

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 Mrs. Becky Neubert

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

Official School Name Seaford Central Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1 Delaware Place

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

City Seaford State DE Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 19973-1433

County Sussex County

Telephone (302) 629-4587 Fax (302) 628-4380

Web site/URL http://ces.seafordbluejays.org/ E-mail becky.neubert@seaford.k12.de.us

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

Date _____
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Mr David Perrington E-mail david.perrington@seaford.k12.de.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Seaford School District Tel. (302) 629-4587

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. Rebecca Adams
(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):
- 4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 6 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	4	3	7
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	82	80	162
4	72	74	146
5	67	75	142
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	225	232	457

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 2 % Asian
 - 38 % Black or African American
 - 13 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 41 % White
 - 6 % 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: 8%

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	21
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	17
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	38
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	457
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.083
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	8

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 16 %
72 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 43 %
Total number students who qualify: 191

8. Students receiving special education services: 19 %
85 Total number of students served

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

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <u>3</u> Autism | <u>3</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>10</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>1</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>42</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>4</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>10</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>2</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>10</u> Mental Retardation | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities | <u>2</u> Developmentally Delayed |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 3
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	18
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	13
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	9
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	7

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 25:1
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%	95%	95%	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.

The mission of Central Elementary is to lay a solid foundation with all students, expecting them to be successful in their educational pursuits while growing into responsible, life-long learners who become leading members of society.

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

Seaford Central Elementary embraces an ethnically, racially, linguistically and economically diverse population. Our school community values education and is committed to high levels of student academic achievement. Seaford Central Elementary School is located in the heart of Seaford, Delaware which is a small town in a rural community of western Sussex County just a few miles over the state line of Maryland.

The Nanticoke River, running through the center of town provides obvious agricultural benefits to support the thriving poultry industry in Sussex County. In 1939, the DuPont Company chose Seaford as the site of their first Nylon plant and Seaford became known as the “Nylon Capital of the World”. Due to a decreased demand for nylon, the DuPont Company left Seaford. Since their official exit in 2003, the town of Seaford has been in an economic recovery. However, Seaford survived what might have been a devastating blow and the Seaford School District continues to help students prepare for a future in a more challenging and diverse economy.

Recently, the town of Seaford formally ditched its longstanding nylon capital motto in favor of the forward-looking slogan, "A perfect place to start." This new and updated perspective embodies the spirit of Central Elementary School and the Seaford School District. Today, more than half of Seaford's 3,500 students receive some form of federal benefits, like free lunches, 17 percent of the student population are English learners, and 16 percent of students are special-education learners. These statistics are among the highest rates in Delaware. While Central Elementary School represents the many cultures and diversity, the school community embraces our cultural differences. Central Elementary School represents the many cultures and diversity represented in the town, and the school community embraces our cultural differences. We teach our students that each individual is unique and offers different perspectives and experiences that we can learn from.

Over the years, Seaford Central Elementary has had a strong reputation for excellence and high performance. Central Elementary currently serves a diverse population of students in grades 3-5. In previous years, Central Elementary served students in grades 1-3, and then later transitioned to grades K-5 and functioned on an alternative “year-long” balanced calendar. Even though Central Elementary has experienced many transitions in their organizational structure, the school has remained constant in creating a place where children are loved, encouraged, supported, and held to high standards for their learning, behavior and performance. Every single teacher is committed to all students finding success. Forming strong relationships between students, families and the community serves as a critical foundation upon which our staff builds a bright future for each and every student.

Seaford Central Elementary School has strong ties to the community, history and traditions. Over 30% of the staff attended school in the Seaford School District as a student. Because so many on our staff have been part of the story in Seaford for so long, connections, ties, and relationships run deep. Our school has a variety of traditions to engage and inspire. One of these traditions that is eagerly anticipated is “Dancing with the Superstars”. Students select one family member to serve as their “Superstar” guest of honor to this semi-formal dance. That night celebrates the superstar in the students’ lives and reinforces that family support is essential to help each child’s light shine.

Families are an essential part of our school at Seaford Central Elementary. The school community functions as a family in the way we care for each other and the relationships we have developed. The doors to our school are always open. We provide frequent and meaningful opportunities for families to learn about and participate in our curricular and instructional programs. Examples of these opportunities include classroom visitation, volunteering, conferences, PTO meetings, as well as several curriculum nights. In planning each of these events we keep the focus on the needs of our learners and their families. As a result we consistently provide interpreters and culturally sensitive supports. We also invite the community to our school for celebrations and showcases throughout the year to highlight both academic and the related arts. We celebrate the achievements of each student as a cherished family member of our school family.

All of the staff at Seaford Central Elementary is committed to student achievement as well as to meeting the

social and emotional needs of all our learners. Our teachers model strategies and share their own thinking right along with their students. Each teacher in every classroom creates an environment where every learner is challenged and pushed to excel to their highest potential. All students receive differentiated interventions to accelerate their learning. No child is left without supports to move them toward their highest achievements.

Exemplar programs at Central Elementary include the school-wide behavior supports and intervention system, the Dual Language Spanish Immersion Program, the Active Learning Project for highly able learners, and the 5th grade band program. These programs contribute to our school community in a positive way and exemplify how we are focused on developing the whole child.

Seaford Central Elementary houses the Sussex County Orthopedic Program, which provides services to students with mild, moderate, and severe cognitive and orthopedic disabilities, receive various services through the support of an in-house physical therapist, occupational therapist, speech therapist, nurses, and qualified teachers. All these students are included and eagerly welcomed in the classroom with the general education students and participate in all activities both during and after school.

Even though Seaford Central Elementary School may be a small school in a small rural town, we have always strived to make big accomplishments. We believe in our students and that together anything is possible.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

At Seaford Central Elementary we use the Common Core State Standards to drive our instruction. Each of our learning cycles is followed by a deep data dive to analyze student results and develop an action plan to move learning forward. All of the classroom lessons and learning activities at all levels and content area are designed to emphasize the use of instructional strategies that are interactive, differentiated, and student-centered.

The Bookworms literacy program is a research based comprehensive core K-5 reading program designed by Dr. Sharon Walpole (University of Delaware) and the late Michael McKenna (University of Virginia). The 135 minute language arts block develops students who are effective communicators, who love literature, and are lifelong readers and writers. The curriculum is literature based with a strong phonics foundation. Students spend a significant time reading in schools and are exposed to three different texts each day, including text well beyond their grade reading level, text on the grade level reading, and a text specifically appropriate for the individual student needs. The program utilizes three 45 minute segments of engaged shared reading, interactive read aloud and differentiated small-group instruction. Students engage with integrated reading, writing, speaking, listening and language daily. They experience authentic literature which includes a balance of informational and literary text throughout the school year. Writing is integrated each day throughout the ELA block as students write to respond to text in the form of super sentences, narrative writing, persuasive writing, and expository writing. We have excellent readers and writers who are striving to improve each day.

The Seaford School District's mathematics program is based upon the philosophy that all students can learn mathematics at high levels. Students are taught to work both individually and in pairs where they learn the art of explaining their thinking or process for their answer. They are taught that there are many strategies to obtain the solution to a mathematical problem. Students are taught math a minimum of 60 minutes each day. The Common Core State Standards for Mathematics (CCSS) provide a rigorous pathway of college and career readiness requiring students to gain a deep understanding of the mathematics and apply their understanding to real-world situations. Students develop a solid foundation in whole numbers, fractions, decimals and operations using the Math in Focus and Engage New York, Number Worlds, Ten Marks, and Number Talks curricular materials.

The science curriculum is a multi-year sequence that emphasizes hands-on experimentation and functional knowledge of scientific phenomena. Students engage in hands-on, inquiry based science investigations of the natural world. As a founding member of the Delaware Science Coalition, Seaford School District students receive instruction in physical science, life science, earth/space science, and engineering through the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Students engage in exploratory experiences using units such as Smithsonian/STC (Science and Technology for Children) and FOSS (Full Optic Science System) kits. Students actively engage in critical thinking using the science practices.

Developing our students into responsible citizens is critically important. Seaford School District Social teachers use the Delaware Recommended Curriculum (DRC) which provides model units developed by Delaware teachers based on the Delaware Social Studies Standards. The DRC, as well as district-developed units of study in the four core disciplines of social studies (civics, economics/personal finance, geography, and world and U.S. history) form the basis of social studies instruction. Civic and community learning extends beyond the formal Social Studies lessons conducted in the classroom. A fundamental practice in our school are the weekly classroom and grade-level Community Meetings. Teachers and students collaboratively develop the agenda for these meetings based on identified social needs arising in the school community. In alignment with the topic and desired outcomes, guest speakers have been invited to participate. For example, Mayor Genshaw has been invited to come and speak about the role of a mayor in Seaford and how a community works together to solve problems. The students were able to engage in a meaningful discussion with the mayor and were able to relate the function of a school community to that of the town. School-community responsibility is a common thread in everything that we do at Seaford Central

Elementary. One demonstration of this is even present in the lunchroom where our mantra is “Leave it better than you found it.” Providing students with constant reminders about the role they can play in improving the community makes it possible to change the habits of mind. Our school counselor’s lessons further enhance the school initiative to create responsible school citizens. In an effort to face the challenge of bullying head-on, our school counselor has focused this year on the role of the bystander. Equipping students to not just stand by and watch things happen has had a positive impact. As an extension for our most highly-able learners in the Active Learning Project (ALP), through project based learning, students are challenged with identifying a problem in their community and developing a project to propose a solution. The purpose of elementary school social studies is to enable students to understand, participate in, and make informed decisions about their world. Engaging our students in social studies content allows students to explain relationships with other people, to institutions, and to the environment, and equips them with knowledge and understanding of the past. It provides them with skills for productive problem solving and decision making in the future.

The fundamental key to our success is that the learning is sequential; concepts and skills are taught explicitly by highly trained teachers who motivate students to move at a pace that allows them to maximize learning. A critical supporting element is the focus on data driven instruction through common assessment analysis cycles. Through the Professional Learning Community (PLC) and data review cycle, staff members engage in professional discussions and brainstorm methods and strategies to reach each and every student.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

In addition to the core academics of the school, Central Elementary School supports a well-rounded learning environment with a variety of experiences, such as the Dual Language Immersion Program, a variety of related arts subjects, field trips, and hands-on learning. We guarantee equal access to content rich, rigorous curricula designed to develop the whole child; thereby leveling the playing field for disadvantaged children.

Art class is provided to all students weekly. In the art room, students engage in a variety of projects which provide students the opportunity to learn about culture and art history around the world. Students have created Aboriginal dot paintings, totem poles, Chinese paper lanterns, and most recently are working on African Animal Masks. Students are also learning about weaving yarn through the process of creating a paper plate loom. They have learned that early depictions of weaving were found as hieroglyphics in Egyptian pyramids. In the spring, students work with the ancient art form of pottery. Their first experience with the medium is creating their very own sculpted and painted pinch pot.

Music class hosts a variety of opportunities to perform in class as well as in concerts for the school community. We match pitch and sing in harmony. Students learn how to read music notes as well as use music to perform vocally and instrumentally. The class offers opportunities to sing and play a variety of instruments, such as the guitar, ukulele, and different types of percussion instruments all of which are reflected through two culminating performances each year. Our goal in music class is to expand on their knowledge of music beyond current "radio". They learn the history and cultural originations of jazz, country, pop and rock music. Students learn music best by "doing" music and they have every opportunity to sing, play, bang or whatever is necessary to enrich and satisfy their musical curiosity. Fifth grade students have the opportunity to explore additional musical instruments through joining the band where they may choose to play the flute, clarinet, trumpet, trombone, saxophone, or percussion instrument.

In physical education students learn a variety of topics that are related to student health, well-being, and most importantly physical activity. Our curriculum also focuses on social skills and reinforces positive student interactions. Students learn ways to improve their physical health and mental health through games and activities.

Within the Dual Language Spanish Immersion Program, Seaford Central Elementary offers a world-class bilingual experience for young learners at the critical point in their cognitive development that is perfect for language acquisition. Students benefit from the instruction of two highly-qualified classroom teachers—one who teaches them for half of the day in English and the other for half of the day in the immersion language. The English-speaking teacher teaches English Language Arts as well as social studies from the Delaware

Recommended Curriculum and Common Core State Standards. The Immersion-language teacher teaches Language Arts for the immersion language, mathematics based on the Common Core State Standards, and science. Dual Language Immersion students follow the same standards-based curriculum in all content areas that non-immersion students would follow in any other Delaware elementary classroom.

In our Media & Instructional Technology classes, all of our students gain skills in the use of technology through our active and continuing use of Chromebooks, Google Apps, and the Schoology learning management system. These platforms allow our students to become proficient in inquiry, critical thinking, and knowledge acquisition. Students also have the opportunity to explore personal areas of interest and develop their love for reading through our electronic and print resources. Technology is infused into every facet of instruction at Central Elementary through the use of interactive whiteboards, Google Chromebooks, computers, laptops, and document cameras. Student use of technology is emphasized so that all learners are able to practice keyboarding and word processing skills. We promote ethical and safe use of technology. All students participate in lessons focused on internet safety and the consequences of cyberbullying.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Central Elementary excels by implementing superior and continuous data-driven cycles of analyzing, strategizing and acting. Through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), the grade level teams preview assessments and determine next steps for instruction, create common weekly formative check-ins, analyze these results collaboratively, and prepare for summative assessments. Once a summative assessment is administered, the teams thoroughly analyze the information to determine strengths, weaknesses, and next steps. Analyzing multiple types of data and comparing these results to a student's growth trajectory allows us to determine the appropriate intervention type to utilize when working on specific skills with students.

PLC meetings are held once every week for 90 minutes. Prior to each 6 or 7 week learning cycle, plans for PLCs are determined. At least 4 weeks prior to administering a common assessment the teachers analyze each question and examine the Common Core Standard(s) associated with the question. This process allows teachers to ensure maximum success for student learning. In concert with analyzing the standards, the team also considers the question type as it relates to the standards. After a thorough investigation, the teachers determine if the students should be able to answer the question based on the upcoming instruction. If the teachers are unsure of whether or not a student will be able to master the question, they pry further into the information and conduct a root cause analysis. Why?; How do you know?; and What evidence do you have to support your claim? are constant questions asked during every step of the process. Understanding the learner's thought process to effectively answer a question allows for the educator to strategize in what method a concept or skill needs to be taught. Finally, plans are made to guarantee that students have access to the learning that must take place for them to prosper.

Each grade level has at least 4 common summative assessments per year. As referenced above, the grade level teams analyze the assessment prior to teaching and complete daily check-ins to determine progress toward mastery. The identification of levels of mastery through formative assessments are documented on a "Cruisin' Clipboard". This tool lists all of the students and the standards or targets they need to master within that learning cycle. As they cruise through the classroom working with students, teachers identify through annotation which students have excelled, which students have met, and which students need more instruction to master the objective. This immediate feedback provides teachers with a guide to provide applicable support before the students take the common assessment.

Once a common assessment is administered via the Illuminate or DESSA online system, the teachers review the results through the assessment matrix reports. The team completes a whole group analysis data review. Afterwards, the teacher meets separately with the administration to review individual classroom data, outliers, and action planning. Patterns of success are celebrated and discussions take place as to why the students met the targets. The conversations always center on what the teacher did in order to help the student reach the goal.

The team looks for student exemplars, compares them to the teacher exemplars and shares the different paths students took to demonstrate mastery. This way the team is constantly learning from each other and

best practices are shared. Next, the major patterns of weaknesses for the grade level are unpacked. The team looks for commonalities across the grade based on standards, question type, and answers chosen. Teachers look for key errors in conceptual understanding, computation or procedure. Finally, the identification between what was taught and what students did on the assessment is explored. Once the highest level of misconceptions to address are branded, the plan to re-teach is created. The plan is executed, and the cycle begins again.

Our data driven lens deeply informs how we implement supports for struggling learners. STAR Reading and Math benchmark assessments are used as our universal screener for Response to Intervention (RTI). Instructional planning reports through the STAR resources provide the instructors with a starting point to support every student. After students are initially tiered in Reading, an informal decoding inventory (IDI) is administered to narrow down the specific skill in which they need support. In math, Number Worlds resources are used to drill down to specific math skills that will support the student with preview and acceleration opportunities. Progress monitoring is completed weekly or bi-weekly throughout a 6 week RTI cycle. Additionally, the students participate in a brief 3 week check-in to see if they can move through a skill group or if they need support. At the end of each cycle an extensive RTI end of cycle review is completed with a team of teachers including the specialists, interventionists, and special services representation. Ultimately, if the student is on trajectory toward mastery the student is removed from the tier. If the student is not on trajectory we either change the intervention or the interventionist. Although some student results present us with challenges, the continuous search for the right piece to the puzzle carries on until we find the best fit.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Over the past decade, the culture and climate have been purposefully developed through high expectations for respect, responsibility, and safety. Upon entering Central Elementary School, visitors are immersed in our “relationships matter” culture. The launch and modeling of behavioral and academic expectations from the beginning of the year and throughout, allows for teachers to instill common targets in the students. The continued teamwork toward these expectations does not allow for much interpretation or vagueness; therefore, the staff supports one another. This common language helps the entire school. These beliefs connect with our vision: laying a solid foundation with students, expecting educational success while growing into responsible, lifelong learners who will become leading members of society. We strive to leave the world and our school better than we found it.

Students are greeted by a minimum of three staff members before entering their classrooms. Teachers stand at their classroom doors to welcome each one of their students to their class for the day. Every day is started positively with morning announcements which include any special day observations and birthday announcements. Throughout the day, staff members including custodians, cafeteria workers, secretaries, and administrators’ converse with students using a tone of decency whether it be to redirect or to praise. Volunteers work in our building, parents eat lunch with their children, groups of students have lunch with teachers and administrators, student work is celebrated and posted, students participate in academic and non-academic conversations with each other and staff members, and most importantly there are lots of smiling and friendly faces throughout the school.

We maintain our climate through Positive Behavior Supports. Students are given the opportunity to receive individual incentives, group incentives, classroom incentives, and school-wide incentives. We celebrate with quarterly assemblies that recognize our students for attendance, behavior and academics. Parents are always invited to these assemblies and attendance has grown each year. We also have quarterly celebrations for behavior that include a school-wide ice cream party/dance and a water day celebration. Every month, teachers identify a classroom Superstar of the Month and that student is celebrated with special recognition at the monthly Parent Teacher Organization meeting, a pizza party, and a free gift from a local restaurant. Classes are rewarded for showing respect, responsibility, and safe behaviors in our cafeteria with a reward called “The Golden Spatula.” Our school prides itself on being proactive rather than reactive.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Our parents are a major part of maintaining a positive and healthy climate and culture. Central Elementary recognizes that the partnership between our school, our parents, and our community is necessary and valuable. We have had more than a decade of well-established PTO groups that continuously support our students. Year after year, they sponsor a wide variety of activities such as movie night, ‘Dancing with the Stars,’ book fairs, yearbooks, and scholarships. One of the most important roles of our PTO is ensuring that all students have the opportunity to enrich their learning by extending the classroom outside the walls of our school. Our PTO donates money to each grade level to supplement the cost of field trips so every child has the opportunity.

The administration believes that parents should be active partners in their children’s education. Parents and community members are strongly encouraged to volunteer whenever possible in support of our students here at Central. Parents volunteer in classrooms, at book fairs, in our cafeteria, and help make fundraisers successful through either helping during school hours or selling to friends and families. Each year, parents donate school supplies to our classrooms, not just in the beginning of the year, but throughout the year. When teachers schedule celebrations of any kind, parents are invited, participate and contribute to the celebration.

Our school participates in many community awareness projects. We frequently promote community/global

causes by having dress up days, collecting can goods, promoting local businesses and supporting events through our attendance. Local businesses collaborate with us by supporting our students with gifts for school related accomplishments. One example of this is the collaboration and support we have with the Seaford Rotary Club. The rotary invited the administration to be guest speakers at their monthly meeting. As a result of that meeting, the Seaford Rotary Club learned about the literature that students were learning and the school's work to instill a love of reading in each student. They graciously donated \$1200 toward the purchase of new books so that every student had their own book when reading together in class. In the spring, our art teacher works with the local florist to hold an art show at the store. Student work is chosen to be displayed throughout the store and many times outside in the Secret Garden. Parents and community members attend the exhibit thus bringing more of the community together.

As a result of having a highly functioning PTO, opening our doors to parents, and collaborating with local associations and businesses, our students witness on a daily basis the impact parents can have on the success of their school. By encouraging students to participate in community related events and keeping them abreast of public issues, they are able to see how their school and their community can come together for the good of all. At Central Elementary and the Seaford School District, we understand that the staple of a community is the school system. We strive daily to keep our families and our communities engaged to help support our students and increase our overall academic achievement.

3. Professional Development:

Professional learning for all staff including teachers, paraeducators, and administrators at Seaford Central Elementary is designed to address school, district, and state goals. A comprehensive, systematic, and well-planned system of professional learning has been critical to the overall success of Central Elementary School. It starts at the district level, filters down to the school and teacher level, and ultimately ends at the student level. The goal of professional learning is increased educator growth and development for the purpose of improved student learning outcomes. The district also provides a new teacher induction program along with extensive mentoring to support new teachers.

Based on teacher input and student data, various professional learning initiatives and needs are determined. At our school, the School Leadership Team is a diverse group consisting of grade level teachers, Reading Specialist, ELL Specialist, and our administration. This team works together to identify, focus and monitor the effectiveness of professional learning. Recently, the overriding emphasis has been on training teachers to implement data driven instruction, to create instruction driven by the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and to identify best practices in reading and math instruction for instructional purposes.

Recently the professional learning has narrowed to focus on three main areas: aligning all instructional practices in English language arts and mathematics to the CCSS, providing equitable and inclusive practices in all classrooms, and creating a culture of high expectations for appropriate behavior. Professional learning takes a variety of forms: formal learning sessions, PLC cycles, experts from the field, in-house experts. At Central Elementary, continuous professional learning is expected and embraced. The journey is part of the reward.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership at Central Elementary models an interdependent system of partnerships with a common vision of improvement and success. There are high expectations for all of the school leaders and having the right people in place allows the leaders to challenge the limits of their potential both as individuals and collectively as a team. The principal and the associate principal approach leadership collaboratively and with a growth mindset. As teammates, the administrators endlessly seek advancement in knowledge and understanding in areas of data, instruction, coaching, and climate. With this mindset, their roles are able to be interchangeable. With a solid foundation in shared school leadership coupled with trust, teachers are united to passionately work toward goals that are realistic and meaningful, providing a great outlook for the future of the school and students.

At the end of each school year and prior to the beginning of the next school year, the administrators use a

variety of data reflective of climate and culture and instructional data to generate potential needs for the upcoming year. With the support of the School Leadership Team (SLT) comprised of teachers from each grade level and multiple specialty areas, the group analyzes the data, completes multiple root cause analyses, and determines possible next steps toward growing, meeting, or developing new targets based on the data. Out of this information, school priorities and desired outcomes are recognized along with the development of critical actions needed to achieve the desired outcome. The SLT works through this process as a collaborative and cooperative team and identifies specific people to complete the actions and the necessary resources. The team models the actions prior to implementation by the entire staff. If adjustments need to be made based on staff feedback; therefore, a climate of collective responsibility is taken for the success of the initiative.

Evaluating progress toward the desired outcomes is essential when fulfilling any target new or old. The leadership initially approaches timelines in 90 day window and checks in monthly to look at the data collected and indicators of success or challenges. When successful, the team celebrates with the staff and continues with the actions but moves on to another priority area. When there are challenges and potential adjustments that need to be made, the team does not wait until the end of the year to make changes. They adjust as soon as possible much like a teacher would adjust instruction if a child is not learning.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Here at Central Elementary, we live by the slogan “relationships matter”. Although a data driven mindset is paramount, we believe a positive school culture is one of the most critical factors in shaping the success of the school. Because of the positive culture, the academics soar as we teach students lessons that go beyond the classroom. Our goal is to leave this place better than we found it, and the Blue Jay Superstar Family does just that.

Relationships with the staff is vital to this success. Our staff has the opportunity to bond during school hours through curriculum, data and instruction, but we also embed celebrations of successes during those times. During PLCs the transparent and trusting culture is built through taking chances and asking questions without fear of negative consequences. Outside of school, we bond through staff events such as softball games, floor hockey challenges, dodge-ball, family dinners and laser tag in the evening, baby showers, bridal showers, and other celebratory events. For those that are not as athletically inclined, we attend movies together, cheer on our current and former students when they play sports or watch a community performance through art, music, and dance. Staff unity strengthens our team.

Students are happily greeted and speak directly to multiple adults from the time they step foot on campus, through the halls as they pick up their breakfast, and by their teacher as they enter the threshold of learning. Relationships are built throughout the year as well as at the end of the school year with the students coming from our sister school. With the support of our K-2 sister school, students needing early interventions with relationship building are identified and a team of staff members visit their school, classrooms, and sometimes homes.

It is not uncommon to see staff members eating lunch with students, participating in gym class or recess, showing students how to present themselves appropriately when addressing other adults, or explaining to students how taking care of yourself can support a more positive learning environment. Without necessarily being written into a plan, the staff at Central will see a need or opportunity to build relationships that will contribute to the overall success of the school community and they will act upon it. Whether it’s Girls on the Run which teaches transformational life skills to a Gentleman's Club that shows young male students from challenging backgrounds how to lift their heads up high and do great things regardless of their situation, the staff at Central knows what it takes to positively impact a child’s life.