

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

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Ms. Lisa Sundquist

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

Official School Name North Harford Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 120 Pylesville Road

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

City Pylesville      State MD      Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 21132-1397

County Harford

Telephone (410) 638-3670      Fax (410) 638-3675

Web site/URL  
https://www.edline.net/North\_Harford\_Elementary      E-mail Lisa.Sundquist@hcps.org

Twitter Handle      Facebook Page  
https://twitter.com/HCPSSchools      http://facebook.com/HCPSSchools      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\*Mrs. Barbara Canavan      E-mail Barbara.Canavan@HCPS.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Harford County Public Schools      Tel. (410) 838-7300

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board  
President/Chairperson Mrs. Nancy Reynolds  
(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

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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

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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):
- 33 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 9 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 11 High schools
  - 1 K-12 schools
- 54 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
<b>PreK</b>	24	15	24
<b>K</b>	45	18	63
<b>1</b>	25	29	54
<b>2</b>	29	27	56
<b>3</b>	35	32	67
<b>4</b>	32	30	62
<b>5</b>	34	30	64
<b>6</b>	0	0	0
<b>7</b>	0	0	0
<b>8</b>	0	0	0
<b>9</b>	0	0	0
<b>10</b>	0	0	0
<b>11</b>	0	0	0
<b>12 or higher</b>	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	224	181	405

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 1 % Asian
  - 1 % Black or African American
  - 1 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 93 % White
  - 4 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2014 – 2015 school year: 7%

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	13
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	16
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	29
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	407
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.071
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	7

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 29 %  
Total number students who qualify: 120

8. Students receiving special education services: 15 %  
62 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>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness              | <u>12</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness        | <u>14</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>35</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>1</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>5</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:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers	20
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	8
Paraprofessionals	4
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 20:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2015.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
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.

Providing skills, knowledge, and opportunities for students to achieve their highest potential in a safe and respectful environment to become responsible citizens and lifelong learners.

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

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Rigorous curriculum, supportive community and staff collaboration are the building blocks at North Harford Elementary School that help provide opportunities for all students to achieve to their highest potential in a safe and respectful environment. The vision of the North Harford community is “SOARing on the wings of success with Safety, Ownership, Achievement and Respect for all.”

North Harford Elementary School is nestled in the rolling hills of Northern Harford County and is part of an educational complex that is the cornerstone of our community. Our campus includes the middle and high schools which our students will be attending and with whom we have developed strong partnerships that benefit our students now and lay the groundwork for their future successes as students and citizens. Constructed in 1982 with the purpose of unifying two existing school communities, North Harford Elementary School provided the community with a modernized facility that embraced the values and traditions of our unique community. Our community is comprised of working farms that often support several families, single family homes and multi-generational homes. Boasting a population of over 400 students, many generations of families have valued their experiences at North Harford and have moved back to the area so that their children can attend the schools which continue to be the epicenter of our strong, close-knit community.

We have established many traditions at North Harford Elementary School which continue to ensure ownership, achievement and respect for the community we serve. Our democratically elected student congress demonstrates their emerging leadership skills by organizing food drives, book collections for the homeless, soda can pull tab collection for the Ronald McDonald House, and creating letters and cards for senior citizens and to send to our service men and women. Our unified arts programs have bolstered our tradition of highlighting the talents of our students by holding an annual community art show coupled with an instrumental concert. Students at North Harford are taught to honor our rights and freedoms as demonstrated by performing the Star Spangled Banner at the local minor league baseball games (Ironbirds) and participating in a living flag at Fort McHenry on Flag Day. We also have a strong tradition of large numbers of our 4th and 5th grade students participating in the Patriot program each year.

With the emphasis of Health and Wellness in our School Improvement Plan, many healthy practices and habits have been instilled in our community that lead to readiness for learning and achievement. Students participate in an end of the year Field Day which includes physical activities focused on cardio, coordination, stamina, endurance and promoting teamwork and good sportsmanship. Music and kinesthetic activities are utilized in classrooms on a daily basis. Hearing and vision screenings are conducted annually as well as dental screening for our youngest learners. Embracing the farm to table mentality, our students were excited to create a vegetable garden in courtyard. Utilizing their math, science, technology and engineering skills taught in the classroom, students regularly harvest crops such as lettuce, peppers, tomatoes, and thyme, to be served in our cafeteria. The raised garden beds, in conjunction with our in-house and community TerraCycle program, Waste Free Wednesday (composting), hand dryers, Harford Glen Environmental Center partnership, no mow zone areas, Wear and Share Program (clothes recycling), monarch butterfly Way Station, master gardener, and our conservation initiatives earned us the prestigious honor of being named a 2014 Maryland Green School.

The school faculty, staff, and PTA have developed a cohesive partnership that has allowed our students to flourish. Our PTA sponsors many events which bring our school community together. PTA’s largest fund raiser, Football Training Camp, supports the health and wellness objective in our School Improvement Plan. Each year the NHES PTA covers 100% of the costs for all field trips and cultural arts assemblies. This alleviates the financial burden for families that may not otherwise be able to afford such educational opportunities. Despite geographic challenges our families may face in attending school events, our PTA sponsors a variety of activities to bring our community together. The annual Talent Show, Reflections Program, Trunk or Treating, Spring Fair and Breakfast with Santa round out a wide array of activities which allow families to show their school support.

The people within our community embody a true sense of belonging through outreach programs such as the

Whiteford Volunteer Fire Department's Fire Safety program, the Whiteford Library's "Every Kid a Card" program and the Summer Reading program. The high teacher and staff retention rate @ NHES shows the sense of belonging staff have within the school and community. Many of our staff members live in our community and have children who attend North Harford Schools. Through the efforts of curriculum, community and collaboration we continue to strive in "Soaring on the Wings of Success."

## PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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### 1. Core Curriculum:

North Harford Elementary School's (NHES) success can be attributed to the integration of the three Cs: Curriculum, Community and collaboration. While the Maryland State Common Core State Standards are the driving force for instruction it's through the collaboration of our learning community that high quality, rigorous instruction ensures student achievement for all.

Students at NHES receive a balanced approach to integrated language arts instruction. Curriculum is aligned with Common Core standards within a thematic approach which is integrated across content areas. Students are engaged daily in a variety of text appropriate to their literacy level. Co-teaching involving classroom teachers, Gifted and Talented teachers, Reading Specialists and Special educators helps to provide a variety of grouping practices where all student's academic needs are addressed. Students are immersed in reading, writing, speaking and listening through varied content rich complex text which includes trade books, anthology stories, Junior Great Books, National Geographic and Scholastic magazines as well as various multi-media sources. Foundations and Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Literacy Instruction are utilized with primary students in order to build phonemic awareness, phonics, and comprehension strategies which are essential to building a solid reading foundation. Intermediate teachers build on these foundational reading and writing skills with a rigorous instructional plan that includes close reading of multiple texts, thus challenging students to master a multitude of skills that cultivate lifelong learners.

At North Harford Elementary school the students are actively engaged in problem solving, reasoning, and critical tasks based upon the county initiative coupled with the Common Core State Standard Shifts in Mathematics. Students are grouped in flexible math groups. In addition, each teacher utilizes Number Talks which provides students with an understanding of number sense and efficient computational fluency. The Upside Down Classroom strategy enables teachers to provide high-quality individualized instruction based on student needs. In turn, students engage in college and career readiness practices that allow for insights into the construction of divergent thinking and problem solving rather than the dissemination of information. Additionally, NHES has adopted the First in Math online math program in grades one through five as an initiative to increase the automaticity of basic fact recall and enrichment. Interventions such as Dream Box as well as grade level incentives for basic fact recall provide additional practice of strategies and increased number sense.

At North Harford Elementary School science is taught across the curriculum. Local and global issues lead us to develop practices that contributed to being honored as a Maryland Green School. As a result of becoming a Green School our school initiative of environmental conservation has even been adopted as a way of life for our entire community. Inquiry based education enhances the physical science, life science, earth and space science, and engineering design domains of science. Primary and intermediate students engage in analyzing and synthesizing information through the use of the Claims, Evidence, Reasoning structure. The incorporation of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) stimulates student interest while engaging all students in authentic learning in preparation for future careers.

Students apply essential social studies knowledge and skills to think critically, solve problems, and prepare to be productive citizens within their community. They learn to use primary and secondary sources such as maps and other multi-media sources when exploring several major focus areas: the community, the importance of citizenship, history, economics, government, geography, and multi-culturalism. Through collaboration with the Maryland Historical Society, teachers are able to enhance learning experiences by completing distance learning projects. This program highlights Maryland history and how artifacts were once used. It also incorporates the use of technology, which is often integrated through project-based learning. Field trips at every grade level enhance our social studies curriculum. Students participate in field trips to various locations in Harford County, Baltimore County, Baltimore City, and Annapolis. North Harford Elementary School has deep roots within the community and has established many vital and meaningful partnerships with our local services and businesses.

This year, North Harford Elementary School was excited to expand our existing Prekindergarten program by adopting a co-taught Prekindergarten model. This model allows our youngest learners with disabilities and our general education Prekindergarten students to work side-by-side as they build a strong foundation of skills for a successful educational career. The success of our students is ensured through a close partnership with parents and guardians and the classroom staff to maximize learning experiences for all students. These experiences build on their individual strengths and target specific needs as they work to become confident and capable students who will be prepared to achieve in later grades. Prekindergarten students enjoy working with their fifth grade mentors who help them transition to the classroom each morning and work one on one to reinforce previously taught concepts such as book and print awareness and rhyming words.

## 2. Other Curriculum Areas:

The students at North Harford Elementary School continue to “soar on the wings of success” through our unified arts program. Collaboration between teachers, our school community and Harford County Public Schools curriculum offices allows the integration of transdisciplinary lessons which provide the whole child the opportunity to engage in imaginative, inquisitive, interpersonal, and physical activities as they develop both the cognitive and creative parts of the brain. Prekindergarten through grade five students participate in developmentally appropriate physical education, library/media, music, and art experiences.

The Physical Education program at North Harford Elementary School focuses on the students’ cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development. Students attend Physical Education class five to six times a month as they study five general movement concepts. These areas include: throwing and catching, striking, integrated movement, group initiatives, and personal fitness/wellness. Classes are structured so that through sequential learning experiences, students gain general motor skills, an understanding of personal fitness, as well as safety concepts. Every student is encouraged and directed to work towards their potential through continued practice and problem solving in both individual and group settings. Students are regularly assessed in both a formal and informal setting, which in turn is used to direct the student’s progress as well as the teacher’s instruction. Students participate in our yearly Field Day and Marathon activities and the Fitness Gram program. Our Physical Education teacher works collaboratively with PTA to hold our Fall Training Camp which includes a series of physical activities and drills in order to help raise money for our school and provide students with an authentic opportunity to apply their skills.

The North Harford Elementary School art curriculum provides students with a weekly art class in which they benefit from experiences in five major units: drawing, painting, printmaking, three-dimensional design and two-dimensional design. All content is historically and culturally balanced, allows for creative expression and includes visual literacy as students analyze elements and principles of design in artwork. As lessons are integrated with other content areas, art content and skills become relevant in real-life application. Two annual art shows allow artwork to be exhibited at the school as well as in the community. Our art teacher worked with our 4th grade team during the Maryland Unit in order to have students use paper tearing techniques to create Maryland collages that incorporated their research and demonstrated their learning.

In weekly music classes, students can be found learning about the fundamentals: rhythms, melody, harmony, form, tone color, dynamics, tempo and music history. Students are engaged in activities that encourage them to read, play, and to compose their own music. Third grade students are introduced to playing instruments as they learn to play recorders in class. Fourth and Fifth grade students perform at annual winter and spring concerts. Their musical talents are highlighted through instruments as well as vocal performance. Our intermediate students attend regional band, strings and choral days at the high school. Our music teacher works collaboratively with our first grade team during the Animal Unit in order to extend students’ understandings through songs, which are presented to parents during the theme celebration.

Technology continues to be an essential tool in our student’s growth. Teachers have participated in Professional Development on various Web 2.0 tools such as Class Flow, Active Inspire, Active Expressions, Symbaloo, Haiku Deck, and Pixie in order to integrate technology into everyday instruction. Students are encouraged to use these technology tools to present their learnings as an alternative to traditional formats. Teachers are using these innovative technology tools in their classrooms to gather formative and summative

assessment data.

There are many extra-curricular programs offered to students at North Harford Elementary School. At the intermediate level, students can participate in an after school, "Extended Day STEM" intervention. This program is designed to boost students' knowledge of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, in order to shift from proficient to advanced in the areas of science and mathematics on standardized assessments. Additionally, we offer an intermediate, Health and Wellness Running Club to students in grades three, four, and five to promote health and nutrition. We have co-taught guidance lessons throughout all grade levels and a guidance mentoring program. The, "Fun Club" supports the social development among anonymously nominated (through a blind student survey) intermediate students to promote positive social interactions and exchanges. There is school-wide participation in the Maryland Black Eyed Susan book club in order to expose children to new authors and illustrators as well as to build a love of reading. Our Student Government has initiated monthly School Spirit Days, canned food drives to help feed people in our community, as well as a school-wide book drive in partnership with The Harford County Reading Council to give books to homeless families in Harford County.

### 3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

The focus at North Harford Elementary School is on each individual child as a learner. Grouping meetings are held in the spring in order to place children into classrooms for the fall. Formative and summative data is used to facilitate the placement of every child. Every grade level groups based upon the needs of each student at that grade level. Vertical team meetings are then held in order for teachers to share data with the next grade level. Grouping practices at North Harford Elementary School take into consideration students who may need added support using interventions as well as students who have surpassed grade level standards and may require enrichment.

Co-teaching between classroom teachers, special educators, the reading specialist and the enrichment teacher allows for the needs of all students to be met. Team lesson planning allows for differentiation within the classroom. Common themes across content areas are investigated through the use of intentionally selected texts at various levels. This allows students to collaborate with their grade level peers to demonstrate their knowledge through a variety of learning styles. Universal Design for Learning is incorporated into daily lessons in order for all students to have an equal opportunity to learn. Teachers believe that giving students choice in how to present their understanding and knowledge helps to promote the many learning styles of students in their classrooms.

The Classroom-Focused Improvement Process (CFIP) is utilized at North Harford Elementary School in order for grade levels to continually analyze data. Based on data, students may be provided with either enrichment projects or intervention services such as Foundations, Wilson, IStation, Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Literacy, Edmark, Dreambox and First in Math. After school programs are provided for intervention and enrichment based on the needs of our school. The guidance counselor and Physical Education teacher work together to offer a group for students looking to improve their social skills. The needs of the whole child are very important at North Harford Elementary School.

The faculty at North Harford Elementary School strives to create lessons that are meaningful, differentiated and data driven thus producing successful life-long learners who are college and career ready. Students leave North Harford Elementary School with the confidence and knowledge to SOAR.

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

In order to meet the needs of all learners, formal and informal data is utilized and evaluated during our CFIP meetings. The Scholastic Reading Inventory is utilized to obtain a Lexile level for all second through fifth grade students. Our Kindergarten and 1st grade teachers utilize the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System as well as the Harford County Kindergarten Assessment in order to get an accurate reading level for their students. The information from these assessments guides teachers to appropriate books on a child's instructional level and allows an increase in the amount of time students are actively reading. County math assessments are analyzed at all grade levels to determine proper placement of

students into math classrooms as well as for practice and enrichment lessons. Additionally, Performance Matters (a county wide data collection system) allows teaching teams to identify specific outliers in need of further focus. North Harford's School Improvement Team uses these tools, as well as data from the PARCC assessment, to select areas of need to be incorporated into our school plan.

Informal assessments and data collection are used on a daily basis within each classroom. Exit tickets help teachers plan for follow-up learning opportunities, such as math stations, in order to meet the needs of each student. Upside Down Lessons help teachers assess students based on communication and understanding of core concepts. Students are responsible for maintaining their personal data binder to track their own progress and set individual goals. As a result, students enjoy being the recipients of many academic awards including Carson Scholar Awards, Presidential Awards, and recognition through the Patriot Program. Our local pizzeria recognizes students with perfect attendance each quarter with a free dinner.

As one of the 3 C's, Communication is a very important part of North Harford Elementary School's success. Parents and guardians are kept informed about their student's progress through phone calls, conferences, Edline (online gradebook) updates and quarterly report cards. Parent and guardian volunteers are able to see their child's academic achievements first hand when they support programs such as our Patriot program, and when they attend events such as our First grade book share and Kindergarten's Mother's Tea.

## **PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS**

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

The pride within our community is evident on not only the children's faces as they arrive every day, but also every individual that crosses into our school building. This is evident through our high attendance rate. Our school is a place where learning is engaging, intentional, purpose driven, and emotionally and intellectually stimulating. We offer after school programs such as Run Club and STEM Club to enrich our students as well as to demonstrate the importance of health and wellness. We also motivate our students during the school day by offering engaging activities and by working with the student government to provide the students, faculty and staff an opportunity to show school spirit for monthly spirit days. For example, the entire school community is encouraged to show support of our wonderful state on Maryland Day. Students and faculty alike are encouraged to promote their love of reading by dressing as their favorite storybook character.

The tone of each day is set by a warm greeting from the Principal and Assistant Principal as they greet students at the front door. Individual student achievements are celebrated daily on the morning announcements. Blue notes highlight exemplar behavior of students who are then rewarded with a small group luncheon attended by our administration. The student's day concludes with a farewell from their teacher as well as administration. In addition to daily accolades, students are celebrated through quarterly Good News Assemblies. One of the many well-loved traditions at North Harford Elementary School happens on the last day of school. A school-wide farewell can be observed as the teachers gather at the front of the school with a tear in their eyes and equipped with bubbles and smiles bidding their students a safe and happy summer. This long standing tradition has been embraced by our bus drivers who send the teachers off for the summer with hand written messages displayed in the bus windows and a gift of Hershey Kisses.

In order for students to achieve great success, teachers must work in an environment where they feel highly regarded. Through comradery, collaboration, and a mutual respect for each other, the staff at NHES feel valued and supported. Our teachers find motivation in personalized notes from peers, afterschool workouts, and other wellness activities and healthy lunches on early dismissal days. Teachers are encouraged to take risks and pursue county and state leadership roles as well as attend state and county professional development. A supportive environment and mutual respect uplifts staff spirit and motivation.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

North Harford Elementary School is an integral part of the community. Communication is an essential aspect of keeping our families and the North Harford community apprised of what great things are happening at our school. Our families receive a weekly Sunday evening call from our Principal that gives them information relevant to the upcoming week's activities and also celebrates the accomplishments of our students. In first through fifth grades, the students have an agenda book that serves as a place to record assignments and also as a valuable communication tool between teachers and parents and guardians. Parents and guardians are kept informed about grades and other school information through Edline, Remind (Teacher to Parent and guardian texting program) and monthly newsletters. NHES utilizes a weekly Thursday folder to ensure that flyers and notices are sent home in a timely manner. Our PTA maintains a Facebook page that is updated often and shares information about accolades and special events at the school and in the community.

Within the school community our students benefit academically and culturally from our association with North Harford High School and Harford Community College (HCC). We are invited to attend dramatic and musical performances at the high school. High School students in the Future Teachers of America club volunteer their time to assist teachers and students after school. Our students have worked with high school students to plant trees in wetlands found in our community and to learn about products from local farms. Many teachers at NHES are mentors to HCC students who work within our classrooms for 30 hours each

semester as they complete coursework for a future career in education.

Our PTA and volunteer programs cultivate longstanding relationships with our families. Volunteers work in the school every day, assisting teachers and students and preparing materials as needed. PTA volunteers organize and lead many family events, such as Football Training Camp, Trunk-or-Treating, Breakfast with Santa, The PTA Reflections program, Basket Bingo, Kids' Bingo, movie nights, the Spring Fair, Scholastic Book Fairs, and school-spirit restaurant nights. PTA volunteers also design our school yearbook and create fifth grades' commemorative shirts. As a result of the support from our PTA, our students also benefit from educational and cultural assemblies, guest speakers and field trips for every class. The NHES PTA is truly committed to the support and growth of our students and families.

Community involvement is further demonstrated by our relationship with the Whiteford Branch of the Harford County Public Library, local businesses and charities, as well as individual neighbors. Recently, a local neighbor identified our school as the recipient of a \$10,000 Box Top bonus award!

### 3. Professional Development:

The success and achievement of our students is directly correlated to the quality instruction that our highly effective staff brings to life in each classroom at North Harford Elementary School every day. After analyzing student data and identifying targeted areas of need for our diverse learners, the School Improvement Team (SIT) actively pursued feedback from the staff to determine the necessary Professional Development that individuals need to continue to prepare all students as lifelong learners and thinkers while facing today's rigorous demands.

Differentiation has been a primary focus of professional develop and has been identified as a "High Leverage Strategy" at North Harford Elementary School. As a school community, we recognize the value and power that differentiation allows by mixing and blending students' abilities, interests and learning styles. Our students SOAR in the classroom because teachers intentionally differentiate and apply the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in order to engage students and give them an authentic purpose. Our approach to offer a variety of modalities for learning allows us to support students in their individual growth.

As we continue to investigate best practices for providing high quality, rigorous, integrated, engaging tasks, our school adopted a student-centered, constructivist approach to mathematics that focuses on students' understanding and the development of conceptual knowledge that later leads to procedural knowledge. Through book studies and delving into John Van de Walle's text *Teaching Student Centered Mathematics* and Sherry Parrish's *Number Talks* teachers have been charged with rethinking the philosophy of mathematics education while increasing their own understanding of mathematical coherence. Students deepen their understanding of mathematical standards and are able to apply the Standards of Mathematical Practices by apply their understanding to real world problems using the Upside Down Classroom approach.

Growing and Developing as a Professional is a crucial piece that leads to our goal of "Achievement for All." Teachers self-select areas within their Professional Development Plan (PDP) that they believe are essential to their growth as an educator and in turn provide for valuable learning experiences for students. Professional development is also designed based on the Student Learning Objectives (SLO) created by teacher teams and based on the needs of their current students in any curricular area. During collaborative planning time, professional leaders within the building and county provide meaningful professional development carefully tailored to the direct needs of each team of professionals to meet the goals of both the PDP and the SLO. This philosophy gives each staff member an opportunity to grow in the most essential areas of personal need in order to deliver the highest quality of instruction. North Harford Elementary School intentionally designs professional development based on the vision of our school, the needs of our professionals, and to support our entire school community.

#### 4. School Leadership:

The Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) at North Harford Elementary School consists of a principal, an assistant principal, and a part time instructional facilitator. It is the responsibility of these individuals to provide staff with focused and meaningful professional development opportunities, observe and evaluate faculty and staff members, manage the physical plant, collaborate with the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), and establish community relationships. The ILT believes that input from all stakeholders is critical as we all work together for the benefit of the students at North Harford Elementary School. This has been brought to life this year as teachers were given the opportunity to help design the delivery of professional development based on the needs of the students and in a manner that increased teacher effectiveness. Under the direction of the School Improvement Team, teacher leaders were identified by their peers based on areas of expertise and experience with specific programs and methods that lead to increased student achievement. For example, teachers were excited to learn more about the Upside Down Classroom strategy from two of their peers who had studied this method and implemented it in their own classrooms with much success. Teachers feel empowered when their input is sought regarding issues that directly affect the achievement of their students and their classroom programs. Our teachers are experienced and smart and are trusted to make sound instructional decisions each day. It is the overwhelming desire of the teachers to do their best every day so that their students are able to rise to high levels of achievement.

A critical role of the leadership team at North Harford is to ensure that all resources are appropriately allocated in a manner that provides support where needed. Intervention and enrichment programs are identified and a schedule is developed that allows maximum time spent in content rich instruction and interventions. School leaders persevere to ensure that the schedule and the resources are targeted to meet the needs of students. The effectiveness of each program is monitored through ongoing Classroom Focused Improvement Process (CFIP) meetings and ILT Collaborative Planning Meetings. Teachers are extremely professional and flexible when it comes to doing whatever it takes to meet the needs of our students.

North Harford Elementary School administrators and staff are aware that values and beliefs are being modeled for our students each day in the decisions that we make on their behalf. It is important to us that students are able to apply their growing leadership skills by having input on many decisions and by making some decisions on their own. Our Student Congress identifies both in-house programs and activities as well as community service projects that allow them to see firsthand the responsibility and importance of working within a community to meet the needs of everyone.

By working in a collaborative and supportive manner, school administrators, teachers and staff, and students and families are able to envision a positive and successful future for all to. "SOAR on the wings of success" now and in the years to come.

## Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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All of the efforts of the hard working faculty, staff, and community result in a total school program that allows our school to SOAR. Selecting one practice has been a challenge, however we believe that the collaboration that occurs within our building is pivotal to the success of each student. School leaders work together to assign supports to each classroom and empower the teachers to utilize those supports to best meet the needs of the whole child both socially and academically. Through collaboration with our physical education teacher, guidance counselor, and classroom teachers, programs have been developed to aid in students' social and emotional development. Our guidance counselor conducts grade level, classroom and small group lessons where social and emotional topics are covered and coping strategies are instilled. When students interact in a positive way with their teachers and peers, their work and learning become the primary focus of the day.

Our Support Staff meets with students before, during and after school to provide additional academic opportunities. Through collaborations between the teachers, administration and support staff, schedules have been created to maximize the exposure of students to various intervention programs. Based on collaboration between classroom teachers, special educators, and reading specialist, flexible classroom structures are used in order to meet the unique needs of our students. Our enrichment teacher not only meets the needs of high level learners but also collaborates with all teachers at grade levels to provide enriched learning opportunities for students at all levels. Collaboration occurs during grade level planning, faculty meetings, goal team meetings, planning for co-teaching, vertical team meetings as well as individual consultations.

Through research, ingenuity, inventiveness, and imagination our unified arts teachers integrate grade level standards and yearly initiatives within their curriculum making a cohesive learning environment between their classrooms and the general education classrooms. Our special area teachers have won a county curriculum award based on our SIT plan's wellness goal. Year after year our special area teachers incorporate many school wide initiatives into their curriculum. Our vocal music teacher worked with the Enrichment Teacher as well as the 3rd grade team to have the children plan, create, write and perform a recorder concert focusing on the Olympic theme and our Green School initiative. Our physical education teacher has used themes when designing field day activities while art instructor sparks the creativity of our students as they design masterpieces around those yearly themes. To further develop the school-wide themes, instruction and opportunities to use multi-media resources are provided by our media specialist.

The intentional collaboration and planning of all staff members allows each student at NHES to become motivated life-long learners.