister-school in Tanzania).

Community members support the arts and sciences. Art Volunteers in the Classroom (AVIC) connects parents to the classroom by leading lessons about different historical aspects of art and art appreciation. The annual science fair includes community scientists from Argonne National Laboratory, area hospitals, and universities. They help judge as well as provide feedback for the student projects.

Parents are an integral part of culminating events including field day and a bowling unit finale, Cosmic

Bowling. The Monroe community's contributions in educating the whole child, building teamwork among students, staff, and families, and infusing academic content throughout the curriculum, adds to Monroe's mission of creating an environment where all children experience success and grow in excellence.

3. Professional Development:

Monroe staff members are made up of an all-star cast that support and challenge each other to continuously grow in the specific ways that students need. It all starts with a school improvement plan that outlines specific strategies for addressing areas of need in math, literacy, and social-emotional learning. Staff members who have an area of expertise share their knowledge and teach other staff members through dedicated staff meeting time, lunch hour learning opportunities, and weekly grade level collaboration time.

The District Staff Development Committee (comprised of teachers representing various schools and grade levels/subject areas, building administrators, and District administration) plans the staff development opportunities for the entire year. These sessions are based on a combination of District initiatives and staff professional needs. Frequently, District staff or teachers lead these sessions. Bi-monthly District-wide grade level/subject area meetings are led by staff members, utilizing an agenda developed by teachers, in order to meet the needs of staff. These meetings allow a chance for teachers to clarify District objectives, discuss academic strategies, and share classroom management ideas with their colleagues.

Regular learning team meetings gather a variety of staff members (grade-level teachers, reading specialist, differentiation specialist, special education teacher, instructional coach, occupational therapist, school psychologist, principal) to discuss needs of students at the grade-level, small group, and individual level. Data collected through standardized testing, as well as classroom assessments and observations, frame these discussions. The primary goal of these meetings is to meet student needs. In addition to creating plans for classroom interventions, these meetings also provide a valuable opportunity for building professionals to engage in professional conversations that disseminate and develop curricular and classroom management strategies on a more individual and personal level.

Teachers are required to develop individual growth plans that provide a framework for each teacher's professional development. Staff members are provided a budget to engage in individual professional development outside the District in order to meet their individual goals. Attendance at these seminars allows for individual teacher interests to be developed. Furthermore, teachers bring back their learning to share with their colleagues.

All of these professional development opportunities and reflection have a positive impact on the teachers and administrators, thereby increasing student achievement.

4. School Leadership:

Monroe School utilizes a shared leadership philosophy. Every staff member takes ownership in a child's learning and supports one another in a variety of ways. In addition to daily check-ins, the principal is in classrooms teaching with whole and small groups. He also hosts book clubs, morning math help, and a principal birthday lunch with a story and songs on his guitar. The school social worker meets with individual and small groups of identified students, as well as whole-class interventions as needed. The pupil services administrator oversees the process of developing and facilitating IEP and 504 plans. The custodians participate in school assemblies and leave encouraging notes on the students' lockers. Instructional coaches meet with teachers to refine academic strategies as well as with small and whole groups of students to implement and model techniques. The reading specialist meets with teachers to identify student needs and plan interventions. The physical education, music, art, and Spanish teachers develop methods to improve reading and math skills by integrating specific strategies into their lessons. Parents are involved in leadership by meeting monthly to determine best ways to support the school through volunteer opportunities as well as purchasing instructional enhancements for the school. Student leaders engage in the Student Council, Green Club, and other public-spirited organizations. Every stakeholder in the Monroe School community has a vested interest in seeing its students succeed and grow.

The Monroe School Building Leadership Team is made up of staff members that represent all areas of the school. They work together to problem solve procedural, academic, and social issues that impact student learning within the building. Monroe uses its School Improvement Plan as a guide to focus its discussions, but anyone can add items to the shared agenda and has an equal voice at the table.

To ensure that all of its policies and plans are carried out, leadership developed five guiding questions that are continually reflected on. The questions include: What should every student know, understand, and be able to do? How does each student learn best? How will we differentiate instruction for all students? What will we do if a student is not making growth? How will we show that every student is learning? Stakeholders' collaborative discussions about these core questions generate a synergy that leads to a culture of high expectations and achievement for all students.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The one practice that embodies Monroe is its team approach to helping students be successful socially, emotionally, and academically. Team-based meetings look at all aspects of the child. When a student's goals or progress is discussed, a variety of professionals are often present. This diversity of staff encourages a more rounded view of the whole child.

A team of teachers develops school-wide activities based on the District Social Emotional Learning for Academic Success (SELAS) goals. These goals are woven into each classroom's curriculum. Projects based on these goals are centrally displayed in the school. In this way, students are kept aware that their social-emotional well being is valued at school. Fifth grade volunteers are trained as Peer Mediators by the social worker and school psychologist to assist younger students with any disagreements that might occur at recess. Behavioral success is noted and encouraged through the implementation of classroom as well as school-wide systems. These include both individual student and school-wide rewards. Through these collaborative efforts of the staff and students, Monroe ensures that children are respectful, responsible, and ready to learn.

The team effort between staff and the Parent-Teacher-Organization creates opportunities to recognize and nurture academic successes including competitions (WordMasters, Science Fair, Spelling Bee, Chess Club, Destination Imagination, etc.) as well as many classroom-based activities. The classroom based activities that are indicators of academic success include culminating activities such as a third grade biography fair, a fifth grade Civil War musical, and a second grade Ellis Island simulation. Students recognize each other's contributions and acknowledge their achievements through classroom meetings and school wide announcements, which fosters a supportive learning environment.

Monroe's team approach to cultural diversity is enhanced through school-wide studies of a variety of countries across the globe. Student committees and classroom activities foster social awareness and community involvement. The planning and celebration of International Peace Day is another example of the collaborative efforts of the Monroe school community by including everyone from central administration, to custodians, to local politicians.

By using this team approach to education, Monroe has witnessed academic success and created healthy, knowledgeable, responsible, and conscientious citizens.