

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

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name James Whitcomb Riley Elementary School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1201 Riley Road  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City New Castle    State IN    Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 47362-1675

County Henry County

Telephone (765) 521-7211    Fax (765) 593-6646

Web site/URL <http://www.nccsc.k12.in.us/index.php/schools-main/elementary-schools/riley-elementary>    E-mail nmiddleton@ncweb.me

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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature)    Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Superintendent\*Mr. Stephen Welsh    E-mail swelsh@ncweb.me  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name New Castle Community School Corporation    Tel. (765) 521-7201

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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature)    Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Mrs. Elizabeth Whitmer  
(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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)    Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

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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

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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):
- 6 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 8 TOTAL

### SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
  - Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
  - Suburban
  - Small city or town in a rural area
  - Rural
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2016 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	19	19	38
2	17	25	42
3	19	21	40
4	20	29	49
5	24	22	46
6	20	19	39
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
<b>Total Students</b>	119	135	254

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 2 % Asian
  - 1 % Black or African American
  - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 89 % White
  - 4 % 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	12
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	9
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	21
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	254
(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: 0 %  
2 Total number ELL

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

Vietnamese

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 43 %  
Total number students who qualify: 108
8. Students receiving special education services: 14 %  
37 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.

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

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	12
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	4
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.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 21:1
12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

<b>Required Information</b>	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	98%	96%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
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.

Academic growth starts with the family and continues at Riley Elementary. Our school provides a safe, student-centered environment that enables students to be life-long learners.

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**

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James Whitcomb Riley Elementary is located on 8.03 acres southwest of the intersection of Main Street and Riley Road in the city of New Castle, Indiana. The present building was built in 1968 to accommodate team teaching with six double rooms and a kindergarten room. A renovation was completed during the 2015-16 school year to move the office to the front of the building, providing a safer environment for our school community, as well as to add a second computer lab for our students. Today the school has twelve self-contained classrooms equipped with 21st century technology to facilitate classroom instruction. James Whitcomb Riley Elementary is one of six elementary schools in the New Castle School Corporation. This public school corporation, located in east central Indiana, serves New Castle (population 17,700) and all of Henry Township, as well as an adjoining portion of Liberty Township in Henry County, Indiana.

James Whitcomb Riley Elementary currently has a student population of 255 students: 89% White; 4% Multiracial; 1% Black, 4% Hispanic, and 2% Asian. Students who qualify for free and reduced lunch represent 43% of the student population. The majority of students come from middle income families. Approximately 35% of Riley's students use school bus transportation; 5% walk to school and 60% are transported in their family vehicles.

James Whitcomb Riley Elementary has thirteen highly qualified teachers who work daily with general and special education children. Music, physical education, and art instructors meet weekly with students from each classroom. James Whitcomb Riley Elementary also offers the services of a speech/language pathologist, an itinerant occupational and physical therapist, as well as itinerant teachers for vision and the Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing. The special education resource department, which services children with a wide range of disabilities, is staffed with a full-time licensed special education teacher and four special education assistants. Currently, each grade level has an instructional assistant with fifth and sixth grades sharing one assistant among the four classrooms. A library technician oversees the library and media center. The staff also includes: the building principal, secretary, office clerk, a health assistant, a family-student support liaison, a part-time instructional coach, a cafeteria manager, two part-time cafeteria employees, a day custodian, a half-time evening custodian, and two lunchroom aides.

A part-time instructional coach is utilized school-wide to support teachers based on individual needs of students. Our instructional coach meets with teachers on a regular basis to disseminate data and support instructional strategies. Collaboration with teachers includes model and team teaching, assisting with our Response to Instruction program, facilitating our Eight Step Process, and providing professional development and resources.

A part-time family-student support liaison was added to Riley Elementary during the 2015-16 school year. Through this position, we are able to offer small group and one to one counseling to students in order to provide social and emotional support. Our family-student support worker also links families in need with community resources.

James Whitcomb Riley Elementary has received a Four-Star rating (ranking in the top 25% of the state on ISTEP+ Scores) seven times from the Indiana Department of Education. The school years are as follows: 1997-1998, 1998-1999, 2003-2004, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, 2011-2012, and 2012-2013. Riley Elementary has also been recognized as an "A" school eleven times in the past twelve years, earning a "B" status in 2013.

Students at James Whitcomb Riley Elementary are taught the skills they need to help them not only master the Indiana State Standards but also to become successful in life. The Riley teaching staff follows the New Castle Community School standards-driven curriculum and utilizes pacing guides and other resources to help them prepare meaningful and relevant lessons daily within the Eight Step Process structure. Within this framework, Riley Elementary teachers offer a range of support through differentiation of instruction in the classroom, special education, Response to Instruction, Eight Step Process, and classroom support. All teachers have the curriculum, pacing guides, and copies of the Indiana State Standards and curriculum framework. The building principal has copies of all curriculum materials in his office.

James Whitcomb Riley Elementary offers extra-curricular activities for students throughout the school year including Spell Bowl and Math Bowl competitions, Science Fair, Student Council, and the National Geographic Bee.

James Whitcomb Riley Elementary has a very active Parent Teacher Organization that supports the school in many ways. Our Parent Teacher Organization purchases books for our library, funds educational programs such as Accelerated Reader and Star Reading, purchases curriculum materials for classrooms, and funds updates for our running track and playground. Our Parent Teacher Organization funds these projects by conducting various fundraisers throughout the school year. Every parent has the opportunity to be a member of our Parent Teacher Organization.

## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Core Curriculum:**

Riley Elementary's core curriculum is aligned to Indiana Academic Standards. The curriculum provided to students is appropriate and geared towards meeting the individual needs of students. The teachers and support staff work collaboratively within their respective grade levels and across grade levels to ensure the instruction and presentation of content provide a positive learning experience for each child. The core curriculum at Riley Elementary consists of reading/English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

The foundation of our reading/English language arts curriculum is framed around Journeys, which is published by Houghton Mifflin. Our curriculum offers a unique approach to instruction by providing a fiction or nonfiction text weekly. Weekly texts are also paired with another short text or excerpt, which challenges students to make connections. An essential question is linked to the text and is the central focus for student learning. In addition to texts, teachers provide instruction in phonics, vocabulary, comprehension (strategies and skills), fluency, writing, and grammar. Teachers create anchor charts to support the instruction of the various components. These anchor charts become references for students as they complete independent or small group work. An online component of our curriculum is available for both teacher and student use which allows students to complete online reading activities and assessments.

Leveled readers, novels and vocabulary readers are also significant tools utilized within the curriculum. Readers are used during small group lessons in order to provide differentiated instruction. Practice worksheets, fiction and non-fiction cards, literacy stations, interactive notebooks, and assessments are additional resources that our teachers implement during their ninety minute reading blocks.

Teachers in second through sixth grades compliment their reading/English language arts curriculum with Accelerated Reader. This program, paired with the Star Reading assessment, provides students with independent reading levels. Teachers and students work collaboratively in setting custom goals for each student to reach a certain number of points during each grading period. Students are given adequate time weekly to meet their goals. Accelerated Reader is a tool utilized to enhance students' reading comprehension and fluency while promoting a love for reading.

Riley Elementary adopted Curriculum Associates Ready Mathematics for first through fifth grades this past school year. Teachers challenge students and support their growth in conceptual reasoning, which leads to rich discourse within the classrooms. Our curriculum provides an online toolbox for resources which include a digital copy of the instruction book, practice and problem solving book, interactive video lessons, lesson quizzes, unit reviews, tools for instruction, and math center activities. Teachers have access to all grade levels within an online toolbox which provides a unique opportunity for reteaching and enrichment activities with students. Teachers and students also have hard copies of the instruction and practice and problem solving books.

In sixth grade, Riley Elementary adopted McGraw Hill Glencoe Math in unison with the five other elementary schools and middle school within our district. Our curriculum has three main components: conceptual understanding, application, and procedural fluency. These components are noted throughout the various resources, lessons, and practice assessments. Our curriculum empowers teachers to teach math standards in ways that engage every student and develops a classroom of critical thinkers.

Riley Elementary's core science curriculum is National Geographic and is focused on providing students with the knowledge to unlock big ideas. Students become engaged in the nature of science as well as science inquiry. This curriculum builds scientific and content literacy in the areas of life, earth and physical science. Teachers provide real life opportunities for students to explore these ideas through projects, experiments, and activities. Through this adoption, leveled readers are implemented within the daily reading block, allowing for cross curricular activities.

Our social studies curriculum varies among grade levels, yet provides the same rigor of instruction which engages and immerses each student through its respective content. Students in first, second, and sixth grades are presented with real-life experiences through National Geographic. Content is scaffolded to provide differentiated instruction through leveled readers and lesson activities. Students in third, fourth, and fifth grades are provided inquiry-based instruction and assessments through McGraw Hill. Each unit is linked to a big idea and essential question, which are supported through the combination of print materials and digital resources. Our students are also provided opportunities to visit local, state, and national government and community entities in order to acquire foundational skills in civic learning and engagement.

## **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

Our goal at Riley Elementary is to provide students with an education that supports each student and presents unique learning opportunities beyond the general education classroom. In addition to providing new skills and knowledge to our students, our special teachers work collaboratively with classroom teachers to integrate core curriculum into their classrooms. The special curriculum area teachers work alongside the corporation's curriculum director to ensure all Indiana Academic Standards are being taught at an appropriate pace. All students are offered art, physical education, music, library, and computer technology once a week for thirty minutes per day.

Our art education program includes the study of artwork from a variety of artists and cultures. Students study techniques and create work inspired by the artwork they see and their own experiences. They apply the skills they have learned in class through a variety of projects. This artwork is then displayed in the school's hallways. Student work is also selected to be showcased at local art shows and in our central office building.

The physical education curriculum offered to our students provides them the opportunity to learn about leading an active lifestyle. Starting in first grade, students begin to learn motor skills and movement patterns which are translated into physical activities and games. Our physical education teacher challenges our students to set goals and then guides them as they work towards achieving those goals. Students demonstrate this process by striving to meet the requirements for the National and Presidential Physical Fitness awards and also accumulate as many miles as they can throughout the year in "Mileage Club."

Our music teacher finds creative ways to expose all grade levels to foundational musical principals. First and second grade students begin learning and practicing musical notes and values with a series of books. Third and fourth grade students build on the book series by learning all the notes of the musical staff. These notes are explored through the playing of different melodies and rhythms with glockenspiels. Fifth and sixth grade students use a program to learn and play a recorder to earn different levels of "belts." All students learn movement and dance to build teamwork and coordination. Riley Elementary produces a Christmas program which allows students to showcase their musical skills. Our music teacher also facilitates a talent show each spring that includes student chosen acts that are performed in front of an audience. The performing arts at Riley Elementary are well established and supported by the entire school staff.

Fostering a love for reading is the focus of our students' time in library. The media center, which is the heart of the building, provides students with a variety of genres within fiction and informational texts. Students are encouraged to find quality, high interest books within their reading levels. During library time, students find books, take time to either read or be read to, and complete vocabulary and comprehension quizzes utilizing the Accelerated Reader program. Our library technician sparks students' interests in new books by highlighting the list of twenty Young Hoosier books throughout the school year. Students in third through sixth grade are encouraged to read all twenty books, receiving an award if completing the task. The library technician reads books from this list to students in first and second grades.

The computer technology time provided to students is an opportunity for our library technician to help students become comfortable with and further enhance computer skills. Two computer labs, which house sixty computers combined, are utilized to practice assorted skills. During this instructional time, students are challenged to learn the proper techniques for keyboarding. They are also given activities to complete which support core curriculum in the classroom in the form of online lessons and games. Digital citizenship

is also introduced through the content of Common Sense Media. Lessons are provided for the library technician along with online activities and assessments which encourage students to become upstanding citizens in the new era of technology. Our classroom teachers often give input to guide the specific skills students work on during this computer time.

### **3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:**

The staff at Riley is committed to meeting the diverse needs of our students. Through various instructional methods, interventions, and assessments, students and staff are challenged to meet both school and individual goals.

At Riley, we utilize the Eight Step Process to drive our reading/English language arts and mathematics instruction. This process allows our teachers to use data driven instruction to identify student strengths and needs. Teacher leaders from Riley and other schools within our corporation work diligently to create curriculum maps for each grade level along with formative assessments to be given in three week cycles. Within this cycle, an instructional focus is identified through a set of standards determined by our corporation pacing guides. Teachers create lesson plans and introduce content aligned to these guides. After each cycle, our teachers assess students and enter student results in learning logs. These logs are shared with the principal and instructional coach. Data meetings are held during each cycle to analyze the most recent data. In these meetings, teachers, the principal, and the instructional coach collaborate to identify areas for remediation. Enrichment activities are also discussed to challenge students beyond subject mastery. Through maintenance discussion, teachers identify spiraling skills to revisit with students in order to maintain previously mastered skills.

Along with our Eight Step Process, Riley values and utilizes the results of our diagnostic assessments. iReady diagnostic assessments are given three times a year. Teachers identify students' scores and level their classrooms accordingly. Instructional profiles are created and lessons are provided to teachers. Our staff uses these resources and lessons in varying ways, all which support the individual needs of students. iReady also provides growth monitoring assessments which are given monthly. These assessments provide additional data points for the teachers which highlight student progress.

Our iReady math program has also been a valuable tool to Riley's Response to Instruction (RtI) process. Through our iReady program, a baseline assessment is utilized to obtain an accurate portrayal of students' abilities. Students who score at least one grade level below their current grade level in mathematics are entered into the RtI program. Teachers meet with the principal and instructional coach to discuss student growth during each data meeting. Identified students are entered into our corporation's data warehouse (Pivot). Teachers instruct RtI students individually or in small groups three times weekly for fifteen to twenty minutes. Data gathered from this instruction is updated weekly on Pivot. Students who make appropriate gains based on our diagnostic assessments are dismissed from the program while those students who are still working on their goals remain in the program.

To enrich our high ability students, our corporation's high ability coordinator conducts screenings in kindergarten, second, and sixth grades. Qualifying students are given the opportunity to attend another one of our schools, which houses our high ability classrooms. Students who are identified but choose to remain at Riley or those who show high ability but did not meet the specifics of entering the program are supported in the general education classroom through differentiated instruction. To support these students, our high ability coordinator provides resources and professional development to teachers as well as periodic checks to ensure students' needs are being met.

In addition to our RtI and High Ability programs, other instructional methods and tools are utilized throughout the school. Riley students are equipped with one-to-one devices. This initiative has allowed our teachers to use creative instructional techniques. Our one-to-one initiative allows for the use of computer programs for Tier I and Tier II instruction. At Riley, all students have access to Study Island, which is a program aligned to Indiana Academic Standards in all content areas. Students complete lessons and interactive games to work towards mastery of assigned skills. All students also have access to the iReady instructional component. This resource gives students a custom pathway of lessons which helps either close

student gaps or enriches student mastery.

To help with our reading curriculum, students in first grade are given access to Lexia. Lexia is an online program which encompasses phonological awareness, phonics, structural analysis, automaticity, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Students in second grade utilize Raz Kids, which provides leveled reading resources. Each of these computer programs meets the needs of our students both individually and collectively.

## **PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS**

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### **1. School Climate/Culture:**

At Riley Elementary we have a dedicated staff that strives to ask, "What is best for our students?" in all aspects of our decision making process. Riley Elementary engages and motivates students by incorporating a safe, student-centered environment where students are engaged and encouraged in their academic pursuits as well as celebrated for their achievements.

Academic and behavioral success is celebrated at Riley Elementary through daily initiatives, student of the month awards, a quarterly honor program, and a yearly honor night for our sixth grade students.

The staff at Riley Elementary works daily to provide a positive experience for our students. The principal and custodian greet every student as they enter the school each morning. Through these interactions, students are encouraged to do their personal best in completing academic work and in building positive relationships. This carries over into morning announcements. The principal and teachers work with students before, during and after school on a regular basis to help with academic needs, striving for success in areas of difficulty. Intermittent, daily celebrations are recognized through our "Gotcha Program" where students are rewarded for random acts of kindness.

Quarterly, students are recognized at a school wide honor program for academic achievement, perfect attendance, outstanding physical education accomplishments, and for reaching Accelerated Reader goals. Awards are given out during these programs for participation in extra-curricular activities.

Each year, Riley Elementary hosts a sixth grade honor night. Students are recognized and celebrated through numerous awards given for academic and behavioral achievement not only for their sixth grade year but also their entire careers as part of our school family. Parents are invited to both honor programs and the sixth grade honor night to celebrate student success.

Riley Elementary also recognizes that pertinent field trips are instrumental in academic, social, and emotional growth. Over their career at Riley, students have the opportunity to visit local, state, and national government and community entities, culminating in a sixth grade trip to Washington, D.C.

The principal recognizes the importance of a positive and supportive environment for both students and teachers. He keeps an open-door policy for both sets of stakeholders in which ideas and concerns can be shared to further enhance the educational environment. He is active and engaged, encouraging teachers to take on new challenges and implement new ideas. Barriers are removed from learning so that teachers can focus on student success. Teachers are supported through encouraging words, shared planning time, and shared decision making. Teachers are also energized through teacher appreciation initiatives supported by our Parent Teacher Organization.

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

At Riley Elementary, we understand that families are key stakeholders and are vital to the success of our school. It is imperative that our staff keeps an open line of communication with families on a regular basis. From daily contact by email, phone calls, Class Dojo, and meetings, to weekly communication through classroom and school newsletters, we strive to keep families well-informed. Effective and constant communication is key to building relationships which allow parents to be active participants in their child's education.

Each year, we host a Back to School/Parent Night in which we have strong family participation. This involvement is also seen in the supervision of classroom field trips, organization of classroom parties, attendance of classroom plays and activities, talent shows, science fair competitions, and almost daily visits at lunch. We are fortunate to have a strong family base at our school.

Riley Elementary has a great relationship with its Parent Teacher Organization which enhances the school in many ways. Through various fundraisers and an annual Fall Festival, this organization provides educational resources and programs, financial support for students unable to afford field trips, and incentives and awards for students. Every parent has the opportunity to be part of our Parent Teacher Organization.

Riley Elementary also partners with community organizations that provide resources for our students. Through the Kiwanis Club shoe drive, Lion's Club vision screening, Ace Hardware hat and glove drive, Little Blessings food bags, and Healthy Smiles dental screenings, students have access to resources that otherwise might not be available to them.

As a school, we appreciate the many resources available to us and believe it is important for our school to give back to the community. During winter, Riley Elementary participates in the Westminster Food Drive and donates gifts for children at a shelter within our community as well as children abroad. Our staff and students also partner with Riley Hospital through Spirit Week contributions and a yearly Pennies for Patients drive.

Riley Elementary students interact with the New Castle community through field trips to local civic and business entities as well as inviting guest speakers into our school. Through presentations from resources such as REMC, Duke Energy, the D.A.R.E. Program, and other community members, students are exposed to the broader community surrounding them.

Riley Elementary also understands its role in building future leaders. We host student teachers from surrounding colleges as well as PEER students from our high school.

### **3. Professional Development:**

Committed to the growth of our students and to sustain the philosophy of being lifelong learners, professional development is an ongoing activity at Riley Elementary. Starting at the district level and continuing at our school, teachers are exposed to a variety of professional development opportunities with student growth being the ultimate goal.

As a corporation, professional development is determined by our curriculum director with input from building principals and teachers based on what is needed to best support students. Our curriculum director coordinates professional development that creates unity within our corporation. Each year, Pat Davenport and Peggy Hinkley meet with principals and teacher leadership teams to focus on the implementation and vitality of our Eight Step Process.

Our curriculum director facilitates grade level meetings which are conducted periodically throughout the school year. The professional development focuses on a variety of topics and often includes bringing in outside resources for support. Curriculum Associates has aided our teachers with further study of resources available for our new math adoption. Our technology team has led sessions entitled, "Tech Camp," which focused on the utilization of one-to-one devices in the classroom. Our high ability coordinator has provided ways to enrich the classroom experience for high ability students. Teachers are also given time to collaborate on school pacing guides and common three week assessments. These are just a few of the examples of corporation wide support that helps all stakeholders better enhance their skills in educating students.

At the building level, our focus has been on the development of more rigorous differentiated instruction in reading/English language arts. We have received professional development in the area of guided reading over the past two school years. Experts from Smekens Education have also provided custom, on-site professional development, including the Six-Traits of Writing. A contract has already been established to continue this work for the 2017-2018 school year. Our staff also participates in a book study each year with this year's study focusing on Rigorous Reading by Nancy Frey and Douglas Fisher.

Our instructional coach also provides professional development both individually and to the staff as a

whole. Each month, our coach instructs staff on the 18 Power Strategies to Boost Reading and Writing Achievement. She works closely with our curriculum director to support the principal and teachers with the implementation of corporation and building level professional development. Individually, our instructional coach supports teachers through observation, collaboration, modeling, and co-teaching.

#### **4. School Leadership:**

At Riley Elementary, the principal believes that leadership is ultimately based on relationships. Every stakeholder in our school community (corporation and building administration, teachers, parents and students) is vital to the success of our school. Building these relationships with each stakeholder is an imperative part of the principal's job. The principal is an active and engaged leader who works diligently to create an atmosphere of shared leadership responsibility. He believes that every member of our staff is a leader within their given role. The principal works daily to ensure teachers are given the time, resources, and training to best improve and administrate best practices. The principal is the lead learner for the building.

The principal conducts daily walk-throughs in each classroom. Distractions to both teaching and learning are dealt with in a firm, fair and consistent manner as to allow as much time on academics as possible. The principal makes himself available to meet with any stakeholder whenever possible. Daily communication is conducted through phone calls, emails and meetings.

While the principal understands that ultimate authority for the building is his, he understands that teacher leadership is integral to a successful school. Our teachers share the leadership role through implementing and maintaining Riley's vision and core beliefs in each of their respective classrooms. Teachers provide daily input as well as share in the decision making process. Several of our teachers participate in corporation initiatives such as textbook adoption and the creation, implementation and revitalization of our corporation pacing guides and three week assessments. Our instructional coach leads our data meetings and provides monthly professional development.

Students are also key stakeholders that provide school leadership. Our sixth grade students participate as reading buddies with our first grade students. We have daily student leadership roles that students share throughout the year. These activities include escorting younger students to their buses, raising and lowering the flag, emptying recycling bins throughout the school, assisting with announcements, and setting up our computer labs for the day. Student leaders are also engaged in intermittent activities such as Student Council and initiatives such as Pennies for Patients.

At Riley Elementary we have an active Parent Teacher Organization. Through this organization, parent leadership purchases academic programs, organizes school dances and movies, raises funds to ensure our playground is well maintained, and purchases supplies and resources for our staff. Parents also serve as leaders through organizing classroom parties, attending field trips, and helping with classroom activities.

## **Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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Riley Elementary has consistently produced high academic results through a committed school community that is dedicated to best educating students. Our staff works assiduously in conjunction with parents and other key stakeholders to give every student the opportunity to learn. Riley Elementary can attribute this success not only to the implementation of our Eight Step Process but more importantly to the framework that this process provides for our staff to best help identify student needs.

The Eight Step Process is utilized within our reading/English language arts and mathematics instruction. This process allows our teachers, principal, and instructional coach to use data driven instruction to identify student progress on the Indiana Academic Standards, as well as detect student strengths and needs.

Specific grade level teacher leadership teams, consisting of teachers working throughout our corporation, work diligently to create curriculum maps along with formative assessments to be given in three week cycles. Through this framework, an instructional focus is identified for each cycle through a set of standards determined by our corporation pacing guides. Lesson plans are created and content is introduced that are in alignment with these guides.

After each three week cycle, teachers assess students and enter student results in learning logs. This data is shared with and analyzed by the principal and instructional coach. Data meetings are held each three weeks so that key stakeholders can collaborate on recent data.

Through data meetings and the framework in which the Eight Step Process provides, teachers, the principal and instructional coach are given a specific, predetermined time to collaborate on students' needs. Within this structure and through data collected, methods of how best to support students with remediation or enrichment are identified and plans are made to implement instruction. As with any successful endeavor, data meetings also provide a time for reflection on our teaching practices.

In each data meeting, teachers identify one or two specific skills that have already been taught that their respective students are having difficulty with. Through this maintenance portion of the meeting, these skills are brought to the forefront, creating a spiral review in lesson planning.

Through the Eight Step Process, Riley Elementary has a systematic means of teaching, assessing, and monitoring all students. Along with the process itself, the framework provided enables our staff to discuss and incorporate other resources that are well-suited within our school community to best educate our students.