

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 Dr. Dan Costellow

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

Official School Name Rich Pond Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 530 Richpond Road

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

City Bowling Green State KY Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 42104-8716

County Warren

Telephone (270) 781-9627 Fax (270) 846-3041

Web site/URL http://www.warrencountyschools.org/richpond E-mail dan.costellow@warren.kyschools.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. Rob Clayton E-mail rob.clayton@warren.kyschools.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Warren County School District Tel. (270) 781-5150

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. Kerry Young
(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):
- 14 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 4 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 4 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 22 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	20	13	33
K	41	36	77
1	32	36	68
2	47	36	83
3	31	25	56
4	37	46	83
5	36	45	81
6	40	43	83
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	284	280	564

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 3 % Asian
 - 2 % Black or African American
 - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 88 % 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: 9%

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	22
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	14
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	36
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	403
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.089
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	9

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 8 %
44 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Serbian, Bosnian, Burmese, Hindi, Mandarin, Zomi, Albanian, Gujarati ,Spanish, Cambodian (Khmer), Chin Haka

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 43 %
Total number students who qualify: 243
8. Students receiving special education services: 10 %
54 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
- 0 Emotional Disturbance
- 0 Hearing Impairment
- 4 Mental Retardation
- 4 Multiple Disabilities
- 0 Orthopedic Impairment
- 6 Other Health Impaired
- 4 Specific Learning Disability
- 22 Speech or Language Impairment
- 0 Traumatic Brain Injury
- 1 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
- 11 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	22
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	10
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	17
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 15:1
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	97%	96%	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 X No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 1997

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

Learning, Leading, and Succeeding.

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

The Rich Pond community came about in 1859 when the L&N Railroad Company built a line between Louisville and Nashville. This railroad was the initial impetus for development in the area. In 1908, a one room schoolhouse was built at Rich Pond, and as the community grew, so did the schools.

Rich Pond Elementary is located in southern Warren County, a few miles outside of Bowling Green. Bowling Green is a town of about 61,000 residents, with Warren County having a total population of about 118,000. Our school has preschool through sixth grade with about 37 certified and 38 classified staff.

Due to its geographical location, expanding businesses, infrastructure, and great schools, our community is among the fastest growing in the Warren County School District. Therefore, our enrollment is continually increasing. Since the opening of nearby South Warren Middle and High Schools six years ago, many staff members send their children here as well. Due to growth throughout the area, Rich Pond Elementary just underwent redistricting from a neighboring school. The combination of growth and redistricting added approximately 150 students to our former population of just over 400. Our percentage of free and reduced lunch students qualified us as a Title I school last year and again this year. These services are provided for targeted students in the areas of reading and math. A challenge we face is increasing the number of students demonstrating proficiency in reading and math while continuing to show growth for our students who are already proficient. Improving our achievement in writing is also a focus area. Over the past two years we have implemented various strategies for improvement including a partnership with the local University, vertical alignment, and visits to local schools that have successful strategies already in place.

Our mission statement is “Learning, Leading, and Succeeding.” Rich Pond has earned district, state, and national recognition through its committed parental and community involvement, dedicated faculty and staff, and instructional strategies that facilitate achievement for all students. On the 2015 state K-PREP assessment we were identified as a Distinguished/Progressing School. We improved in 2016, achieving the status of Distinguished/Progressing, School of Distinction, and ranking 50th out of 709 Kentucky elementary schools. Our educational goals are based on Rich Pond’s Guidelines for Success: Responsibility, Positive Attitude, Excellence through Effort, and Showing Respect.

Universal expectations and procedures are in place for all students and staff through Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). Currently, our discipline data shows that we are in the top 10% of schools nationwide for the fewest discipline referrals. The universal procedures in place are highly effective and promote a positive environment that is conducive to learning, challenges students to work towards excellence, offers equal access to a common curriculum, and instills a wholesome attitude toward democratic principles within each student. The Leader In Me program is utilized school-wide to promote leadership and common approaches to success.

Our parents support and believe in the value of education. We are fortunate that the majority (69%) of our Kindergarten students enter school ready to learn. Our Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) is diligent both in managing school-wide fundraisers and hands-on support for a variety of activities involving students and staff. We have very high turnouts for events like open house, parent conferences, fall festival, and other events.

We strive to provide a rigorous curriculum aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for both English/Language Arts (ELA) and Math in grades K-6. There is a school-wide focus on closing the achievement gap for all of our at-risk populations. In addition to closing the gaps, Rich Pond is striving to increase academic growth for all students by focusing on the CCSS and offering a rigorous and relevant curriculum. Teachers participate weekly in Professional Learning Communities to analyze formative and summative assessments. These discussions drive instruction to meet the needs of each individual learner. All students are screened for academic progress through the use of district-wide universal assessments three times a year and district common assessments intermittently throughout the year. From these data points, students receive either intervention or extension instruction which helps them to reach proficiency benchmarks and beyond.

Extracurricular opportunities for students abound, including chorus, recorder, strings, band, student council, Junior BETA, chess, Future Problem Solvers, Community Problem Solvers, academic team, and Student Technology Leadership Program (STLP).

Rich Pond was designated as a Blue Ribbon School nearly twenty years ago. Many changes have taken place since that time with only a handful of staff from then still remaining. The high expectations, family-like atmosphere, and quality staffing that were present then are still key components of our successful school. Our vision is “Safety, Positive Relationships, and Success for All.” We believe that if students feel safe, comfortable, and enjoy coming to school, success (academic and otherwise) will then follow.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

The faculty and staff of Rich Pond Elementary provide a rigorous and challenging curriculum for our students based on the Common Core Standards. Our school district has worked together to map our curriculum for each grade level, which can be accessed at <http://www.warrencountyschools.org/Content/22362>

Reading/English Language Arts

Reading is a focus for our school. Out of fourteen district elementary schools, Rich Pond has had the highest percentage of students above the 40th percentile in the Renaissance STAR reading in the fall, winter, and spring screening windows over the past five years (with only two exceptions) while also showing high growth. We strive to maintain consistency with experienced, high quality teachers in the primary grades in order to build a foundation. Rich Pond follows the Common Core standards as adopted by our state. ELA instruction encompasses word work (phonics, grammar, and word families), vocabulary development, guided and independent reading, and writing. Teachers use selections from Scott Foresman's Reading Street for instruction as well as trade books in literature circles. Rich Pond has a robust Accelerated Reader program to allow students to focus on independent reading comprehension while selecting books they find engaging. Teachers use small groups, centers, direct instruction, and project based learning to meet the learning needs of all students.

Rich Pond is a recipient of a state funded Read to Achieve grant which will supply one certified teacher for up to four years to complete intensive intervention with students in K-3 who are reading below grade level. It also allows for the interventionist to collaborate and co-teach with primary teachers daily to further the scope of the interventions for struggling students. Rich Pond is committed to seeing our students leave the primary grades reading on grade level.

Mathematics

Rich Pond is also known as a high-achieving math school in our district. As with reading, our school is consistently at the top when it comes to our STAR math achievement on the district screeners. Common Core standards guide instruction which follows a developmentally appropriate hands-on approach in the primary grades. Students use manipulatives to understand concrete math concepts before moving to semi-concrete and abstract models. Teachers use lessons from Go Math and Engage NY or design their own lessons to meet students' needs. There is a focus on real world problem solving to assist students in understanding the application of the strategies learned. This year we applied for and received the MathPlus grant, which provides professional growth and resources for our teachers in the intermediate grades. We also received the Math Achievement Grant, which will provide us with an additional math teacher, professional development, and teacher support. Opportunities for differentiation are provided, as are blended learning opportunities using Google Classroom, Khan, and Dreambox.

Science

The Science curriculum is undergoing change since the state's adoption of the Next Generation Science Standards, moving toward an inquiry based model of instruction which builds critical thinking skills, integrates content across the curriculum, and is exceptionally engaging to students. The state has provided some formative assessments at all grade levels to assist teachers in the development of 5E based instructional units. The Curriculum Coordinator has attended several trainings and shared materials and resources with the staff as they work together to build an engaging and dynamic Science program at Rich Pond.

Social Studies

Students are provided instruction regarding the history of our nation as well as how to be active and productive citizens. Curriculum resources include: Kentucky Studies Weekly (4th grade), Social Studies Alive, History Alive, and historical artifacts. Students are provided the opportunity to not only learn about civic engagement from instructional resources, they are given the opportunity to live it through student

council. Students learn about duties, campaigning, compromise, teamwork, and decision making from this experience. Council members gather input from students and work together to implement initiatives within our school.

Writing

Based on teacher input and the results of state assessments, writing is an important area of focus for our school. We initiated a partnership with Western Kentucky University and invited their writing specialists into our building to observe teachers, provide feedback and resources, and to help streamline our curriculum through horizontal and vertical alignment. We are continuing this partnership through mentoring and book studies with key staff. This year we hired an experienced teacher to work with some of our proficient students to further improve their writing ability. We expect this to pay off with higher student achievement in all academic areas. One area of focus has been on authentic writing. We provide real-life prompts that connect students to their interests. Teachers have incorporated “storybooks,” whereby students submit a writing piece that is published as a collection of individual pieces into a small, hardback book. Students are proud to share this among themselves and with their families.

Preschool

Our preschool program has adopted Creative Curriculum for Preschool which is aligned to Kentucky's Early Childhood Standards (KYECS) and addresses content in all developmental domains. KYECS has been cross-walked with the district K-3 curriculum to provide a continuum of learning between preschool and kindergarten. Supplemental curriculums include Handwriting Without Tears Literacy and Math, and Second Step Early Learning. Participation in the preschool program helps to reduce the learning gap due to disability and/or poverty, as is evidenced by kindergarten readiness scores well above the state average.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Our school’s vision and mission statements both reflect a goal of success for students. We are happy to provide a number of opportunities outside of the core curriculum to help them grow into confident, successful students and adults.

Music

All students are provided activities and opportunities in general music education. The music program includes opportunities for playing instruments, singing, moving to music, the study of styles, the study of world music and cultural musical traditions, and musical technology. Students play instruments, learn songs from various cultures, create and read music. Students use an online curriculum and an aligned curriculum text, which provide a natural integration to the related arts areas as well as the academic core. Students in K-4th grade participate in annual music presentations that include movement, singing, drama, and instrumental performance. Students in 4th-6th grades are offered the opportunity to take part in chorus, band, recorder ensemble, and beginning and intermediate strings. Chorus and recorder perform at the local courthouse, at an assisted living facility, and at a community senior citizen’s banquet.

Technology and Library Media

At Rich Pond, students have several opportunities to interact with technology daily. Six devices have been provided to each class for daily student use, and all grade levels have Chromebooks and iPads available for checkout. Multiple programs are used to enhance student learning each day including Lexia, Dreambox, Khan Academy, BrainPop and Accelerated Reader. The technology curriculum, which includes digital citizenship, online safety, cyber bullying, keyboarding, and Google Classroom, is delivered weekly as a "specials" class in the main computer lab. An additional lab with 30 units is also available for teachers to reserve each week as needed. The library media center is equipped with 14 desktop computers. Students utilize these daily for enrichment and remediation activities. In addition, they are used to create presentations and conduct research during scheduled library times each week, as well as throughout open/flexible times. Teachers extend the technology curriculum by integrating it into daily instruction.

Physical Education

P.E. Students in grades K-6 participate in P.E. at least one time a week for 40 minutes. The physical education curriculum aligns with the Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE) National Standards

and Kentucky's Academic Standards for Practical Living and Arts and Humanities. A list of partial resources used are the Online Physical Education Network (OPEN) which provides for differentiation strategies, YouTube, P.E. Central, peUniverse, SPARK K-2/3-6 as a resource guide, and Moving to Success as a curriculum guide. Nutrition/Health and classroom subject area integration activities are also provided. Golf in the Schools program is provided for the 4th-6th grade students. And since 2001, Rich Pond has collected \$150,000 for the American Heart Association in the fight against heart disease and stroke.

Guidance

All students at Rich Pond Elementary participate in Guidance class two times per month. The guidance counselor teaches a variety of topics at all grade levels in order to promote growth academically, socially, and emotionally. The counselor enlists the help of a number of community agencies throughout the year to assist students in learning about topics such as substance abuse prevention, healthy eating, bullying, safety, and decision making, and to make them aware of the services these community organizations provide. Through classroom guidance instruction, students learn many valuable lessons that assist them in being successful in all aspects of their lives.

ESL

Our school provides instruction and support to students who are not yet proficient in English. English Learners (EL's) at our school come from more than 11 different countries and speak more than 10 different languages and dialects. The goal of our EL program is to provide EL students with equal opportunity and access to services so they may become fully proficient in English and meet content standards. Academic expectations are high for all EL's. Our school provides support in a positive environment to help them achieve.

Multiple Opportunities

To support our philosophy of educating the whole child, our school offers several additional opportunities. We have two Chinese teachers that teach weekly lessons to every classroom. Other opportunities include choir, future problem solving, academic team, Jr. Beta club, STLP, and student council. We also implement school wide leadership jobs as a part of the Leader In Me initiative.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Rich Pond utilizes evidence-based programs for all tiers of instruction. Through our Professional Growth and Evaluation System (PGES), we focus on positive classroom environments that are conducive to learning and facilitation of rich questioning and discussion. A current priority for our school has been the addition of staffing during the school day through Title I and Extended School Services (ESS) funds. Our belief is that while instructional materials and programs provide a much-needed supplement to instruction, you cannot supplant the value of high-quality personnel working with students.

One of our priorities the past three years has been on increasing student access to technology. The number of student iPads, Chromebooks, and desktop computers has increased from about 175 to more than 360 over the past three years. We have utilized professional development funding for Google Classroom and other technology-related training.

The use of frequent assessment is critical to our knowing what to do next in meeting the needs of students. Formative assessments occur throughout the day at each grade level to determine student understanding of content, leading to instructional support or enrichment. Teachers and administrators throughout our district began an initiative two years ago to develop common assessments in all subject areas to help ensure a common and relevant curriculum is taught district-wide, and curriculum maps help to measure the pace at which they are delivered. All of our students are assessed five times per year using STAR Early Literacy, STAR Reading, and STAR Math to measure student growth and to determine the appropriate placements in either tiered interventions or advanced instruction.

After each assessment window, two 40-minute meetings are set aside for "Child Study Teams." Grade level teams of teachers, along with school leadership and intervention teachers, discuss the progress of students in reading and math. Additionally, a third day is utilized to examine student behavior and discuss research-

based tiered intervention strategies.

In our intermediate grades, we have implemented departmentalized instruction. This has provided a better opportunity to focus professional development and resources to serve the needs of students while capitalizing on the strengths and experience of our teachers.

To meet the needs of gifted and high achieving students, students in 1st-3rd grades are referred by their teachers for placement in Primary Talent Pool. The curriculum coordinator, who is a certified gifted education teacher, meets with students twice a week to extend their learning through critical thinking exercises, creativity-building lessons, and project based learning units. Kindergarten students are not formally identified for Primary Talent Pool. However, a flexible group of high achieving Kindergarten students meets once a week to explore patterns and engage in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) activities. Students in 4th-6th grades are challenged inside the classroom with flexible grouping to accelerate content for those who have demonstrated mastery on a unit pre-test, through blended learning programs that meet and challenge students on their individual levels, through a school Gifted Education pullout program that meets twice a week to build critical thinking skills and creative problem solving, and through content specific grade-level acceleration. The district also has created a STEM academy for exceptionally high achieving Gifted Students called the 212 Academy. Selected students attend one full day each week to immerse themselves in STEM based problem solving projects.

In reviewing our state performance data in reading for 2016, Rich Pond showed high achievement with 73.6% of our students scoring proficient or distinguished (P/D), significantly higher than the district (57.7%) or state (56.0%). Our gap students at 58.8% P/D also performed higher than the district (46.1%) and state (46.9%). In math, all students combined scored 68.1% P/D, compared to the 52.7% district average and 51.8% state, with gap students scoring 56.9% P/D. Although our gap group still has room for growth, we are making significant gains due to the focus on interventions for our Tier II and Tier III students. For example, in the 2013-14 school year, our gap students had a reading P/D percentage of 46.3%, just ahead of the district (40.0%) and nearly even with the state (45.1%). In math that same year, our Gap students were at 31.5% P/D, lagging behind the district (34.8%) and the state (39.1%). We were a Title I Targeted Assistance school in 2013-14, but lost that for the 2014-15 school year. Because we were just short of the required 40% for Title I School-wide funding, we made identifying that percentage of students a priority. Receiving these funds the past two years has helped us provide struggling students the extra assistance we could not have provided otherwise.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

The staff at Rich Pond Elementary treats students as if they were their own. Our vision is for all students and staff to feel safe and to build positive relationships with others, which leads to success. We believe the key lies in how we treat one another. Our staff, regardless of their position within the school, are expected to exhibit professionalism, positivity, a caring and supportive attitude, and take an active interest in the lives of others. Staff members attend students' extracurricular events and competitions, make personal contacts when there is sickness or tragedy, and build relationships with parents to ensure that personal and academic needs are met. Our stakeholders view us as a family.

Through PBIS, teachers and staff are encouraged to utilize multiple positive approaches to discipline, teaching and rewarding students for what is expected. Our mascot is the Bulldog, so we utilize "Good Dog" tickets to give students when they do what, or more than is expected. Staff are given "Big Dog" tickets by other adults in the building for exhibiting excellence and professionalism. Classrooms as a whole are presented "Leader of the Pack" nominations when they follow school-wide expectations. Drawings for each of these groups are held each week at our Monday Morning Meeting, and our custodian awards the "Silver Spoon" to the class that has the best lunchroom behavior. Additionally, teachers mail home two hand-written positive postcards per year for each child and have the opportunity to submit "positive office referrals" which are printed and given to students to take home when they are caught being exceptionally good.

Our Monday Morning Meetings are an opportunity to share information about school-wide events, highlight the academic and extracurricular achievements of students, and to provide students a chance to showcase their talents. We also recite the pledge of allegiance, sing the National Anthem, cite our "Guidelines for Success" and School Mission Statement.

Staff are provided the supports and resources they need to do their job well. Successes are celebrated through social media, newsletters, Monday Morning Meeting, or faculty meetings. Culture-building activities include a back to school pool party for families in the fall, evening dinners with staff, and a winter staff party. Potlucks and surprise treats (food, gift cards, and more) are given throughout the year. Administrators provide positive feedback through email and in person to staff.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Involving families in the process of learning is critically important. We utilize a number of opportunities through our PTO to bring families into our school including open house, fall festival, classroom pottery/basket auction and supper, and staff appreciation week. We also utilize parent volunteers to assist teachers and provide small group and one-on-one instructional assistance. We conduct training multiple times throughout the year so that parents can help in the building and attend field trips. Additionally, we enjoy having parents and grandparents come to school for breakfast events throughout the year and to eat lunch with students.

We are fortunate to have a Family Resource Center (FRC) that supports families through providing or directing them to social and economic resources and programs, parenting skills classes, literacy services, health and mental well-being providers, food and sustenance, job providers, and educational support. This provides an extra layer of assistance to families that need it the most. The FRC works continually with a number of local business partners to provide people, resources, and funding to enhance the educational program. Parents serve as members of an advisory board for the FRC as well as on our Site-Based Decision Making (SBDM) Council.

Another way we build partnerships with the community is through our guidance classes. Twice per month, all students participate in guidance class. Often the counselor will invite an employee from a community agency such as Barren River Health Department, Kids on the Block, Hope Harbor, and Junior

Achievement. Community leaders are invited to attend a luncheon each quarter with students who are nominated by teachers for their success and leadership in academics and behavior.

Communication is key to building positive relationships with families. Each week a newsletter is sent to parents highlighting student achievements and events. Social media (Twitter and Facebook) and our website are utilized almost daily to promote academic strategies and accomplishments, student achievement, and events happening in the school and community.

This year we had the opportunity to use Title I Parent Involvement Funds to create baskets for our Parent Involvement Night. We invited the families of academically struggling primary students to school and provided them with over \$100 worth of books and reading, math, and writing materials. We taught them how to utilize the resources at home with their child and gave additional guidance to parents for improving academic success.

We are fortunate to have Western Kentucky University just a few miles away. We host dozens of elementary education students per year for observations, block experience hours, and as student teachers. Our faculty puts them to work in the classroom, maximizing the experience for everyone.

3. Professional Development:

There are several factors that are taken into account when planning professional development activities. First, we examine student academic data. It is important that we identify and target the areas in which we need to help students grow. Discussions take place in weekly Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and faculty meetings regarding student achievement, and teachers and school leadership discuss upcoming professional growth opportunities to better meet the needs of students.

Teachers are surveyed to determine what they feel are their most critical professional growth areas for increasing student achievement. Some of the targets over the past two-three years have been growth mindset, writing, questioning and discussion, team building/strengths development of staff, math instruction, and utilizing the domains within PGES to improve instruction. A few times throughout the year we will bring in outside consultants or utilize our own staff to share strategies in our PLCs or faculty meetings.

Our district has encouraged us to send teachers to other schools to learn about the instructional strategies they find most effective. We have sent teachers to learn about writing, leadership development, growth mindset, classroom management, and positive behavior supports. Teachers in our fifth and sixth grades have spent time at our feeder middle school to gain a better understanding of the content, skills needed, and challenges students will face when they leave Rich Pond and enter the seventh grade.

One of the best opportunities for professional growth this year has occurred from within. At the start of the year we asked each grade level to select a reading, math, and writing liaison. Our schedule allowed us to provide students with some additional specials class periods. Once every three weeks, teachers collaborate with their content area colleague in the grade above and below them to examine the strategies being used, share ideas, and improve vertical alignment of instruction within our building.

We are fortunate to have a number of district and regional professional growth opportunities that are provided for school leadership. Our Principal, Dean of Students, Curriculum Coordinator, and Guidance Counselor believe strongly in the value of continued growth and development to serve the needs of both students and staff. We also seek out opportunities for classified staff, sending instructional assistants, our technology coordinator, FRC coordinator, secretaries, and other staff to meetings and sessions that support student success.

4. School Leadership:

The core leadership team of Rich Pond Elementary includes the Principal, Dean of Students, Curriculum Coordinator, and Guidance Counselor. Each week, time is set aside for them to meet and discuss academic

and other school needs. A top priority in a growing school is building the capacity of current staff, while seeking the best candidates for each new position. Giving these individuals the tools, structure, and processes they need to be successful is critical to our success.

The Principal believes in building a positive, supportive culture among students and staff alike. The theme for this school year is “Team,” and creating opportunities for staff to come together, either to build culture or to improve student achievement, has been a priority. Removing barriers to good instruction is essential. Whether it involves covering a class when substitutes are not available, ensuring a process for reporting and resolving disciplinary concerns, or providing resources and personnel where needed to boost student achievement for both gifted and struggling students, providing an environment that is supportive of the instructional process is key. This year a staff leadership team was created with representation from all areas of the building, including classified personnel. This team has been tasked with soliciting feedback regarding important decisions throughout the year to ensure that all personnel have an opportunity to provide input.

The Dean of Students is an integral part of the instructional leadership component, spending time in classrooms and PLC meetings, analyzing data, leading the PBIS team, developing and leading the Behavior Child Study Team, and maintaining proactive approaches to student discipline. Additionally, the Dean works collaboratively with the principal to maintain a positive climate for the school and to ensure staff are able to work efficiently and effectively to help students thrive.

The Curriculum Coordinator collaborates with teachers to ensure the instruction students receive at Rich Pond is of the highest quality. The alignment of curriculum with state standards, district pacing guides, and both among and between grade levels within the school is a primary focus. Assisting teachers with locating resources, conducting discussions regarding instructional strategies and best practices, and analyzing student data to determine next steps are also key responsibilities. The Curriculum Coordinator serves as the Gifted Education teacher, providing pullout services to students twice a week and managing blended learning programs for all students to enhance student achievement at every level.

The Guidance Counselor focuses on building relationships with students, staff, parents, and the community. These relationships are key to the success of not only the school, but to each individual student. In addition to teaching guidance classes weekly, the counselor also participates in academic and behavioral child study team meetings, initiates multiple ways to celebrate student successes, and provides help and assistance to children, teachers, and families as needed.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Rich Pond is, and always has been known for its “family-like atmosphere,” and we truly believe this is at the heart of our success. With a vision for every child and staff member to feel safe, to have positive relationships with others, and to experience success, the groundwork is laid for an atmosphere conducive to high achievement. The work we do each day throughout the year, in a culture that is positive, supportive, and caring, leads to high achievement on our local and state accountability assessments. Our teachers and staff alike go above and beyond to ensure the success of our children and feel there is always more that can be done. We view the relationships we have with parents, the community, and the school district as an opportunity to utilize the strengths of each individual to maximize student achievement.

Selecting and retaining the best staff is critical. We are fortunate to have more high-quality applicants than we do openings. Teachers and support staff are viewed as the experts in their field, and they are offered the opportunities, support, and resources they need to be successful. They use multiple sources of data to make decisions, meet to discuss best practice strategies, and look beyond our building to experts in neighboring schools and across the country for ideas to ensure continual improvement. Weekly PLC meetings provide opportunities for teachers to review student achievement and discuss ways to improve instruction and support for students.

We are never satisfied that we are doing enough to improve student achievement, and continually seek out opportunities for additional resources and self-improvement. This year we applied for and received three grants that will help our students in reading, writing, and math instruction. We worked with our PTO to add a teaching position in order to reduce class sizes, and added more technology to be used in each classroom. Many of our teachers and support staff attend professional development sessions beyond the days that are required. We bring in outside professionals to observe and critique the work that we are doing in order to maximize our effectiveness.

Our high achievement and supportive culture make Rich Pond a highly desirable school. Nearly twenty percent of our population consists of students from outside of our attendance district. If space allowed, that number would be much higher. We believe strongly in the work that we do, and that the decisions we make each day impact students’ lives forever. Our students know that each day they are coming to a school with a positive culture where they are safe, loved, and cared for by staff as if they were their own. This supportive environment is what makes Rich Pond students and staff continually, and forever successful.