

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 Mr. Josh McKeel

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

Official School Name Southwest Calloway Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 3426 Wiswell Road

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

City Murray State KY Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 42071-4452

County Calloway County

Telephone (270) 762-7345 Fax (270) 762-7350

Web site/URL http://www.calloway.kyschools.us/5/Home E-mail josh.mckeel@calloway.kyschools.us

Twitter Handle _____ Facebook Page https://www.facebook.com/southwestcalloway/ 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*Mr. Tres Settle E-mail tres.settle@calloway.kyschools.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Calloway County Tel. (270) 762-7305

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 Mr. Jeff Gordan
(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):
- 3 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 5 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	30	39	69
1	42	48	90
2	35	37	72
3	48	42	90
4	46	25	71
5	42	35	77
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	243	226	469

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 2 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 94 % White
 - 2 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2014 – 2015 school year: 14%

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	41
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	29
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	70
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	490
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.143
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	14

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 3 %
16 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 51 %
Total number students who qualify: 236

8. Students receiving special education services: 12 %
53 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>1</u> Autism | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>7</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>3</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>23</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>5</u> Mental Retardation | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities | <u>10</u> Developmentally Delayed |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 4
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	20
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	11
Paraprofessionals	0
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 23:1

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

Required Information	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	96%	97%	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 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.

Our mission is to develop lifelong learners that have a strong foundation academically, socially, and behaviorally that will allow them to excel in the future!

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

Southwest Elementary is located in western Kentucky along the Tennessee border. Lying west of Land Between the Lakes, Calloway County, a rural community, is home to Murray State University and Calloway County Schools. Southwest Elementary is one of three elementary schools in the district.

Southwest Elementary, comprised of kindergarten through fifth grade, currently serves 476 students. Ninety-four percent of the student population is Caucasian, with the remaining 6% being Asian, African-American, Hispanic, Native American, and/or Middle Eastern descent. Fifty-one percent of the student population qualifies for free and reduced lunch services.

Our school employs a principal, guidance counselor, and 32 certified teachers, who all meet the requirements for a highly-qualified educator and are teaching in their certified areas. A Gifted and Talented teacher, school nurse, and Family Resource personnel also serve all students in our district. The average years of experience is 14.375, with 96.8% of teachers holding a Master's Degree and the remaining teacher currently taking courses for one. Southwest has one National Board Certified teacher and four teachers actively pursuing National Board certification. Our school also employs 23 classified staff members, including two secretaries, instructional assistants, cafeteria workers and custodians.

Living by the motto "Every Student Matters, Every Moment Counts," the faculty and staff of Southwest Elementary focus on loving our students as if they were our own children. Through an emphasis on relationships, accompanied with high expectations for all, Southwest has made continuous progress over the previous four years. Our efforts have earned Southwest the title of "Distinguished," "High Performing," "Progressing" and a "School of Distinction," based on our state accountability system.

To ensure that our students are successful now and beyond, we strive to provide for the individual needs of each child. Through differentiated instruction in the classroom, grade-level specific intervention times, a rigorous grade-level specific intervention system supported through Title I, Read to Achieve, and Extended School Services both during and after the school day, we are able to assist students who are struggling. For those students who are excelling, we focus on enriching their learning through our Gifted and Talented program, utilization of research-based computer programs, and individualized enrichment opportunities.

The culture of our school is built on high expectations, the foundation of what it means to be a Laker, and the belief that we all must give our personal best. Based upon the 212° concept created by Sam Parker and Mac Anderson, our school strives to give the extra degree each day. We emphasize that, while we are all different, we can each do our personal best in all that we do. We praise small victories, recognize extra efforts, and celebrate successes. Students are recognized through various means such as Captain's Club, the Character Counts initiative, and other academic and behavioral recognitions. Our annual celebration of the extra degree occurs on February 12, 212 day, as we spend time emphasizing the importance of turning up the heat.

All stakeholders at Southwest Elementary School strive to support and challenge all students to develop their full potential academically, emotionally, physically, socially, and culturally. Through various partnerships, Southwest is proud to offer a variety of opportunities for our students, such as, but not limited to: Junior Achievement, World Language Clubs through the International Language Center, economics instruction from local banks and Murray State University, 4H programs, wildlife instruction with the Department of Fish and Wildlife, fitness and health clubs, STEM Club, and a Broadcasting Club.

We take great pride in our continued success at Southwest Elementary. As part of our morning routine, faculty, staff, and students recite "Each day, in every way I am getting better and better. I am a learner for life!" As part of their educational journey, we are confident that the lessons learned, the skills that are mastered, and the attitudes that are learned will serve our students well as they will become "Lakers for Life!"

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

The main focus of Southwest Elementary is to prepare our students to become productive members of society who are equipped with the skills necessary to excel in all areas of their lives. Through rigorous and relevant instruction that is based on Kentucky Core Academic Standards and the Program of Studies, our students are able to learn at their highest possible level.

The use of ongoing assessments is a key component of our curriculum and instruction process. Through the use of multiple assessments, both formative and summative, our staff is able to identify areas of strength and weakness for each student and to monitor content acquisition. Southwest is utilizing Measure of Academic Progress (MAP), Map for Primary Grades (MPG), AIMSWeb, STAR reading, Brigance Screener, and formative and summative assessments in the classrooms.

Reading/English Language Arts

Southwest's reading/ELA program incorporates reading, writing, speaking, listening, phonics, and phonemic awareness, as well as spelling, grammar, and research skills. Our reading and ELA instruction in all grades is guided by the Journeys Common Core series from Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Our reading instruction empowers our students through skill mastery while teaching problem-solving and critical-thinking skills with a focus on vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Based upon student performance and assessment data, students are provided differentiated instruction on their level by utilizing ability grouping, leveled readers, assistance from interventionists, and the Read to Achieve program.

Reading and language instruction is supplemented by the Literacy Design Collaborative and Read, Write, Think. Other resources include Storyworks, Scholastic News, and trade books. Teachers use online resources such as BrainPOP, English for Everyone, Moby Max, United Streaming, Tumble books, Spelling City, and Star Fall. The Accelerated Reading (AR) program is implemented in all grades. Students are recognized for reading excellence or improvement through the Top Readers Club and AR celebrations at the end of each nine week grading period.

Our students participate in local writing contests such as the Grandparent Essay sponsored by the local Retired Teachers Association. Our fifth graders collaborate with the UK Extension Office to present speeches and demonstrations. Kindergarten students compose a book per classroom, while each third and fifth grade student writes an individual book that is published by Student Treasures Publishing Company.

Mathematics

Mathematics instruction is based on the Kentucky Core Academic Standards for math, with instruction aligned vertically to allow for a learning progression across the grades. Beginning in kindergarten, our students learn to think mathematically as we develop concepts, language, and vocabulary that will be used throughout their educational career. Our math instruction is guided by the Go Math series created by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Supplementary resources include Everyday Calendar Math, KASC Coach books, Rhymes and Times, and Daily Mental Math. Technology also provides opportunities for us to enhance instruction through the use of Moby Max and Think Central. Our students also benefit from our partnership with Murray State University, which provides participants and teacher candidates.

Science

Science instruction is guided by the Science Alive series from TCI. With a focus on developing scientists, our students participate in hands-on, project-based learning that provides opportunities to learn through experimentation. Learning is supplemented with online and community resources. Our students benefit from visits from wildlife officers from the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife, guests from local universities, the local 4H program, and Food, Land, and People, which is a collaborative effort with our local conservation district.

Social Studies

Social Studies instruction is guided by the History Alive series from TCI. Instruction is also supplemented with Simple Solutions (Grades 2-5), Social Studies Weekly, United Streaming videos, and Kentucky Studies Weekly. Instruction is enhanced through the use of community members, university professors, the Junior Achievement program (5th grade), mock elections, Moby Max, and field trips. Collaboration with the Kentucky Humanities Council's Chautauqua program and the Steven L. Trigg Sons of the American Revolution have allowed our students to learn from skilled historical re-enactors. Our students also benefit from field trips to historical locations, such as Columbus Belmont State Park.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Our goal at Southwest Elementary is to provide core and non-core instruction that allows students to develop academically, culturally, and creatively. Our students experience high level instruction in music, art, library, and physical education, in which they participate 50 minutes each day on a rotation basis. French, Spanish, and technology instruction is also available.

Arts (Visual and Performing)

All students participate in general art instruction based on Discipline Based Art Education (DBAE) curriculum. This curriculum focuses on the elements and principles of art. All students are assessed on their understanding of the elements through teacher-generated pre- and post-assessments. All students complete detailed performance assessments using a variety of mediums that provide hands-on experiences with various art concepts. Student art work is displayed throughout the school building for all stakeholders to enjoy. Our students also participate in local and state competitions. Many of our students have earned recognition for their submissions.

All students also have the opportunity to benefit from general music instruction. The music curriculum is based on the Music Play curriculum and is supplemented from various sources. Students in kindergarten through 3rd grade participate in an annual production, while fourth and fifth grade students visit local nursing homes to perform for the residents. All 5th grade students are provided instruction on how to play the recorder and are assessed on their abilities. In collaboration with a local dance studio, our second grade students participate in a dance production at the local university. As part of the music instruction, students play various pitched and unpitched percussion instruments during lessons. Students also benefit from movement-based activities to help them learn musical elements using parachutes, ribbons, bean bags, scarves, stretchy bands and other manipulatives.

To help supplement our arts instruction, our students have many co-curricular opportunities including performances by the Calloway County High School band, Paducah Symphony, and collegiate percussion ensembles. Southwest also has an Honor Choir for fourth and fifth graders. Through field trips to the Carson Center in Paducah, as well as productions at the local university, our students experience plays, performances, and musicals.

Physical Education

Our students have physical education class one to two times per week. All students are provided the opportunity to develop fine motor, gross motor, locomotor and non-locomotor skills through specific skill instruction and activities that develop active lifestyles. Our physical education program is based on the curriculum provided by the National Association of Sport and Physical Education (NASPE).

Health and physical education are imbedded throughout our school day. Students benefit from structured physical activities during recess, participation in the "Take 10" initiative with assistance from websites such as Go Noodle, and a collaborative effort in all grades with the local extension office through the use of the Organ Wise curriculum.

Fourth and fifth grade students also have the opportunity to participate in co-curricular clubs focused on health and fitness. Students learn about various health-related topics and how to improve eating, sleeping, and exercise habits.

Foreign Language

As part of our program to provide cultural education to our students, Southwest has partnered with the International Language Program. All of our 5th graders are instructed in French language and in the French culture. A group of 4th grade students have also learned French and have enjoyed making connections with children in Paris, France through email and Skype. Students in first and second grade also receive instruction in Japanese language and culture. First through fifth grade students have the opportunity to participate in after school extracurricular programs in Spanish and French.

Technology

With a recent upgrade of our technology, Southwest is able to place current technology in the hands of our students. All grade levels have classroom access to Chromebooks, which allows access to enrichment and remediation activities. A computer lab with 30 desktop computers provides weekly instruction for all students. The creation of presentations, composing of writing pieces, student progress, and technology-based enrichment activities are monitored by Southwest staff. Students also utilize technology to benefit from online resources such as Moby Max, Think Central, and multiple other educational resources.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

With an emphasis on growing every student and taking advantage of every moment, the Southwest staff implement a wide range of instructional methods. A school wide implementation of high-level questioning and an emphasis on student engagement have been our focus for the previous two years. Teachers facilitate learning through direct instruction with a focus on a rigorous and relevant curriculum, active student learning, peer editing, and timely and descriptive feedback.

The use of differentiation is prevalent throughout our building. Teachers and staff work collaboratively to utilize large and small group instruction and to provide the support necessary to build knowledge and enhance learning. Based on assessment data, students are grouped to allow for specific instruction.

Southwest implements the Kentucky System of Intervention by using a three-tier system to provide comprehensive services to meet the academic and behavioral needs of all students. A team of Title I interventionists, ESS staff, Read to Achieve personnel, and AmeriCorps volunteers provide interventions for students in all grade levels. Students are identified through the use of universal screeners and teacher recommendations. The interventions include collaboration in the classroom, small group, and one-on-one instruction. Our goal is to provide remediation and enrichment that will meet the individual needs of each student.

Struggling third, fourth, and fifth grade students are also encouraged to take advantage of our afterschool ESS program. Students are identified through assessment data and classroom performance to participate in the three day per week program taught by teachers and staff members, with an emphasis on math and reading.

Southwest Elementary has a Primary Talent Pool for kindergarten through third grade and a Gifted and Talented program for fourth and fifth grade students. The GT students meet once a week with the district GT teacher, who provides challenging instruction. These students also benefit from learning opportunities at the local high school and university.

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

Through the use of data from multiple measures, Southwest Elementary identifies individual, grade-level, and schoolwide areas of strength as well as needed growth. The sources of data include the annual results from the statewide Kentucky Performance Rating for Educational Progress (K-PREP) tests for grades 3-5. Students are also assessed three times each school year using Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) for grades 2-5, MAP for Primary Grades (MPG) for first grade, AIMSweb for all students in kindergarten, first and second grades, and students who are receiving services through KSI, Title I, or special education. Reading levels are assessed up to five times per year using STAR reading in grades 1-5. Formative and summative assessments are utilized in the classroom to assess learning and guide instruction.

Teachers and administrators meet in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and afterschool meetings to disaggregate data and make decisions. KPREP data is reviewed by the entire faculty and staff and is used to identify schoolwide trends and areas of needed growth. MAP and MPG data is organized by the principal based on achievement and growth and shared with teachers as grade-level, classroom, and individual data. The data is then discussed in PLCs or individual meetings to help guide instruction, pinpoint needed professional growth, and identify students for remediation, enrichment, or motivation. AIMSweb is used to recognize student need or growth. Data is shared with principals, teachers, staff, and interventionists to direct instruction. Formative and summative assessments given in the classroom are also discussed with the principal to monitor learning and recognize areas of improvement.

Parents and students are informed of a student's academic achievements in a variety of ways. All parents receive reports from KPREP, MAP, and/or MPG at conferences or meetings. The information is explained to the parent by the teacher, guidance counselor, or principal. Parents are also informed of progress through the Infinite Campus Parent Portal and Renaissance Learning's Home Connect. Community stakeholders are only informed of school wide and grade-level data due to confidentiality. KPREP data is shared annually at the October Board of Education.

Southwest has worked diligently to decrease achievement gaps that are identified through state testing. On our most recent assessment, the two identified groups that were 10 or more percentage points lower than the test scores of all students in reading were students that were eligible for free or reduced meals and students with disabilities. In math, the only subgroup that met the achievement gap criteria was students with disabilities. In order to close the achievement gap, students are identified and receive one on one or small group interventions to remediate areas of needed growth. There is extensive collaboration between regular and special education teachers to provide the support necessary to help all students learn.

Southwest students have been high performing for several years. In order to maintain these levels of achievement, we work diligently to provide rigorous instruction at high levels of engagement. We constantly monitor student progress and make adjustments based on data. We use an "all hands on deck" approach to help students who are struggling while maintaining high expectations for all.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

One of the largest factors in Southwest's continued success is our positive school climate. Our ability to engage and motivate students begins with the establishment of relationships between the faculty, staff, students and stakeholders. Our focus is to love our students as if they are our own. This begins with making sure that students feel respected and safe. The principal and staff take great pride in knowing each student, their interests, strengths, and areas of needed growth.

At Southwest, we celebrate our successes and recognize outstanding effort. Students have the opportunity to earn a nomination for our school wide Captain's Club. The purpose of the Captain's Club is to recognize students who are performing at high levels or showing improvement in academics or behavior. Nominations are made by the adults in our building, and students are recognized on a bimonthly basis. We also take the time to celebrate accomplishments through assemblies, recognition over the intercom system, and display of student work and accomplishments throughout the building.

We build our culture on the 212 degree concept by Sam Parker and Mac Anderson. The concept is based on the premise that everyone can give one extra degree, and that extra degree will be the effort required to get better each day. As part of the concept, we celebrate 212 effort annually on February 12 with a variety of activities and a school wide assembly. Students can also be "caught" being 212 and earn the right for an extra reward such as eating lunch with the principal.

Throughout the year, Southwest also hosts events to help fortify our culture. Family Reading Nights, a Fall Carnival, Book Fairs, Read Across America, Spirit Weeks, and school wide competitions are examples of such opportunities.

We strive to maintain an environment where teachers feel valued and supported. Our goal is to provide a family-type atmosphere where everyone is treated with kindness and respect. Teachers are provided the flexibility to utilize various strategies and activities based on their professional opinion of what their students need. The administration works diligently to remove barriers and provide the resources necessary for the teachers to be successful.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Southwest Elementary benefits greatly from the support from our students' families. While many sacrifice their time and talents to serve as volunteers in our classrooms, others are willing to provide donations to help support initiatives that benefit our students. The majority of our families are actively involved in their children's educations. By attending parent-teacher conferences, communicating through email or their child's daily planner, or the use of our Parent Portal, families are able to stay on top of students' academic and behavioral performances.

Southwest has benefited from the support of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). In recent years the PTA has provided financial assistance in purchasing items for our school and helping with instructional programs such as Renaissance Learning. The PTA also sponsors afterschool activities and provides for student celebrations such as Kentucky Kid's Day and Field Day.

We are fortunate to live in a community that is truly committed to high-quality education. As we are home to Murray State University, the importance of and opportunity to achieve higher education are a direct part of our community. Murray State is actively involved in our school through their teacher preparation program. Teacher candidates and teacher education students completing practicum experiences provide extra assistance. We also benefit from volunteers from the university who serve as guest speakers, presenters, or tutors.

3. Professional Development:

The state of Kentucky requires all certified teachers to acquire 24 hours of professional development annually. Based on the areas of needed growth that are identified by surveys, teacher self-reflection, and recommendations from teachers and administrators, the Professional Development committee presents proposals for professional development options to our Site Based Decision Making Council. Based on the recommendations and available funding and resources, the SBDM Council approves the professional development plan.

Emphasizing personal professional growth, our PD opportunities are designed to benefit each individual teacher. With the implementation of the Professional Growth and Effectiveness System, administrators and teachers work together to assess and reflect on areas of needed growth. Once the areas of needed growth are identified, the principal and teachers, through professional dialogue, discuss and design a plan to meet the identified areas.

Teachers use a variety of options to grow professionally. Through the use of technology, conferences that are hosted by the local university, and professional development available within our district, our teachers have several options when seeking professional growth. We have often benefited the most from professional learning that occurs among our staff as we share ideas and strategies with each other.

Our individualized professional development has resulted in a positive impact on the capacity of administrators and teachers. Each person identifies areas of needed growth and by collaborating with their supervisor they are able to locate and actively participate in activities that address their specific need. This approach has led to substantial growth and directly impacted instruction and learning. For example, a group of primary teachers, our principal, teachers from other local schools, and professors from Murray State University are working together on a Numeracy Project to help strength our math instruction.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership team at Southwest Elementary includes the Site Based Decision Making (SBDM) Council, the principal, the school counselor, teachers, and parents.

The SBDM Council, the governing body of the school, is chaired by the school principal and is composed of faculty members and parent representatives. The council has the responsibility to make decisions that impact student achievement including allocating resources, monitoring and approving the school improvement plan, creating policies, and consulting on potential employees.

The principal is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school, as well as for providing the vision and motivation for future improvement. As the instructional leader of the school, the principal meets with staff members during Professional Learning Communities and also informally to monitor instructional progress and provide motivation and guidance. By being in the classrooms on a daily basis, the principal is visible and actively engaged in the learning process.

With a passion for data, the principal spends hours disaggregating data from multiple sources in order to monitor progress and assess effectiveness. This includes individual student data, classroom data, and school wide data. The findings are then shared with staff members to provide direction and ensure accountability. As a team, the data is used to determine the overall needs and allows for individual students to be identified who would benefit from enrichment or remediation. By constantly monitoring the most recent data and assessing the progress in the classroom, the principal is able to assist all stakeholders.

The most important aspect of our school leadership is that we are all in this together. A team mindset focused on each student reaching their full potential is at the center of our leadership team. With a clear focus on our goal and a true commitment to excellence, all stakeholders collaborate to make Southwest Elementary the best it can be.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

While there are many factors that have contributed to making Southwest so successful, the one practice that has made the greatest impact has been the renewed focus on using data to make decisions. Four years ago it became apparent that we had all the resources and personnel to excel. By collecting and utilizing data, we were able to honestly assess our current status, establish priorities and goals as we pinpointed areas of strength and needed growth, and use the information to develop obtainable goals. Whether it is being used to determine the individual needs of a student, the attainment of content for a classroom or grade, or the areas of focus at the school level, assessment data is used to guide all decisions.

Each student is given formative and summative assessments to determine their present level of performance and their comprehension of the content. Once the data is collected, teacher, staff and administrators meet to discuss and develop a plan to meet the needs of the students. This allows for a prescriptive approach to learning as students' areas of strength and needed growth can be addressed through remediation or enrichment.

Professional conversations based on classroom or grade-level data allow for adjustments in instruction and planning. Teachers and the principal meet in professional learning communities, KSI meetings, and informally to monitor progress. By constantly examining the data, we are able to create fluid ability groups in mathematics and interventions. Data is also used to monitor growth, which provides the school personnel with insight into what content and skills require reinforcement.

Schoolwide planning is guided by assessment data and stakeholder input collected through surveys. This information provides the basis for planning through our Comprehensive School Improvement Plan. School leadership also uses the data to make staffing decisions, prioritize professional development, recognize outstanding growth and achievement, and guide the direction of the school.

Being driven by data has provided our school with direction, purpose, and motivation. We are open and honest about our strengths and weaknesses and realize that being able to use data effectively can pay huge dividends and result in reaching greater heights than we ever believed possible!