

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 Mr. Ken Stites

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

Official School Name Norton Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 8101 Brownsboro Road

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

City Louisville State KY Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 40241-2647

County Jefferson Co.

Telephone (502) 485-8308 Fax (502) 485-8600

Web site/URL http://schools.jefferson.kyschools.us

/Elementary/Norton E-mail ken.stites@jefferson.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*Dr. Marty Pollio E-mail marty.pollio@jefferson.kyschools.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Jefferson County School District Tel. (502) 485-3011

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. Chris Brady
(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):
- 91 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 22 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 18 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 131 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	7	6	13
K	64	60	124
1	71	53	124
2	63	59	122
3	63	59	122
4	56	56	112
5	58	60	118
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	382	353	735

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 11 % Asian
 - 12 % Black or African American
 - 3 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 69 % White
 - 5 % 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: 10%

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	41
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	32
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	73
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	734
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.099
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	10

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %
7 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Korean, Telugu, French, Spanish, Hindi

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 23 %
Total number students who qualify: 169

8. Students receiving special education services: 12 %
86 Total number of students served

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

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <u>10</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>13</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>3</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>21</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>5</u> Mental Retardation | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| <u>2</u> Multiple Disabilities | <u>6</u> Developmentally Delayed |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 12
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	31
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.	18
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 24:1
12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012
Daily student attendance	95%	96%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

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

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.
Yes No
- If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

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

Norton Elementary, where all children learn at high levels. No Exceptions. No Excuses.

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

Norton Elementary School is located in a neighborhood on the eastern boarder of Jefferson County. The school opened in 1967 and has had a long tradition of excellence. Many students are second generation, and the third generation students won't be far behind. "Norton families" and the neighboring community as a whole take great pride in the school, its students, and their accomplishments. Most of the Norton families fall within a high socioeconomic status, however our district student assignment plan ensures that we have the opportunity to serve a diverse population of students. We have worked hard to build an inclusive environment for all students attending our fine school.

Norton Elementary is a high performing child-centered school that develops self-esteem, embraces multiple intelligences and strives to improve its excellence every year. We offer 735 children in grades PreK – 5th stimulating and rigorous learning opportunities within a safe, nurturing, and supportive setting. Students are heterogeneously grouped and all are held to high expectations. Staff members provide differentiated teaching and support according to student need, from remediation, to reinforcement, to enrichment. Instruction is differentiated to individualize learning and stretch students' expectations. The Advanced Placement program further extends educational experiences for children by providing an environment that nurtures student curiosity and talents at a higher level. A partnership of teachers, staff, parents, and the community at large works together to create an environment that fosters the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development of every child. By providing instruction that informs, inspires, and challenges, we hope to instill a love of learning that continues throughout children's lives. Our goal is to help each child develop an enthusiasm for learning, a respect for self and others, and the skills to become a creative, independent thinker.

The curriculum at Norton is guided by the Kentucky Core Academic Standards (KCAS) for English Language Arts and Mathematics. Use of these common core standards provides consistency across all same grade classrooms and creates a spiral effect from one grade level to the next. We believe that a major cause for our success is this consistent curricular commitment by our staff. Within the KCAS, teachers are given ample latitude and flexibility to utilize a variety of instructional materials and resources. Teachers are able to provide differentiated instruction for students who are having difficulty with a standard and for those who have easily mastered a standard. All certified staff have been trained in the understanding, deconstruction, and implementation of the KCAS. All special area (art, music, physical education, computer, and library media service) teachers are able to reinforce the teaching of these standards within their particular domains.

Students enjoy rich and inclusive curriculum across all content areas. Our ELA (English/Language Arts) curriculum provides students with authentic literacy experiences throughout their day, while the math curriculum challenges student thinking and asks them to apply problem solving strategies in a variety of situations. Students have weekly experiences in art, music, physical education, computer lab, library, and Spanish. Technology is also integrated through authentic experiences that access curricular content. Each classroom is well equipped with technology. Students have access to interactive Smart Boards, laptop computers, iPads, iPods, document cameras, and student work stations. Orchestra and band, which are offered to 5th graders, provide additional music opportunities. Partnerships with many community arts organizations provide students with additional learning experiences both in and outside of the school building. Every Norton student attends a performance each year at the Kentucky Center for the Arts produced by Stage One Family Theatre, while other fieldtrips include visits to the Louisville Orchestra and Ballet. Music groups, theatre companies, and dance troupes are invited multiple times each year to perform at the school for children from all grade levels. In addition to the many Arts and Humanities experiences, students also have the opportunity to interact with other professionals from our community. First responders, bankers, athletes, scientists, and engineers are among just some of the career representatives that interact with Norton students in a variety of different ways.

Norton Elementary School has 76 staff members, including certified teaching faculty, instructional assistants, and student support staff. Each staff member is dedicated to help increase the learning opportunities for children throughout our building. Even those not directly responsible for instruction serve in some capacity to promote student achievement, as tutors and mentors. Norton teachers have a strong

commitment to professional growth. In addition to attending both district and school based professional development, they meet weekly in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to share ideas and learn from one another. Student learning is always the focus of these PLCs, and conversations regularly center around student performance and achievement data. One of our strengths is a belief in teaching to mastery. We operate with the notion that all students can learn, and learn at high levels.

The success of Norton Elementary is not based solely on the work in the classrooms or the exceptional and dedicated staff. Parents have high expectations for our school and they push us to provide the best education possible for students. They also understand that a quality education begins at home and they work hard with the school staff to give their children the best possible opportunity to succeed. This includes sending their children to kindergarten equipped with the basic skills, ensuring they are finishing homework at night, and preparing for the next day's lessons. These extra opportunities provide for learning outside of the school day.

In short, our school is worthy of National Blue Ribbon status because of our comprehensive programming, our striving for continual improvement, our high expectations for all students, and our willingness to do whatever it takes to ensure student success.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Norton Elementary School offers a rigorous, standards based curriculum that enables children to develop socially, emotionally, cognitively, and physically through instructional practices that ensure all students reach proficiency in assessed content. Our curriculum is vertically and horizontally aligned in all content areas to the Kentucky Core Academic Standards. We pride ourselves on providing a rigorous and viable curriculum that meets the needs of all learners. Teachers meet weekly to develop units of study aligned with these standards. Daily learning outcomes are developed by grade level teams and help teachers plan units that are congruent with the standards. These are displayed and referenced during instruction to help students fully understand learning expectations. Active student centered learning is visible when visiting our classrooms. It is not uncommon to see teachers and students working on hands-on activities, peer-led center groups, and technology integrated lessons. Every instructional minute is utilized to deliver quality instruction, and maximize student learning. Proficiency assessments, which are developed by our district, allow teachers to monitor student mastery of the learning outcomes at the end of each instructional cycle and to plan next steps based on analysis of the student performance data. This assessment data is analyzed throughout the year to determine the effectiveness of current instructional programs. All this is monitored to ensure effective implementation in Professional Learning Communities comprised of grade level teachers, a curriculum specialist, and administrators.

Norton’s preschool program incorporates the Big Day curriculum. Developmentally appropriate learning activities are intentionally aligned to the Kentucky Early Childhood Standards in order to promote independence, curiosity, decision making, cooperation, persistence, creativity, and problem solving. Their curriculum includes language, mathematics, physical and social emotional development, creative arts, science, and social studies all specifically designed to impact school readiness. Our preschool students utilize much of the same facility and resources used daily by our K-5th grade students. In addition, they participate in almost all of our school-wide functions, initiatives, and celebrations. The preschool students are very much a part of the Norton family, and find themselves well-prepared when they are old enough to take their seats alongside our older elementary scholars.

At Norton Elementary, we recognize that reading is the foundation for academic success and actively engage students in high interest, meaningful reading instruction. This fosters high self-esteem and propels students to high levels of achievement and growth. Through district collaboration, teacher-crafted ELA units are intentionally aligned with the Kentucky Core Academic Standards of Reading, Speaking, Listening, and Language while embedding social studies and science. Our staff is trained in multiple approaches to actively engage all students in best reading and writing practices.

Norton’s ELA program is an integrated model that incorporates reading, writing, speaking, listening, phonics, grammar, and research skills. Supplementary resources are sought out and utilized by our teachers to enhance the curriculum requirements, as well as to ensure a seamless instructional pathway. Critical thinking skills, oral presentations, and well-planned writing pieces are used to challenge students to achieve at new and higher levels. In the primary grades, students spend time each day working on phonemic awareness, fluency and comprehension, and are also exposure to numerous genres of literature. These early literacy skills are essential building blocks that ensure competent readers and writers in our intermediate grades.

Our mathematics curriculum is designed to provide students with hands-on learning, inquiry based opportunities to develop a deep understanding of mathematical concepts. Mastery of skills, strategies, and problem solving are based on Kentucky Common Core Standards. In addition to Go Math, our adopted curriculum, teachers use supplemental materials to provide hands-on experiences, opportunities to demonstrate mathematical learning in writing, and activities that require students to demonstrate mathematical reasoning skills. The spiraling curriculum, engaging activities, and presentation of multiple strategies create a solid foundation for math concepts. Supplemental math programs such as Sum Dog and Big Brainz, computer based applications, are used to provide students with another learning modality,

differentiation of instruction, and support of conceptual understanding. The vertical alignment of our program ensures that there are no instructional gaps. Teachers intentionally incorporate inquiry based learning with specifically designed instruction to make math class an engaging experience for our students. Teachers spend much time researching ideas and materials to supplement our series to ensure that all math standards are mastered.

The Norton Elementary teaching staff is committed to integrating science across the curriculum. This process begins with explicit instruction using the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) at all levels. Lessons are presented using an investigative, inquiry-based approach to learning through the use of Full Option Science System (FOSS) Modules. Students develop an understanding of scientific concepts and processes by conducting investigations, using hands-on materials, working in teams, and incorporating interactive technology.

The social studies curriculum is aligned to the Kentucky Program of Studies and is frequently integrated into reading units of study. The intent of this curriculum is to promote a sense of community, country, and world, and to develop a lifelong civic responsibility in our students. This process begins with explicit instruction of the common core standards at all grade levels. We actively engage our students in a variety of real-world learning situations beginning in kindergarten and continuing through 5th grade.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Our goal at Norton Elementary is for our students to excel through critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity. We believe that a broad education in the arts helps give children a better understanding of their world and offers students a way to access their history and culture. To achieve this, our non-core subjects hold as much value as our core curriculum. Each of our non-core subject areas is taught by a full-time teacher who is specifically certified in that area. Students experience instruction in music, art, physical education, library, and technology. For 50 minutes each day, K-5 students rotate to one of these classes, while Pre-K integrates the Arts into classroom activities. Special Area teachers collaborate with classroom teachers to integrate social studies, science, ELA, and math concepts into their instruction. It is not uncommon to hear the music teacher reinforcing reading concepts through singing (rhyming words, the musicality of a poem, or the main idea of a musical composition) or mathematical concepts through instrumental music (rhythm, fractions in musical notation, or patterns). The PE teacher integrates dance as a way to illustrate cultural diversity, while the art teacher collaborates with teachers to reinforce concepts about animal habitats, Colonial life, and various genres of literature.

Art education is critical for creativity. Students in every grade are given the opportunity to work with various media including chalk, oil and water paints, textiles, wood, and clay. Students often work collaboratively in grade levels to create bodies of work that are displayed throughout the school. We have our own kiln and following intentional instruction from the art teacher, each student designs and creates a work of art resulting in a piece of pottery to take home with them. Focus on the elements of shape, texture, line and form drive instruction and performance based assessments are used to determine mastery of content. Our visual arts teacher collaborates with grade level teams to align lessons with the content being covered in the core classrooms. The Visual Arts curriculum contributes to the overall success of our students by focusing on each child as an artist.

General music instruction is offered at all grade levels. Band and orchestra classes are offered as an elective to 5th grade students with almost half of them participating. The Music curriculum contributes to the overall success of our students by exposing them to a wide variety of music and artistic styles, introducing a large range of musical instruments with a concentration on the percussion family, and providing them with opportunities to perform for others. All of our 5th grade classes work to develop concert pieces which they perform for guests at our 5th grade promotion ceremony. In addition to a yearly field trip to hear the Louisville Orchestra, students are exposed to a variety of musical groups and styles that perform at our school. The music instruction is closely aligned with the common core instructions occurring in the classroom.

All students experience invigorating physical education classes weekly. During these classes, students

participate in many organized activities such as team and individual sports, dance, exercise and fitness, and group games. As a school-wide initiative, we participate annually in the American Heart Association's "Jump Rope for Heart". All of these activities share the common goal of teaching the students how maintaining a healthy, active lifestyle can be fun. The curriculum provides differentiated learning strategies that ensure competency and confidence in motor skills. Dance components are integrated in units and guest dance instructors supplement the essential skills of dance and movement. Health lessons are designed to foster a life-long enjoyment of health and wellness, while focusing on NASPE standards. Twice a year each student takes the Presidential Fitness Challenge assessment and individual goals are set based on their performance data. The Physical Education/Practical Living curriculum contributes to the overall success of our students by promoting healthy, active lifestyles.

At Norton Elementary technology is considered vital to student success. Students have numerous opportunities to interact with technology daily. Every classroom is equipped with a Smart Board, teacher laptop, document camera, voice enhancement system, and multiple internet enabled student work stations. Technology is consistently used in all classrooms, and across all grade levels and content areas. It is intentionally embedded to enhance all common core instruction. Technology contributes to the overall success of our students by developing 21st century learners who are proficient in the use of technology.

To fulfill the foreign language and global competencies requirements, Norton offers Spanish instruction to all students. Weekly lessons encompass vocabulary, culture, and conversational language. Students are immersed in the language by a teacher who speaks fluent Spanish.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

A rigorous core curriculum based on the Common Core Standards is the heart of Norton Elementary's success. Instructional methods are an ongoing topic of conversation and guide the work of our Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Grade level PLCs meet weekly to share instructional strategies, review student work, analyze assessment data, and determine the need for intervention and/or enrichment. Refining our skills to meet the interests and needs of our students is critical in the delivery of instruction. Since all students do not learn in the same way or at the same rate, differentiated instruction is utilized to meet the individual needs and allow all students to have equal access to the curriculum. Our goal is to provide differentiated instruction across all levels and all content areas. The instructional practices used to support this goal include developmentally appropriate learning experiences that actively involve students, cooperative learning activities that promote higher-level thinking skills, and integrated units of study that provide links across content areas. Differentiation is prevalent in all of our classrooms. Meeting daily with small groups based on need is a key instructional technique that is used throughout our school building. Flexible groups and focus groups are created based on assessments, learning styles, common interests, and topics. One group may be working on enrichment activities while another group may be receiving supplemental instruction to bridge gaps in understanding. The Daily Five method is widespread in the primary classrooms. This allows teachers to meet with small groups while other students are involved in engaging content-related activities. Room arrangements are designed to accommodate collaborative clusters and quiet work stations.

While planning lessons and implementing instruction, teachers keep several key questions in mind: What do we expect students to learn? How will we know if they are learning? How will we respond if students aren't learning? What will we do if students are already proficient? By focusing on these questions during unit planning, we can ensure that differentiation of instruction is carefully thought out, that standards and student performance data drive implementation, and that the needs of all students are addressed. In order to scaffold student learning, high level questioning strategies push students to expand their knowledge base and excel at the next level. Student led discussions, peer conferencing, literature circles, writer's workshop, and performance based projects are ways for students to showcase their learning while incorporating content knowledge. Direct instruction of foundational skills and strategies that allow students to become lifelong learners spans every grade level. Our teachers activate prior knowledge, model think aloud strategies, and provide explicit instruction on how to be an active learner. Process and content are equally important, so the emphasis is on both. Learning content is important but learning how to learn is equally important. For example, common graphic organizers are used as a prewriting technique from kindergarten through 5th

grade, and in every content area. This instructional method allows students to intentionally structure their thoughts before writing regardless of content or application.

For students K-5th, who struggle academically in reading and math, we offer a variety of interventions. In addition to remediation that occurs daily within the classroom, K-2nd grade students receive targeted interventions from the reading specialist, instructional assistants, the instructional coach, and/or the assistant principal. These interventions are delivered individually and in small groups, and may also include an on-line component. The intervention strategies are developed in collaboration with, and under the guidance of the classroom teacher. These groups are flexible and are based on needs identified through formative/diagnostic assessments. Our 3rd through 5th grade students who struggle in reading and/or math participate in our Daytime ESS (Extended School Services) Program. These students receive support and remediation designed specifically to reinforce the core content instruction being delivered in the classroom. 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades are supported by a retired content specialist brought in specifically for their strengths in needed areas. Working with small groups of students, both in and outside of the classrooms, these interventionists support anywhere from 60 -70 students across the 3 grade levels during the fall-spring ESS program. Student progress is monitored in 6 week cycles, then teachers meet in PLCs to look at student assessment data and work samples to determine instructional modifications.

Norton Elementary is a data-driven school. All instructional decisions are made after thoroughly and carefully analyzing a multitude of data. We have teams of teachers that represent each grade and subject area. Analyzing all data enables us to make curriculum plans/maps, attain new programs, revise existing programs, and if necessary, alter grade-level instruction to improve any areas of concern. Teachers look at all data collected through formative and common assessments, review progress on curriculum, and discuss plans for regular instruction as well as extension and intervention activities. Using the data, teachers evaluate what instructional practices have been most successful, what learning targets need to be reviewed, and how to group students for differentiation. We use this ongoing process to assure that standards are being mastered before summative state assessments are given in the spring.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

At Norton Elementary School, we support our students academically, socially, and emotionally. Academically, we support our students by setting high expectations for learning, differentiating instruction to ensure classroom engagement, and providing meaningful remediation opportunities when they struggle. We scaffold student learning to meet individuals where they are, activate prior knowledge to utilize the tools they have already acquired, and provide rigorous and engaging lessons to help ensure all students move towards mastery in all academic areas. Norton parents also contribute to our students' academic growth by ensuring that students arrive at school and on time every day, prepared to learn. They review homework nightly, monitor grades and their child's progress, and communicate with school staff about academic concerns.

Social and emotional growth are supported through the expectations placed on students through our NICE (Norton Individual Conduct Expectations) program. These expectations are focused around helping students become safe, respectful, and responsible citizens. NICE behaviors are displayed on posters throughout the building. Students at Norton understand these expectations for classrooms, hallways, cafeteria, bathrooms, and common areas. Through a series of teacher created videos, students are given the opportunity to observe positive examples of these behaviors. Teachers routinely review these expectations with their students.

Norton students are also supported both socially and emotionally through the many opportunities for peer collaboration and active problem solving embedded within our core instruction. Teachers devote time daily to whole class meetings and wrap-up discussion sessions where student concerns are addressed. Our related arts curriculum meets the social and emotional needs of our students by exposing them to a wide variety of cultures. Additionally, our students participate in a variety of community service projects such as food drives, fundraisers, and clothing collections that support both local and national charities. Every spring our entire school participates in the Mayor's Give-A-Day of service campaign, as well.

The PTA plays a vital role in the success of our school. Teachers are supported by parent volunteers in the classrooms, on field trips, and in a variety of different ways. The school's PTA takes care of the teachers by offering help with teacher reimbursement for supplemental needs and basic classroom supplies.

Not only do the teachers have the support of parents, but they also have the support of each other. Our teachers contribute greatly to the culture of the school through the power of positive collaboration. On a weekly basis, teachers meet in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to analyze student work, share strategies, and gather feedback on ways to enhance instruction and student learning. Every nine weeks, teachers meet in "Power Planning" sessions to deconstruct upcoming standards and plan lessons and common assessments to ensure mastery.

Fostering positive staff relations enhances the overall climate and culture of our school, making Norton Elementary a place where teachers want to come to work!

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Parent involvement is an essential component in the success of Norton Elementary School. We recognize that strong parent communication is a key factor in helping our school reach its academic goals and expectations. Family and community members have multiple opportunities to be involved in school activities that directly impact student success and school improvement. The faculty and staff understand the value of engaging parents and the community. Working together for the needs of the students helps prepare them to be successful in and out of the classroom. We feel that involving members of the community helps form well rounded students and a successful school. We believe parent involvement has helped increase our levels of academic achievement because we are constantly communicating with our parents concerning student academic progress, as well as the social and emotional development of their

children.

We reach out to our parents through various activities designed to promote increased levels of family involvement and participation. Before the school year begins, we invite all Norton students and their families to a Back-To-School Open House and student orientation, organized by grade levels, designed to share information with students about the upcoming school year. At both of these events families are able to meet their child's teacher, take a tour of the school, shop for Cougar Spirit Wear, and learn how to get involved with the PTA. Throughout the school year parents are engaged in and support events such as: Field Day, Cougarfest, movie nights, Pastries with Parents, and a number of other events and activities designed to involve parents, both new and "experienced," here at school. In addition to these special events, parents are visible throughout the school, on a daily basis, assisting teachers in classrooms and with other tasks.

Norton Elementary believes that communicating with parents is essential to the success of children. Meeting with parents about their child's performance is extremely important. We schedule parent/teacher conferences to discuss progress and areas for growth for each student. Over 95% of our families participate yearly in parent teacher conferences. In addition to conferences, we stay in touch with our parents through weekly newsletters from both the PTA and the Principal, along with e-mails, text alerts, Wednesday folders, and daily agendas. Teachers communicate regularly regarding instructional expectations and learning targets so that parents are better informed and able to support their children's learning at home.

The Norton Elementary PTA is beyond description! With over 700 members, and a working budget in excess of \$60,000 annually, it would take more words than allowed in this summary to do the PTA justice. It suffices to say that they have enhanced the quality and success of our school in almost every way imaginable. We clearly recognize the importance of our many volunteers and encourage parents and community members remain active in our school. Without support from the parents and community, we know that we would not be this successful. With these partnerships, we will continue to inspire students to become lifelong learners.

3. Professional Development:

Professional Development at Norton Elementary is a comprehensive school-wide initiative that focuses on developing an effective curriculum and ensuring that teachers have adequate training to deliver instructional programs knowledgeably and with fidelity. Each year, student assessment data is carefully analyzed and the results serve as the driving force behind the goals in our Consolidated School Improvement Plan and the individual Professional Growth Plans of our teachers. Our professional development plans must be creative as the funding for professional development has diminished in our state. Often we rely on our own teachers as presenters. We believe that our teachers possess creative and innovative ideas, and that they are the best at delivering effective professional development to our staff. Administrators lead professional growth sessions on faculty work days about topics that will enhance teacher instruction. The Principal also collaborates with teachers on their Professional Growth Plans utilizing the Professional Growth and Effectiveness System, and the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Our staff receives professional development on methods to ensure a rigorous curriculum, appropriate formative and summative assessments, learning targets, curriculum alignment, differentiated learning and teaching, and spiraling essential content.

With the implementation of the Kentucky Common Core Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics, our school-wide professional development focuses primarily on assisting teachers in unpacking the standards and planning units that align student outcomes with state expectations. This professional development begins in the summer, as teacher teams develop long-range plans and begin planning units of study that align instruction with the Kentucky Common Core Standards. PD days, release time, and job embedded professional development allow time for grade-level teams to reflect on instructional practices, share effective teaching strategies, and observe classrooms to find best practices that work for colleagues. Through continued education and exchange of information, teachers are able to offer every student what he or she needs to learn.

Professional development is valued at Norton Elementary because we realize that continual pedagogical improvement is absolutely necessary to increasing teaching and learning success. We also recognize that focusing on teacher growth is imperative in improving overall school effectiveness. The goals of professional development at Norton are to provide teachers with the support they need to keep up with best practices in education and to develop individual areas of growth. We believe that student achievement is strengthened through collaborative efforts of professional learning communities (PLCs). Much like our students, our teachers have diverse needs and learning styles. For this reason our professional development sessions offer a variety of activities that align with the goals of our school improvement plan and address the needs of specific teachers or teams.

4. School Leadership:

Norton Elementary students are the heartbeat of the school and at the center of every decision made by the school leadership. The principal keeps his finger on the pulse of student needs by meeting with staff regularly, reviewing assessment data, observing students, and keeping open lines of communication. Students, teachers, parents, community members, and district personnel are welcome in his office at any time. His passion for keeping the culture and climate positive for all permeates the Norton educational community. The principal sets the tone for the school and believes that positive relationships are critical to student academic success. His focus is on a safe and welcoming environment, student engagement and achievement, effective instruction, and parent involvement. He sets very high expectations and exemplifies a dedicated work ethic for all stakeholders to emulate. Supported by an incredibly talented Assistant Principal and Goal Clarity Coach, the principal serves as the instructional leader. Together they visit classrooms, monitor student progress, analyze and disaggregate state and local assessment data, and communicate the successes and challenges faced by students and teachers at the school to stakeholders.

The leadership team, which consists of the administrators, guidance counselor, Goal Clarity Coach, and leader of each grade level team, including Special Area and Special Ed. teams, meet monthly to review progress, and implement needed changes on behalf of the students. Each meeting is designed to keep students at the center of the discussion and all decisions. Programs and curricular needs are reviewed to determine what teacher supports are needed in order to best serve the students. This leadership team also oversees the development and execution of the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP). The Assistant Principal, Goal Clarity Coach, and Principal meet weekly to discuss instructional needs and concerns. Instructional strategies and professional development needs are planned through these discussions. The principal and assistant principal at Norton work collaboratively to ensure high levels of academic achievement throughout the school. They meet with teachers on a weekly basis during grade-level Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to analyze student data and work samples, guide lesson planning, and discuss instructional strategies and formative assessment. Additionally, our school is guided by a School-Based Decision Making Council (SBDM) that consists of the principal, three certified teachers, and two parents. The purpose of the SBDM council is to help make school policies, allocate staffing positions, review financial resources, and analyze student assessment data.

The principal at Norton Elementary advocates high expectations for all students and staff, alignment of the curriculum, interventions for struggling students in reading and math, implementation of PLCs, making student centered, data driven decisions, and building personal responsibility in all stakeholders. The administrative team at Norton feels these areas have significantly helped in achieving high levels of academic excellence.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Norton Elementary is committed to maintaining highly effective Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Our grade level PLCs are comprised of teachers within a grade level, administrators, the guidance counselor, Goal Clarity Coach, and interventionists/specialists that work with the grade level. Weekly these professionals work collaboratively to share best practices, review data, and discuss strategies to help all of our students learn better. Four key questions guide the actions of our PLCs: 1). What do we expect students to learn? 2). How will we know if they are learning? 3). How will we respond if students aren't learning? and 4). What will we do if students are already proficient? By keeping these four questions at the forefront of our efforts, Norton educators are able to work more effectively to meet the needs of all students. We believe that if our school is supported by these highly effective PLCs, our students will have the greatest opportunity for success through learning at a rigorous level.

Each grade level and special area teachers have 50 minutes of common planning time daily at Norton. This allows teams to meet at least once a week in PLCs. During these PLC meetings, the teams review assessment and student data. These assessments include district Proficiencies and teacher created common assessments. The PLC discusses both academics and social skills/behaviors of students. The team identifies strategies to implement for student success, whether academically or socially. Teams discuss common practices such as: cooperative learning, differentiated instruction, implementation of technology, and any additional resources that may enhance student learning. They discuss and share what instructional strategies are most effective for given grade level expectations. The teams also consider supplemental instructional resources and opportunities they may want to provide for their grade level and content areas. PLCs explore various learning methods to reach the needs of all learners. They determine if certain students require further, deeper instruction through interventions. PLCs will decide which specific intervention(s) will be utilized for each student in both Tier 2 and Tier 3. The team refers any social/emotional concerns to the counselor for further evaluation.

Through much research, practice, and professional development, we have come to realize that our staff works better as a team than individually. Norton teachers understand the paradigm shift from teaching to learning, and instead of “my” students, they refer to “our” students. This is a direct result of the learning that has taken place in our building surrounding the PLC process. This has shaped our culture and it is now a culture of learning where every educator is committed to high levels of learning for each and every student.