

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 [] Charter [] Magnet [] Choice

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

Official School Name West Point Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 705a Barry Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City West Point State DD Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 10996-1196

County _____

Telephone (845) 938-2313 Fax _____

Web site/URL http://www.dodea.edu/WestPointES E-mail denise.demarco@am.dodea.edu
/ _____

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. Emily Marsh E-mail emily.marsh@am.dodea.edu
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Americas Mid-Atlantic Tel. (703) 630-7017

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. Heather Evangelista
(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):
- 15 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 5 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 3 High schools
 - 2 K-12 schools
- 25 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	52	27	79
K	49	36	85
1	36	28	64
2	26	28	54
3	33	41	74
4	31	38	69
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	227	198	425

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 % Asian
 - 6 % Black or African American
 - 9 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 6 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 76 % 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 2015 – 2016 school year: 21%

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	69
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	100
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	480
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.208
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	21

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):
Portuguese, Spanish, Hungarian, German

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 8 %
Total number students who qualify: 34

8. Students receiving special education services: 16 %
66 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.

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

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 4
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 including those teaching high school specialty subjects	21
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	15
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	14
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	8

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 20:1
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	95%	95%	95%	95%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**
Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 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
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.

WPES is committed to developing 21st century learners through a differentiated learning environment that is healthy, safe, engaging, and challenging.

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

West Point Elementary School (WPES) has a proud tradition of serving the children of the military and support staff that are stationed at the United States Military Academy (USMA) at West Point. While most students are here for two to three years, some students spend their entire elementary and middle school years at West Point. Some may even find themselves back for a second rotation. We have a small population of children of foreign exchange professors. Some parents are deployed overseas and some are deployed for operational experiences stateside. WPES offers formal and informal opportunities for children meeting the unique needs of the challenges of military life.

A cultural tradition that the whole school gets excited about is football season, especially the Army-Navy game. Students practice the Army football song, and second grade, dressed in black and gold, sings it on the Morning News program the day before each game. Then, parents and students enjoy a pep rally breakfast. Students are also invited to attend the Army Football Spirit luncheon.

A milestone we are currently celebrating is our 2 Centuries of Learning. To commemorate this event, a USMA band member wrote a school song that the students are learning. Our students are working with middle school students and the Smithsonian American Art Museum mentors to curate a school exhibit about Military Children at West Point. They plan, use teamwork, and create inquiry questions for each stage of the exhibit which will become part of the historic record of WPS. From kindergarteners and first graders working on favorite places and personal experiences at West Point to third graders researching West Point sports and the Army-Navy competition to fourth graders writing biographies of famous Americans, the entire campus is engaged.

WPES stands for West Point Equals Success, and is our school motto. Every child recognizes and loves our mascot, a giant bulldog named “Success.” Every child not only chants, but understands the cheer “We learn how to read, we learn how to write, West Point equals success, that’s right! Strategies That Work, 6+1, we use them to make learning fun!” Students understand that reading and writing across the curriculum is very important, and the positive learning environment contributes to the success of students.

There are several key strategies used within the school that have encouraged and challenged all students to develop their full potential. The DoDEA curriculum challenges students to become prepared for college and careers in the 21st century. Teachers collaborate to understand vertical alignment of standards and plan with intentionality using the College and Career Readiness standards. The standards promote student-centered and project-based learning. Within classrooms students are active problem-solvers, collaborate with each other, and are learning to critique their own reasoning as well as that of others. Data drives instruction so that students receive carefully aligned instruction for their needs. WPES classrooms are active and full of student participation and collaboration, fostering self-motivation and social interaction.

Teacher mentors and after-school clubs provide opportunities for students to grow emotionally and socially. Quilting Club offers students a chance to become aware of their ability to make decisions, plan for a task, and develop self-management skills, as well as have fun with peers. Through Chef of the Month and physical activities, such as Move to Learn and Go Noodle, students become self-aware of healthy choices they can and should make. The NFL Fuel Up to Play 60 partnership encourages 60 minutes of fitness and exercise inside and outside of the school day, and the students understand that healthy kids do better in school. LEGO club enables students to use STEM principles to investigate a real world problem, and plan, create, and present their project. Digital Storytelling helps students learn to communicate information to the school and public through podcasts.

Support programs, such as our interventions of Reading and Math Clubs, Gifted Education (GE), and classroom differentiation provide opportunities for what students need to learn, how they need to learn it, and assessment and products to show that they have learned it. Tasks are challenging and thought-provoking, yet respectful of a child’s readiness and abilities. Flexible groupings are dynamic so that students receive the content and the process they need to deepen understanding.

WPES administrators, teachers, students, and parents have a shared vision for the success of students at our school. We all believe in a safe, risk-free environment for all stakeholders. A trusting environment promotes student achievement. Communication between home and school is continual and encouraged. Administrators promote continual improvement through a dynamic vision of professional development for 21st century teaching and learning. Teachers promote student achievement through their service as classroom teachers and facilitators, by serving as instructional coaches, and by participating in CSI. Students promote their own as well as peer achievement by critically thinking about self and community issues.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

The standards-based core curriculum at WPES provides rigor and focus for teaching and learning. Equitable opportunities and access to materials are available to all students. To accomplish our school goal of proficiency in literacy across the curriculum, teachers integrate all core curriculum subjects, using 21st Century Teaching and Learning methods. Standards are best taught in an integrated manner so that students can make connections within and across subjects. Therefore, reading and writing are actively seen within the other curriculum subjects. WPES has a model specialist program that includes visual arts, music, foreign language, technology, STEM, and Enrichment. These educators directly support the learning standards for their curricular area and are committed to integrating instruction of the content areas. They collaborate directly with classroom teachers to integrate project-based learning opportunities.

The language arts core curriculum focuses on reading and writing skills for a variety of purposes through a variety of texts. To vertically align the teaching and learning, ongoing professional development is provided using our interventions, Strategies that Work (STW), and 6+1 Traits. Through this professional development, teachers and students use consistent vocabulary to discuss strategies and skills, i.e., “I Can” statements. Another strategy, anchor charts for fiction and nonfiction text features, allows children to self-monitor when reading any text, which in turn elevates learning. 6+1 Traits training and support, i.e., charts to make the traits visible to students, allows teachers and students to use the writing process in all curricular areas. A dedicated ELA block, provides an instructional program that is developmentally appropriate and challenging for each student through large and small group instruction, 1-to-1 differentiation, technology and the expertise of the specialists. Co-teaching allows modeling for teachers and students, and classroom support is always available. Support services from the reading specialists, GE, and SPED teachers, as well as buddy-reading programs help students achieve their highest potential.

WPES is using the adopted College and Career Readiness Standards in Mathematics (CCRSM) to help students develop mathematical thinking and incorporate mathematical principals to all areas of their learning and, broader still, their lives. A dedicated math block allows for differentiation for all students- large and small group instruction, 1-to-1 differentiation, technology, and co-teaching with our math coach. Teachers have received on-going hands-on professional development by outside experts and highly trained district and in-house staff. Weekly grade level meetings and quarterly vertical collaboration provide rigor and focus to the teaching and learning of math. Specialists support the classroom learning through use and modelling of the SMPs, i.e., precision, perseverance, and discourse. Math Night allows parents and children to explore, engage and have fun with math concepts.

Curriculum integration is an essential practice at WPES. Through ongoing professional development, teachers at WPES have committed to integrated and multidisciplinary practices for instruction. The two reading specialists compiled the list of science texts with the SCHOLASTIC guided reading leveled science readers, providing aligned resources for instruction. Social studies leveled readers are now being added. Classroom teachers are able to use this list to plan an integrated unit. Interdisciplinary concepts are also stressed during STEAM week, which includes a parent night at which teachers, West Point cadets, and parents participate in activities and projects that engage all learners. The installation Forester and Fish and Wildlife Technician integrated math, science and engineering, through hands-on environmental activities. Another example of integrating the curriculum was created by the fourth grade team who integrated all subject areas in theme-based units, including technology, into the study of the regions of the United States. STW, 6+1 Traits, CCRSM, and Picture Perfect Science, and curriculum integration all incorporate the 5 E's- Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, and Evaluate.

Our 21st Century Student Leadership Team is comprised of students in grades 1-4. Focused on essential skills for learners and through project-based learning, this group has been instrumental with coordinating civic learning events that affect our school as well as the community. For example, Toys for Tots and Souper Bowl, a canned food drive, show caring for others in need, while Holiday Cards to Soldiers supports our military. Fuel Up to Learn, Kindness posters, the Kindness chain, and recycling develops caring for self,

class, school, community and planet.

Creative Curriculum covers all areas of WPES Pre-K development. Preschoolers learn how to manage the academic environment while developing social skills that will set them up for success in future years. Creative Curriculum teaches academics through active engagement. Students learn critical skills in academics and socials areas through modeled play and project based activities. On-going collaboration between Pre-K and kindergarten promotes alignment of foundational academic and social skills ensuring a smooth transition from Pre-K to kindergarten. Additionally, children from Strong Beginnings, the preschool program on the installation, tour the school and visit kindergarten classrooms.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

West Point Elementary School hosts a model specialist program that includes visual arts, music, foreign language, technology, physical education and STEM/Enrichment. These programs are tailored to students in grades kindergarten through fourth grades. These educators not only directly support the learning standards for their curricular area, but they are committed to integrated instruction of the content areas, as well as the instructional coaching of their specialized content area to their general education peers. They collaborate directly with classroom teachers on the power standards to integrate into their program learning standards and commit to project based learning opportunities. This model of integrated instruction is beyond powerful as students are able to directly relate to and connect with real-world learning experiences.

The specialist team fosters a culture of collaborative teaching and learning across all grade levels. They actively engage in project based learning experiences that they regularly co-plan and co-teach as necessary. Specialized projects are tailored to meet the learning standards of students in all appropriate curricular areas, not only within the specialized standards. Specialists meet on a daily basis to collaborate on the varied topics and projects being planned for the school, a grade level, or a particular group of students that require specific differentiation.

In our visual arts program, students actively participate in the creation of art in multiple mediums. The teacher is extremely cognizant of the tools that are developmentally appropriate for students and carefully aligns instruction with standards that are both content specific as well as general education specific. Depending on the activity you might find students reading, writing, measuring, or even engaging in scientific inquiry while in the art classroom. The sky's the limit in art class.

As you transition into the foreign language classroom, students are engaged and immersed in a Spanish speaking environment. Here too, students are learning content specific material integrated with the leveled language development expectations for their particular grade level. Students are actively engaged in hands on activities that increase their language development as well as their cultural knowledge of spanish heritages.

Our performing arts class focuses on music and presentation development. Students actively participate in developing both vocal and developmentally appropriate instrumental skills. Students author speaking parts for their performances and the events are always centered around a project theme that has been carried over into the other specialists areas. For example, this year WPES celebrates 2 centuries of a military dependent school presence being on the academy installation. While not all of that time is a DODEA responsibility, for over 200 years military children have been taught here at West Point. Thematic teaching has been ongoing all year, including research and projects to highlight the accomplishments of West Point, impacts of individuals from West Point, as well as learning environments that have existed here over that time period. The collaboration between all stakeholders, but especially the leadership of the specialists, is resulting in a 2 Centuries of Learning Museum that will feature the timeline and projects of all of our students. Technology is actively integrated under the teacher leadership of our Education Technologist. She and the information specialist work carefully with all teachers, specialists included, to incorporate robust methods of integrating technology into their instructional programming.

To highlight that WPES is a healthy community focused on balanced wellness is an understatement. WPES is approaching its fourth consecutive year as being recognized as an NFL Fuel Up to Play 60 school. We

have been awarded the Presidential Fitness Award and we have a robust and dedicated Wellness Committee that focuses on health, wellness, and fitness for all WPES stakeholders. This committee works collaboratively, under the leadership of our physical education teacher with teacher, parent, and student leaders partnering in dynamic ways to ensure that health and fitness is a focus for all. Our team organizes fitness events for students, for parents and community members, and for staff to lead a balanced and healthy lifestyle. From a student created field day that incorporated methods of recycling into every activity, to staff lunches that focus on healthy eating, recipes exchanges, and fitness activities, the Wellness Committee is one that keeps WPES moving and conscientious on health.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

WPES has high expectations of students with diverse needs and provides exemplary instructional practices. A variety of tiered instructional approaches are based on student achievement data and anecdotal evidence of performance. Teachers and support staff collaborate and use supplemental materials for students not meeting monthly goals or who are in need of enrichment.

Differentiated instruction occurs in many ways to include guided reading, choice centers, small group, 1-to-1, and reteaching. Workstations, based on reading comprehension ability, combined with remediation activities and leveled libraries, target individual learning styles and needs. Task descriptions and their alignment to the standards are posted. Differentiation in math is primarily accomplished through the use of leveled games and hands-on activities.

Specialists differentiate expectations, materials, tools, and equipment. Morning News scripts are written with the help of students and a re-assuring co-anchor is often used to help a struggling student. In FLES, a second grader attends FLES with fourth graders to improve her Spanish in anticipation of moving to a Spanish-speaking country.

Explicit instruction is a key instructional method. Teachers use the research based practices of Strategies That Work to help students think about their thinking when they read and utilize strategies, such as monitoring comprehension, making connections, and determining importance. The Reading Specialist modeled monitoring comprehension lessons in each classroom and provided anchor charts to maintain a common vocabulary and have a daily visual of how to self-monitor. A modeled lesson on nonfiction text features helped the STEM teacher continue to use the same explicit teaching in her classes. Students across grade levels are well-versed in these strategies and a common vocabulary and enthusiasm about reading is evident. This intervention has improved comprehension skills, as shown on our assessments.

Explicit trainings and classroom modeling of 6+1 Traits of Writing has helped students understand that good writing is a process that incorporates all of the traits and takes time, thought, peer conferences, and revision to create strong writing. Students are learning to recognize the traits in the writings of others and have improved their writing skills, as shown by writing assessment scores. In addition, the implementation of CCRSM allows for differentiated instruction and has already shown to improve students' ability to share their mathematical thinking, both orally and in writing.

Technology-based support offers differentiated opportunities. Pebble Go is for students who may need to hear the information, such as, ELL. Britannica Online provides higher level reading to challenge readers. Reading A-Z, Discovery Ed resources, Brain Pop, and Brain Pop, Jr. are used for different reading levels. Using the digital portions of the GoMath! curriculum, teachers can assign different activities to students based on their current need.

Summative data derived from system-wide and local assessments, such as the Reading Inventory (RI), the Benchmark Assessment System (BAS), Reading Street Benchmark, Selection, and Unit Tests, GoMath! Chapter and Unit assessments, CEPAS, and local writing assessments is used to determine the academic needs of students. Formative data revealed by continual assessment is used by teachers to guide instruction and form fluid, flexible instructional groups which provide remediation or enrichment where necessary. Lexile levels determine eligibility for Read 180, a reading remediation program for 4th graders. BAS levels are used to determine independent and instructional reading levels of primary students, and generate a

starting point in Raz-Kids, which builds skills incrementally and provides instant feedback on their reading.

Grade level teams use data to identify trends. Macro-level analysis by grade levels determines grade level instruction while micro-level analysis helps plan for differentiation. To assist the math, reading, GE, and case study committees, teachers use a robust, data-based process, i.e., data points, classroom observations and description of classroom modifications, to determine what types of services are needed. Anecdotal evidence and FitnessGrams are used in PE to determine if a child is in a healthy fitness zone.

To close any achievement gaps we have various strategies in place. For example, Level 1 and 2 ELL students receive both ESL and leveled literacy intervention. This has proven very successful; they made great gains towards grade level standards. SPED students have IEP goals and objectives which are adjusted as needed. We also use the Writing Protocol Analysis worksheet and the SRI Instructional Planning Report to identify learning strategies to help struggling students achieve both the writing and reading standards.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

WPES engages and motivates students and provides a positive environment that supports their academic, social, and emotional growth. WPES recognizes that no two students are alike and differentiated learning styles are the norm. Often student-led learning activities result from interest while the teacher acts as facilitator.

Motivation for success is both intrinsic and extrinsic. Student ownership of their own learning is discussed in classrooms and assemblies to remind students of their role in their own success. Exemplars of student work are displayed so that students see their hard work is valued and are models to other students. Students are also motivated to success through classroom awards and Student of the Week. Students who achieve the schoolwide Principal Paw Award are recognized for both academic achievement and civic responsibility. The weekly gold Bulldog Bone award is for the classroom that has most exemplified responsibility in the cafeteria each day.

Our Morning News, produced and presented by students, highlights achievements and “Did You Know” questions contributed by all students. The positive environment at WPES includes Recycling Projects, Leadership Club opportunities, Student Work Display showcases, and ongoing video capturing students engaged in learning.

The positive academic, social, and emotional environment is also provided for through the physical set-up of classrooms, in adherence with 21st Learning Century guidelines. Early childhood furniture allows for free student movement and ease of teacher facilitation. Guidance counselors are highly visible and accessible to students. Character trait learning has led to the creation of a school-wide kindness chain, a caring tree, and an ongoing puzzle where incoming students are new pieces that fit into our school community. Our students understand that they are a part of our school motto, West Point Equals Success.

Teachers feel valued and supported at WPES. The principal has an open-door policy, and teachers feel free to set an appointment or just drop in to address concerns or talk about ideas they’d like to implement as school-wide activities. For example, a teacher came up with a project-based learning idea that would have students plant milkweed seeds to create monarch butterfly habitats combining aspects of STEAM, specifically, combining our kindness/caring initiative, recycling efforts, art, math and science. Support specialists are often asked by classroom teachers to model lessons. To boost morale our Sunshine Club, Mandatory Fun Committee, and Wellness Committee invites teachers to participate in fun activities inside of school as well as outside, i.e., hikes, rock-climbing, community events, pot lucks, and challenges.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

WPES recognizes that family and community involvement is critical in helping our students become successful learners. We set up many leadership opportunities that involve families, the school liaison representative, and community.

As part of shared leadership, the opinions and suggestions of all community members are solicited during School Improvement meetings at which student progress is tracked and reviewed for trends. Further opportunities involve participation as School Board and PTO members. Partnering with our Garrison Commander ensures that the school’s schedule supports the needs of the parents that serve our USMA cadets and meets DoDEA guidelines. Our principal works closely with him during inclement weather to make decisions that will promote the safety of all stakeholders.

To enrich and support school programs, parents and community members are encouraged to volunteer. Located on a military base with a university within walking distance, affords us many opportunities to elicit the help of USMA and USMAPS students and faculty as co-educators. During STEAM week and Math night, professors from academic departments at USMA share their expertise. During Read Across America

week, USMA personnel, i.e., the Garrison Commander, the Superintendent, the Dean, the Commandant, or others participate in our activities. Our reading specialists partner with the Red Cross to have “Paws For A Cause” dogs visit our school; struggling readers gain confidence by reading aloud to these animals.

To further support our learners and keep our stakeholders updated on school issues and student progress, teachers communicate weekly through the use of newsletters which contain current information about important events coming up in the classroom, the schedule for specials, as well as what concepts are being covered in content areas. Knowing when specials are enables students to come prepared for P.E. or library. Spelling words and math concepts included in newsletters help parents practice skills with their children at home.

Ongoing communication also exists through our school web page and facebook page, the use of One Call Now, a biweekly Bulldog Blast school newspaper, and the Pointer View newspaper to post notifications and share events. A community fair, school tours, and “Meet and Greet” help new and returning students enter school on the first day feeling more at home. On “Back to School Night” teachers discuss curriculum standards, grading, and classroom expectations. Parent conferences throughout the year, weekly reports through the agenda, Aspen Gradespeed, and quarterly reports provide parents with their child’s progress. WPES strives to keep all of its stakeholders engaged and informed participants.

3. Professional Development:

Professional Development at WPES is both school-wide and differentiated to meet the needs of the faculty. All teachers participate in weekly professional development. The format varies depending on the expected outcomes and the needs of the professional learners. Some examples are meeting as a whole group, in learning teams, in grade levels teams, or individually. Focused professional development on the adopted reading instructional strategy, Strategies That Work, provided differentiated learning for our teachers. Faculty members were given the opportunity to study the content in a variety of ways, including a college course for credit facilitated by the administrative team and reading specialists, small study groups, and individualized study. All teachers show evidence of success using the instructional strategy during full group discussions of what worked or did not work in monthly faculty meetings. Reading comprehension data is tracked, using system-wide assessments, RI and BAS, to gauge the positive impact of this instructional strategy. Teachers participated in explicit trainings on how to collect, record, and analyze BAS assessment results. Comprehension data was analyzed by the type of questions asked, and then using the Systems of Strategic Actions from the Fountas and Pinnell Prompting Guides, teachers taught the strategies that students needed in a more focused manner.

Professional development for the implementation of CCRSM has been exemplary. This PD is uniform system-wide throughout DoDEA. During quarterly trainings, teachers are given the opportunity to grapple with mathematics, building a better understanding of how their students will learn the skills. Teachers work within and across grade levels to discover alignment of the standards from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. Teachers collaborate during full day trainings, as well as weekly sessions, to implement the standards and the curricular materials with fidelity. Assessment data is being compiled to evaluate the learning. Initial anecdotal data indicate a positive trend in achievement, especially in the ability of students to express their mathematical thinking.

WPES has begun to implement DoDEA’s Professional Learning Community Framework. Based on research that student learning increases when teachers examine and improve their practice, all stakeholders, including parents and community members, have come to a consensus to begin weekly early dismissal for professional development, starting in SY 17-18. This time will be reserved for collaborative planning, data analysis, vertical and horizontal articulation, and collaboration among specialists, special educators, instructional specialists, and classroom teachers. The recent reallocation of personnel by our district to embed an instructional systems specialist for professional development within our campus is more evidence of the strong value that our system, district, and school place on professional learning.

4. School Leadership:

The stakeholders at WPES believe in shared leadership. The PTO is in charge of putting together the yearbook, the Book Fair, and Read-a-thon. The administrative officer in conjunction with the specialists helped to develop the policies and procedures for evacuation drills. Stakeholders develop the specialist schedule to ensure a dedicated collaboration time for each team and time for specialists to collaborate with classroom teachers. Teachers volunteer to lead professional development based on their field of expertise. Every stakeholder is a valued leader at the school, each person having roles and responsibilities based on their areas of expertise and interest, based on DoDEA's 21st Century Teaching Leading and Learning Professional Framework.

In addition, the Continuous School Improvement Committee (comprised of administrators, teachers, specialists, parents) worked together to create an assessment calendar and a testing procedures and policies handbook. A Professional Development Calendar was developed to create robust, stimulating and differentiated training based on teachers' needs and to ensure that interventions are clearly understood and used in the classrooms. The Data Committee chair instigated, modeled, and developed the Data Team Process in order to look closely at the information being collected and how it could help with instruction. For example, the BAS comprehension data was analyzed by the type of questions asked (within the text, about the text, and beyond the text) to see where the students' breakdown in comprehension occurred. This helped teachers focus on the strategies that students most needed. Also, intervention fidelity increased among and across grade levels when we analyzed writing data through blind scoring. An environment was created in which data is regularly gathered and analyzed in order to plan focused lessons based on student needs.

Important, too, is student leadership which is growing each year. A classroom teacher developed the recycling initiative at our school that evolved into student leaders becoming emissaries to all classrooms to ensure recycling collection occurred on proposed dates. Student leaders further proposed milk carton recycling, write scripts for the annual music programs, and submit "Did You Know?" facts for the Morning News program. Student leaders presented to the School Board all the activities they are spearheading. It is important to WPES that the leadership roles of teachers and students continue to develop.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Continual collaboration is one of the strongest educational practices that our school incorporates to achieve student success. This ongoing model prevails within each grade level, across grade levels, and with school specialists and other school support personnel.

Formal collaboration within grade levels is supported through the use of common planning time during which teachers discuss students' progress to date, where they are expected to go, and how to get them there. Grade level standards, programs, and materials are reviewed to address the needs of differentiated learners. Curricular maps for content areas are set up as common guides. Student work is reviewed as a team and ideas and lesson plans are shared. Informal collaboration occurs in addition to regularly scheduled meetings, as teammates fluidly work and talk during free moments. Coworkers support each other by sharing experiences, classroom successes, and individual talents.

Articulation across grade levels is evident when all classroom teachers use carefully planned staff development opportunities to create vertical alignment and intentionality charts that guide planning. This systematic scrutiny of standards allows teachers to closely monitor expected student progress from grade to grade, and adjust learning opportunities to meet diverse needs.

In addition to curricular vertical alignment, grade levels also display evidence of robust collaborative opportunities, as they share thoughts, brainstorm plans, and work to resolve problems at monthly grade level chair meetings held with administration.

Collaboration is also apparent in the way we use collected data. Throughout the year, academic data, such as RI, BAS, and writing scores, is collected and recorded on spreadsheets in common access files. This practice allows teachers the opportunity to have a snapshot of their incoming students' abilities, as well as track student progress throughout the year. It is also used as documentation when needed to support the SST process.

School-wide collaboration between grade level teachers, specialists, and school support personnel, is an integral part of our school. One example is the project currently being implemented in our school entitled, "2 Centuries of Learning." This initiative honors 200 years of continuous education for the families in our military community. Teachers and students have decided on the projects they'd like to do, and specialists are coordinating with them to enrich this event with musical, physical, artistic, STEAM, reading, and technological opportunities. Fuel Up to Play and recycling as part of the Green initiative are other examples of school-wide collaboration. It takes a whole school to develop 21st Century learners, and West Point Elementary School personnel are doing an exceptional job of collaborating to support this effort.