

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Ms. Donna Funk

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

Official School Name Thomas W. Mahan Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 94 Salem Turnpike

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

City Norwich State CT Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 06360-6496

County New London County

Telephone (860) 823-4205 Fax _____

Web site/URL http://www.norwichpublicschools.org/mahan E-mail dfunk@norwichpublicschools.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*Mrs. Abby Dolliver E-mail adolliver@norwichpublicschools.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Norwich Public Schools District Tel. (860) 823-6284

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. Aaron Daniels
(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):
- 7 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 0 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 9 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	11	9	20
K	22	21	43
1	23	16	39
2	22	18	40
3	20	25	45
4	18	25	43
5	27	28	55
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	143	142	285

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 21 % Asian
 - 13 % Black or African American
 - 26 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 30 % White
 - 10 % 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: 18%

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	31
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	20
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	51
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	283
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.180
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	18

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 19 %
52 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Cantonese, Gujarati, Haitian-Creole, Khamir, Mandarin, Spanish

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 64 %
Total number students who qualify: 183

8. Students receiving special education services: 17 %
49 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.

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

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 5
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	13
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	8
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	13
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

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

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

At Mahan Elementary School we share a vested interest in our student achievement and successes. Our highly qualified staff works cooperatively to create a safe, nurturing and academically rewarding

environment that provides for each child's uniqueness and special needs. At Mahan School we utilize data diagnostically and provide focused, explicit instruction based on the Connecticut Standards. We take pride in every one of our students. Their successes are our successes.

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

Thomas W. Mahan Elementary School is located in the heart of the Rose City. We are home to students in preschool through fifth grade. Our population is diverse with multiple languages spoken and we are home to a bi-lingual center with support services in place for our English language learners. The majority of our students qualify for free and reduced lunch and, due to the number of families with income below the poverty level, free breakfast is provided for all students. Mahan houses two special needs classrooms that provide programming for the district's students that have multiple physical and cognitive needs. We also have a resource support room that provides academic instruction at the special education level through small group and inclusion models based on student needs. All of our students take part in media skills, music, physical education and art as part of the daily curriculum. Our school offers access before and after school hours through a program for students that includes a focus on homework completion to promote learning as well as group physical activities.

At Mahan, our main focus is to provide our students with an education that will meet both their academic and social potential. Mahan students have access to a veteran staff of teachers that value collaboration and the educational community. Our leadership team is inclusive to all faculty members and addresses both our strengths and challenges in order to brainstorm solutions and next steps throughout the school year. We have a Student Study Team (SST) process that strives for effective strategies to respond to, and to prevent, academic and social challenges through implementation of targeted interventions. Mahan defines progress monitoring as the essential piece to provide a clear picture of success, and to what degree.

Each grade has academic enrichment blocks that contain a number of targeted interventions that are focused on each academic level. All students' needs are addressed whether they require support in small groups of 6 maximum, focused 1:1 instruction for specific academic needs or enriching activities for those students who are at or above grade level. Our certified classroom teachers work with those students with the greatest needs and our interventionists provide small group, tier-II instruction as well as enrichment activities based on expertise. Mahan provides after school tutoring programs with a maximum of 1:4 teacher to student ratio to address academics dependent on current identified reading or math needs. Our after school instructors are highly qualified teachers and focus on the grade K-2 basic academic skills needed in order to provide the foundation for more complex skills.

Our tiered instruction framework has been in practice for three years and the results have shown a significant increase in the success rate of moving lower performing students to grade level. In addition, Mahan has implemented programs that encourage academic excellence for students that are meeting or exceeding grade level standards. Fourth and fifth grade students that are three grades or higher than current level, as determined by the MAP assessment, have the opportunity for participation in a pre-algebra class that meets five days weekly. Similarly, students that are at grade level or higher in reading skills meet with an interventionist for further instruction and enriched discussion of literary novels.

To facilitate reading success at the earlier developmental levels, the district implemented the research-based, Foundations program in the whole group classroom setting, which has been extremely successful. We have continued to facilitate reading skills through identifying students who need a slower rate of instruction, or continued practice, through participating in repeated lessons. We have seen great improvement in reading skills, as well as retention of learned skills, due to the program and framework that is being taught. After three years of implementation, our first and second grades are approaching 90% at grade level on the running record assessment.

At Mahan, we strive for an inclusive and welcoming environment. We are a positive behavioral support practicing school that celebrates the successes of our student community through weekly student announcements and monthly student awards. We promote family engagement through student of the month celebrations during school hours and provide school support and teacher representatives on our active parent-teacher organization board as well as our school governance council. We support attendance through family liaisons to support parents and monthly attendance awards to celebrate student success. As a result, we have a high percentage of students at grade level, increased attendance, and diminishing number of

students requiring special education services. To increase the health and social awareness of our students, our physical education teacher has initiated more inclusive practices with our students with physical challenges by providing both an adaptive physical education class to help with specific skills as well as integrated physical education class settings that combine skill needs of all students and fosters a diverse and rich social learning community.

As the principal, I am proud to take part in all aspects of Mahan's successes. Through continuous data review, plan evaluation, and regular classroom observations I strive to make myself available to teachers, staff, students, and parents at all times. On behalf of Mahan, I am proud of our school's achievements and look forward every day to the next challenge and celebrated success.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

In the last few years, Norwich Public Schools has taken a close look at our base curriculum. The current curriculum follows the Common Core standards in both reading and math. Through consistent implementation throughout the district, expectations are that students not only understand the material, but are able to effectively apply content knowledge to other areas of learning. The district has been focused on what is working and what is not and then adjusting at the district leadership team level. With input from all stakeholders we have created a standards-based curriculum as a foundation for all students. The district implemented Lucy Calkins' Readers' Workshop model four years ago, which provides the district's basic teaching framework for reading skill acquisition. Within the framework, our teachers provide a structured mini-lesson that introduces a targeted reading skill. They then follow the lesson with independent reading practice. Students are able to "shop" for classroom books of interest to read within their level. The teacher provides guided support to ensure active reading within the allotted time. Students requiring more support meet with the teacher on an individual or small group basis to support the target reading skill introduced during the mini-lesson. There is also a focus on reading accuracy and comprehension skills. At the end of reading time, a whole group interactive sharing session occurs that focuses on strategies learned during reading. Our teachers also use additional 'Read Aloud' time that allows for group discussion of text and strategies to improve reading skills. Use of the Readers' Workshop model has allowed our students to explore various reading genres and to rotate through strategy groups that target needed reading skills. In addition, each student's reading goals are identified, addressed and monitored for progress by the teacher in order to build reading stamina. Specific to Mahan, small group instruction is consistent across grade levels and additional research-based reading resources are implemented to support our struggling readers. Within the ELL Center, our teachers use the base reading curriculum and teach language forms and functions in order to facilitate the access of content in the general education classroom. At Mahan, we are continuously reviewing and revising academic strategies to meet the current needs.

The district is currently in the process of developing a district-specific math curriculum. At Mahan, we use unit assessments that purposefully require students to dig deep into the Common Core math standards and promote critical thinking and multiple step problem-solving. All teachers at Mahan use the Calendar Math program to provide connections that align with grade level math skills. The Calendar Math program uses mathematics and applies it to life skills such as time, measurement, and money concepts. Each day, teachers begin instruction through a morning meeting format and discuss the date on the calendar, number patterns, and monetary daily deposits as well as a targeted daily math skill. Teachers then use the elements of the calendar math session throughout the day to embed the calendar math skills learned during daily activities and other academic content areas. All classrooms have access to iPads, laptops, and Smartboards to develop technologically related skill building across subjects. Teachers are able to identify areas of need and to design specific lessons using various technology programs such as the web-based program Khan Academy. Mahan uses grade level data teams weekly to evaluate student work. During the data team process, areas of achievement are noted and areas for further instruction are implemented into teachers' lessons. In addition, trends within and across grades are noted that drive change at the systems level. Students that are above grade level in math and reading receive enrichment to promote success and to inspire other students' motivation and creativity.

The district is in the process of developing a new curriculum for science that is based on the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Currently, Mahan's science instruction is focused on World Science and active learning through science experiments. Our teachers design lessons that inspire students to think about science in terms of the big picture and in a real world setting. Topics are grade-based to promote content consistency and include insects, plant growth, and animal life cycles in the younger grades. Third through fifth grade students focus on fossils, force and motion, land forms, and planets and space concepts. Recycling and weather are themes that are taught across grades with increasingly complex content in order to promote an ongoing understanding of the earth and their role in the future. Science topics are integrated into our reading and writing curriculum to provide cross-curricular connections. Social studies instruction is focused on cultural understanding, tolerance, and celebration of diversity. Kindergarten through grade two

students begin learning about others through the study of cultures and traditions. They then move on to reading and creating biographies. Grade three through grade five students continue to gain an understanding of the world through world geography, explorers, and studies in Colonial America. Social topics of rights, responsibilities, culture and traditions are integrated into the Readers' Workshop model and writing themes. To reinforce civic responsibility, Mahan has a Student Leadership Team that concentrates on defining and promoting positive behavior and driving an anti-bullying message. The Student Leadership Team attended a leadership workshop at Three Rivers Community College in Norwich, CT. Students were actively engaged and inspired to begin addressing anti-bullying issues during recess. The district has scheduled the development of a curriculum in social studies in the coming year. Once developed, Mahan will continue to use data teams, PLCs, and collaboration to ensure consistent implementation and success of all students within the curriculum.

Specific to preschool, the core curriculum is based on the Connecticut Early Learning Development Standards (CTELDS). The areas that are covered relate to cognition, social and emotional development, physical health and development, language and literacy, creative arts, mathematics, science and social studies. The Connecticut State Department of Education Preschool Assessment Framework (CTPAF) is used for student assessments in order to provide data to determine student success. The alignment of prekindergarten with kindergarten through grade three academic standards are based on an approach that is needed to ensure that children develop a solid foundation in language and literacy, math, science, social-emotional skills, as well as a strong engagement in learning. In the area of language and literacy, children have the enjoyment of books, word recognition, vocabulary development, reading comprehension, writing skills, and verbal communication. The standards in math align with understanding numbers and how to use them, counting, patterns, measuring and shapes. The topic of science demonstrates an understanding of the world including living things, the earth, space, and energy. Children begin to develop an understanding of themselves, their feelings, and how to cooperate with others in preschool that is continued through the upper grades and aligned to the common core social, emotional and intellectual habits skills.

There is tangible impact of preschool on school readiness skills and success in the primary grades at Mahan Elementary School. Therefore, kindergarten teachers meet with all preschool students assigned for the next school year in June to complete a rating scale on every student. The teachers also have the opportunity to visit and observe children in their preschool classroom environment and recommendations are provided to facilitate a smooth transition from the half-day to full-day academic setting and expectations. The preschool teachers collaborate with kindergarten teachers at Mahan Elementary School to discuss the expectations in kindergarten and have an understanding of the Foundations reading program that is implemented at the beginning of the kindergarten year. Ideas and expectations of what is required at the kindergarten grade level are also shared each year to facilitate the acquisition of academic and social skills. Through these practices, children in the preschool classroom are introduced to many of the skills that are covered more in depth at the kindergarten level. The early focus on social-emotional, academics, and following classroom rules and procedures at the preschool level allows for children entering kindergarten the following year to move forward to a more advanced level.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Mahan School provides specials area instruction to all students in grades preschool through five on a weekly basis in the areas of visual arts, music, physical education and library media technology. Art provides instruction to all students in grades preschool through five. Grades kindergarten through five meet once a week for forty minutes in an assigned room that is shared by art and music. Our preschool population receives art instruction twenty minutes a week. Art classes are taught by a certified teacher with a multifocal concentration on developing fine motor coordination and meta-cognitive development as well as experimentation with a variety of media, developing self-awareness through creativity, and fostering an appreciation for fine arts. Completed student art work is displayed throughout the building and in other venues. To promote family and community involvement, students have the opportunity to participate in a district-wide art show within the community.

Similar to art, music provides instruction in grades kindergarten through grade five for forty minutes once a week. The certified music teacher focuses on musical literacy as students learn how to read music, produce

vocal performance and understand rhythmic uses of basic percussion instruments. Grade four has an additional opportunity to learn how to play a recorder. Students have many opportunities during the year to perform for their peers as well as the school population and parents with direction by the music teacher. Additionally, students in grades four and five have an opportunity to audition in order to perform for the community at large in a city wide musical concert. Special needs students are included during both art and music instruction in the general education setting and have consistent opportunities to participate with peers.

Mahan's physical education program is taught by a certified physical education teacher. Physical education classes are provided for all grades on a weekly basis with morning and afternoon preschool classes participating for twenty minute sessions. Grades kindergarten through fifth meet forty minutes once a week. The special needs population is included in the grade level classes with peers and have an additional opportunity to work on specific skills at the individual level through adaptive physical education classes. These additional sessions focus on providing instruction to those students that need special devices and modifications to perform the skills being addressed. The focus of physical education instruction is the development of gross motor coordination and skill sets that accompany grade level expectations for physical activities. These activities include ball handling skills of bouncing, dribbling, passing and catching as well as locomotion skills of running, jumping and skipping. Throughout instruction, the students are taught cooperative play techniques and social interaction expectations during games. At the end of the school year, physical education culminates through an event at the end of the year by promoting school wide participation in field day. Field day provides an entire morning of staff facilitated outdoor activities that focus on both centered group play and skills-based competition.

Mahan school contains an active media center that is staffed by a certified library media specialist. Student participate on a weekly basis and are taught print and technology-related skills. Similar to other specials areas our preschool population has instruction for twenty minutes once a week while kindergarten through fifth grade meets for forty minutes once a week. The focus of the librarian is to teach students how to use the resources of the library, which include withdrawing books, learning how to use the library as a place to do research, as well as computer skills like Type to Learn. Technology instruction is also embedded throughout our educational framework and is used to support academics through the iPad, laptop, and desktop computer formats. In addition, each classroom has a Smartboard, which is used during academic activities to allow students to gain access and instruction in new technologies as they are developed. Students assist teachers using Smartboard technology during classroom lessons and also provide individual presentations using its technology during student directed learning.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

At Mahan School, teachers employ a balanced instructional framework based on the workshop model. Throughout the workshop lesson teachers observe, question and listen in on student conversations to check for understanding. Students are matched to text using reading levels, which ensures that they are continually being appropriately challenged and pushed forward. While delivering a curriculum built around Connecticut Common Core State Standards, teachers have the flexibility to utilize a variety of approaches that encourages individualized instruction. Throughout the school, teachers use interactive white board (SMART) technology and notebook software to create interactive lessons that enhance and differentiate instruction. All students have access to either a Chromebook or an iPad. Whether it is through Khan Academy, Reflex Math, or Lexia, teachers can target specific areas of need for each child. Teachers are also using Google Classroom to thoughtfully integrate technology and inform instruction. Parents, teachers, and students are communicating more than ever in discussions that center on student work and achievement. In the area of mathematics, students can try various methods and strategies to solve a given problem. It also involves utilization of manipulatives to move students from the concrete to the abstract. This kind of problem solving is encouraged and inspires a mistake friendly environment.

Tiered interventions are an integral part of how student-centered instruction is delivered at Mahan School. The professional collaborative environment is pervasive in all aspects of planning. During common daily planning time, weekly data teams, Professional Learning Communities (PLC), and collaboration with special services decisions are made as to how to tier instruction within the classroom. The principal, classroom teachers, special education teachers, interventionists, and instructional specialists ensure that

students receive differentiated instruction. Mahan School uses a team-based approach to analyze performance at the school, classroom and individual level. In addition to using this data to drive tiered instruction, teachers can fluidly adjust methods of instruction (i.e., whole group, small group, or individual). Based on data, our staff works collaboratively to determine types of interventions. Some of the Scientific Research Based Interventions (SRBI) used within the general education population are Leveled Literacy Instruction (LLI), Six-Minute Solutions, and Foundations.

Programs utilized within the special education classrooms are Foundations, Wilson Reading, Visualizing and Verbalizing and Touch Math. Progress monitoring is completed on a weekly/bi-weekly basis. The data is then analyzed by the team and interventions are adjusted to ensure students are progressing at an appropriate rate. All progress is carefully monitored and communicated to parents. Parents are encouraged to visit the school or call to discuss their child's progress with any of the team members. Our district also participates in standardized testing. All students take the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) as well as the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). Results from these assessments help the teachers to determine areas of strength and weakness. Individualized instruction is then strategically planned and monitored. Students requiring more frequent, individualized instruction receive special education services that is delivered in a variety of ways; including push-in and pull-out service methods. The special education teacher may co-teach with a general education teacher, focusing on both grade level standards and specific IEP goals and objectives. Similarly, pull-out services are provided in a small group setting within the special education classroom; focusing on a balance between state-level standards and individual academic subskill needs of each child.

Tier two services follow a similar model. If a student needs additional assistance to advance to grade-level, the team makes a determination after a thorough examination of student work and progress monitoring data. Groups of four to six students are taught by highly qualified interventionists using one of the Scientific Research Based Interventions (SRBI). Mahan has a large English Language Learner (ELL) population and houses an English language learner center where students receive individualized instruction from a certified teacher. The instruction team, in conjunction with the ELL teacher, meet to review each student and plot a course that is tailored to his or her needs. At Mahan, we believe that all students can achieve.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Here at Mahan School, we engage and motivate students by implementing various positive behavioral interventions, supports and strategies. To increase engagement and motivation we have a school-wide positive behavior reward system called ROAR, where we teach students to Respect Others and Act Responsibly. Students have many opportunities to earn and work for ROAR cards, which are entered into a weekly prize drawing. We also have 100% classroom participation in the use of Class Dojo for classroom management. Students earn green points for following school-wide expectations, and all students who have 80% green points at the end of the month are invited to a school-wide celebration that focuses on team building and enrichment activities. In order to encourage student effort and achievement, our school has Student of the Month assemblies. These assemblies highlight not only academic achievements, but also behavioral achievements. In addition, at each Student of the Month assembly, we also recognize students with perfect attendance awards.

Mahan maintains a positive learning environment that supports academic, social and emotional growth. Teachers are knowledgeable in developmentally appropriate practice and set clear, consistent and rigorous expectations for all students based on common core learning related behaviors. Our staff encourages and supports the whole child and strives to assist children in reaching their full potential in academic, social, emotional and physical domains. Our staff takes pride in modeling respectable and socially appropriate behavior. We currently implement Second Step at the whole group classroom level and provide small group social skills instruction to address struggling students' social and emotional needs.

The teachers at Mahan School feel extremely valued and supported. The biggest contributing factor is having a principal who has confidence in the school staff's knowledge and instructional techniques, and is respectful and responsive to the needs of teachers and their individual abilities to meet the needs of all students. In addition, our principal maintains an open door policy for teachers to communicate progress, thoughts or concerns in an open, comfortable and collaborative manner. As a building initiative, we recognize one teacher each month with an attendance incentive and each year we honor one teacher with the Teacher of the Year Award. The teacher of the year is chosen by colleagues in order to provide school community-based support and respect by peers. This award is recognition for outstanding classroom achievement, as well as dedication to our school, our students and our profession.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Mahan School has a strong Parent-Teacher Organization and School Governance Council that encourages and supports family and community involvement. Our PTO is involved in designing meetings to encourage more family involvement by inviting community members to the school to discuss topics that are interesting to the community; such as childhood illnesses and child safety. Our school improvement plan is reviewed with our PTO each year as we plan for continued improvement in areas of need. Each year Mahan School invites our families at the beginning of school to a Back to School Night. Children are able to visit their new classroom and teacher before the first school day and then all students, staff and families enjoy a cookout that provides a comfortable time to share summer stories.

Throughout the school year we invite families to the school for other opportunities including Technology and Curriculum Night, Mahan Family Fun night, and Kindergarten Family Culture Day where different cultural food is prepared by families for all to experience. These are a great success and serve as a time that we bond with our families to support the needs of our students. Each month a student from each class is named "Student of the Month" and families are invited to a whole school celebration where each child is recognized for academic and behavioral achievement. We take every opportunity to celebrate the positive accomplishments that our students reach.

Similarly, the after school program contracts with community partners to provide enriching activities for participants to help broaden community-based experiences. Students take part in swimming lessons and the

arts. Students have also had the opportunity to take part in theater productions that for many have become an interest that they continue to follow on their own.

Our challenges are met with a commitment to discover how a student learns. During more formal school-based activities, we provide parent-teacher conferences twice yearly and strive for 100 percent participation. If parents are unable to make an appointment, we offer formal parent teacher phone conferences and school staff routinely reach out to parents that are unable to get to the school. Our current participation rate approaches 95 percent at this time. During our Student Study Team process, we strive to include parents in our meetings as they are an essential part of the discussion and an integral part of facilitating success when developing interventions. For our special education population we work hard to increase home to school communication through providing translation services, access through telephone conferences and meetings at times that parents are available.

3. Professional Development:

The professional development for Mahan school is geared toward the further development and education of its teachers. Planning for development begins at the highest level and works its way down through district-wide professional development, building level professional community learning (PLC) offerings from our Instructional Coach, monthly Learning Energizes Dreams (LED) meetings and finally 12 hours of additional development that is completed independently based on individual needs and interests. What makes our professional development successful at Mahan is the way we target professional development to meet our specific needs.

At the district level full-day professional development is offered four times a year. The district uses the initial two days before the start of the school year as a way to provide a wide lens into the overall curriculum initiative or to provide a selection of topics for staff to choose from. Two additional days are provided in November and March to target ongoing skills brought forth earlier in the year or to address additional areas identified. At the building level, Mahan school considers the monthly half-day Learning Energizes Dreams professional development to be the most valuable. Our instructional leadership team provides guidance on areas of focus for the building and provides opportunities to collaborate and to specifically focus on the needs of our staff and students. These meetings give us the opportunities to discuss across grade levels, or in small groups, specific topics that will impact the success of our school.

Another opportunity available to us on a daily basis is through our Instructional Coach. This is when professional development can become personalized. These opportunities let the individual teachers seek out a precise need and work one to one, or with a grade level partner, to further their learning. Our Instructional Coach is well-versed the areas of literacy and mathematics. Professional Learning Communities are scheduled before, during or after school and give personalized opportunities for training in new materials and instructional approaches or areas of focus for grade-level teams. Data team meetings are also utilized to present instructional resources and methods that will impact student learning. These vary in content from mathematics to literacy and introduce strategies for all learners including our special education and ELL students. This provides ongoing opportunities for teachers to learn strategies from colleagues that will meet our students' needs and maximize learning. The final opportunity for staff to increase their professional development is through "on your own" methods, which encourage staff to seek out new learning topics that are of interest to each learner through professional readings, outside conferences, online courses and other professional resources. The combination of district, school, and personalized professional development provides Mahan teachers with vast and rich opportunities to grow as educators.

4. School Leadership:

It is the philosophy of Thomas W. Mahan School leadership that all students will meet their academic potential. With a finger on the pulse of the school, the leadership team knows where all students are academically and behaviorally. Our philosophy permeates throughout the entire school through our ROAR motto: Respect Others Act Responsibly. Students follow by example, and the staff at Mahan model the behavior every day with a warm welcome and a helping hand. We nurture the whole child.

Our school environment is based on respect for all. As leaders we exhibit respectful and positive behaviors toward all students, each other and our families. As a result, our attendance is excellent and our behavior concerns are minimal. The principal has an open door policy where students may reach out whenever they need help. Concerns are handled immediately and contact is made to the social worker or the school psychologist as needed. This allows us to apply our time to student success. Mahan has a veteran staff with a talented lead teacher that provides assistance to the principal and to staff when the principal is unavailable. Mahan has enjoyed no movement of teachers, which is a result of shared collaboration, mutual respect and the freedom to make mistakes without recourse. Just like students, teachers must feel safe to take risks. The principal encourages those risks and supports teachers' efforts along the way. All achievements are celebrated regardless of how small.

The principal, lead teacher, grade level representative teachers, school psychologist and instructional specialist are members of our Leadership Team. This team drives the focus and directives over the course of the school year. A portion of our teachers also serve as teacher leaders in the district; adding their expertise to curriculum and focus of studies. The principal encourages teachers to take this leadership role as becoming leaders in the district strengthens both the district and their knowledge to support Mahan. Teachers are encouraged to strive for continued excellence. Our students at Mahan are unique, and building a strong relationship with their families is a priority. The principal makes a point to recognize and acknowledge parents when they come into the school by name, addresses their issues and concerns immediately, and answers phone calls and emails promptly. Our goal at Mahan is to build a strong school community where we work together to create an environment where all students reach their full potential.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Mahan's strategies for academic success focus on three areas; filling gaps from general education Tier-I curriculum, providing researched based interventions and progress monitoring for struggling students and addressing academic related behaviors to foster increased time on task and to facilitate motivation to be an active member of the learning community. Teachers are encouraged to identify areas of skill deficits in the classroom setting and to supplement curriculum to ensure these areas are addressed. Through grade level meetings and across grade level Professional Learning Communities, teachers regularly inform each other of these areas and provide information and materials that have been successfully used to address the gaps.

At the intervention level, Student Study team meetings are utilized to address the needs of individual students and include representatives from student services, ELL and special education as needed in order to provide areas of expertise that can inform tier-II and tier-III instruction. Interventions are then tailored to the particular student's level of independence, academic pace and academic motivation in order to address their behaviors as learners as well as the targeted academic skill. Progress monitoring is completed and reviewed at each stage of the process in order to determine next steps to support the student and to project whether the skills are able to be remediated at each tier level. Mahan has diligently followed a positive behavioral support model that includes Respect Others Act Responsibly (ROAR) cards as incentives towards weekly drawings for tangible rewards, fun ROAR day activities, and student of the month celebrations with family attendance welcomed and encouraged. In addition, Classroom Dojo has been implemented school-wide and is in its third year of implementation. Dojo helps to provide immediate feedback to students, ongoing communication with parents and a consistent behavior vocabulary in order for students to understand expectations and to celebrate successes. Through technology, we have been fortunate to have use of Smartboards that allow students to have hands-on access to Dojo throughout the day and teachers have downloaded the application to cell phones for easy use in hallways, lunch and other areas of the school to provide feedback across settings.

Through student services, Mahan utilizes a social skills screening instrument to identify students that would benefit from small group practice of skills needed to navigate the educational environment and to develop positive relationships with peers and adults. This not only provides direct instruction within the Common Core Social, Emotional and Intellectual Habits, but is also tied to success throughout the day by earning Dojo participation points within the small group setting. Overall, Mahan has worked diligently and consistently each year to ensure that strategies focus on supporting both the academic and social-emotional needs of its students in order to create a welcoming learning environment where all feel supported, valued and comfortable accessing assistance when needed for each student's academic success.