

**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 Mr. Jackson Norvell

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

Official School Name Wrightsville Beach Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 220 Coral Drive

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

City Wrightsville Beach State NC Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 28480-2734

County \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (910) 256-3171 Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Web site/URL http://www.nhcs.net/wbeach/ E-mail jackson.norvell@nhcs.net

Twitter Handle \_\_\_\_\_ Facebook Page \_\_\_\_\_  
https://twitter.com/WBeachscho https://www.facebook.com/WBeachScho  
ol ol/ 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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Superintendent\*Dr. Tim Markley E-mail tim.markley@nhcs.net  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name New Hanover County Tel. (910) 254-4200

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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School Board  
President/Chairperson Mr. Don Hayes  
(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.

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

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):
- 26 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 9 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 7 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 42 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	36	20	56
1	33	19	52
2	26	31	57
3	33	33	66
4	32	30	62
5	41	24	65
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
<b>Total Students</b>	201	157	358

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 2 % Asian
  - 1 % Black or African American
  - 9 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 87 % White
  - 0 % 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: 11%

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	22
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	17
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	39
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	355
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.110
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	11

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 5 %  
18 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 10 %  
Total number students who qualify: 37

8. Students receiving special education services: 3 %  
12 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.

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

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 1
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers	16
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	7
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.	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     11:1

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.

The mission of WBS, in collaboration with parents and community, is to provide children an excellent education in a healthy and safe learning environment where they are prepared with the critical skills to reach their full potential in a 21st Century Classroom.

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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Wrightsville Beach Elementary School is affectionately referred to by most as WBS. We are a K-5 elementary school with a traditional schedule, and are part of the New Hanover County School (NHCS) System. Within this system, there are 43 schools consisting of 4 traditional high schools, 2 early college high schools, 9 middle schools, 19 traditional elementary, 4 year-round elementary, 3 magnet program elementary schools, and 2 pre-K centers.

Serving students since 1954, our school has deep historical roots and it is a cherished landmark in the community. With an enrollment of approximately three hundred and sixty students, we are one of the smaller elementary schools in the district, yet we experience frequent overcrowding. The building only has enough space to house seven of the seventeen classrooms. Housed in an older structure, we are met with many challenges including limited space and antiquated facilities. However, these issues, while challenging, only serve to bring us closer together and require that we identify solutions as a team. There are eight classes housed in mobile units and currently the fifth grade classrooms are located in a nearby church, yet by 12:30 each day, 5th graders return to the campus for lunch, recess and enrichment as 5th grade teachers meet and plan with colleagues.

Nestled on a barrier island surrounded by a tidal estuary in the town of Wrightsville Beach, WBS utilizes its natural surroundings to enhance student learning by providing authentic experiences through a strong Marine Science program. In fact, the Marine Science program is the only one of its kind in the region. It plays a significant role in the culture of the school as life lessons of citizenship, team building, problem solving, and responsibility are embedded into the program. Integrating guidance and other content areas with marine science engages and motivates our students and provides a plethora of volunteer and community partnership opportunities. We are committed to providing a high quality and challenging education with an intentional focus on the marine environment.

At WBS, we have high expectations for all students, facilitate learning using research based strategies and instruction is driven by analyzing data. We integrate instructional technology throughout the curriculum to help students to become engaged, 21st Century Learners. Although this assertion comes directly from our mission statement WBS is much more. We are a group of dedicated professionals who all “buy in” to the core belief that ALL students can learn and be successful. When polled about our climate at WBS, myriad responses from the staff included that we are inviting, cohesive, flexible, student-centered and supportive. We are a hardworking team with high morale. WBS is a happy, productive place. We have highly effective leadership, promising practices and we are consistently closing gaps with excellence. As a result our learners are encouraged and challenged while their emotional and social needs are validated.

Many programs and activities are used to extend learning and ensure student success. These include, but are not limited to our Science Fair, Book Fairs, Battle of Books and AIG History Fair which encourages students to explore our region’s past. Science Olympiad covers a range of topics from earth to physical science and more while Rooty Rascals honors and beautifies our environment. Girls on the Run and Stride (for boys) clubs encourage physical fitness with goal setting and tracking. Chess club develops higher order thinking and problem solving skills and our Student Council creates events to promote school pride including recently, a cultural awareness week where we honored and celebrated working and learning together. Our grade level planning initiative has allowed for data review with increased fidelity and provides opportunities to address vertical alignment.

WBS also has a solid support base from the parents and the local community. The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is very active in the school and provides funding as well as volunteer support. Parent volunteer hours average over two thousand hours per year. In past years the PTA has raised funds to purchase Smartboards, document cameras, flip cameras and iPads for the school. In 2012, parents and community members created the WBS Foundation for the sole purpose of raising funds to support the educational needs of the school. The WBS Foundation recognized that the PTA, although successful with their fundraising efforts, were limited to funding for the current year only and were restricted by the type of fundraising they could do by district and national PTA regulations. The WBS Foundation has supported the

school by providing funds for iPads, online instructional technology programs, a paved walking trail that supports fitness initiatives, a teacher assistant and 4 part-time tutors. The WBS Foundation's investment in human resources certainly has enhanced student learning.

At WBS, our key strategies for student engagement and mastery, along with our positive climate make WBS a consistent success.

## PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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### 1. Core Curriculum:

At Wrightsville Beach Elementary, our curriculum is aligned with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, which includes the Common Core Standards for Mathematics and English/Language Arts and the NC Essential Standards for Science and Social Studies. We collaborate as a staff to determine how to continually update our curriculum to best meet the standards and the needs of our students. All grade levels turn in quarterly long range plans for all subject areas which include standards addressed, materials, student technology use, assessment tools and differentiation. Grade levels meet with administration and the instructional coach regularly to review data and instructional practices. At the beginning of the year, each grade creates a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) tier 1 plan based on current data and a review of instructional practices to ensure 80% of more of students are able to meet instructional standards. These plans are updated throughout the year. Teachers use learning targets to guide instruction and utilize “I Can” statements to help students identify what they should know and be able to do during each lesson.

In Math, teachers follow quarterly math pacing guides created by New Hanover County. The curriculum we use is multi-faceted, incorporating various resources such as materials from the Envisions math series, teacher created resources, and online subscriptions. In the lower grades, students become familiar with numbers and number sense. Upper grade math instruction focuses on operations and properties of numbers, including geometry and fractions. At all grade levels we focus on problem solving, math fluency, and encouraging students to understand there are multiple ways to arrive at an answer through journaling and writing in math.

In English/Language Arts teachers use a variety of research based curriculum materials that address many of the components of our reading instruction. Curriculum focuses on phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension. Teachers use the Daily 5 framework and CAFE to teach various reading strategies. Students read a variety of fiction and informational texts and work on written response starting in kindergarten. Many teachers use Words Their Way to successfully differentiate spelling instruction. Writing focuses on narrative, informative, and explanatory texts and teachers incorporate the use of Thinking Maps to aid in the writing process.

In Social Studies, we follow the NC Standard Course of Study. The five strands include History, Geography and Environment Literacy, Economic and Financial Literacy, Civics and Government and Culture. Curriculum maps have been created by our county to aid in instructional planning. Many teachers integrate Social Studies into their ELA instruction as well. Students in all grade levels enjoy a multitude of field trips that enhance our curriculum and bring it to life, such as traveling to a local farm to learn about people of the past in first grade and visiting our state capitol to support fourth grade’s learning about North Carolina history.

Science Kits are provided by county which contain unit plans, hands-on resources, suggested activities, trade books, and other resources to teach the standards at each grade level. Teachers supplement with teacher created resources, Discovery Education, and other online tools and subscriptions and integrate Science into their Language Arts curriculum when possible.

To ensure we are meeting the needs of all our students, we incorporate both intervention and enrichment into our curriculum. For the past two years, we have had an intervention block built into the master schedule. All available staff is used to provide research-based tier II or tier III interventions to students in small groups for both reading and math. These small groups are created based on benchmark and classroom data. Interventions are skill based and focus on basic skills as determined by data. Teachers progress monitor students to ensure the interventions are meeting the needs of all students. Our AIG specialist collaborates with teachers to support high achieving students and to ensure teachers have the resources they need to support those students. Our instructional coach provides feedback to teachers when requested to improve instruction as well as locates resources and support as requested.

Working together, using the Common Core and Essential Standards as well as data as our guides, we strive to develop the best curriculum possible to meet the needs of our ever-changing students.

## 2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Our school offers many unique and multi-faceted opportunities for growth in Art, Music, Physical Education, Media, AIG and Marine Science. These curriculum areas help students deepen their knowledge acquired in other academic content areas. Teachers in Art, Music, Physical Education and Media all follow the North Carolina SCOS and the North Carolina Essential Standards for their curriculum areas. These teachers work closely with classroom teachers to use curriculum overviews to integrate content from various academic areas into their lessons. Our school is very fortunate in that we are located on a salt marsh and near the ocean. Because of this, our guidance counselor has combined the guidance curriculum with a Marine Science program that offers a unique opportunity to learn about social skills and other concepts through their immediate environment. Within these programs, there is a focus on higher order thinking skills, collaboration among students, reaching students through multiple intelligence platforms and maintaining high achievement expectations.

Students K-5 receive instruction in Art once a week for 45 minutes. In Art, students are given the chance to think creatively, solve problems and express themselves. Lessons often incorporate content from other curriculum areas such as math, science and social studies. The students are exposed to a variety of mediums and are able to explore their properties. Students are expected to plan out their ideas through sketch and note taking, use materials with purpose and revise and improve their projects. There is a heavy focus on Visual Literacy and reading art. Inferring meaning in artwork enables students to transfer these skills to ELA and writing. Students have the chance to showcase their talents within the community through various displays and exhibits. Our talented students have created a holiday display for a local business and photographs displayed at University of North Carolina, Wilmington (UNCW) our local 4 year university. Our students have won several awards for their creativity such as NHCS Board of Education Art Exhibit and national placement in PTA Reflections Program.

Students K-5 receive instruction in P.E. once a week for 45 minutes. Research indicates a direct correlation between physical activity and brain activity, making students more ready to learn! In addition to the regular class time, our P.E. teacher has implemented a "GET UP & MOVE: Fitness with a Porpoise". Our "porpoise" is to positively promote fitness in a fun and encouraging way to instill healthy habits which will lead to good choices into adulthood. Mondays through Thursdays, students are able to run on our paved track from 7:30 to 7:50 a.m. This movement gets them relaxed and ready for their day of learning. All students are encouraged to be members of this club! Exercise habits begin at an early age and affect the choices they will make as an adult. This was a new club that started last year in the 2014-2015 school year with the assistance of the WBS PTA and Physical Education program.

At Wrightsville Beach, the curriculum may be extended, enriched, and/or accelerated to meet the needs of children performing above grade level. Classroom teachers work closely with the Gifted Education Specialist to ensure that content, process, product and learning environment are meaningfully differentiated and appropriately challenging. In order to best meet each student's individual needs, service delivery is multi-faceted and flexible. Formally identified students who need significant differentiation come to the AIG room weekly for small group instruction. Units and lessons are based on reading, math, thinking, and researching skills.

In 2001, Wrightsville Beach Elementary School was designated as a Marine Science Focus School. Since that time, our School Counselor has had the dual role of Counselor and Marine Science Coordinator. She integrates our school-wide counseling and Marine Science programs which support and extend academic curriculum through relevant, hands-on learning experiences. This serves as a platform for students to learn and to practice social/personal skills and learn positive environmental stewardship. In 2000, through grants and donations, a pier and floating dock were constructed at WBS in the salt marsh creek that runs adjacent to the school. Each class visits the dock to enjoy studying the environment, fishing, crabbing, and other activities. In 2007, WBS was awarded a grant to purchase 5 kayaks, and since that time, our fleet has grown to 16; all acquired through donations from individuals, businesses, and other organizations. These resources

provide for plethora of outdoor, hands-on learning opportunities for students and their families. In addition to outdoor learning, students have classroom exploration experiences throughout the school year to learn about fish, sea turtles, whales, dolphins, barrier island ecosystems, marine invertebrates, and much, much more.

The WBS library media center is a place where active learning is constantly taking place to stimulate a successful environment and experience. It is a place where students and teachers can come to read and access books, technology, and other resources freely, safely, and in a comfortable setting. We have an excellent library program that motivates and builds a love for reading and lifelong learning. The media specialist understands and integrates technology tools, digital citizenship and critical literacy into each lesson. The library programming offers book clubs, a makerspace, and computer science opportunities such as coding. Instructional partnerships are strong between the media specialist and teachers as they connect, collaborate, and plan curriculum together. The media specialist offers professional development on a monthly basis and successfully advocates for her program with all stakeholders.

The music program at WBS is rooted in the Orff Schulwerk ideology of active student involvement that offers diverse learners multiple pathways to success. From the beginning steps of imitation to the increasingly more advanced brain functions of exploration, practice, and creation, students sing, play, speak, act, move, and dance their way through the music curriculum. Our learners are also exposed to 21st century skills and other life lessons as they explore world cultures, cooperate in groups, work independently and self-assess. Other activities outside of regularly scheduled classes are Chorus Club, Best Foot Forward, and the Wrightsville Beach Steel Band.

### 3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

Wrightsville Beach Elementary school adopted a school wide program, The 5 combined with Cafe, in order to enhance differentiation within our school. The ability to integrate subject matter within Daily 5 creates opportunities for cross curricular connections. Daily 5 components; read to self, read to someone, listen to reading, word work, and work on writing, enables the teacher to incorporate different methods of differentiated instruction. Technology is implemented into all core subject areas allowing the student to meet individualized goals based on their current abilities. Reading A-Z, Book Flix, and TruFlix allow students to read on ability level, listen to reading as well as read aloud, and exhibit comprehension through follow up activities. Literature Circles, Words Their Way, Learning Contracts, and collaboration with specialty teachers are instructional strategies used within the Daily 5 parameters. Data analysis drives grouping and instructional methods. Types of data analysis include informal assessments, benchmark tests, daily observations, rubrics, Schoolnet quizzes, Math and Reading IXL reports, and work exhibited by students.

To supplement our integrated science and social studies curricula we utilize online subscriptions like Brainpop, Instagrok (for research), Flocabulary (for content vocabulary) and more. These technology based resources engage students and enrich the curriculum.

In Math, many teachers follow daily small group rotations similar to the Daily 5 framework. Groups are based on skill level and content is taught according to pacing guides aligned with common core standards. Opportunities exist for students to utilize technology, peer collaboration, one on one instruction with teacher, small group instruction, hands on manipulatives or games, and project based learning. Data analysis drives instruction and grouping. Types of data analyzed include informal assessments, benchmark tests, schoolnet quizzes, IXL, work samples exhibited by students, and daily observations.

Interventions and enrichment opportunities are a key component for all students to ensure success on all levels. Assistants, tutors, instructional coach, AIG teacher, specialty teachers, EC teacher, and administration all collaborate with classroom teachers. The goal is to coordinate interventions, create enrichment, and ensure rigor in instruction. An intervention block is built into the master schedule to support students in tier II or III of the Multi-Tiered System of Supports, MTSS, model. Tutors have been hired for grades 2-5 to support teaching and learning. Tutors work with students at various levels to provide support and/or enrichment.

Instruction with integration of content, opportunities for cross curricular connections, use of technology, varying methods of delivering, daily reflections, and differentiation are visible in all classrooms at Wrightsville Beach Elementary School.

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

Teachers assess students in their classroom daily through the use of formative assessments. These assessments can be as simple as asking students to answer questions as they leave the classroom for recess or they can involve the use of online quiz tools such as Kahoot to check for understanding or mastery. Teachers also make use of state and county assessments to analyze and improve instruction. Students in grades kindergarten through grade 3 are assessed using DIBELS, Reading 3D and mClass math assessments three times a year along with a progress monitoring component. Assessments provide teachers with a snapshot of a student's mastery of key foundational skills that help determine success in both reading and math. In grades 3-5, students also are assessed using district created benchmark testing. These assessments are given online via the SchoolNet portal. At the end of the school year grades 3-5 also complete End of Grade tests ( EOG) to measure achievement.

Data from all of these assessments are reviewed with teachers during grade level meetings facilitated by school administration and the school's instructional coach. This data is used to guide all instruction including interventions for low performing students and enrichment for students who are performing above expected grade level standards. In the past few years, EVAAS data has also been analyzed by administrators, teachers and instructional coach to ensure all levels of students are growing academically, especially our high achieving students who need to continue to show growth. Teachers share data and collaborate with support staff such as the Academically Gifted or Exceptional Child resource teachers as well, to further ensure all student needs are being met.

Assessment analysis is used to formulate grade level tier I Multi- Tiered System of Support (MTSS), also known as Response to Intervention (RTI), plans for core instruction. If the data shows an area of weakness, teachers can modify their tier I plans to focus instruction in that area. Additionally, data is used to guide long range plans that are prepared by teachers each quarter. Assessment results are also used to identify students who may need intervention in a particular area or skill to help them improve academically.

Assessment results are shared with families through various modes. Letters are sent home with interim report cards that detail results from the DIBELS and Reading 3D results. Families of students in grades 3-5 can access SchoolNet benchmark data through the Power school parent portal. Teachers also schedule conferences as needed to discuss student assessments and instructional needs. The school district releases school test scores to the public as soon as they get data from the state. Parents and community members can also view EOG data on the North Carolina School Report Card website.

## **PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS**

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

At Wrightsville Beach School certain practices have become part of our culture and contribute to our ongoing climate of success while providing a positive environment that supports academic, social, and emotional growth. Some of these practices include incorporating cooperative learning, integrating technology, utilizing multiple intelligences and inquiry based activities. We routinely apply varying assessments to gauge learning and plan quality instruction to go beyond the standards and allow for the mastery of challenging content.

Teachers work closely with specialists including our Academically Gifted (AIG) and art, music, media and PE teachers in order to teach the “whole child”. We recently completed a book study for *The ABC’s of Education* by Doug Goodkin, in order to examine ways we can meaningfully integrate content.

Our unique marine environment provides many opportunities for study via kayaking, fishing on the pier and planning a Marine Science festival. We engage students with a variety of activities used to extend learning and ensure success. WBS provides an elementary education our students never forget.

We also have a very active PTA and many community partnerships including a strong relationship with UNCW, our local university. The WBS Foundation is an organization that works to provide additional funds for varying school needs and to support instruction. We have an open door policy with administration. Stakeholders; families and staff alike are encouraged to share ideas.

Our school culture creates an environment where teachers feel valued and supported. Professional development is made available based on staff surveys and teacher input. Coverage is provided in order for teachers to observe colleagues and collaborate. Professional Learning Teams read, work and learn together while teachers set goals for personal growth with Professional Development Plans. The School Improvement Team addresses building, instructional and planning endeavors and has created subcommittees in order to continue to improve our climate.

Recognition is important to our climate. Certified staff vote for our Teacher of the Year. A team member is chosen each month for varying merit and is honored at meetings. Staff and students receive “Dynamic Dolphins”, a recognition system which acknowledges kind deeds, good citizenship and excellent character traits. These are read during morning announcements.

Communication is key to success. Bulletins, school and classroom news, fliers and reminders go out regularly to keep all stakeholders in “the loop.” Our principal also sends weekly emails with encouraging and thought provoking quotes and videos. The emails and correspondence is uplifting and adds to our family atmosphere. Our principal reminds us that “the choices we make today, shape our world tomorrow” and “make it a great day”. That is exactly what we do.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

Wrightsville Beach Elementary School is a school generously embraced by the local community and where volunteerism abounds. This extraordinary support unequivocally contributes to the academic success of our students and enriches the overall school climate.

WBS is supported daily by family members. Dedicated volunteers average over 400 hours each month. Some of the volunteer activities include participating on the School Improvement Team, writing and distributing a newsletter, running the School Store, facilitating the bi-annual Book Fair, holding an annual school-wide Fall Festival and classroom holiday parties, providing daily supervision in the cafeteria, organizing a school-wide chess club, and assisting with a multitude of field trips. They facilitate running clubs, such as Girls on the Run and Stride. WBS has a Marine Science Program, which is successful due to volunteerism. Family members take students fishing, crabbing, and kayaking throughout the school year.

We have an active PTA that supports school functions and generously provides funds for teachers to purchase supplies. In 2012, the WBS Foundation, a non-profit organization of dedicated parents, was created to generate discretionary funds to provide equipment, supplies, and projects above and beyond what traditional funding sources provide, such as ipads, kayaks, playground equipment, and much more.

The local community is very involved at WBS, and this provides authentic, hands-on educational opportunities for our students that reach beyond the walls of our school. For example, the dock and pier were built in 2001, entirely with donated funds and manpower, and in 2007, 16 kayaks were donated. The Harbor Island Garden Club has lead the 5th grade garden group, Rooty Rascals, for the past 20 years, and for the past 5 years, this group has worked with North Carolina Audubon to make signs that protect the shorebird sanctuary at Wrightsville Beach.

Within the walls of our school, community members are also very active. For example, on a weekly basis chosen students participate in the Canines for Literacy program in order to motivate them as readers. On a monthly basis, community members' visit 3rd grade classes, helping to make connections between occupations and academics. The Wrightsville Beach Fire Department hosts a kindergarten field trip in the fall and later comes to WBS to present "Risk Watch," a safety program for 2nd grade students. For the past 12 years, we have held an annual Marine Science Festival, in which over 150 local experts have presented a wide array of ocean-related topics to the students.

### 3. Professional Development:

As a school, we view professional development as an opportunity to expand teachers' growth as professional educators as well as an opportunity to add to teachers' instructional repertoire.

WBS offers on site staff development which focuses on supporting district initiatives such as Rutherford's Artisan Teacher and the Daily 5/Café. Other training supports goals from our School Improvement Plan such as using a variety of technology in instruction and practice. In order to best meet the professional development needs of teachers, surveys are used to help determine common themes and we then build our professional development plan around those needs. This year's surveys indicated a need for training on web based educational programs. To address these needs, teachers who were proficient with those programs were selected to design and provide training to their peers at the school. This provides leadership opportunities for teachers and engages staff. Additionally, PLC book studies have taken place on the following titles: The ABC's of Education, Teaching the Critical Vocabulary of the Common Core, and Words Their Way.

Teachers also have the opportunity to participate in county sponsored professional development opportunities that address curriculum, the arts, special education and student support.

### 4. School Leadership:

Considering the numerous intricacies inherent to keeping a school moving in a positive direction these days, it is virtually impossible for any one individual within that school to unilaterally assume all leadership responsibilities. In this era of high stakes instructional accountability and increased societal, political, parental, cultural, and human resource complexities, challenging variables demand that school leaders adopt a collaborative decision making approach. At Wrightsville Beach Elementary, the leadership design is not merely structured to invite opportunities for collaborative decision making, but rather, the function and productivity of our leadership design is contingent upon it.

The leadership philosophy and structure at Wrightsville Beach Elementary would most accurately be described as distributive leadership and the principal, within that structure, assumes the role of lead learner. In fact, the framework for the distributive leadership structure is based upon a non-negotiable tenet set forth by the principal based on the adage that "none of us are as smart as all of us." Our leadership model certainly increases collective vested interest and ultimately promotes unified productivity.

A recent example of our leadership structure in action occurred last month as through our School Improvement Team, sub-committees were formed to address three major components of our school's operational function. All having direct influence over student achievement, the three major components were the master schedule, school calendar, and the school-wide behavioral plan. The sub-committees were comprised of teachers, administrators, and parent representatives. The objective was to review current elements of their respective component and to cooperatively devise improvements. Ultimately, they would develop a new and improved process and product through collaboration.

This opportunity for various stakeholders within the school community to work together, united by a shared purpose, has yielded immediate positive results. For example, members of the master schedule sub-committee, through this process, now understand much more clearly the multitude of variables that must be considered when developing an effective, equitable master schedule. Also, embedded in this process was a reinforcement of certain policies regarding instructional time requirements. Another benefit is that this endeavor provided an opportunity for teachers to become exposed to instructional programs offered across multiple grade levels; increasing knowledge of what other teachers do improve relationships by increasing unity. Furthermore, this has brought transparency to the process with adequate representation and input from all stakeholders. At WBS the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. This philosophy and practice directly contributes to student success and achievement.

## Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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In recent years, one practice that has yielded the most significant results has been the manner in which grade level meetings have been facilitated. Our new restructured grade level meetings are more frequent, they focus on student achievement, and they provide an uninterrupted time devoted to delving into data. These meetings have become the core practice that has allowed our school to grow our students to their fullest potential and has ensured success. Historically, due to our unique demographics, and somewhat isolated location, WBS had its own perspective on how to best serve students. This view although somewhat successful, did not always correlate with the school district's plan or necessarily focus on ensuring students were learning at all levels to their fullest capacity.

In the past several years this perspective has been transformed through the implementation of a strategic plan. Two elements embedded within the strategic plan that have yielded the most significant results have been our comprehensive approach to disaggregated data analysis and the implementation of consistent coaching and modeling. As a result, we have seen a major overhaul of our instructional practices ensuring that they are tied to curriculum standards and common planning within grade levels. Through ongoing coaching and support, these practices have evolved over time during regular grade level meetings held with administration and instructional leaders within the school. This unifying practice has led to more open communication between teachers, support staff and administration.

The restructured grade level meeting process has proven successful. Success can be evidenced through increased academic growth as measured by our accountability model. Additionally, teachers have developed a clear vision within their grade levels and across the school that is reflected in their long range planning and daily lesson plans. Over the last four years, our end of grade tests scores have increased to the point that has positioned WBS among the top performing schools in the region. Reflecting on the numerous best practices implemented over our reformation, structured focused grade level meetings have made the most significant impact.