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

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

School Mailing Address 2980 Vaughan Drive
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Cumming   State GA   Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 30041-7308

County   Forsyth County

Telephone (678) 965-5060   Fax   (678) 965-5061

Web site/URL http://www.forsyth.k12.ga.us/brookwood   E-mail   tbsmith@forsyth.k12.ga.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*Dr. Jeffrey Bearden   E-mail jbearden@forsyth.k12.ga.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Forsyth County School District   Tel.   (770) 887-2461
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. Kristen Morrissey
(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   21 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
   (per district designation):   10 Middle/Junior high schools
                                          5 High schools
                                          1 K-12 schools

                                          37 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
   [X] 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	22	4	26
K	69	55	124
1	96	92	188
2	98	72	170
3	105	76	181
4	92	105	197
5	97	80	177
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	579	484	1063

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:

    0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
    32 % Asian
    3 % Black or African American
    7 % Hispanic or Latino
    0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
    55 % 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: 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 *to* the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	52
(2) Number of students who transferred *from* the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	30
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	82
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	999
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.082
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	8

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

    Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
    Chinese, Dutch, Farsi, Gujarati, Hindi, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Portugese, Russian, Spanish, Thai, Turkish, Vietnamese, Other Asian, Other Indian, Hungarian, Iranian, Icelandic, Tamil, Telugn, Urdu

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 6 %
    Total number students who qualify: 61

8. Students receiving special education services: 16 %
    0 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.

26 Autism	0 Orthopedic Impairment
1 Deafness	15 Other Health Impaired
0 Deaf-Blindness	7 Specific Learning Disability
0 Emotional Disturbance	98 Speech or Language Impairment
1 Hearing Impairment	0 Traumatic Brain Injury
1 Mental Retardation	1 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
0 Multiple Disabilities	22 Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: <u>8</u>

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	3
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	44
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	26
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	15
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	6

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   <u>24:1</u>

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

Required Information	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	97%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**
    Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2016.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.
    Yes <u> </u>   No <u>X</u>

    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.

Empowering and encouraging all students to reach their academic, social, emotional, and physical potential and to actively participate in school and in the community.

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

Brookwood Elementary opened in August 2009, with approximately 800 students from Big Creek, Johns Creek, and Sharon Elementary schools. The school was named after the early Brookwood community, whose name reflects the wooded landscape and abundance of small, freshwater streams located in Forsyth County. The school is located in the southwest corner of Forsyth County, tucked in the midst of the neighborhoods it serves.

Our philosophy of education focuses on meeting the individual needs of our students. The Forsyth County School System's Learner Profile shapes our principles and core values. The domains of this profile are: Pursuing Continuous Learning, Exhibiting Strong Personal Qualities, Utilizing Creative and Critical Thinking, Engaging and Contributing, and Interacting Effectively. Every staff member is well versed in this profile and integrates the domains into their daily work. One strategy we use consistently in this regard is the 7 Mindsets, a program based on research and designed to help students develop leadership qualities and build social and emotional awareness. The mindsets are consistently applied throughout the school and embedded into the curriculum.

Teachers work together in grade level teams during daily common planning times to share strategies and create lessons that are engaging and aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE). A block schedule is developed each spring to shelter instructional time, ensuring maximum opportunities for support services, such as English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), Early Intervention Program (EIP) and Special Education. This schedule includes a Response to Intervention (RTI) block three mornings a week during which every child is in provided with staff-guided learning activities tailored to individual student needs. Every teacher and many classified staff members are working with students during this time and ensuring delivery of effective instruction. The daily schedule includes two 90-minute segments, one for math and another for language arts instruction. Upper-elementary grade learners who demonstrate exceptional proficiencies in math and language arts receive advanced placement coursework.Eighty-three percent of grade 3-5 teachers are Gifted Endorsed, making them highly qualified to facilitate advanced and enriched content. We embrace opportunities for inclusion for our exceptional learners with a variety of initiatives, including peer tutoring, mentoring, and the integration of students into the general education classroom.

Students at Brookwood are high achieving. Over the course of eight years, Brookwood has been recognized by the Governor's Office of Student Achievement on multiple occasions. Some of the most recent recognitions are 2016 Platinum Award: Greatest Gains, 2016 Platinum Award: Highest Achieving, 2015 Platinum Award: Greatest Gains and 2015: Platinum Award: Highest Performance. Robotics teams have competed at the super regionals and the state level. Chess club teams and individuals have competed at state, super-national and world competitions. Brookwood students competed and placed at the state level technology fair. Several years ago, our Teacher of the Year was selected as the system Elementary Teacher of the Year.

A consistent focus on data and research-based strategies is key to our students' success. Data teams convene with administration regularly to examine results of school and grade-level data. This information informs decisions regarding how to best meet the needs of each student through RTI, EIP, ESOL, Advanced Placement Instruction, and Instructional Extension sessions.

The demographics of our student population has changed since Brookwood's inception. In 2014, our Asian population was 17%, and today this community of students has nearly doubled to the current 32%. Our families speak over twenty different languages at home. The challenge we face as our diversity increases is ensuring that all stakeholders are understood and made to feel welcome and accepted. Our diversity roundtable, Cultural Night, and staff diversity training have helped meet these challenges. They provide opportunities for us to learn about and appreciate each other's differences and perspectives. Cultural Night is one of our most highly attended family events, representing more than twenty countries and offering the opportunity to share and learn about the food, dress, and cultures of our families. Our PTA's Executive Board is also representative of our diverse population, comprised of an ethnically diverse group of

volunteers who work diligently to provide opportunities for all stakeholders to come together, striving to collaborate for the benefit of our students.

The Brookwood PTA has been instrumental in many initiatives over the years, particularly in supporting classroom enhancements, providing opportunities for parent involvement, organizing family events outside the school day, and facilitating teacher appreciation. Many of our Executive Board members have moved into leadership positions at the district and state level. Our PTA is the recipient of numerous achievements at the local, district and state levels, including the designation as the number one Georgia PTA among schools with 800 or more students.

Outside of each school day, students have the opportunity to pursue their academic and creative interests through involvement in the many clubs Brookwood offers. Students may join Chorus, Jump Rope Team, and Running Club before the school day begins. After school, Chess Club, Robotics, Science Club, Environmental Club, Honors Chorus, and Girls on the Run are some opportunities for students to participate in interest-based activities. Also, students may compete in the State Math League Competition, Georgia State Technology Fair, Optimist Club Oratorical Contest, Spelling Bee, Young Georgia Authors Writing Competition, Social Studies Fair, and Honor Our Hero writing contest. Students interested in fine arts may choose to submit entries in the PTA Reflections contest and several other local and state sponsored contests.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. **Core Curriculum:**

Brookwood Elementary subscribes to the vision of inspiring lifelong learners to be the leaders of tomorrow. Our community is committed to a mission of empowering and encouraging all students to reach their academic potential and to actively participate in the school and the community as responsible learners and leaders. Teachers utilize a variety of research-based curricula and innovative strategies to differentiate instruction based on individual student needs. While the Georgia Standards of Excellence is the foundational piece of our curriculum design, recognizing the needs, strengths, and challenges of every student is paramount in our implementation and execution of these standards. It is our focus on the individual child that builds variety and choice in our personalized learning environments and sustaining relationships in our community. By knowing our students in this way, we are better equipped to teach and prepare each one of them for the future that lies ahead.

At Brookwood Elementary, we believe critical reading and writing skills are the life source from which higher-order thinking is fertilized. To this end, all teachers are empowered to enrich students as readers, writers, and thinkers utilizing a balanced literacy model to provide instruction in guided reading, independent reading, and word study. Additionally, our leveled library supports the curriculum and development of emergent and advanced readers. Teachers perform ongoing informal reading inventories using the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System which guides their reading instruction. Further, teacher-created mini- lessons utilizing fictional and informational text help students develop comprehension skills. Through classroom experiences that include precise text-based questioning and discourse, students learn to support their reasoning and understanding with text-based evidence.

The common thread that binds all content areas is writing. Our writing instruction applies the theories of Lucy Calkins, Mark Diamond, and Lola Schaeffer to present students with a variety of approaches that are grounded in the essential elements of the writing process. Writing instruction is delivered through a workshop approach, whereby students receive the explicit exposure to and practice in the elements of writing. Students learn strategies to build their writing craft, and also have an opportunity to observe modeling of various phases of the writing process. This access to writing encourages exploration, independence, and some measure of risk-taking to inspire each learner to reach for higher personal thresholds. Integrated into every core curricula area are writing and reading, with a particular focus on narrative/memoir writing, argumentative/ opinion writing, and informational writing.

Math instruction follows a comprehensive approach to deepen our students' conceptual understanding, build procedural skills, and provide opportunities for real-world application. Computational fluency is developed through Number Talks, as students develop their math fact fluency and number sense in student discussions and problem-solving activities. Further, the EnVision MATH program used at Brookwood is a rigorous, comprehensive educational catalog aligned with Georgia Standards of Excellence which provides differentiated instruction for diverse learners, including English Language Learners, students receiving specialized services, at-risk or below-level learners, and advanced learners. Daily lessons deliver opportunities for review, quick checks, re-teaching, practice, and enrichment. Each lesson begins with problem-based interactive learning, which allows students to interact with peers and determine workable solutions for real-world problems. Lessons also provide students numerous opportunities to develop solid foundational standards for mathematical practice. The EnVision Math program delivers hands-on learning, concrete representations of abstract concepts, and a technology component. Additionally, its technology allows parents to access math support at home.

Science is integrated consistently into our planning and delivery of ELA standards-based instruction, with an emphasis on collaboration, discussion, evidenced-based reasoning, and hands-on inquiry activities. With the establishment of our school-wide science lab several years ago, students investigate life, earth, and physical sciences through exploratory projects each week. Students then connect their learning in reflection journals which provide further reinforcement of our school's commitment to writing across all content areas.

The social studies curriculum integrates research, writing, and presentation skills, introducing students to various aspects of our physical, social, and real world. Teachers utilize the Georgia Performance Standards, state-supported documents, and district curriculum guides to drive instruction. Student-created interactive notebooks are a valuable tool used to facilitate the social studies curriculum. Lessons are infused through the arts using primary and secondary sources. Text-based, digital/visual sources, and publications such as Social Studies Weekly provide additional insight to enrich instruction and understanding.

Brookwood is home to one Georgia Pre-K and the curriculum followed is the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS). The GELDS align with the Georgia Standards of Excellence in grades K-12 and the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework. Research indicates that 82 percent of former participants in Georgia's universal pre-k program had higher scores on third-grade readiness, compared with those who did not participate in the program. The students in this Bright From the Start Pre-K will attend kindergarten at Brookwood. Having a pre-k experience in their home school sets these children up for a smooth transition to kindergarten.

2.   Other Curriculum Areas:

The following non-core subjects are offered for all students at Brookwood Elementary in a weekly rotation schedule: art, music, physical education, and technology. K-1 students attend classroom guidance and participate in media center activities once every other rotation, while grade 2-5 students attend STEM lab sessions once every seven days. Kindergarten and first-grade teachers collaborate with the STEM lab teacher to create hands-on lessons weekly. Grades second through fifth visit the media center for collaboratively taught lessons to address core curricular standards. Every student at Brookwood has access to the media center daily. Additionally, our media specialist provides a forty-five minute segment for all kindergarten and first-grade classes bimonthly. During this specials time, students are exposed to a variety of literature genres to promote the love of reading. Our media specialist incorporates the core curricular standards, Makerspace concept of exploration and technology into lessons.

As part of Brookwood's Comprehensive School Counseling Program, students receive classroom guidance aligned with the American School Counselor Association's K-12 College and Career-Readiness Standards. Throughout the year, students engage in topics such as bullying prevention, conflict resolution, diversity, advocacy, problem-solving, student success skills, interpersonal skills, and career exploration. Applying a multi-tiered system of support determined by need, students receive these topics through classroom guidance, small group instruction, and individual sessions.

Our art program focuses on art history and specific artistic techniques through the examination of master artworks. Art class is a standards-based program, featuring artists from the past and present, including regional artists. Students participate in exhibitions at the school, district, and state level. Reinforcement of school-wide literacy goals is accomplished through artist statements in grades 2-5 for the annual art show. Students demonstrate skills through many different mediums, including clay, paint, chalk, and mixed media. Passionate artists may choose to develop their artistic skills further in our after school arts program.

Our physical education department follows the Georgia Performance Standards and incorporates a variety of team and individual sports and activities that help develop a well-rounded student. Students participate three days in a seven-day rotation and are encouraged to make healthy choices regarding physical activity, both in and out of school. Our program regularly invites community professionals to teach and share the importance of remaining active, including karate dojo, dance studio, and members of a semi-professional hockey team. Modeling our commitment to healthy living, Brookwood has supported the American Red Cross through Jump Rope for Heart and currently holds the title of the highest online donor.

System-wide, technology is an important part of 21st-century learning. Brookwood students incorporate technology in their academic classes, as well as attend a technology special. Most of our students are digital natives and building advanced knowledge of technology practices and programs. We focus on introducing and reviewing the Forsyth County Responsible Use Guidelines, being safe online and digital citizenship at the beginning of each year. Students demonstrate their understanding of these guidelines by participating safely in a digital project that incorporates classroom standards. A variety of digital tools and applications

are used to complete these projects, as well as a combination of the 4 C's: communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity.

Our music program follows the Georgia Fine Arts Performance Standards while incorporating instruments (such as recorders and percussion), singing, dancing, and music theory. The students have an opportunity to participate in music theater, performing in front of an audience of both students and community members. Our chorus program extends beyond the regular school day for students in grades three through five, and all students are invited to sing during Brookwood's Festival of the Arts.

Brookwood's STEM lab supports grade level standards across the curriculum. In the inquiry-based learning lab, students in all grade levels have the opportunity to spend time outdoors observing their adopted trees, walking along our nature trail, adding to the worm compost bins, and watching the progress of the Victory and Butterfly Gardens. Inside the school, the life cycle comes alive with chicks, rainbow trout, frogs, newts, and geckos. Student scientists maintain the same interactive journal from second through fifth grade for reference and reflection throughout their years at Brookwood. On our Morning News Show, Wondering Wednesdays highlight questions from the lab question box and students are encouraged to research the answers on sites linked to the STEM lab's itslearning page.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Brookwood's instructional practices exemplify the Forsyth County Schools' vision statement of "Quality learning and superior performance for all." Our culture includes high expectations for all students, shaping our instruction and interventions. Instructional time is protected and flexible grouping is used to meet the needs of all learners. Students in grades K-3 receive an individual reading goal based upon data from the Fountas and Pinnell Assessment System which teachers monitor throughout the year. The RTI pyramid consists of four tiers. Within the tiers, interventions are implemented daily. At Tier 1, all learners receive standards-based instruction which is differentiated to meet student needs. Students at Tier 2 receive progress monitoring on a monthly basis while students at Tier 3 receive monitoring bi-weekly. Our Instructional Support Team (IST), consisting of grade level teachers, support staff, and administration meets monthly to discuss progress monitoring data and students in need of interventions and support. Student Support Team (SST) meetings occur when students are not responding to interventions in Tier 2 and will need an alternative intervention plan. Some of the research-based interventions may include the use of Orton-Gillingham, Touch Math, Read Naturally and, Visualizing and Verbalizing. Technology-based interventions include programs such as Moby Max, Reflex Math, Raz-Kids, and Education City.

assessment data, grade level pre-assessments, previous teacher input and performance tasks are used to determine class placement for advanced content.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. **School Climate/Culture:**

School culture and climate at Brookwood Elementary are founded on relationships with all stakeholders. From the moment visitors enter our building they are greeted warmly, making it clear Brookwood is a welcoming and friendly place. Our student Bobcat Greeters welcome new students acclimating them to the "Brookwood Way."

Brookwood has embraced the 7 Mindsets to accomplish our goals of engaging and motivating students to be lifelong learners capable of being tomorrow's leaders. The Mindsets are based on a three-year research effort that began with the simple question: What do the world's happiest and most successful people have in common? Emerging from the research was a set of seven mental habits foundational to an enriched life. The Mindsets are a comprehensive blueprint for happiness, intentionality, and success, written in simple, powerful language to teach and activate success strategies for people to live the lives of their dreams. The Mindsets are embedded and reinforced throughout our school.

We are all connected, one of the 7 Mindsets, helps us look outside of ourselves to see how our actions and choices affect others. By preparing our students to engage and contribute to a global community, we have increased our work with diversity. In partnership with our PTA's Diversity Chair, roundtable discussions with stakeholders helped create a welcoming atmosphere for all families and supported the increase of student materials. High school mentors, faculty members and trained adults within the community can be seen daily in the school, building connections with students that need academic, social and behavioral support.

Leadership opportunities are offered to encourage student ownership and growth. For example, students exhibiting strong personal qualities in academic achievement, peer/teacher relationships, and motivation are considered for TREK positions. Trek Leaders are 4th and 5th grade students who exhibit leadership qualities and responsibility by helping with peer tutoring, safety patrol, community service, and serving at our school events. Additionally, students who demonstrate hard work and positive attitudes receive recognition with the title "Leader of the Week." To recognize students who exemplify outstanding behavior, teachers offer a variety of choice-based incentives. Furthermore, our student-led Morning News and school-wide monitors are often used to celebrate student accomplishments.

Fostering a culture of support and collaboration is accomplished in a variety of ways. Staff members begin the year with team building activities to encourage positive relationships. Offered throughout the year are activities such as Smart Team Building, allowing collaboration and communication to occur naturally during the workday with various challenges and competitions. Staff members are recognized for their hard work and dedication through staff appreciation luncheons, Above and Beyond the Call of Duty monthly awards, and positive notes of encouragement from the administration. Additionally, our Climate Committee hosts monthly activities to promote staff interaction and socialization.

2. **Engaging Families and Community:**

Brookwood's achievement can be directly attributed to the unique synergy existing among all of our stakeholders. Each year, over 340 volunteers participate in training and then serve our school in a variety of roles. Parents support instruction by leading small groups, working in the media center, volunteering on the science committee, reading in classrooms, assisting in the science lab, chaperoning field trips, and coordinating PTA events. Also, we collaborate with our PTA to host the following activities: Fall Festival, Monster Dash 5K/Family Fun Run, 7 Mindsets Family Night, Science Night, Bingo, Cultural Night, Reflections, Honoring our Heroes, Father Daughter Dance, Festival of the Arts, and Mother/Son Bowling. Tomcats, a Dad's Initiative Group, encourages a stronger male presence throughout our building.

Partners in Education contribute to the Brookwood community through monetary and in-kind donations to enhance and enrich the educational experiences for our students. Resources provided include additional

technology, website subscriptions, STEM lab enhancements, exceptional students' playground equipment, and supplies.

Our Local School Council (LSC) is a policy-level advisory body to the Principal, Superintendent, and local Board of Education. The council meets bi-monthly and advises and makes recommendations on any matter related to school improvement and achievement. The purpose of our LSC is to bring our community and school closer together in a spirit of cooperation to solve difficult education problems, improve academic achievement, provide support for teachers and administrators, and involve parents in the school-based decision-making process. This February, the council met with the Superintendent, members of the Board of Education and the Director of Human Resources to share their thoughts on the replacement for our principal who will be retiring at the end of the school year.

A variety of communication tools is used to engage parents in the education of their children. The administration corresponds to our parents through The Buzz, a weekly newsletter, with school-wide information. Teachers communicate through a daily agenda, weekly newsletters, parent-teacher conferences, and itslearning. Students take ownership of their education by sharing the artifacts of their learning with parents and educators through student-led conferences.

Brookwood is an active member of the community by participating in a variety of outreach projects; such as canned food drives, care packages for soldiers, toy drives, Jump Rope for Heart, Northside Hospital Cancer Institute, and Humane Society donations. We are fortunate to have over forty mentors who visit weekly to support students. Also, we strive to offer students a variety of enrichment options before and after school through Chess Club, Robotics, Science Club, Environmental Club, Battle of the Books, Chorus, Creative Cats, Running Club, Jump Rope Club, and Girls on the Run.

3. **Professional Development:**

Professional development (PD) at Brookwood focuses on teachers' professional needs that impact the entire school, grade levels, content areas, and individual teachers. Each year, our Professional Learning Team, consisting of teacher leaders and administration, meets to evaluate and plan for PD based on staff and district input. Curriculum changes, assessment, and school data are an essential consideration in this planning process. This plan includes goals and objectives for an efficient approach to PD for the upcoming school year. Many opportunities for educators are interest based and aligned to school improvement goals and individual needs. Our instructional coach and administrators have administered professional learning needs surveys to gauge teachers' interest in different PD topics. These results have shaped PD within the school; and the instructional coach, instructional technology specialist (ITS), and administrators strive to provide interest based PD for all educators.

Brookwood's instructional coach is available to support all teachers, offering PD through modeling instruction and best practices. Our ITS regularly offers optional PD on new and existing technology programs; including itslearning, our online learning management system. These sessions extend online learning into the classroom and home for our stakeholders. Moreover, our administration, ITS, instructional coach, ESOL teacher, and media specialist provide PD specifically geared towards our new educators as part of their induction process.

Trainings recently provided for teachers have included personalized learning, technology topics, math number talks, Fountas & Pinnell Assessment, and Lexile interpretation. Simultaneously, the administration supports and promotes teachers obtaining their Gifted, ESOL, Online, and Math Endorsements. Common grade level planning times also offer PD opportunities for teachers to collaborate on best practices. Also, teachers voluntarily participate in book studies and national conferences to further their professional knowledge. Moreover, teachers engage in school and peer visitations, and video recording for self-reflection. Our district has provided sessions focused on high-impact strategies with attention to differentiation, authentic feedback, and questioning. To this end, our school system has moved towards a more personalized approach for providing PD, as this year teachers had the choice of what PD to pursue through attending a variety of professional learning workshops. Brookwood's staff development

opportunities have positively impacted instruction and have resulted in increased teacher interaction with students and a significant impact on student learning.

4. **School Leadership:**

Brookwood Elementary embraces the philosophy of shared governance since the opening of our doors in 2009. Through this approach, stakeholders consistently participate in decision-making opportunities which impact our school in a positive manner. As a brand new school, the administration understood the importance of working closely with staff, parents, and community members to establish a strong foundation that fosters a productive and enriching learning environment for years to come.

The administrative team believes leaders are cultivated within the school community. An array of opportunities is made available to staff and students to serve as leaders in our school. The principal, assistant principals, counselors, grade level representatives, instructional coach, media and instructional technology specialist comprise the leadership team. This team meets on a regular basis to ensure shared decision making is firmly intact, to confirm school actions are student-oriented, and to identify opportunities for staff engagement for Brookwood's Leadership Team. Whether the discussions are focused on budgeting money for instructional materials, analyzing data for our school improvement plan, or construction of our school-wide block schedule, all input is valued and considered as final decisions are made.

Administrators serve as the instructional leaders of the school. While instruction is a primary focus, building relationships among staff, students, parents, and stakeholders is key to our school's success. At the center of relationship building is the 7 Mindsets program, which is implemented in all grade levels and reinforced at home. Through the 7 Mindsets, staff members teach and model the social and emotional aspect of personal development, which in turn leads to academic success for all. Administration awarded each grade level with a monetary donation to fund a service project or charity of their choice in keeping with the Live to Give Mindset.

The leadership team has focused on technology enhancements to ensure students learn to utilize technology effectively to access information and demonstrate learning. Leaders in the building have aligned with PTA, community partners in education and other stakeholders to make this a reality.

Developing student leadership is an ongoing school-wide focus. Our student leaders are visible throughout the building during the day serving as peer tutors, hallway patrols, and peer mentors. They also participate in evening events sponsored by the PTA serving as guides, greeters, and presenters.

At Brookwood Elementary it is evident that leadership development is a building initiative and every administrator, staff member, parent, student, and community member is encouraged to grow as a leader. Allowing all stakeholders to participate in the decision-making process has been a significant part of our continued success.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Embracing a growth mindset has the single-most transforming impact on education at Brookwood Elementary. We recognize and appreciate the 21st-century learning environments and strive to create dramatically different classrooms to keep up with the changing world. Students immerse themselves in learning that is dynamic and focused on the exploration of authentic, real-world topics and problems in context. A growth mindset has empowered our staff to build these exceptional learning opportunities for our students and has enabled them as productive collaborators on new instructional approaches. Brookwood's growth mindset has developed a culture of resilience essential for great accomplishment.

Our school prides itself on the construction and implementation of a variety of exciting and challenging learning experiences to orient our students toward progressive thinking and experiential learning. Students participate in exploratory learning taking place in the Science Lab, on the nature trail, and in our outdoor classroom on a daily basis. Classes regularly rotate through demonstrations, labs, and lessons that are hands-on and inquiry-based. Further, students learn about the living world through observation and interaction with a variety of organisms, including rainbow trout, lizards, chickens, goats, and insects. Diverse interactions provide opportunities for students to discover how ecosystems and life cycles work, and to develop confidence in their connective thinking to allow for active learning. Participating in dynamic experiences such as these ignites a love for learning, even in the midst of difficulty and challenge. Students learn to think logically about the world around them, making them more self-aware of their ability to contribute as they develop their growth mindsets.

A growth mindset for our students and staff has fostered creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem solving, and communication and collaboration. Developing these skills among our students and teachers has yielded incredible personal growth and data outcomes. The results include exemplary levels of student achievement, student accountability, resilience, and strong interpersonal skills. Students and teachers are empowered to embrace challenges, become self-directed learners, and think beyond self-perceived limits.