

U.S. Department of Education
2017 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mr. Christopher Rafanelli

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

Official School Name Liberty Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 170 Liberty School Road

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

City Petaluma State CA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 94952-1074

County Sonoma County

Telephone (707) 795-4380 Fax (707) 795-6468

Web site/URL http://libertysd.org E-mail crafanelli@libertysd.org

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. Christopher Rafanelli E-mail crafanelli@libertysd.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Liberty Elementary School District Tel. (707) 795-4380

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 Dr. Bob Koenitzer
(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. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group and all subgroups, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2017 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. 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 2011 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: 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, or 2016.
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 has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. 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 (2016-2017) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - Middle/Junior high schools
 - High schools
 - K-12 schools
- 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, 2016 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	16	26	42
1	18	13	31
2	15	11	26
3	17	13	30
4	16	15	31
5	15	15	30
6	16	13	29
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	113	106	219

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 0 % Black or African American
 - 18 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 80 % White
 - 0 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2015 – 2016 school year: 1%

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, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	3
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	3
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	216
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.014
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	1

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 11 %
24 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 9 %
Total number students who qualify: 20

8. Students receiving special education services: 6 %
13 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.

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

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 11
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 including those teaching high school specialty subjects	10
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	5
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	11
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 22:1
12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	97%	96%	97%
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 2016.

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 X No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2007

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

Each student will be successful in school and will reach his or her potential as one individual in a community of learners.

16. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

Liberty is a charter school. Students are not chosen to attend; all students living in the attendance area may attend and students from outside of the area may enroll as space is available.

PART III – SUMMARY

“You always know when a Liberty kid comes in. They stand out from the rest.”

Junior High School Teacher

Liberty School is nestled in the rural dairy ranching area of Petaluma, forty miles north of San Francisco. A community with deep roots, its rolling hills still scattered with dairy ranches and poultry farms. It also looks to the future with a technology-based business sector that is growing and flourishing. Founded in 1857, Liberty School is among the oldest schools in Sonoma County and California. As Liberty passes its sesquicentennial it remains the hub of the entire community, where families meet neighbors and build relationships, requiring little urging to get involved in the life of their school. The life of the school reflects that feeling of warmth and family, from the first day when you pull up to have your car door opened and be kindly greeted, through yearly traditions such as the Veterans Day program honoring our local heroes, the annual fourth grade overnight trip where students act as crew on the tall ship *Balclutha*, the 6th Grade Appreciation Day, where school staff serve the 6th graders ice cream sundaes and tell them how much they appreciate and will miss them. These special events provide important landmarks in the development of each student, lifting life at Liberty above the bells and schedules, making it a thriving and unique place to learn. The students are a reflection of the community around us. While a recent influx from the technology sector has swelled our ranks, the vast majority of Liberty students come from our local ranches and from families centered around the trades and small businesses.

The vision of Liberty School is clearly expressed in our mission statement, which was developed and is reviewed annually through a collaborative process involving staff, the Board of Trustees, parents and community members. It states, “Each student will be successful in school and will reach his or her highest potential as one individual in a community of learners.” Our mission statement emphasizes both academic skills and character development as current research and practice have shown both to be vital in the development of the whole child. This statement is a living document utilized when setting goals, implementing standards, and assessing progress. It is in the front of our Parent and Student Information Handbook, appears in our Single School Plan for Student Achievement (SSP), is reviewed by our School Site Council (SSC) annually, is at the front of the Board of Trustees binder and guides our annual goal setting session. In addition, we make every effort to engage parents in helping students reach the goals. At Back to School Night, teachers provide parents an overview of what students should know, understand, and be able to demonstrate at each grade level. A “parent friendly” state standards pamphlet is distributed. Our high expectations are reinforced through weekly “go-home” folders, phone calls, notes home, conferences, report cards, weekly Wednesday Bulletins, and a newsletter.

The high level of parent involvement adds the essential finishing touch to our successful program at Liberty, as the whole community joins the hardworking and dedicated staff to ensure our children are safe, fulfilled and prepared for the future.

In 2007, Liberty was fortunate to be a recipient of the National Blue Ribbon School Award. Being recognized with this honor was an early stepping stone for us on our path to charter our school and continue to pursue a curriculum that was based on building strong academic foundations and encouraging all students to achieve at their own level. This added to our well regarded reputation in Sonoma County for a high level of academic achievement in English-Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics and for providing students with a well-rounded standards-based education in science, history-social science, physical education (PE), and visual and performing arts. This reputation has led to our current inter-district transfer rate of almost 50%.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

All Liberty School students receive an outstanding education that is aligned with the California adopted Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in all academic areas. State approved curriculum materials are being utilized to supplement our staff designed academic program throughout our school. Instruction is driven by these standards-aligned materials, as well as by current research and best teaching practices.

Reading/Language Arts: Liberty School utilizes research-based reading practices to ensure that all students are receiving balanced and comprehensive instruction in language arts and reading. At the primary grade levels, students are taught a sequentially planned curriculum that includes sight words, sound units, phonemic awareness, and word families. This curriculum ensures that students meet reading readiness, fluency, and comprehension standards by the end of third grade. In collaboration with State approved text, intermediate teachers utilize Read Naturally, Accelerated Reader, and AR Literacy Tests to support achievement throughout the curriculum focusing on reading comprehension and fluency in all subjects. In addition to this core curriculum, Liberty Staff utilizes supplemental materials and practices to support all of our students in meeting the rigorous standards. Teachers collaborate to set expectations for curriculum delivery based on student needs and school benchmarks. They also develop and/or adapt assessments for measuring student progress toward the standards. All faculty members participate in 8 curriculum alignment/planning days, spread throughout the school year and summer, working in their segment teams (K-1, 2-3, 4-6). These planning days allow for constant articulation and support planning to address the needs of students on a regular basis. In addition, they meet on a regularly during preparation times to review benchmarks and adjust academic interventions for each student.

Mathematics: All grade levels at Liberty School use state and district approved materials in addition to staff designed and chosen supplemental materials. To best meet student needs, different math programs are instituted. For grades K-6 the Saxon math program is used to establish foundational math concepts, allowing us to both support struggling students and challenge those more capable. This curriculum offers lessons focusing on basic computation. In addition, the school utilizes Eureka Math in K-6 to address the CCSS and pursue deeper strategies around critical thinking and problem solving. As a supplement to these programs, we also use IXL and TenMarks digitally based programs to help differentiate math for our students and address individual areas of strength or need. Our 4th through 6th grade students also utilize the Accelerated Math program that reinforces basic skills on an individual level. At the instructional level, students with greater needs are allowed to work in smaller groups with greater individual attention and differentiation of instructional practices. This differentiation has allowed at-risk students to out-score the general population of students throughout Sonoma County and California on the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP).

Science: The science program at Liberty School is taught by specialized instructors in conjunction with classroom teachers. The curriculum emphasizes direct instruction and a hands-on learning approach utilizing the Full Option Science System (FOSS), Harcourt Brace Science and supplemental materials to meet the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). At each grade level students are provided opportunities to hypothesize and prove their results through exercises, experiments, graphing, charts, maps, data analysis, projects, and oral presentations. In addition to field trips, school assemblies, and classroom speakers provide real-world experiences to further strengthen student understanding.

Social Science: Liberty uses the Scott Foresman program as the primary student social science text for grades K-3, as it integrates social science concepts and standards within the curriculum. In addition, field trips are scheduled that align to the curriculum in order to further strengthen student understanding of topics presented in class. Teachers supplement social science with map skills, geography studies, current events, and local/state history with the standards as the goal. In grades 4-6, McGraw Hill is the adopted curriculum as it provides students with practice reading expository text and ideas for required projects. To bring history to life, supplemental field trips are used. These curricula provide a foundation for students to meet California state academic standards and to face an increasingly interdependent society.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Art: All students at Liberty School are provided numerous opportunities to express themselves through visual and performing arts which are integrated within all subject areas. On a daily basis, students in grades K-3 receive teacher-guided instruction while students in grades 4-6 receive exposure to art history and opportunities to create unique forms of art with an art specialist. The school regularly participates in local art shows displaying student art in galleries and museums throughout our community. In addition, we engage local artists to enrich our teacher based art curriculum with professional artists in residence. A music instructor teaches each class songs, reading music, rhythm, harmony, melody, music appreciation and history. Throughout the school year, band, chorus, and drama students showcase their abilities with presentations for the school, parents, and the community.

Physical Education: Classroom teachers, in conjunction with a PE specialist for all grades, provide regular instruction in physical education using the California Department of Education Physical Education Framework. Students are encouraged through the physical education program to keep their bodies fit and strong. Students participate in the State mandated 100 minutes of physical education time each week. This includes: participating in organized sports, teacher and student led aerobics/calisthenics, and through a school-wide attention to developmentally appropriate fitness activities. Fifth grade students take the California Physical Fitness Test and 43% of our students met all 6 standards in 2016 as compared to 26% of students statewide. Health Education begins in kindergarten and continues through 6th grade. In 2016, Liberty School reviewed and implemented our School Wellness Policy that emphasizes healthy food choices for daily living and school celebrations.

Foreign Language: While Liberty School does not include foreign language during the traditional school day, foreign languages are offered to all students among our after school enrichment choices. All students may participate and there is not a required fee for anyone to enroll. The school offers Spanish regularly and has also offered Mandarin. We have attempted to include a language in our regular school day; our extensive enrichment schedule has made it extremely difficult to find a time slot available.

Technology: Technology is seen throughout the school as a supplement to a program that distinguishes between technology as a tool for learning rather than as the goal of learning. Liberty is not a one-to-one school where every child receives a digital device of their own but a school that carefully chooses when and where technology should be added to our standards based program. This concept is based around the idea that elementary children are best served by excellent instructional practices and curriculum delivered by highly trained and knowledgeable staff. Every classroom has an electronic whiteboard, a number of iPads, electronic document readers and several desktop computers. In addition, the school has a fully equipped computer lab and a robotics lab for our summer enrichment program and robotics club. Technology is integrated into all curriculum areas as both a way to enhance and enrich learning and to supplement learning for students that are ready for advancement and students that need greater reinforcement and instruction.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Liberty teachers utilize a wide variety of research-based instructional methods and techniques to ensure the success of all students. Teachers provide diverse learning opportunities by differentiating instructional groups: students in total class, small group, and individual instruction. Liberty emphasizes direct teaching of skills and basic concepts with teacher modeling and providing students numerous opportunities to practice. Frequent and authentic assessment allows teachers to place students into flexible groups for the instruction of core curriculum.

With each curriculum assessment, teachers determine a proficiency level for each student and develop appropriate plans for interventions or additional challenges as necessary. Students who are struggling to meet academic standards are supported in numerous ways. These students receive individual and small group instruction with classroom aides, peer tutors, parent volunteers, or a school-based intervention program if they do not qualify for Special Education services. For students with an IEP, the Resource Specialist Program (RSP) teacher works closely with the classroom teacher to ensure access to and success with the regular classroom curriculum. Classroom routines and curriculum are modified to best suit the

needs of Students with Disabilities (SWD) and Full Inclusion students. English Language Learners are instructed using the core curriculum with Specifically Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) as needed. When necessary, cross-grade instruction/curriculum modification is implemented until the student gains sufficient skills to achieve success at grade level. English Language Learners also receive daily English language development through a standards-aligned skill development program including regular and effective instruction in speaking and listening skills.

There are many support structures and intervention strategies used to improve student performance. These include after school tutoring for students in grades K-3, small group language instruction for English Language Learners, small group and 1:1 tutoring by classroom aides, cross-age tutors, before/after school tutoring/homework clubs and assistance in RSP through our site-based program.

Liberty Elementary School prides itself on our exceptional performance on the CAASPP results as compared with districts throughout California. In the latest round of testing, Liberty scored amongst the top 4% percent of districts in math, 7% in ELA and 5% overall. This is a testament to our rigorous and engaging curriculum and instructional practices.

Assessment greatly contributes to our success and is an essential building block for student achievement. The entire teaching staff meets at the beginning of each year to study CAASPP results and our own locally derived multiple measures. We look closely at any gaps in our instruction and/or curriculum and develop school wide goals to target any area that needs extra support. Plans are developed for students who didn't meet or exceed standards in ELA or Mathematics. In addition, teachers meet in grade segment teams, throughout the year, to evaluate individual grade level assessments and student progress. The goals of these meetings are to gain a better understanding of student needs, guide instructional planning, and provide individual teacher support.

As well as meeting the CCSS, each grade level has its own set of "Liberty Standards" to be met by students. Liberty student progress is continually being monitored through the use of various ELA assessments including DIBELS, SRA Skill books, Benchmark Reading Books, and accompanying Literacy Tests, DOLCH Assessments, and Accelerated Reader Program quizzes. In math, we monitor our student achievement through the use of multiple grade level assessments, including chapter tests, Accelerated Math tests (ACM), STAR math and Standards based Assessments in Math (SAM), implementing intervention when necessary. Although a major focus is on ELA and Mathematics, we also assess for progress in science, social studies, PE, health, visual and performing arts, and English Language Development.

All assessment results are recorded on a Multiple Measures spreadsheet each year which is passed on to the next grade level teacher, along with writing samples and the CAASPP results. Appropriate interventions are set into action based on the continual monitoring of the assessments. Classroom teachers, the principal, and the Resource Specialist Program (RSP) teacher work closely together to examine at risk students and evaluate how each is progressing to reach expectations and standards. One year of growth is expected in all areas. Classroom routines and curriculum are modified to best suit the needs of ELL, special needs, and low social-economic students. The progress of these students is carefully monitored weekly.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

The culture of Liberty is a direct offshoot of our belief that you don't enroll your child at Liberty, you enroll your whole family. This is a hands-on deck type of place that expects to engage students, parents, grandparents, and the community as a whole. This allows us to turn our small size to our advantage, supporting and addressing individual student needs both emotionally and academically. Teachers collaborate frequently, students are personally known and actively supported by all staff as they progress through the grades, and the principal is knowledgeable of and has direct contact with all students and staff.

Every student is recognized annually through our Nifty Kid assemblies. These assemblies highlight school-wide life skill traits that emphasize academic and personal qualities that help to develop outstanding citizens and scholars. Students can be recognized for perseverance, responsibility, positive attitude, and curiosity, just to name a few. Students are also regularly recognized for their reading progress at our monthly Read, Read, Read assemblies. At these assemblies students can be acknowledged for overall reading success, improved reading growth and for effort. In addition, entire classes are recognized for success in reaching their goal.

The school also supports a play therapy program for students (Cloud Room) needing one-on-one attention to address social and emotional challenges that may occur. This program helps students through difficult times at home and at school and can act as a special friend for students that are struggling to succeed in the school setting. Children needing support meet once a week with our trained staff member to engage in various play activities. The program offers a supportive and non-judgmental relationship, which fosters positive self-esteem and confidence in their abilities.

The culture of the school reflects the shared decision-making that takes place on all levels. Teachers feel valued and supported through our team approach to all areas of policymaking. Classified staff, teachers, administration, and Board Members sit on various committees that provide guidance in hiring, curriculum choices, instructional practices, budgeting and facilities design and maintenance. This approach empowers staff to feel ownership of all aspects of the school's success and challenges.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Liberty School staff provides regular, clear communication to parents, students, and our community. Liberty communicates student performance, including assessment data, in several ways. Student classroom assessment results are communicated to parents, in their primary language, through conferences, report cards, weekly go home folders and reports, phone calls, and notes home. Before each school year begins, student assessment results on the California Assessment for Student Performance are mailed home to each family with a letter from the Principal that explains the report. School wide results are also available through our School Accountability Report Card and SSP which are posted on our website, available in the office and explained in our parent newsletter. The Principal at Liberty School writes a detailed newsletter, which is posted to our website and sent home to all Liberty Families and community. Each issue contains information on standards, assessment, and accountability, as well as advice to parents on ways to help their child succeed.

Within the second week of school, Back to School Night is held. At this time, academic and social expectations, including standards and homework, are communicated to the parents. Grade level standards are distributed and discussed. Teachers contact any parents unavailable to attend Back to School Night to review the information provided.

Our standards-based report cards clearly outline individual standards at each grade level. Each year, this report card is updated to ensure the clearest communication between school and home. Prepared each trimester, it informs parents whether their child is exceeding, meeting, progressing towards, or not meeting standards in all academic areas. In addition, it reports on the social development and work ethic of each

student. Parent teacher conferences at the end of the first trimester provide additional time to discuss the standards-based report card with parents. During each conference teachers share in-depth details of each assessment and how each child is progressing towards the standards. To ensure constant communication, teachers provide each student with weekly progress reports. Any concerns from the teacher are explained clearly on the weekly report and are followed up with a phone call or meeting if needed.

Liberty School communicates overall assessment results of our students by sending out our School Accountability Report Card (SARC) during the school year. The SARC includes essential information such as student performance on the CAASPP, ESSA expectations, and school budget data. Performance standards and current assessment results are discussed through formal meetings. These meetings include staff meetings, School Site Council, Liberty School Foundation, and Liberty School Board of Trustees.

3. Professional Development:

Professional development is a high priority, with staff given opportunities to attend workshops to further individual development and work collaboratively with peers to support and enhance the learning environment. The principal and Board encourage professional development for all certificated and classified staff based on the needs of our students. The principal oversees all professional development courses and workshops, and offers guidance based on the needs of our students as well as teachers' individual needs and interests. As a result of the professional development, teachers have received while working at Liberty, all teachers have been deemed "Highly Qualified Teachers" and have met CLAD certification requirements. New teachers participate in the two-year Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment program and are mentored by on-site veteran teachers and overseen by the principal.

Each year multiple days are devoted to reviewing multiple grade-level assessments and state test results from the previous year. Subsequently, a collaborative discussion takes place to formulate school-wide goals for staff development that focus on student achievement. Targeted areas are those in which students have not reached proficiency on the state tests, or have not met standards from the grade-level multiple assessments. The principal researches and presents information on workshops and seminars available to address the areas generated from this session for both classified and certificated staff which may be funded by the Professional Development Block Grants.

Teachers and the administrator enrich their own professional development by pursuing additional degrees, taking courses that support personal goals and academic interests, and attending workshops that enhance Liberty's curriculum. The RSP teacher regularly attends workshops and meetings to meet the changing curriculum and guidelines of the Special Education Program. The information gathered at these meetings is shared with the administrator and teachers so everyone is apprised of the changes and laws under the Individual Disability Education Act. Classroom teachers train aides in the classroom with state approved core curriculum and school developed instructional practices through workshops and regular one-on-one sessions.

4. School Leadership:

Our shared leadership philosophy revolves around the concept of "kids first". All decisions on every aspect of our organization from facilities, to staffing, to budget to the pencils we purchase – is based on how it can best work for our kids. This leads to our collaborative approach in working with all stakeholders. Leadership, support, and collaboration are a high priority from the selection of new teachers to continuous staff support and individual growth opportunities. Wednesdays are reserved for formal and informal sessions where teachers collaborate about standards, curriculum, discipline, and school operations in staff meetings or grade level team meetings. This is also a time for teachers to take on the role of presenter/facilitator to provide information gained from workshops or trainings they attend to their colleagues.

Some of our leadership roles include Site Council, Foundation and Board liaisons, Budget Team, Teacher-in-Charge, After School Tutoring Supervision, and Safety Plan committee. Each of these teams includes administration, teachers, classified staff and members of our community. These teams/committees form

the backbone of all recommendations made to our Board of Trustees. The Board weighs this input and how it will affect children in taking any final actions.

The school has benefited from stable leadership with the same superintendent/principal for the past 11 years. This combined with the stable teaching population and Board of Trustees has allowed for all segments of the school to learn to work together in a trusting and open fashion. These open relationships have allowed the school to build on past success and become one of the highest performing schools in the State for our overall population but also for our at-risk subgroup populations.

Teacher mentorship is a hallmark of our school's leadership philosophy. Teachers are highly valued at Liberty and the selection and induction process involve all parts of the school community. New teachers are welcomed into the "Liberty Family" and go through a rigorous induction to the high expectations of academic and behavior standards. New teachers participate in the BTSA program and are mentored by an on-site veteran teacher. The mentor teachers observe, help examine student work, offer feedback, assist with curriculum planning, and offer emotional support to beginning teachers.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

It is the challenge of Liberty School to provide an environment that facilitates learning: an environment that fosters self-acceptance, as well as tolerance of others; an environment where humor, enjoyment, and laughter live alongside order and self-discipline; an environment of high hopes and high expectations; an environment where people feel safe and connected; and an environment where everyone is respected and valued as contributing members of a community that supports lifelong learning.

There isn't any particular strategy or program that has led to the success of Liberty School and its children. The strength lies in its people. Their hard work, determination, perseverance, creativity, compassion, cooperation, patience, initiative and never-ending positive attitude are the bedrock of all that leads to success at Liberty. These qualities have led to an attention to detail that ensures that no child will slip through the cracks. Every child is addressed where he or she is at and in a way that will encourage and build his or her success. Included with this is the active role students are encouraged to have in guiding their own education. Staff works with our students to help them understand their role and responsibility in reaching their own potential.

The Liberty Staff work as a close knit team always focused on "what is best for kids", working to create an educational program that not only meets the needs of all students but also raises student levels of accomplishment beyond expectations. Teachers use our core programs and assessments to learn about and address a student's needs. This combined with our many interventions and high expectations for all students means an equitable education for students despite their background or history.

Liberty School is a community of students, teachers, administrators, parents, and other community members. It is through the interactions of these groups, through communications, community service and mutual support that we are able to realize our common goals.