

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Dr. Marie Stanley

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

Official School Name Watauga Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 23181 Watauga Road

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

City Abingdon State VA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 24211-7073

County Washington County

Telephone (276) 739-3600 Fax (276) 628-1847

Web site/URL http://wes.wcs.k12.va.us E-mail mstanley@wcs.k12.va.us

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. Brian Ratliff E-mail bratliff@wcs.k12.va.us

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Washington County Tel. (276) 739-3000

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. Elizabeth Lowe

(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):
- 7 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 4 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 4 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools

15 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	26	14	40
K	40	39	79
1	36	46	82
2	38	50	88
3	51	57	108
4	46	42	88
5	41	56	97
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	278	304	582

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 2 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 3 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 91 % White
 - 3 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	49
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	34
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	83
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	580
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.143
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	14

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 43 %
Total number students who qualify: 254

8. Students receiving special education services: 12 %
73 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <u>2</u> Autism | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>18</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>8</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>9</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>2</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>1</u> Mental Retardation | <u>2</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| <u>2</u> Multiple Disabilities | <u>21</u> Developmentally Delayed |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 6
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	2
Classroom teachers	28
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	12
Paraprofessionals	5
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 23:1

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

Required Information	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
Daily student attendance	96%	95%	95%	93%	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.

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.

Watauga Elementary School seeks to recognize and respond to the needs of all students. Through the cooperative efforts of the school and the community, students will secure the foundation for continued success.

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

Watauga Elementary School (WES) is a public elementary school, located in a rural community about four miles from Abingdon in Washington County, Virginia. The school opened on August 17, 1981 and housed students in kindergarten through seventh grade. In the fall of 1991, Washington County adopted the middle school concept and Watauga Elementary became a K-5 school. A preschool class for four year-olds was added in the fall of 2000. Today, Watauga Elementary School continues to serve students in grades preschool through five with a current student enrollment of 589.

In the past six years, the faculty of Watauga Elementary School has sustained significant changes, which include a new administrator, the addition of a half-time assistant principal, and several new teachers. The faculty continues to be a compatible mix of energetic new teachers and experienced veterans who willingly share their expertise. In the same time period, some faculty members have changed teaching assignments. The administration and many of the full-time faculty members hold advanced degrees.

Watauga supports Washington County's mission statement of: "Committed to the Success of Every Student." Our school mission statement mirrors the county's with the following proclamation: "Watauga Elementary School seeks to recognize and respond to the needs of all students. Through the cooperative efforts of the school and the community, students will secure the foundation for continued success." WES is led by one principal and one half-time assistant principal, the support of a leadership team, and an active PTA. Watauga takes pride in its many accomplishments, including our most recent honor as a recipient of the 2015 Board of Education's Distinguished Achievement Award. Watauga Elementary School was also recognized as having the third highest average of Standard of Learning scores of all elementary schools in Virginia for the 2014-2015 school year. WES has been fully accredited and has met all state and federal benchmarks each year since 2001.

Watauga Elementary School has high expectations for all students resulting in a faculty who consistently provides both small group and individualized instruction to ensure student success. Regular meetings are held to review various sources of data and to discuss the academic strengths and weaknesses of specific students. Faculty members share teaching strategies, recommend resources, and openly collaborate in grade level meetings, curriculum committee meetings, and faculty meetings. Teachers participate in peer observations and regularly share best practices in professional development meetings. The faculty has compiled a document containing best teaching practices in reading and math for grades K-5 which is shared with all faculty members. Watauga's faculty and staff truly represent a team approach to student learning and achievement, and this approach continues to benefit all Watauga students.

High expectations, small group and individualized instruction, and team work have resulted in remarkable academic success as measured by performance on standardized tests. In 2014-2015, the pass rate for State Accreditation for all students in English was 97 %, exceeding the state benchmark by 22 %. In mathematics, the pass rate was 97%, which was 27% higher than the state benchmark. Watauga's pass rates of gap groups and identified subgroups also exceed the federal AMOs in English and mathematics.

While academic success is a top priority, Watauga's faculty and staff recognize the importance of encouraging the development of the whole child. To teach and emphasize the importance of giving back to the community, all grade levels participate in service learning projects during the month of December in addition to various service learning projects throughout the school year. Students are regularly recognized for their successes and contributions to the school and community. Watauga acknowledges students' accomplishments through the Honor Roll, Good Citizens of the Month, and the Million Word Reader program. Watauga has a school choir that is regularly invited to perform at community events such as Abingdon's Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony, and the Relay for Life celebration. The WES choir also visits area nursing homes during the month of December to sing for the residents.

Reading is promoted through Watauga's annual participation in the "One School, One Book" program in which the school and the community read the same book together. Watauga Elementary recognizes the significance of developing student leadership and provides the following leadership opportunities for

students: the principal's Student Advisory Committee, PTA Grade Level Representatives, Student Reading Buddies, Cafeteria Helpers, School Flag Committee, and Student PTA Representatives for grades 2-5.

An additional key factor to the success of Watauga Elementary School is the level of community engagement. The PTA and all school stakeholders play an active role in events and activities. Teachers, administrators, staff members, and community members host student-centered programs and family events. Watauga was named a National PTA School of Excellence for 2014-2016. Our PTA supports the school's needs and has recently provided an iPad lab and a mobile computer lab for our students.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

At Watauga Elementary School our curriculum in the core areas of English, math, science, and social studies is based on the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL).

Reading/English Language Arts: Watauga Elementary School teaches the curriculum based on the Virginia Standards of Learning and follows the pacing guides that have been established by Washington County Public Schools (WCPS). The learning objectives support the students' growth in the areas of reading, writing, and oral language. Students are provided with a balanced literacy program that integrates listening, speaking, reading, and writing into daily classes. Phonemic awareness, phonics, comprehension, and vocabulary are also significant features of our balanced literacy program. Beginning in pre-kindergarten, students are exposed to systematic phonics instruction which increases their readiness to learn. These skills are developed through direct instruction, modeling by teachers, guided practice, and literacy stations. Classroom teachers use a combination of whole group, small group, and individualized instruction to meet the needs of all students. The reading specialist, kindergarten intervention, and Reading Recovery teachers provide additional small group and individual support for students in need of intervention. Throughout the year, students engage in the writing process. Since the 2011-2012 school year, Watauga Elementary School has been using the 4Square writing model schoolwide. This writing model gives students an organized approach to develop their writing skills as they move from grade level to grade level. Each year, the students expand their writing samples using the 4Square writing model.

Math: WES teaches the curriculum based on the Virginia SOL and WCPS pacing guides. The instructional focus in mathematics is for students to be able to communicate mathematically and to connect to the world around them. Students should be able to problem solve and demonstrate mathematical reasoning abilities. Watauga teachers use best practices, including hands-on learning, cooperative learning, Number Talks, rigorous tasks, interactive math journals in grades K-5, and small group instruction to guide students in developing critical thinking skills and a deeper understanding of mathematics. Both formative and summative assessment data is used to identify students in need of interventions or enrichments. Students who are identified as needing either intervention or enrichment receive instruction in small groups within the general classroom. Tutoring is also provided to students needing intervention by certified retired teachers in the classroom setting and outside the classroom setting as necessary.

Science: Watauga Elementary teaches the science curriculum based on the Virginia SOL and the WCPS pacing guide. A hands-on approach is used to explore and extend the students' understanding of the scientific method. Students learn through self-discovery and experiential activities. Throughout the year, students participate in project-based learning to demonstrate their understanding. Students also participate in field trips, such as the annual fifth grade field trip to the Bristol Caverns, to enrich their learning experience.

Social Studies: Watauga Elementary teaches the curriculum based on the WCPS pacing guides and the Virginia SOL, which includes: history, geography, civics, and economics. Students participate in many activities, including field trips and project-based learning, to assist in making history relevant. The Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation visits our fourth graders every year to enhance the students' learning experience. Our fifth grade students attend a local Civil War reenactment annually to provide a deeper understanding of the time period and events. Several guest speakers from our community address other grade levels to share their knowledge of geographic regions and various related topics.

WES has one four-year-old Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) classroom with one classroom teacher, one instructional aide, and eighteen students. An additional pre-school classroom was added this school year, due to the number of students in the attendance zone, which consists of nine students and one classroom teacher. The curriculum is based on Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning: Comprehensive Standards for Four-Year-Olds. The curriculum's standards cover the following: literacy, mathematics, science, history and social science, physical and motor development, and personal and social development.

Students participate in the Phonological Awareness Literacy (PALS) three times per year to determine progress in the area of literacy.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Watauga Elementary students in grades pre-kindergarten through grade 5 participate in the following encore classes: art, music, physical education, and library and guidance classes weekly. Our fifth grade students participate in a 6 week rotation of classes throughout the school year including keyboarding, career awareness, nutrition education, and Internet Safety classes. Our encore teachers also integrate the core curriculum into their classes in order to reinforce what students are learning in the general classroom. For example, third grade students play a game called Synonym Scramble in physical education class; third grade students also sing a synonym song in music class.

Each grade level has one PTA performance per year that combines the fine arts with the core curriculum. Our programs often center on the social studies curriculum. Our second graders participate in a program that showcases their knowledge of Egypt and our fourth graders regularly highlight what they have learned in Virginia Studies. We also host a student-led program that honors veterans which is heavily attended by parents and community members.

There is an annual Art Show in March to showcase the talents of all WES students in grades Pre-K-5. The art teacher displays a piece of art for every student in the school. Several PTA volunteers and our student PTA grade level representatives assist with this program. Parents are appreciative that their children are being recognized as evidenced by the consistently high attendance rate.

The music teacher organizes a fourth and fifth grade choir which is a popular extracurricular activity. Students look forward to joining the choir and are allowed to join based on desire, not talent. Being a member of the choir allows students the opportunity to give back to the community while being a productive group member.

The physical education program emphasizes physical activity and good nutrition. Students participate in one hour and twenty minutes of physical education each week. Additionally, the P.E. teacher instructs fifth graders on nutrition and wellness during one of their six-week rotation classes. In kindergarten, the physical education teachers help students learn not only how their bodies work but also ways to keep their bodies healthy.

Technology is emphasized and used throughout all of the classrooms. The Instructional Technology teacher offers after-school classes to educate, inform, and instruct teachers on how to use and implement technology in the classroom. Several teachers in grades 4 and 5 have begun to use Google classroom this school year after attending the after-school technology sessions.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

Watauga teachers use multiple resources and research-based strategies to meet the needs of all students. Instruction is also based on high expectations for every child and the belief that every student can succeed. Teachers regularly implement small group instruction based on the most recent data. Watauga teachers consistently analyze and discuss formative and summative data to plan their instruction accordingly. Students in grades 2-5 participate in benchmark tests at the end of each nine weeks to evaluate progress. A simulation test is given to students in grades 3-5 at the end of the third nine weeks to determine how well-prepared students are for SOL testing; the results of the simulation test are used to provide targeted instruction.

The general education teachers, the special education teachers, reading specialist, kindergarten intervention teacher, Reading Recovery teacher, and ELL teacher collaborate to discuss the progress of students they share and to determine an appropriate instructional approach. The specialty area teachers also provide support to students within the classroom through inclusive services and also in resource settings.

Watauga Elementary has a School Support Team made up of representatives from each grade level, a special education teacher, and an administrator. Students who are not responding to the current interventions that are being utilized are referred to the School Support Team. The team works together to develop strategies to implement for a certain period of time. Data is collected and the team members meet back to determine what progress has been made. Students may be dismissed from the School Support Team if the strategies proved to be beneficial; however, if measurable student progress is not evident, a referral to our Child Study Committee will be made.

In order to reinforce learning and to ensure high levels of student achievement, Watauga provides tutoring for students in grades 3-5 during the school day. Retired teachers, many of whom are former WES teachers, tutor students in the areas of reading and math. Watauga teachers share data with the tutors to inform them of specific weaknesses of the students. The tutors provide services within the classroom setting and in separate settings as necessary.

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

The Watauga staff routinely implements strategies to ensure that students are successful. Teachers review the results from the previous year's SOL testing by grade level and by subject at the beginning of the school year. Thorough discussion and planning occurs as a result of studying the weaknesses as a grade level. Student Performance By Question (SPBQ) results are also reviewed at the beginning of the year which helps to identify particular strengths and weaknesses of individual students. Teachers self-reflect, take ownership of the data, and work to strengthen their instructional skills as well as improve student learning.

Watauga teachers continuously monitor student progress through formal and informal assessments throughout the school year. The following assessment tools are used to evaluate student learning: Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS), PALS Quick Checks, the quarterly Interactive Achievement (IA) assessments, Accelerated Math, Accelerated Math, and STAR reading. Watauga teachers also collect and analyze data from student work samples in all content areas.

Classroom teachers, special education teachers, the reading specialist, ELL teacher, kindergarten intervention teacher, and Reading Recovery teacher work closely together to evaluate multiple sources of data. Assessment results are also shared and discussed with our tutors. Data, from multiple sources, is continually reviewed in an effort to improve teaching and learning. Watauga teachers also meet in vertical teams to discuss assessment results; this allows teachers to discuss academic areas that need additional concentration. Teaching and student learning have both strengthened due to teachers sharing and discussing standards that are areas of weakness.

Watauga Elementary School realizes the significance of communicating with parents and strives to keep parents well informed of their child's progress. Parents receive benchmark test results and are informed of their child's specific weaknesses in the content areas of math and reading. Formal report cards are sent home at the end of each nine weeks. Parents also receive a mid-nine week's grade report and can access their child's grades and attendance through Parent Portal. Formal parent-teacher conferences are held two times per school year, however, many of Watauga's parents meet with teachers more frequently.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Watauga Elementary is a school that communicates high expectations for teaching and learning. This is conveyed through our school mission statement as well as our school motto: Where Everyone Succeeds. Watauga's environment is positive and welcoming which sets the stage for optimal learning.

The faculty works closely together to ensure that each student reaches his or her fullest potential. Weekly grade level collaboration and monthly curriculum committee meetings are focused on student learning as evidenced by the agendas and summaries of the meetings. These groups consistently assess data, share ideas, and work together to address individual student weaknesses. This continual collaboration strengthens our school and benefits all students. The administration, faculty, and staff work together to resolve challenges that are presented. The school faculty and staff operate on the following unwritten belief, "There is not one person who has all the answers, but together we can meet all challenges that come through our doors."

The faculty also works to provide activities that teach social-emotional skills to students. Fostering strong school/home communication is vital to helping students develop the skills they need to be positive members of the community. All classroom teachers call each student's home within the first six weeks of school to share something positive with the parents/guardians about their child. This practice assists in developing a positive relationship between the school and home.

Watauga's School Improvement Committee, comprised of teachers from each grade level and a representative of every department, participates in a continuous improvement process that provides direction for the betterment of student learning. The committee reviews and assesses data from multiple sources to determine the areas of needed improvement. The School Improvement Plan (SIP) is shared with all faculty members and revised as necessary throughout the school year. A professional development plan is also a component of our SIP; the committee discusses our goals for improvement and share ideas regarding professional development opportunities for teachers. Administration, faculty, and staff members hold one another accountable to high expectations for professional practice.

Watauga students, faculty, staff, and administration are continuously acknowledged for their accomplishments which further enhances our school environment. Team spirit is very much alive on our school campus and an "all for one, one for all" mentality is shared by all stakeholders.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Watauga Elementary is fortunate to have a strong partnership with parents, families, and the community. The active leadership of our PTA has continued to grow and strengthen over the years which has resulted in a highly productive organization. Our PTA has been very successful in their fundraising efforts which have benefitted the entire school community. The money raised goes directly back into the school, such as the iPad lab, additional mobile computer lab, and funding grade level field trips for all students to the historic Barter Theatre. Through the PTA, parents are given many opportunities to volunteer and serve on various committees. Watauga's partnership with the PTA plays a significant role in our success.

Watauga faculty, staff, and administration are dedicated to providing a welcoming environment to encourage and continue family engagement. The school staff consistently communicates with families through newsletters, emails, phone calls, student planners, monthly calendars, the School Messenger program, and email listservs. The administration has an open door policy and welcomes parents to share their ideas and thoughts regarding the school. Specific events occur every month throughout the school year that gives parents and families opportunities to be involved in school programs. Some of these events include: Open House, Fall Festival, Book Fairs, Art Show, Family Movie Night, monthly PTA programs with student performances, Field Day, and Santa Saturday. To encourage and increase the number of

fathers and male figures involved in school activities, dads, grandfathers, and other male family members are invited to read to classrooms during our weeklong celebration of Read Across America.

Community members and local businesses graciously donate items for our many events, including Fall Festival, Field Day, and Family Movie Night. Community members are also invited to read to students in primary grades during Read Across America week. Local businesses often match the dollar amount for our Pennies for Books fundraiser.

3. Professional Development:

Watauga Elementary School recognizes that professional development is an essential factor in meeting the needs of all students. Teachers participate in professional development activities throughout the school year and in the summer months. Watauga teachers often choose professional development that addresses areas that have been identified by data as areas of weakness.

Professional development needs for Watauga Elementary are discussed and planned by administration with the assistance of the School Improvement Committee. The committee develops the curriculum goals for each school year and plans professional development with the same focus. When the new math standards were implemented, two math professors from Virginia Tech came to do an after-school workshop for all teachers. The professors came back to observe in all math classrooms and then conferenced with math teachers by grade level. The faculty has completed book studies as a professional development project. Last school year, our professional development consisted of sharing best classroom practices in reading and math. Watauga teachers compiled best practices in reading and math for grades kindergarten through five in a book. This book serves as a resource to all grade levels and is especially helpful to new teachers in our building.

The school division sponsors professional development at various times throughout the school year. The division professional development is centered on identified areas of weaknesses by grade level and by subject. For example, all third grade language arts teachers met to discuss the previous year's SOL results and share teaching strategies and resources. The division also plans professional development opportunities for teachers during the summer months.

Watauga teachers who attend professional development workshops or participate in classes regularly present information at faculty meetings. Many of the topics shared are content area specific and technology related. Many of Watauga's teachers are considered teacher leaders, and this practice continues to build the leadership capacity of all teachers.

4. School Leadership:

The administration believes in and implements a collaborative leadership model. Both the principal and assistant principal share in the role of observing and evaluating teachers. The administration reviews student progress and shares responsibility for student achievement with teachers. The School Improvement Committee is also considered the leadership team and meets monthly to discuss teaching and learning. The administration and all teachers have high expectations for themselves and obviously for students. The culture of high expectations and professionalism is evident to all who enter Watauga's doors. Watauga's motto, "Where Everyone Succeeds", is taken seriously by all staff members.

The PTA Executive board meets with the principal as the school year ends to discuss needs and goals for the upcoming school year. Each month of the school year, the principal and a Watauga teacher meet with the PTA board to share information and to finalize details of monthly events. The PTA works together with the principal to determine the needs of the school and to develop fundraising activities.

Watauga works to build the leadership capacity of students by providing them many opportunities to help their school and community. Students in grade pre-kindergarten through 5 participate in service projects during the month of December. Fourth and fifth grade students serve as reading buddies to students in grades first, second, and third. Students also have opportunities to become cafeteria helpers and to assist

with raising and lowering the flag every day. Each grade level has two student PTA representatives who assist at PTA meetings by leading the Pledge of Allegiance, handing out materials, and welcoming visitors to our campus. Two fifth grade students from each homeroom serve on the Student Advisory Committee that meets with the principal each month. These students learn more about being leaders, discuss school concerns, and provide suggestions to improve the school.

Watauga teachers are given many leadership opportunities such as serving as chairpersons of committees, participating in peer observations, and conducting peer-facilitated professional development. The importance of building the leadership capacity of teachers is recognized, supported, and encouraged by administration. All teachers and administrators work together to analyze data to improve teaching and learning.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Watauga Elementary students consistently exceed the state and federal benchmarks in both English and mathematics. Composite scores indicate that our test scores in English and math have improved over the past five years. During the most recent academic years, Watauga Elementary School earned an all student pass rate for grades 3-5 of 89% in English during 2013-2014 and a 97% pass rate in English during 2014-2015. Watauga's scores in mathematics include an all student pass rate for grades 3-5 of 88% in mathematics during 2013-2014 and a 97% pass rate in 2014-2015.

Our gains in English are due to the small group instruction and increased collaboration in and between grade levels. Data is shared and discussed by all grade levels and in literacy committee meetings. Identified strengths and weaknesses are discussed and instructional strategies and resources are shared. Teachers work together in vertical teams to determine how each grade level can best target the identified weaknesses. Instruction and assessment is based on open-ended questions that require higher level thinking skills. Student data results are also shared with special education teachers, the ELL teacher, and highly qualified tutors who are providing intervention services. Teachers openly share instructional methods and discuss best practices for teaching English.

Watauga teachers believe our gains in math are also due to small group instruction and consistent collaboration in and between grade levels. SOL testing data is distributed and shared with all teachers in grade level meetings, faculty meetings, and math committee meetings. Data is also shared with special education teachers, the ELL teacher, and highly qualified tutors who provide intervention services. Teachers discuss identified weaknesses and discuss how each grade level can work to target those weaknesses. Watauga teachers willingly share instructional methods and participate in peer observations in order to enhance their own instructional practices. The teaching staff also works across grade levels to develop assessments and utilize instructional methods that require higher level thinking skills.

Targeted small group instruction and consistent, focused collaboration, including vertical grade level meetings, are all vital components of Watauga's academic success. At the beginning of each academic year, Watauga teachers meet to review data and develop plans to address and assess areas of identified weaknesses. Teachers continuously meet throughout the school year to review current data, discuss instructional strategies, and share resources in order to meet the needs of all students.