

**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) [X] Title I    [ ] Charter    [ ] Magnet    [ ] Choice

Name of Principal Ms. Lisa Wilson

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

Official School Name Peace Dale Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 109 Kersey Road

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

City Peace Dale    State RI    Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 02879-2428

County Rhode Island (RI)

Telephone (401) 360-1600    Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Web site/URL http://www.skschools.net    E-mail lwilson@sksd-ri.net

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\*Dr Kristen Stringfellow    E-mail kstringfellow@sksd-ri.net  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name South Kingstown    Tel. (401) 360-1300

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Part I – Eligibility Certification

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

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

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

### DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 7 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	41	37	78
1	36	27	63
2	25	35	60
3	40	35	75
4	28	42	70
5	0	0	0
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>	170	176	346

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 2 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 1 % Asian
  - 1 % Black or African American
  - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 84 % White
  - 8 % 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: 10%

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

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	19
(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)]	36
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	358
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.101
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	10

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

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

Turkish

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 24 %  
 Total number students who qualify: 83
8. Students receiving special education services: 15 %  
51 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.

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

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 0
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	1
Classroom teachers	18
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	16
Paraprofessionals	14
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 19:1

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	95%	95%	96%	96%	95%
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 X

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.

Cooperative and collaborative behavior will be the norm. Educational excellence will be the standard achieved by encouraging all to take risks and expand on traditional ideas.

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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The mission of Peace Dale School is to develop an equal partnership with parents, students and staff to achieve educational excellence while honoring each child's social, emotional, physical and academic needs. We celebrate diversity within our school community and recognize that it strengthens and enriches our learning.

Peace Dale School is located in South Kingstown, Rhode Island. It was founded in 1854 as a one-room schoolhouse. It has gone through many renovations and additions throughout the years, but has retained the historic, original brick building complete with slate roof.

Peace Dale School is the largest elementary school in the South Kingstown school department. We presently have 346 students ranging from kindergarten through fourth grade. Our students come from various socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. We are a Title I designated school. This year we were ranked number one in the state of Rhode Island for our performance on the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment in both English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics. We are proud of all that we have accomplished and attribute our success to our growth mindset. As it says in our mission statement, achievement will be reached “by encouraging students and adults to take risks and to expand on traditional ideas.”

Peace Dale School has been recognized as a high-performing school. Peace Dale School's curriculum is based on the Common Core Standards. Instruction is delivered via a workshop model in all subject areas. Support services include literacy, special education (resource, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy and Speech/Language), after school tutoring (math club and homework club) a part-time psychologist, and a part-time social worker. A commitment to educational excellence is supported by weekly Common Planning Time meetings, Response to Intervention meetings and monthly Data days.

This year a new initiative, Dual Language Immersion was brought to our district and embraced by our school. This program has begun in the kindergarten where students are instructed half of their day in English and the remaining half in Spanish. The staff as a whole has enthusiastically supported this endeavor. Signs throughout our building label different areas in both English and in Spanish. Faculty and staff have learned several new phrases that can be used to address the children in Spanish when they are in the hallways. We are all excited to watch this program grow and develop over the next few years.

Our staff works to build a sense of community in many different ways. Each morning, the children participate in school-wide announcements. The children recite the Pledge of Allegiance, birthdays are acknowledged, and good behaviors is recognized by reciting the children's names who have met our school-wide behavioral expectations. The announcements conclude with a quote of the day and our school song. Our school community also comes together on different occasions many times throughout the year before and after school. There are opportunities for students to enrich their learning with before and after school classes. Choices include; chorus, instruments, art classes, gym classes, yoga, and knitting to name a few. Enrichment classes are selected based upon a wide variety of interests.

Peace Dale school has a school-wide behavioral program that focuses on positive behavior and actively teaches children expected behavior. Our school expectations are “Be Responsible”, “Be Respectful” and “Be Safe”. Children are recognized every time they follow expectations by being given a “splash” which is a ticket with their name. The ticket is placed into our “Splash Tank” and names are drawn at our monthly assemblies. At these monthly assemblies, Peace Dale school staff and students celebrate our success in all areas and also model ways to positively interact in our school community. The children always look forward to seeing our school mascot, The Stingray, and hope their names will be selected. These assemblies have become a part of our school traditions and we have become “famous” for our annual Thanksgiving “Turkey Trot” where teachers dress as turkeys and play musical chairs. This is truly an enjoyable experience for everyone!

## PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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### 1. Core Curriculum:

Peace Dale Elementary School's core curriculum addresses the Common Core State Standards within all academic domains. The curriculum is designed to meet the needs of a diverse group of learners utilizing a systematic approach and differentiated instructional strategies that will meet the needs of all students. In addition to the Common Core State Standards within both English/Language Arts and Mathematics, Peace Dale Elementary School also implements curriculum which addresses the Next Generation Science Standards and Rhode Island Grade Span Expectations. Acquisition of learning standards is accomplished through a consistent workshop model within all subject areas.

Peace Dale Elementary implements a rigorous English/Language Arts curriculum which incorporates the Columbia University Teacher's College Reading and Writing Project model consistently over the past several years. Students are actively engaged within self-selected, leveled texts and participate within daily lessons that incorporate a framework which includes a mini-lesson, active-engagement, independent work time and a share. All students are actively engaged in higher-level, meta-cognitive skills using nonfiction informational texts and fiction genres throughout grades K-4. Differentiated interventions addresses learner needs within the five areas of reading on a daily basis; for example, reader's theater, repeated readings of texts at both instructional and independent reading levels and poems and songs all support growth within the area of fluency. Through the use of flexible grouping, strategy groups and individualized conferencing, comprehension skills and vocabulary development are monitored and addressed to ensure successful skill acquisition. Phonemic awareness and phonics are taught by utilizing a multi-sensory and kinesthetic approach which includes the use of gel boards, tile boards and white boards with an emphasis on foundational phonemic rules and acquisition of Dolch sight words. Within our reading program, there is a strong emphasis on shared, collaborative thinking among learning communities and students are becoming independent thinkers and learners through self-monitoring, positive peer interactions and constructive feedback.

The writing units of study at Peace Dale Elementary are seamlessly integrated with the reading units. There is an emphasis on narrative, informational, persuasive/opinion and poetry genres in grades K-4. Conventions, structure and elaboration are the key components taught within the workshop model. The positive results include increased stamina and volume through sustained writing. Increased independence in drafting, editing and revising processes are a result of systematic and individualized instruction. In addition to daily writing workshops, writing is also integrated within all other academic areas.

Mathematics at Peace Dale is based on the Common Core State Standards. The scope and sequence of the curriculum is teacher/district-generated. Our curriculum emphasizes number sense, fluency, problem solving, geometry and pre-algebra. Lessons are designed to meet the academic needs of all learners through differentiation, rotation of center-based math activities and math games. Students accomplish clearly stated objectives through the mini-lesson, active engagement, independent practice and share. Blended learning opportunities are provided using interactive mimeos, i pads, laptops and web-based Common Core aligned programs.

The Peace Dale Elementary science curriculum is aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards. The inquiry based learning practices emphasize life science, earth science and physical science. The teaching staff at Peace Dale Elementary work in partnership with the University of Rhode Island to ensure consistent implementation of the science curriculum through the use of hands-on, inquiry based learning. Teachers are provided with the necessary materials to ensure both rigorous and authentic scientific explorations. Science notebooks are utilized within kindergarten through 4th grade with a consistent emphasis on developing hypotheses, data collection, scientific illustrations, interpreting results and formulating conclusions. Outdoor learning experiences provide a deeper understanding of how the science in our classroom connects to the real world.

Peace Dale Elementary has a district aligned mission is to engage all students in a challenging and

differentiated K-4 social studies curriculum. The curriculum emphasizes integration of: citizenship, historical thinking, and content literacy through research-based best practice, instruction and assessment. The knowledge and skills acquired will empower students to participate in the democratic process and to ensure success in a global and technological society. Social studies lessons are integrated through cross-curricular lessons and activities within both reading and writing.

## 2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Within the area of art, students receive forty minutes of instruction per week. Students learn to draw, paint, produce 3-dimensional sculpture and create pottery. Students are encouraged to brainstorm their own original ideas and express themselves using a variety of media. Students are provided with opportunities to draw or sculpt from observation using live plants, birds and animals. Students are encouraged to “turn and talk” about their work with their classmates in preparation to exhibit their work at school and in the community. The community offers many opportunities for students to show their work at local galleries and businesses. Finally, students explore and produce art-work in a variety of cultural styles. This allows students to value and develop an interest in the diverse artistic heritage of many cultures around the globe.

Elementary students (grades k-4) learn skills and movement that enhance their physical abilities and long-term health.. All students participate in physical education for thirty minutes twice a week. Students access a wide range of different sports and activities including soccer, basketball, volleyball, bowling, softball, and floor hockey.

The first goal of physical education at the elementary level is to help students understand the importance of regular aerobic exercise. Through exposure to a wide variety of physical activities, students are given the opportunity to develop preferences that will encourage to stay active as they get older.

The second goal of our program is to help students identify and model characteristics of good sportsmanship. Students learn what it means to do their the best rather than to focus on being “the best.” Students learn to work as a team and to encourage the efforts of all of their peers.

Students in grades K-3 receive music instruction once per week for thirty minutes. Students in grade 4 have the additional option to take string instruction once per week for thirty minutes and/or chorus once per week for thirty minutes.

Instruction focuses on the whole child and includes movement, playing, singing, composing, improvising, literacy, and critical listening. Students listen to musical selections and “turn and talk” with their classmates about various elements of the pieces. Students explore music history, music in culture, music in dance, music in theater and entertainment, music in our daily lives, music careers and music technology.

Enrichment opportunities include a multi-age chorus that meets once per week before school, after-school ukulele classes offered through the PTO class program, and all-school musical plays which take place every other year and involves the entire school community, as well as many local town organizations.

A new district initiative, dual language immersion, develops bilingualism and biculturalism for students at the elementary level (grades K-4). This year the DLI (Dual Language Immersion) enrolled 39 students entering Kindergarten. Throughout the year students are exposed to the curriculum in both languages. Under this model, students learn 50 percent of the day in Spanish and 50 percent in English. Where opportunities occur in other areas such as art and music, students apply aspects of the partner language. As students develop proficiency in both languages they are able to transfer what they learn by making connections using prior knowledge as it applies to the academic context. This program will grow annually expanding to the next grade, eventually to a K-12 dual language model.

Our school library is a busy and welcoming environment, built on a foundation of (AASL) standards for fostering information literacy. Our school library blends digital and textual literacy in such a way that students are able to browse for reading material via the library catalog, research subjects in print and online, practice their coding skills, collaborate with classmates, and create projects in a variety of technology

formats. Each class comes to the library once per week for instruction and a book exchange period. Additionally, students choose to come to the library during recess to access google Gmail accounts, explore the google suite of products, and work on tech projects via the google classroom. Free-choice time at the library is also an opportunity for students to pursue their interests. Students report a high level of satisfaction with free choice activities such as searching for books on their favorite topics, working with classmates on code or scratch, Glogster, word processing programs, or other available technological programs. Finally, students are able to apply the knowledge they gain in the general classroom by creating presentations using library technology to showcase their work.

### 3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

Our school utilizes a tiered approach to learning through data derived from a variety of resources. Educators in our school use ongoing formative and summative assessments to provide instruction that is tailored to our students' needs.

Through instruction, our students are explicitly taught strategies and are provided time to practice strategies to help them grow as a reader, writer, scientist and mathematician. Our students are also given time to independently practice the strategies they have learned, utilizing books and resources on a daily basis. Educators model and provide guided practice to students using these strategies that are within the student's zone of proximal development. This model ensures that all students are provided with the tools and strategies that meet their academic needs.

We have a collaborative approach through Response to Intervention (RTI) where a team meets to discuss students needs based on on-going data collection. Through this model students could receive a variety of interventions to enable them to make progress towards meeting the common core standards. We have an established intervention block in the schedule where specialists and classroom teachers work with students who have been identified as in need of intervention to close the gap of academic achievement. Students that have been identified in need of intervention have a Personal Literacy (PLP) Plan or Personal Math Plan (PMP). This plan allows for teacher to document intervention goals, progress monitor and track progress and intervention need of students.

Our Common Core aligned and teacher developed math curriculum incorporates small group, differentiated instruction on a daily basis. Techniques include utilizing the Workshop Model to address the Big Idea(s) of the day. The format of the Workshop Model includes the mini-lesson, followed by small group instruction and a share out. This model incorporates the; I do, we do, and you do gradual release of responsibility from teacher to student.

Station rotation, during the math workshop model, is another utilized option for supporting greater independence, opportunities for productive struggle and the embrace of self-directed learning.

Math centers in the primary grades provide opportunities for teachers to use a flexible group model to tier remediation and enrichment activities.

In the upper grades, we are beginning to incorporate Blended Learning into the Station Rotation model to build opportunities for students and teachers to become more comfortable using technology as a learning tool.

For Core Instruction in Literacy, the Workshop model is used. Each day students participate in a mini lesson based on the unit of study, work independently practicing lessons learned while teachers confer and teach students individually or in strategy groups, and then close the lesson with sharing about a strategy, practice or knowledge learned. During independent times, educators research students' reading or writing needs and then provide explicit instruction to students in the form of one to one conferences or small strategy groups. In the area of Literacy classroom teacher and/or reading specialists provide intervention instruction to students. The instruction is based on personal literacy plan identified areas such as but not limited to: phonemic awareness, phonics, and comprehension. Based on the tier determination students have intervention support 3-5 times a week.

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

Assessment begins in the classroom where teachers analyze student work daily. Exit slips and additional formative assessments are embedded in each unit of study, to show which children: struggle with a concept or skill, have partial understanding, have mastery of the skill, or are ready for enrichment. Pretests assess who has mastery of a skill and is ready for more challenging work. Work is returned to students for reflection and revision. Work samples are sent home for parents to review regularly.

After each unit of study, summative assessments are administered, while formative assessments are utilized to drive instructional practices. Work is formally assessed and shared with students and parents. Formal parent conferences are held annually and teachers informally meet with parents as needed. Phone calls, emails, newsletters and quarterly report cards keep parents informed of student progress.

Classroom teachers, coaches, special educators and administrators meet bi-monthly to examine, discuss, and analyze student data. Data sources such as screenings, fluency scores, running records, exit slips, NECAP (New England Common Assessment Program) and PARCC state testing are also analyzed. This analysis leads to critical next step decisions. Students below district benchmarks are identified for additional tiered support. Parents are notified and included as a Response to Intervention plan for targeted remediation is developed. The plan is shared on Technology for Improving Education (TIENET), so all stakeholders are accountable for their part in documenting progress and interventions. Participants record student progress of the targeted skills identified. The analysis done during data days might determine: the development of a personal math plan, a personal literacy plan, a recommendation to work with a math or reading specialist during an intervention block, inclusion in an enrichment group, placement in an after-school homework or intervention group, and/or participation in a Title I summer reading program. After 6-8 weeks, the RTI team reconvenes to evaluate student progress, during a scheduled progress monitoring day. If the student is responding to the intervention the plan is continued. A new plan is put into place if needed.

Teachers and the principal also meet monthly with literacy and math coaches to look at student data (both formally and informally) and to make decisions about assessments, curricula, practices, and instruction. Teachers can collaborate with the math/literacy coaches and reading specialists to improve practice. In addition, faculty meetings are used for staff development in areas of need identified by assessment data. Classroom assessment data is a key component in deciding targeted supports.

## **PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS**

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

At Peace Dale the teachers, staff and administrators work together to create an environment that supports the academic, social and emotional growth of every student. Teachers feel supported and valued by each other and administration.

Our school embraces the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) system. This is a school wide behavior management program that promotes respectful, responsible and safe behaviors. Every child is recognized with blue splash tickets, throughout the course of the school year. They are given recognition during daily announcements and at assemblies. Not only are children excited to hear their own names recognized, but it becomes very evident through claps and smiles that they are as excited when their peers are recognized.

The role out of the current anti bullying program has strengthened the school climate as well. Through classroom meetings children learn to utilize respectful language when talking with their peers and develop empathy for one another. For example, one such activity is the “kindness circle,” where children greet their classmates by giving them a compliment. Our school’s daily quote states “if someone is left out, ask them to join. That’s what our school is all about.”

When walking down the halls of Peace Dale Elementary it becomes evident that hard work and effort is encouraged. Children’s work is recognized and displayed in hallways and in classrooms. Individualized and differentiated goals are set and celebrated when they are achieved. High, yet realistic expectations are set throughout the school spanning grade levels.

In every classroom teachers set up a positive environment that motivates children to learn. The instructional format is similar throughout the school as we all embrace the workshop model. Workshop model teaching supports students’ academic, social and emotional needs. Students are able to make their own choices and decisions. For instance, a classroom might be in the midst of a unit on Biographies. A teacher does not assign a text to each student, but rather large classroom libraries enable students to choose books at their just right level. Similarly a writing unit’s focus might be on personal narratives. Students have choice in what topic they will write about, deciding from their own histories which personal narrative matters most to them. Moreover, students choose the teaching point to work on in the context of the unit. Through choice students have ownership in their work.

Workshop style teaching continues to support students’ academic, social and emotional growth as read-alouds and mini lessons often emphasize perspective taking through the study of characters’ relationships and problems. The texts chosen are chosen with purpose to engage students and ensure "reliability".

This method of teaching also supports collaboration. Students are assigned long term reading, writing and math partners. Teachers at Peace Dale spend time teaching students how to listen and talk respectfully to one another. Exercising accountable talk phrases such as “I would like to piggyback on what Sam said...” or “I respectfully disagree and would like to add...”, partner talk, group work, and whole class conversations are another avenue of instruction that supports not only academic growth, but the social and emotional growth of each child. Turn and Talk is a strategy teachers use to maximize student responses and engagement. When a teacher asks a question they then allow time for students to share responses with one another before calling on a student for an answer. Students who typically wouldn’t share are more likely to because they have more confidence.

The teachers at Peace Dale Elementary School play an integral role in the creation of the school’s culture. Teachers here feel valued and supported by colleagues and administration. One way this is fostered is when administration seeks out teachers’ insight and feedback. Teachers are asked to participate on committees that will make important decisions on how curriculum is delivered. One such recent committee included reviewing how the intervention block could be used to maximize students’ academic gains. It’s a team of

teachers who decide on the purchase of materials to carry out a unit of study and it's the teachers who help to plan what specific reading and writing units will be taught throughout a school year. Teacher's ideas are requested to help decide on the goals of the school's improvement document and the needs of educators were implored when professional development goals were planned.

Additionally at Peace Dale, teachers' individual strengths are utilized to advance student achievement and teachers' own professional growth. During the implementation phase of workshop style teaching, teachers here at Peace Dale hosted lab site classrooms to demonstrate the reading workshop model to other colleagues within the school and district. Peace Dale's teachers presently host lab site classrooms for other nearby districts who wish to learn more about reading and writing workshop. The result of these opportunities is that the members of the building feel empowered and valued as they share expertise and knowledge with others. This builds a school climate in which a growth mindset is the norm and teachers continually seek to better their practice. Most importantly, the fact that teachers are willing to put themselves out there and open the doors of their classroom to colleagues illustrates the level of trust that is present in this building.

It is clear that the entire staff works to ensure that students are motivated and engaged in ways to support their academic, social, and emotional growth Peace Dale School, as you can see is an environment where teachers feel valued and supported.

## 2. Engaging Families and Community:

The Peace Dale School population is culturally diverse, and there is an ongoing effort to meet the needs of the entire school community. The strategies Peace Dale School has found successful in working with family and community members for student success and school improvement include creating a welcoming school climate that engages all families, ongoing communication with families, community involvement, and school-sponsored events.

Staff members have consistent and on-going methods of staying in communication with families. E-mail is frequently used with parents, as are daily or weekly communication logs or classroom newsletters. Each classroom has a phone that parents can call directly. Health alerts are sent home and automated phone messages are utilized to inform families of attendance issues, specific events, concerns, and successes.

Specific efforts are made to involve the community. There is a Special Education Local Advisory Committee that brings in speakers and holds presentations to provide support for families of students with disabilities and empower parents in the decision-making surrounding Special Education issues. Community, college student, and parental volunteers are utilized in all facets of the school to assist staff and provide support to the students. Some students are assigned a mentor who meets with them weekly in or out of school; community members and college athletes come in for special reading activities during Reading Week; Junior Achievement comes in each year to spend a day with students; and the Animal Rescue League works with second graders through the writing curriculum.

Support staff facilitate family access to community-based programs depending on their needs such as health care, heating assistance, vision services, dentistry, mental health, flu clinics, food assistance, housing, legal services and intensive home-based community wrap-around support. Social Work staff act as a family liaison, facilitating home-school-community communication. A community-resource guide was created by social work staff to help connect families to necessary resources.

A homework club staffed by volunteers meets twice a week to assist students with homework. A math interventionist is available two days a week to support students. The PTO offers after school classes that cover a variety of interests (eg; karate, knitting, cheerleading, art).

There is whole class, small group and individual instruction in self-regulation strategies provided by the School Social Worker and School Psychologist. The school has adopted a school-wide anti-bullying (OLWEUS) program and the Positive Behavioral Intervention System (PBIS). Students from surrounding colleges complete their course requirements (teaching, nursing, social work, Physical therapy, Speech

Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Music Therapy) by working under the supervision of specific staff. The Peace Dale School building is used by community members throughout the week outside of school hours for YMCA, Parks and Recreation, and Scouting events.

Several Back-to School Open House events are held at the beginning of each year, where students and families can meet school staff and orient themselves to the school community. Cultural and Academic presentations are sponsored by the PTO throughout the school year (such as the Narragansett Indian Cultural presentation). Annually, the PTO sponsors a Holiday Fair, a PBIS Fair, Art Show/Ice Cream Social, Family Dance/Game Night, a winter Coat Drive.

All of these aspects of the Peace Dale School Community have led to student success and school improvement.

### 3. Professional Development:

Peace Dale School integrates multiple sources of Professional Development in order to develop a plan that is directed at increasing student performance and is founded on best practice. The school approach is designed so that all educators are not only trained in each of the content areas they teach, but are also given continuous support to provide consistent instruction to meet the diverse needs of all learners. To ensure that the curriculum is taught with fidelity, District administrators charge the schools with initiatives that address the standards, improve teaching and learning, and close the gaps.

District professional development includes, training by staff developers from Columbia Teacher's College Reading and Writing Project as well as our own district coaches. Throughout the year trained staff developers come to our school to work directly with the teachers and principal in implementing Readers and Writers Workshop. These sessions consist of direct instruction, collaboration with other teachers, lesson modeling, lab classroom observation, looking at student work and assessments to determine student needs and achievement. The principal attends the training and an administrative session each time staff developers from teachers College come to the school.

Gems Net Science Fellows through the University of Rhode Island and district coaches for Common Core Math. All professional development is designed to align with the Common Core. Additionally, the principal attends tri-annual science sessions with other administrators to discuss science standards, new materials, teaching models and use of inquiry based science. During these science training there is also opportunity to meet with science trainers to plan school site visits. Math professional development is done through the coaching/consultation model. District math coaches present material to the principal and staff either individually, grade level or school wide depending on the need of the staff. Professional development and consultation is based on data from student assessments. For example, teachers recently sat with coaches to look at their latest unit assessments to calibrate understanding of how to score latest math assessments.

Teachers have Common Planning Time to meet with grade level teachers (including the principal, coaches, special educators, and reading specialists) to plan, differentiate and share resources and ideas. This allows for integration of the district professional development to meet the individual needs of our students.

Our professional development in Reading, Writing and Math clearly contributed to the attainment of the highest PARCC scores in Reading and Math for all elementary schools in the state this year. One constant challenge is closing the achievement gaps. Through Response to Intervention, a systematic approach of collecting and analyzing data is in place. This is to ensure the the different needs of all students are met in a timely manner.

As a result of our professional development, the process represents Peace Dale's strengths and needs, culminating in the development of a plan to improve delivery of pedagogy with best practices and fidelity.

Our goal is to assure continuous high performance of all children.

#### 4. School Leadership:

The leadership at Peace Dale School begins with the principal whose philosophy is one of shared responsibility for all of the initiatives and programming in the school. Our principal encourages staff taking leadership role within the school, district and community. There are many opportunities for staff to be a part of as many as twelve committees, as a member or as a chairperson. One example of this is the School Improvement Team. This team develops a plan through analysis of student achievement and discussion of school-wide needs before determining an action plan to address these areas. The team, consisting of principal, teachers and parents, focuses on content, student achievement and social-emotional development during their meetings throughout the school year.

Our principal provides many opportunities for staff input regarding decisions that affect the entire school. An example of this is demonstrated through her collaboration with our Common Planning Time (CPT) Facilitators. These monthly meetings bridge the communication between administration and faculty. The teacher leaders then bring back to their grade level colleagues any information from these discussions that needs to be shared. Student achievement related to curriculum goals is often the focus of these meetings.

The principal motivates the staff and students to pursue leadership roles within our school. This is evident with our Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). Peace Dale School stands out because in addition to having our PBIS leaders who plan lessons and support the teachers, we also have fourth grade student leaders. These students take on leadership roles in three areas: chaperons, communication and organization. Peace Dale School also added the Olweus anti-bullying program this year. This program teaches acceptance, inclusion and promotes proactive behaviors. Success with this program correlates with student achievement.

Although school leadership is shared, the principal will not hesitate in making a decision for the academic well being or safety of the school when called for. Academics and well being are the core of our school. The principal does bring new ideas and support teachers with resources from her own background knowledge and experience. Safety concerns are addressed by our Crisis Team who regularly review state, district and school safety policies annually. This practice promotes a secure and safe learning environment which allows the students to focus on learning and being the best students they can be! Peace Dale School is proud of the leadership displayed throughout, within and beyond this wonderful learning community.

## Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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One practice that contributes to the academic and emotional success of students at Peace Dale School is our commitment to the workshop model. We have spent the last four years learning about the skills and strategies utilized in this instructional model. This model came to us from Lucy Caulkins and Columbia University Teachers College. We have embraced this teaching approach and style as it has allowed us as a staff to really become experts in the teaching of reading and writing. Both teachers and students are active rather than passive in this teaching and learning process. This approach simultaneously allows students the opportunity to not only learn how to read and write but to see themselves as critical thinkers, editors, authors and confident readers with increased stamina.

Complimentary reading and writing units of study are taught to students within each grade level. This cross-curricular approach affords the students the opportunity to make reading/ writing connections. For example, when reading nonfiction informational text, students simultaneously learn about text structure and features, as well as participate within writing informational pieces at grade level.

A unique aspect of the methodology includes the structures necessary to allow students the ability to excel at their individual independent levels within both reading and writing. Choice driven decision making empowers students the ability to take ownership within their own learning.

The workshop model provides both foundational skills and higher order thinking strategies through explicit direct instruction. Teachers teach and model the strategies that will help students develop and use a variety of skills through guided practice. Students are able to use their toolbox of strategies to navigate the curriculum.

Workshop model provides differentiated instruction for all learners. It allows teachers the ability to use the individual student data collected to develop strategy lessons and implement small group and individualized instruction. Therefore, students who are already proficient in the standards are able to expand on what they've learned while those who have not met the standard will receive additional instruction in order meet the standard. Another important part of the workshop model is independent practice. This is valued time where students are expected to try out learning from the unit mini lessons. During this independent practice time, teachers at Peace Dale School are able to differentiate their instruction to meet the individual needs of students. Teachers confer with students, celebrate accomplishments and challenge students to meet the next benchmark, try something new or polish their ideas. Conference time also allows teachers the opportunity to assess learning and needs. Teachers keep notes and plan strategy groups to assist in teaching and developing learning.

Through this form of assessment teachers provide targeted feedback, and students are given the opportunity to develop the skills needed to meet or exceed the standard.

As a result of using this practice, we have seen significant improvements in student skill acquisition each year.