

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mr. Scott Zimmerman

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

Official School Name Mifflinburg Area Intermediate School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 250 Mabel Street

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

City Mifflinburg State PA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 17844-1438

County Union County

Telephone (570) 966-8270 Fax (570) 966-8273

Web site/URL http://www.mifflinburg.org E-mail szimmerman@mifflinburg.org

Twitter Handle _____ Facebook Page _____ Google+ _____

YouTube/URL _____ Blog _____ Other Social Media Link _____

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

Date _____
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Mr. Daniel Lichtel E-mail dlichtel@mifflinburg.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Mifflinburg Area School District Tel. (570) 966-8200

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

Date _____
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. Kenneth Wright
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

Date _____
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

Part I – Eligibility Certification

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The public school has met their state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) using the most recent accountability results available for the year prior to nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) for the year in which they are nominated (2015-2016) and be certified by the state representative. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2010 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, or 2015.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2015-2016) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 2 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 4 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	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	66	75	141
4	69	69	138
5	90	78	168
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	225	222	447

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 2 % Black or African American
 - 0 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 95 % White
 - 2 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2014 – 2015 school year: 6%

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	16
(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)]	32
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	514
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.062
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	6

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 45 %
Total number students who qualify: 204

8. Students receiving special education services: 12 %
55 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.

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

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 8
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers	20
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	14
Paraprofessionals	10
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

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

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

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

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No

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

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

Transforming today's learners into tomorrow's leaders by inspiring a passion for learning and making education rigorous, relevant, and fun.

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

Mifflinburg Area Intermediate School is one of only 4 school buildings within the Mifflinburg School District which is located in a rural area of Union County. It is the newest of the district's schools--built in 2006 and then expanded in 2012. The school currently has about 450 students in grades three, four, and five. There are just over 2,000 students in the Mifflinburg School District. In recent years we have seen an increase in the number of our families living in poverty. More than 40% of the students at Mifflinburg Area Intermediate School participate in the free or reduced lunch program. This fact qualifies the school to be a Title One-funded school.

Since its beginning, administration and staff of Mifflinburg Area Intermediate School have demonstrated a consistent focus on best instructional practices. District leadership has shown a commitment to hiring qualified staff and maintaining the smallest possible class sizes. Timely and frequent professional development has been key to delivering rigorous content and the effective use of student engagement initiatives. Statewide academic achievement data shows that the Mifflinburg School District has steadily climbed from a ranking of 203rd among the state's 500 districts in 2007 to 106th in 2015.

District leadership has been strategic in the way we use special education and Title One funding for staffing. At each of the three grades, we have a dedicated learning support teacher as well as one or two paraprofessionals. When developing class rosters each year, students with IEPs are assigned to only a few of the homerooms at each grade so that the learning support teacher, in a rotating model with the paraprofessionals, can more readily access students to provide support. Our goal is to have all IEP students participate in the core instruction with their regular education peers and leave the classroom only periodically for previewing, skill reinforcement, or small group testing. In addition to special education teachers and paraprofessionals, we also have an Intervention team of two teachers and three full-time T1-paid paraprofessionals. These five individuals have schedules that take them into every homeroom that is not supported by special education staff. The intervention team provides support and interventions to students struggling in both reading and math.

Aside from our special education learning support and Title One interventions teams, we also have an emotional support program and autistics support program for a small percentage of our student population. One Emotional support teacher and two paraprofessionals service the needs of about seven E.S. students. There are four students with autism. Emotional support and autistic support are not pull out programs. All students identified in these ways receive services within their regular education classroom. They participate fully in all specials classes with their regular ed. peers.

In addition, we have a teacher who provides instruction to five students in a lifeskills classroom. Every effort is made for lifeskills students to participate in instruction with their regular education peers for whenever possible. Lifeskills students to participate fully with regular education students in all specials classes.

We give careful attention to the way we form class rosters. The goal over the summer is to create a balance among classrooms to avoid having groups of students with exceptionally high academic or behavioral needs. Students from economically disadvantaged homes are spread evenly across classes (a Title One requirement).

Our school-wide positive behavior support plan is designed to create a school environment where all students are valued. Our R.O.A.R. program reminds students of our shared school characteristics: Respect everyone and everything, Organize yourself, Act Safely, and Remember to be responsible. Our program is designed to recognize positive student behaviors throughout each school day. Consistency in doing so has to do so will reinforce desired, selfless behaviors and chanThe social and emotional needs (relationships) are supported by our school guidance counselor and social worker.

We use the world around us to engage students in learning. Our field trips are all local. Our third grade students takes trips to the bank. They are also given opportunities to set up real accounts and are taught about money management. They also visit our state capital building Our 4th graders tour numerous historic sites to learn about Mifflinburg's rich history that dates back to U.S. Revolutionary periods. Our 5th graders spend three days at Wesley Forest on the west end of our county. There they are engaged in meaningful outdoors experiences such as learning about geology and studying aquatic life.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Our primary math resource of choice for the last ten years has been Everyday Math. Everyday Math is a research-based curriculum that is focused on the Common Core State Standards. We are presently using the most up-to-date version. Within the last two years, our professional staff took the time to align our math program to Pa Core standards. The units and lessons were sequenced in a way that makes more sense to students. Common math assessments were created for each grade. Identified shortcomings in the math program were supplemented by both vendor publications and by web- or cloud-based programs like IXL, Study Island, Reflex Math, and Moby Max, among others. We schedule a minimum of 90 minutes per day to math instruction. Our primary math resource of choice for the past ten years has been Everyday Math. We utilize publications from Triumph Learning to give students additional practice on Pa Core skills formatted for the PSSA exams.

The Everyday Math program emphasizes equally the Common Core's dimensions of rigor: conceptual understanding, fluency, and application. With the belief that depth of knowledge does not develop from a single lesson, Everyday Math uses a spiral approach to repeatedly expose students to key ideas in different contexts over time. While students are working toward mastery of math content, mathematical practices, such as constructing arguments and critiquing the reasoning of others, are embedded in the students' everyday work. All EM4 math lessons provide differentiation options including small group or partner readiness activities to build background and math language prior to the focus lesson. Enrichment or extension activities are built in for students capable of moving faster through the lesson and apply the skill in unique situations.

In grade 3, math instruction includes the concept of time as well as elapsed time. Measurement using a ruler to the nearest quarter inch as well as measuring distance, mass, and volume are taught. The study of geometry includes polygons, special quadrilaterals, perimeter and area. Multiplication is taught as well as the commutative property of multiplication. Division is introduced. Students explore math concepts through solving multi-step number stories. The study of fractions includes exploring equal parts, equivalent fractions, comparing fractions, and multiplying fractions. Multi-digit operations and order of operations are also taught in grade 3.

Grade 4 math instruction includes place-value in whole numbers concepts and formal rounding procedures. Estimation strategies are taught. United States customary units of length and weight are taught. The study of geometry includes points, line segments, lines, angles, lines of symmetry, and classifying triangles and quadrilaterals. The concepts of multiples, prime and composite numbers are introduced. Equivalent fractions, comparing, and ordering fractions are reinforced, and fraction and mixed-number computation are taught. Decimals (tenths and hundredths) are introduced. Multi-digit multiplication is reinforced in grade 4.

Grade 5 math instruction reviews and reinforces area of a rectangle and measuring volume. Exponents and application of powers of 10 are introduced. Instruction includes connecting fractions and division with an emphasis on interpreting remainders. Students explore addition of fractions with unlike denominators and use equivalent fractions to find common denominators. The concept of decimals is reinforced with a focus on representing decimals through thousandths. Rounding decimals is introduced. Additionally, multiplying and dividing decimals by powers of 10, by whole numbers, and by decimals is introduced. Students are also introduced to the coordinate system. Multiplication of mixed numbers is taught. Application of measurement, computation and graphing are emphasized in grade 5.

Our ELA program emphasizes a balanced literacy approach using many materials from a Harcourt basal series, Story Town, that is supplemented with Pa Core-aligned publications and the aforementioned web-based programs for skill work. Within the last year, teachers took the time to design common reading and writing assessments connected to the format and rigor of the state assessments. So, on a consistent basis, students are asked to respond to the stories in their Story Town reading anthology by providing evidenced-based answers to text-dependent analysis questions and selected response-type questions. We devote between 90 and 120 minutes each day to ELA instruction. This includes a 30 to 40 minute guided reading block.

At least one time each marking period, students will respond to an on-demand writing prompt alternating between opinion (argument), informative, and narrative writing. A common rubric is used to evaluate the content, focus, style, mechanics, and organization of the writing. We devote 45 minutes to writing instruction each day. We have adopted the 4-Square writing method developed by Judith Gould. Her unique approaches have helped our students organize their thoughts prior to writing. Students are guided to find their voice through a process that teaches varied sentence structure, the use of transition words, and elaboration using the SEE method--supporting details, examples, and extensions.

For science instruction we use Science Companion resources. Students are taught three units during the year. These units cover life, physical, and earth sciences. Students sharpen their awareness of scientific thinking as they conduct self-directed explorations and then reflect on the processes they engaged in. They are introduced to the work of scientists and the process of inquiry--wondering, thinking, trying, observing, recording, and discovering. Each unit focuses on teaching a set of big ideas connected with Next Generation Science Standards.

We do not follow a "social studies "program." Instead, we take advantage of opportunities to teach non-fiction reading strategies through interesting and relevant resources about the world students live in. For example, when we teach the concept of a biography, students will conduct research on historical figures. We believe the best social studies instruction is a good balance of content and reading strategy instruction; therefore, we teach our students to use captions, photos, graphs, charts, glossaries, bold print, etc. to help them understand what they read. Such a reading strategy-based approach to social studies is done during a reading block. In addition, we set aside time to discuss current events with our students.

We pride ourselves in having all students achieve. Our resources provide opportunities for all levels of learners. Enrichment activities extend students beyond the grade-level expectation. Data provides easy-to-use, actionable information about students' performance, allowing teachers to make informed instructional decisions. The analysis of data allows for flexible grouping. Students can be placed in flexible groups for instruction with differentiated activities and differentiated expected outcomes.

We are continually working on vertical alignment of our curriculum K to 12. It is hard work, but is one of the most worthwhile things we do as educators.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

We are very proud of the related arts programs offered at Mifflinburg Area Intermediate School. Within a six-day cycle, students will experience two classes of art, music, and physical education instruction. Each class is 35 minutes in length (70 minutes/cycle). Keyboarding class (3rd grade) occurs once per cycle for 30 minutes. Library class is offered also once per cycle for 30 minutes.

We believe students should have access to technology to communicate and create. At third grade, we offer keyboarding instruction. Students are familiarized with the functions of the keyboard. Using a web-based program, students begin with engaging keystroke exercises that give positive reinforcement. This is designed to take away the fear of using the keyboard as an interface. Then, students are taught a key concept in typing called home row movements. Home row movements refer to the middle horizontal row of the keyboard that starts with A and goes all the way across. The idea behind the home row is that each finger remains in light contact with a particular key in the home row in order to keep "grounded," providing a reference point for other keys. We strive for a goal of ten words correct per minute with 95% accuracy by

the end of the program. Intermixed with the learning to type aspect is the understanding of applications. Students are exposed to Microsoft and Google applications to create simple documents and presentations.

Nearly every classroom is equipped with Smartboard technology. This has been especially important to the delivery of our new Everyday Math and Science Companion materials. Displaying electronic lesson pages and modeling tasks for all students to see has proven to enhance lessons and provide opportunities for increased student engagement.

Our school contains two computer labs as well as a cart of laptops. In addition, each homeroom has at least four Chromebooks. Some classrooms have as many as sixteen. The labs and the mobile technology are utilized in numerous ways for skill building, research, and creativity. Each lab contains a Smartboard. Teachers are assigned a block of time each cycle that is their time in one of the labs. Teachers use this time for students to complete essays (easily accessed through Google Docs) which may include initial research. Students also use the labs and laptops for skill work for math and language arts in programs such as Study Island, IXL, and Moby Max.

Our Physical Education and Health teacher strives for activities that keep all or most students moving throughout the period. Topics of instruction include skill work in various ball and racquet sports, rhythm and dance, gymnastics, and teambuilding. There is a separate fitness and conditioning unit to teach students about endurance, strength, agility and body awareness. In addition, Mifflinburg Intermediate School participates in the Presidential Physical Fitness Program.

Our music teacher, a gifted musician herself, instructs students to learn to play instruments and compose their own music. Students in our upper grades are given their own recorder. They are taught to perform several basic songs on the instrument and are tasked with working in small groups to create original compositions that are performed in front of the class. Our music teacher also coordinates winter and spring concerts for each grade. Every other year, the 4th and 5th grade choirs put on a musical for their spring performance. Band is offered to 5th graders. We boast a full ensemble of nearly 80 students.

In our Art program, students learn about artists and art history. They are taught elements and processes of art as well as principles of design. Students create and design art with an array of media--ink and pencil drawing, painting, sculpture, ceramics, paper collage, and weaving (thread and cloth).

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

Mifflinburg Intermediate School subscribes to APL instructional strategies. These strategies ensure active, consistent, and measurable participation on the part of all students through high engagement brought about by planned and purposeful teacher actions. APL strategies operate on the premise, "If you want it, teach it." All strategies are fixed on the two ideas that students should look good in front of their peers and students must have positive relationships. These five basic teaching strategies have helped Mifflinburg Intermediate School teachers create learning environments that allow students to flourish.

Teachers begin their classes on time. They provide an agenda for the day. Additionally, they post expected outcomes in the form of essential questions for which understanding can be evidenced. Teachers also post bell ringers. Bell ringers can act as a review of previously-learned material or act as an activating strategy for the upcoming lesson. We use a routine of checking for understanding. Our teachers do not assume students understand. They instruct in short bursts and then review using the 5-1/10-2 rule rather than using long lectures. They provide a reasonable amount of time to complete work. Our teachers understand that students need 3-5 seconds to retrieve information; therefore, appropriate wait time is utilized in an effort to provide all students time to think about their responses. We also use extended wait time (also known as think-pair-share). This instructional strategy allows students to turn to a partner and share their thoughts. We also use a strategy known as "on the clock." Teachers explain the task and provide a time frame for completion. Students are asked to repeat the directions as a check for understanding. Students are allowed to utilize the "pass option." The pass option allows for a student to pass when called upon to answer a question. When another student provides a correct answer, the teacher will come back to the student who passed to repeat the correct answer.

Mifflinburg Area Intermediate School teachers use the "I do-We do-You do" model of explicit instruction. Teachers also employ formative assessment strategies to look for understanding among the students. This takes many forms such as red/green cards that allow students to indicate "I'm good to go" or "please stop, I need help." Another example is the use of individual student white boards that allow students to respond directly to a teacher question. Teachers also use active engagement strategies such as having students think-and-share with a neighbor. This peer-to-peer feedback is less threatening than interactions with an adult and results in higher engagement. Students not grasping skills from the core lesson are often brought together for reteaching of concepts at the end of an instructional period. Students who continue to have academic struggles following reteaching are referred for further support in a Tier 2 group. Members of our intervention team meet with students to provide fluency, comprehension support or math skill support.

Specialists who work with our ESL students deliver a vocabulary-rich program that is a specialized component of Story Town.

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

Mifflinburg Area Intermediate School teachers benchmark students on math and ELA skills three times each year using computer-based assessments from Study Island. After the first administration, students are challenged to show improvement. This personal ownership of progress is tracked by the students themselves. Teachers analyze the benchmark data from the assessments to identify weaknesses and adjust instruction accordingly. Teachers look for individual student growth on specific concepts. Special education teachers and Title One teachers participate in weekly collaboration meetings with regular education teachers where this data is shared.

In addition to the Study Island benchmark testing, we administer the Scholastic Reading Inventory at the beginning and the end of each school year. This computer-based assessment provides us with a lexile score for each student. Teachers use lexile scores to help students select "just right" materials for leveled reading groups and independent reading. Lexile scores also serve as another piece of data to identify students who may need assistance.

Teachers meet with parents during designated conference days (non-school days) at the end of the first and third marking periods. Teachers are strongly encouraged to present evidence of student learning during these sessions with parents. This evidence of learning takes the form of student-created work or assessments showing beginning and ending achievement. Essay writing would be a good example of this where students have made improvements to written expression from the draft to the final copy. Teachers also show examples of problem solving and core subject assessment scores as well as performance data from the web-based programs that help to reinforce Pa Core aligned skills.

Parents are provided with access to a student information system. This system is managed by our regional intermediate unit. At any time, parents can see the status of their child's progress in any graded subject. Although the school communicates to parents on how to access the system, teachers don't assume that every parent is doing it--because they aren't. So, at the mid-term point of every marking period, teachers send home written communications to all parents of students who may be failing or near failing in any subject. This communication is then followed up by a phone call or email to give the parents a chance to share new information that may be related to the student's performance. A plan for success, that typically includes accommodations or participation in an intervention, is developed by the teacher using any input from the parent.

We have known for some time that there has been an achievement gap with our special education and economically disadvantaged populations. Efforts to close the gap for our special education students have been best connected with decisions to ensure that we maintain high expectations for them to respond to grade-level work. Learning support, emotional support, and autistic support students stay in the regular education classrooms for most or all of the day, unless serious exceptionalities dictate otherwise.

Through professional development, teachers and staff have a better understanding of the impact of poverty on school readiness and eventual student achievement. As a result, our teachers have a stronger sense of efficacy to support the needs of these students. Knowing that parents of students in poverty are less likely to be involved with school, our teachers have answered the call to better engage families in the work their children are doing. Students are hearing more than ever before teachers saying, "You can do it and I am here to help you." The school guidance counselor and social worker take time to address the physical and emotional health of the students and help them to build resilience.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Mifflinburg Area Intermediate School's commitment to excellence is connected to the following shared beliefs and values: 1) With support, every student can achieve at high levels; 2) Students learn best when they are valued, respected, and cared for; 3) Education is the shared responsibility between the student, the parent, the school and the community; 4) Schools are to be safe, engaging environments for learning; and 5) Collaboration makes us stronger. These beliefs result in teachers developing strong relationships with students and acting responsibly to provide for their academic and personal growth.

Teachers and staff at Mifflinburg Area Intermediate School take great strides to teach students how to do school. This is the focus of our School Wide Positive Behavior Program--R.O.A.R. A set of guiding expectations was created for how students can show Respect, be Organized, Act safely, and be Responsible at any location at school. Using a matrix for these locations, teachers and staff walk students through the building at the start of the year and then at mid-year to model the behaviors. Coupled with these expectations, students are informed of voice levels they may use at any location. The voice levels are 0-no talking, 1-whisper, 2-partner voice, 3-table voice, and 4-outside voice. This creates the best environment for students to enjoy school. Students are at zero voice only when walking between destinations in the building and/or when an adult is talking. These expectations are coupled with a recognition system. CAT cards are provided to students throughout each day to reinforce desirable behaviors when they are demonstrated. The recognition itself is a positive affirmation. When students acquire 10 cards, they can put their name on a slip and place it into a bowl in their classroom. At the end of each week, several slips are pulled. Those students whose names were pulled come to the office to be recognized and to get their name placed on a grid for a chance to receive a mystery prize.

Students are encouraged frequently through performance opportunities to display talents. Band and choir concerts occur at assemblies during the school day and at special evening events for parents and family members. Students in the school can also choose to participate in the annual Lip-Sync performance run by teachers. Beginning in January, students pick a favorite song and develop a performance to go with it. For several months, students practice the performance at recess time, under the guidance of the teachers. Then in the spring, there is a huge evening performance at our high school that draws a packed house.

Each month, representatives from our local Kiwanis and Lions Clubs come to the school as sponsors of monthly student awards. A few students at each grade are selected by their teachers to receive either the Student of the Month Award for showing leadership, citizenship, and responsibility, or the ASPIRES Award for acceptance of others and friendship. Students receive a certificate and a monetary award and have their picture put in the local newspaper.

Collegial attitudes persist among the teachers at Mifflinburg Area Intermediate School. Teachers are good at sharing what's working for them in the classroom and will often commit to making/sharing curricular items for their teams, such as unit assessments for our new math program. The staff is compassionate toward one another in the loss of loved ones and support during illness or surgery. Often money and gifts are donated to help students and their families around the holidays.

With so much riding on the performance of our students, teachers can feel unappreciated. At Mifflinburg Area Intermediate School, the teachers are made to feel valued for their work and dedication. Teachers hear from supervisors that their personal wellbeing and family needs are important and efforts are made to accommodate personal situations as they arise. Teachers are very frequently given opportunities to provide input on matters that affect teaching and learning. Developmental feedback to teachers is timely and meaningful and always couched in supportive tones. Administration recognizes that teachers need to connect with one another, so planning time is structured to allow teachers to meet together for collaboration and lesson study. Instructional time is protected by reducing intrusions, such as announcements, and by keeping assemblies to a minimum. Class sizes are kept to the lowest possible number and students with learning and behavior needs are distributed evenly among classrooms. Teachers are personally thanked or

given a note when they follow through with requests or go an extra mile, especially when they were not asked to do so. At special times of the year, such as Christmas and on National Teacher Appreciation Day, teachers are given small gifts of thanks.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

The Mifflinburg Area Intermediate School works collaboratively with families and community agencies to develop frameworks of support for students. It begins by creating a welcoming environment. We believe parents know their children best and the school is here to partner with them to create plans of success for their children. Timely communications about progress and mutual respect are the hallmarks of the partnership between the school and home. Parents will tell you that the teachers, staff, and administration at school are accessible and willing to listen to concerns.

Our school has an active Home and School Association--HSA. This parent group works to use its funding streams to provide enriching opportunities for students such as Scholastic book fairs, Santa Shop for students to buy small gifts for family members at Christmastime, Friday Fun Nights, local field trips, a 5th grade graduation event, yearbooks, and Red Ribbon Week. In addition, the HSA has a teacher appreciation program that provides a meal for teachers on the two late nights during the Parent Teacher Conferences. The HSA also provides treats and gifts of appreciation to teachers and staff during National Teacher Appreciation Week in May. The HSA coordinates volunteers for some school events such as our yearly track and field day.

Organizations within our community offer a wide array of activities in which students may choose to participate. Little League, AYSO, gymnastics, community swim teams, Good News Clubs, Boy Scouts/Girls Scouts, YMCA art program, and the like, will often ask the school for assistance connecting with students or getting the word out about opportunities to get involved in what they have to offer. We may either announce this information on our school P.A. system or send approved flyers home with the students.

In November and December each year, Mifflinburg Area Intermediate School joins the other buildings in collecting items to go to our neediest of families. We have an annual food drive at Thanksgiving to supply a full meal for families within our town. Last year, we provided a meal to nearly 100 families. In addition, our school collects toys to be donated to Toys for Tots. And our school social worker coordinates the Angel Tree program. Many of our staff members sign up to donate clothing, personal care items, and toys to be given to children on behalf of a parent who is incarcerated. These families are local--living right here in Union County.

Furthermore, our school has partnered with the local ministerium to run a Friday backpack program. About two dozen of our children take home a backpack filled with a weekend meal for that child and every sibling in the house. The backpacks can be heavy but you wouldn't know it from the smiles on the students' faces as they leave the office at Friday dismissal.

3. Professional Development:

The Mifflinburg Area School District works on a 185 day calendar. Five of these days are set aside for professional development on key instructional practices, periodic initiatives, and collaboration to ensure alignment of programs and services from K to 12. The professional development calendar for the coming school year is established in the spring. Teachers are given opportunities to provide input as to what they believe are critical needs for which training is essential. In years past, our primary approach to professional development was to bring in experts to instruct us on best practices or new resources. We have found that we can do a better job ourselves by using a "train the trainer" approach. Our own teachers are sent to get trained on new things. They then deliver P.D. to their colleagues. This helps us to build trust and capacity. This train the trainer model was recently very effective for training on the updated Everyday Math 4 Common Core program.

Knowing that time is a premium, school administration acts strategically to use faculty meetings for

professional conversations, many of which qualify for Act 48 credit. Topics include technology integration, differentiated instruction/assessment, high impact strategies, and approaches and resources for tiered interventions for both academics and behavior. Teachers who are having success with strategies within their classroom are asked to present these strategies to colleagues at a faculty meeting. Like the train the trainer model, this approach of having one of their own present information is always better received by teachers.

We are increasingly aware of the value of the resources provided by the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit--I.U. 16. Our local I.U. has knowledgeable educators and administrators who are trained in research-backed standards-connected practices and programs. The I.U. serves our school and district well in the dissemination of critical information from the state that impacts students, families, and our schools.

4. School Leadership:

The Mifflinburg Area Intermediate School principal is the building manager and instructional leader. In either role, student achievement is at the center of all administrative decisions. As a manager, the principal ensures that district policies involving programs, property, students, and employees are carried out with fidelity. He provides for a safe and comfortable learning environment by modeling expected professional behaviors and creating systems and routines for unique circumstances such as fires, severe weather, lockdowns and evacuation events. As the instructional leader, the principal takes it upon himself to participate in or lead trainings with the professional staff to be able to assist with program implementation and help with troubleshooting whenever issues arise. The principal is visible within the building. Teachers understand that his presence in classrooms is not always evaluative, but rather collegial by offering another set of eyes and ears to inform teachers about the effectiveness of instruction. While showing respect to the staff, the principal acts as an advocate for students by diplomatically challenging adult actions.

A few teachers from the school are asked each year to participate in a program called the Designated Teacher Leader Program--an in-house leadership group created and run by the district superintendent. Teachers who demonstrate high levels of professionalism are nominated by the building principal to participate in DTLP. The thrust of the program is to encourage the teachers to become more involved in the important processes at their school and assume a leadership role in a meaningful area. Several Mifflinburg Area Intermediate School teachers have gone through this training. One of these teachers is now involved with coordinating all benchmark testing and disseminating the data to grade level teams. The other teacher has taken a leadership role on the school's school-wide positive behavior team.

All professional staff in the school are assigned to serve on a district-wide curriculum committee. The committees are broken down by subject or department such as communications, math, science, social studies, fine arts, technology education, health and physical education, special education, or guidance. Teachers meet with their department colleagues a few times a year to review current or proposed programs and align curriculum.

The Mifflinburg Area Intermediate School has a Child Study Team comprised of the principal, special education director, school psychologist, and the guidance counselor. This group meets monthly with teachers who submit academic and behavioral referrals for students. The team offers feedback to teachers on ways to provide accommodations or intervention strategies to create a scaffold for student success. The team sometimes begins the process of student evaluations or helps to create behavior plans for students who are having more serious issues that impede their learning.

Teachers run our after-school Wildcat Camp. On three days each week, from the fall to the spring, two or three teachers at each grade work with up to two dozen students at their grade. The teachers provide assistance with homework completion. They also provide mini lessons on critical math and reading skills.

The school guidance counselor has coordinated with the local ministerium on a Friday Backpack Program. At the end of each week, about two dozen students, take home a backpack filled with a meal for themselves and a sibling.

Teachers show leadership by spearheading individual interests that may benefit our students and their families. For example, a teacher concerned about students with parents who are incarcerated runs an Angel Tree Program to provide needed items and gifts around the holidays. Other teachers take it upon themselves to coordinate food drives and the collection of toys for local families.

The building nurse and the physical education teacher team up to coordinate health and wellness programs for all students. These programs include lessons on the value of good nutrition and exercise. Representatives from our local hospital come in to speak to students on these topics. Our nurse also works with our guidance counselor to coordinate a program on growth and adolescence for our fourth grade students. Some of our local doctors come in to the school to speak to boys and girls about how their bodies will change as they move through adolescence.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Success at Mifflinburg Area Intermediate School is the direct result of a positive mindset lived out by the teachers, staff, and administrators. The employees consistently demonstrate, through their words and actions, that they understand the importance of relationship building and the need to convey hope to children. It is tied to the belief that all students can do rigorous academic work and perform at high levels, but some students need help overcoming obstacles. A sense of professional efficacy is evident in the conversations that take place among the staff when deciding what's needed for students success. The people in the school really believe they are part of a system that can make a difference. In the classrooms, teachers and staff are conveying the message that says, "This is important. You can do it. I'm here to help you." This attitude shows up in the partnerships that are created with parents. Phone calls, notes, emails, and conferences are all about getting informed and making a new plan to change a child's course. Teachers show that they are willing to work hard to improve themselves and bring about significant changes in the important work they do. Likewise, they are praising effort more from students. Classrooms are characterized by community, ownership, and risk taking. Everyone works as a team to ensure, first, that students' basic needs are met. The guidance counselor and social worker strive to help families get connected to services within the community. The school nurse recognizes the importance of helping to ease a parent's fears that a child's condition won't be understood or accommodated. It's the principal who tells the students on the P.A. system each morning, "I'm really glad you've come to school today. Give today your very best." Everyone is invested. This positive mindset has gained traction and now has proven results. Mifflinburg Area Intermediate School is a nationally recognized Blue Ribbon School.