

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Ms. Mary Bliss

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

Official School Name Farmland Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 7000 Old Gate Road

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

City Rockville State MD Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 20852-4456

County Montgomery County

Telephone (240) 740-0660 Fax _____

Web site/URL <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/farlandes/> E-mail Irma_Mendez@mcpsmd.org

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. Jack Smith E-mail Jack_Smith@mcpsmd.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Montgomery County Public Schools Tel. (301) 279-3381

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. Michael Durso
(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):
- 133 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 39 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 25 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 197 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

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

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	89	75	164
1	68	72	140
2	63	64	127
3	63	57	120
4	62	48	110
5	53	41	94
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	398	357	755

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 32 % Asian
 - 5 % Black or African American
 - 9 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 48 % 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: 20%

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	72
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	69
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	141
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	699
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.202
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	20

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 33 %
225 Total number ELL

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

Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Bahasa, Belarusian, Bengali, Betawi, Brazilian, Bulgarian, Catalan, Chinese (Mandarin), Czech, Dutch, Farsi, French, German, Ghanaian, Greek, Hebrew, Hindi, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Kannada, Khmer, Korean, Macedonian, Malayalam, Newari, Oriya, Persian, Pilipino, Portuguese, Punjabi, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Sinhala, Slovakian, Sourashtra, Spanish, Swahili, Swedish, Tagalog, Tamil, Telugu, Thai, Turkish, Ukrainian, Urdu, Vietnamese

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 7 %
Total number students who qualify: 50
8. Students receiving special education services: 9 %
58 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.

- 5 Autism
- 0 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 0 Emotional Disturbance
- 0 Hearing Impairment
- 12 Mental Retardation
- 1 Multiple Disabilities
- 0 Orthopedic Impairment
- 8 Other Health Impaired
- 10 Specific Learning Disability
- 11 Speech or Language Impairment
- 0 Traumatic Brain Injury
- 0 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
- 17 Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 4
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	34
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	13
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	11
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	8

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 23:1
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%	95%	95%	95%	95%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

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

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.
Yes _ No X

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

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

The mission of Farmland Elementary is to prepare students to become responsible, productive citizens and creative problem solvers. Staff, students, and parents will work collaboratively to foster a community of mutual respect.

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

Farmland Elementary School is located in Rockville, Maryland, in the heart of Montgomery County. Its proximity to the National Institutes of Health, as well as relative distance to research and diplomatic facilities in Washington, DC, brings families from around the world to our school for varying periods of time. This has produced a diverse culture with unique resources available to our school. Farmland's student demographics are a little more than half the population are boys, almost 33% percent of the students are English Limited Learners (ELL), and the students live in a variety of housing that includes large single-family homes as well as apartments.

The land on which Farmland Elementary School is located has a rich history paralleling the founding of our nation. In 1632, it was part of a Charter granted to George Calvert, the first Lord Baltimore, by Charles I of England. In 1776, Montgomery County was established. On part of the Riley Plantation within the present Old Farm neighborhood, lived Josiah Henson, - a slave, who later, through the writings of Harriet Beecher Stowe, became known as "Uncle Tom". Today, within a mile of Farmland Elementary School, is a restored cabin from the old plantation, regarded by many as "Uncle Tom's Cabin".

Over the years the area transformed from a working farm to a housing development in 1961. In September 1963, Farmland Elementary School opened with 708 students. The enrollment increased greatly over the years but fell again in the 1980s. Therefore, Farmland was merged with Congressional Elementary School. Then, in 2008, an addition of a gymnasium and 14 classrooms was completed, and the portable classrooms were removed. The year of 2009 found Farmland Elementary School moving to a "holding school" for two years while renovations were completed to the "old" section of the building. The present building was completed in 2011, with modern features such as Promethean Boards and eco-friendly elements like insulating plants on the roof.

Farmland Elementary challenges and nurtures many facets of each student. The focus on Growth Mindset has become a fundamental key to the success of the school in the last couple of years. Growth mindset words of wisdom are shared with the children during the morning announcements. Each morning, the Principal shares a daily message on "how to be a good friend and a good citizen" on the TV Studio 5th grade Video Voyageurs announcements which is projected throughout the school. Each Monday the announcements have a segment called "Mindset Mondays" in which teachers and students share growth mindset strategies and activities. Growth Mindset is part of the staff professional development and the center of a book study on the Carol Dweck text, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*.

Throughout the week and school year, activities exemplify the school's motto "Together We Can." This includes the administration, PTA, and staff members who build strong relationships to foster a sense of cohesiveness for academic and social advancement of children. Students are encouraged to participate in school and PTA functions in which administration, staff, students, and families can enjoy activities and increase knowledge and skills. The onsite independent before and after school care is closely involved in these events. Some of these school and PTA function include: grade level Family Fun Nights (to build friendships and relationships); Fall into Fitness Night (furnishes the opportunity to move together doing yoga, climbing walls, and many other physical activities); Take Your Parent to School Night (an interactive evening for students to share and participate in curricula learning throughout the year); International Night gives (the occasion to shine spotlights on cultures through performances and informational booths); Geography Bowl (to honor the importance of knowing the world); Spelling Bee; and a Science Fair (with visiting judges from NIH and the community as part of the STEM emphasis in learning).

To create meaningful emotional connections, the school counselor teaches monthly lessons on character development and socio-personal relationships. She also conducts 8-week "lunch bunches" on topics such as social skills, anger management, and anxiety reducing strategies. She leads our Positive Behavior and Intervention Strategies (PBIS) program which emphasizes positive proactive and reflective practices rather than a disciplinary or consequence based approach. She supervises a mentoring program between staff and identified students. Students are matched with an adult to boost the child's connection with a caring adult. Farmland Elementary has a decorated Buddy Bench on the playground where students feeling left out or

lonely can sit and be voluntarily approached by a congenial child. Our school has three Learning for Independence (LFI) special education classes filled with highly impacted students of varying abilities. The general education students are introduced to these children and friendships are created through Friendship Buddies. LFI, as often as is possible, is merged with the general education classes for special learning opportunities and celebrations.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Farmland Elementary School follows the core curriculum (Curriculum 2.0 or C2.0) developed by Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). Based on Maryland's Common Core State Standards, MCPS C2.0 is constructed with Universal Design for Learning Strategies and 21st Century Thinking and Academic Success Skills, known as TASS. Curriculum 2.0 provides weekly Essential Questions, Enduring Understandings, structured sample lessons, TASS lessons, and online resources for the four core curriculum areas in all grades--kindergarten through fifth.

The learning standards that Farmland focuses on school-wide are outlined in our School Improvement Plan (SIP) Goals which address elevating students' writing to demonstrate reading comprehension and mathematics understanding and reasoning. Our math goals were identified in our data as areas of need, because on Partnership for Academic Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) assessments, Claim C-Reasoning requires students to explain one's thinking and reasoning with academic language. Farmland also has an equity goal targeted for our diverse population. Teachers foster a growth mindset during teaching and learning at all grade levels, which reinforces perseverance, effort, and goal setting.

For Farmland's SIP goals in reading, students must demonstrate proficiency by writing in response to reading. Students are required to write prose constructed responses after reading various texts on PARCC assessments. PARCC rubrics are used as a tool to ensure complete responses with effective development, clear understanding, and relevant text evidence.

Farmland uses a balanced literacy approach to teach foundational skills in reading/English language arts based on Fountas and Pinnell's leveled texts' gradient. They use the research-based approach from Words Their Way: Phonics, Vocabulary, and Spelling Instruction. Phonemic awareness and phonics are taught to all beginner readers, including English Language Learners (ELLs) in a developmental format. Writing workshop based on the work of Lucy Calkins and Curriculum 2.0 lessons provide structured guided writing instruction.

In mathematics, MCPS C2.0 emphasizes use of manipulatives to model foundational skills in a concrete manner, followed by pictorial representations of math concepts. Lessons build a depth of understanding for strong mathematics foundations before teaching abstract concepts and algorithms. Math vocabulary and alternate problem-solving strategies are provided to foster fluency and flexibility of thinking. Student discourse is incorporated at every grade level. MCPS lessons offer hands-on experiences, enrichment opportunities, and online Curriculum 2.0 resources for both students and teachers. Pearson's Math Investigations kits are also used in kindergarten to supplement Curriculum 2.0. Teachers supplement with short videos on sites such as Brain Pop.

MCPS Curriculum 2.0 introduces earth and space sciences in addition to life sciences in kindergarten through second as its foundation for science. The study of physical science begins in first grade while engineering and technology begins in third. MCPS science kits are delivered every marking period to Farmland to support scientific research and hands-on experiments for our STEM program. Teachers utilize Discovery Education videos to enhance the MCPS learning tasks and other online resources. Our school district also provides an opportunity for all students to experience the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundations (MAEF) mobile science lab, where students investigate state environmental issues without leaving school property.

For social studies, teachers begin with civic learning to discuss how school and community rules promote orderliness, fairness, and safety. Classrooms create their own mission statements and classroom rules. Students describe responsibilities and rights of being a member of Farmland's learning community. Our MCPS Curriculum 2.0 is culturally responsive. It integrates these connections into learning tasks that establish a culture of respect for our diverse population. Farmland often has multiple native languages spoken in one classroom, so teaching and learning must enhance students' knowledge and appreciation of

other racial and ethnic groups. Online MCPS lessons for civics, culture, history, economics, and geography are taught from kindergarten through fifth grades, and utilize books, flip charts, and videos.

Our Student Government Association (SGA) inspires students to make a difference by engaging the student body in school-wide community projects. One such project collected classroom library books for our MCPS “sister” school, applying civic commitment that authentically connects to curriculum.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

All grades--kindergarten through fifth--as well as our special education population in the Learning for Independence (LFI) K-5 classes, have music, art, and physical education classes. These specialists also utilize our MCPS Curriculum 2.0., and can conceptualize how their content aligns with instruction for the general education grade-level teams.

The county's rigorous curriculum for each area, based on Maryland State Standards, provides a Marking Period Overview to highlight connections to the core subjects' curriculum. Both specialists and classroom teachers are encouraged to plan integrated units. Curriculum 2.0 has a sharing feature where hundreds of teachers within MCPS can collaboratively join peers as an online professional learning community.

For the visual arts, students not only create art but also respond to art in kindergarten through fifth grade. Students are assessed in those two areas and receive report card grades. In first through fifth grades, students analyze art by describing and interpreting themes in artworks. Teachers' instruction includes the use of the Promethean board and videos to present concepts. Art work is displayed in Farmland's display cases all year. As for the performing arts, kindergarten students are taught and assessed on performing, reading, and responding to music from standards developed with the National Association for Music Education. In grades one through five, students learn how to notate and analyze music, plus create and perform music. Concerts throughout the year showcase fifth graders' performances. Fourth and fifth graders have opportunities to study a band or orchestra instrument while other students learn to play triangles, xylophones, and glockenspiels at an early age. Two grants written by our music teacher purchased adaptive mallets, instruments, and teaching materials to make C2.0 more accessible for our mainstreamed LFI students.

During physical education classes, PE teachers' instruction not only focuses on movement skills and concepts, but also personal and social responsibility along with other health-enhancing physical fitness activities. These three areas are taught and assessed in kindergarten through fifth grade. As students are learning to work effectively with others in physical activity settings, they build and maintain relationships which develop a positive sense of community for all. In fifth grade, students examine and compare muscular strength and endurance while other grade levels perform aerobic and flexibility activities. PE instruction enhances heart-related fitness components at every grade level which will lead to a healthier lifestyle. One annual event for charity which is woven into the PE classes is the Jump Rope for Heart fundraiser that all students enjoy. Teachers use adapted PE resources for our LFI students found in our MCPS curriculum. Even though no foreign language program is taught at Farmland, the diverse population provides an authentic immersion program with children from around the world. There are eighty-three different languages spoken here, ranging from Amharic, Bengali, and Chinese to more common languages such as Hebrew, Spanish, and Korean. Teachers often label parts of the classroom in different languages to provide a welcoming environment for our international children.

Technology instruction, based on the Maryland School Library Media State Curriculum, is delivered in kindergarten through fifth by our Media Specialist in the media center. She supports classroom teaching and provides instruction on research practices and safe use of online sites and internet safety, as well as introducing students to new digital platforms, databases, and eBooks. Farmland has a Media Assistant who supports the technology operation for teachers and students throughout the week, and the ITT specialist supports the building once a week. Health and nutrition are online components for every classroom. Teachers access quarterly lessons for personal safety and lifelong wellness. Their instruction focuses on healthy attitudes plus behaviors and skills to reduce stress. Disease prevention strategies and the effects of tobacco are taught in conjunction with Maryland State Department of Health Education Standards. Family life with human sexuality for fifth graders are also taught by classroom teachers.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Our kindergarten classrooms and grades one through five switch classes for reading so that each teacher only has four guided reading groups. (Fourth and fifth grades are departmentalized by core subjects.) This allows each student to receive daily reading instruction. Tiered instruction is evident, as teachers plan for both whole group and small guided reading groups based on students' running records data. The reading block includes independent reading to build stamina and meaningful follow-up while teachers meet with small groups. All students rotate through literacy centers or work independently on written response questions. Leveled texts and classroom libraries are culturally relevant for our diverse students. There are also two part-time Reading Initiative teachers who lower class size in the primary grades by pulling out small groups of students for guided reading instruction.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Farmland wants every child to come to school each day happy and eager to learn. Quarterly Celebration Assemblies are held in which each child will receive a meaningful certificate of achievement focused on their growth through perseverance, effort, or self-discipline. The Principal also recognizes and celebrates two students as Kindness Heroes for their above and beyond demonstration of empathy, caring, kindness, and positivity. During these assemblies, students are encouraged to reach beyond the standard cognitive expectations and expand their minds and emotions through videos, performances, or talks about growth mindset. Farmland introduced "The Power of Yet" as a common theme throughout the school. Students are encouraged to use positive self-talk; for example, by adding the word "yet" as in "I can't do it--YET!" This simple addition helps change the student's mindset and breaks the pattern of negativity.

Students earn PBIS-based Sparky Tickets (small yellow or blue squares) for individual or group recognition for following the Farmland Three: Being Respectful, Responsible, and Safe. Sparky Tickets can be redeemed for either individual rewards (such as pencils, lunch with the teacher, or to be the Principal's Helper) or group Sparky Party celebrations (such as extra recess, movie with popcorn, or a STEM activity).

The Principal believes it is of fundamental importance to create a positive and respectful environment where every staff member feels appreciated and valued, and their opinions are taken into account. Staff at Farmland work under a shared leadership model. Throughout the year, social events--such as breakfasts, lunches, treats, hot chocolate and cider bars--are provided to recognize staff's hard work and dedication. Birthdays, weddings, and births are acknowledged at monthly rotating team level breakfasts through the social committee. The social committee also coordinates assistance to staff members who have personal or family medical issues. At staff meetings, names are drawn for selected gifts, such as an assigned parking space or a "free hour". Staff members show appreciation for each other by completing personal WOW slips to be posted in the staff lounge. In the staff newsletter, Focus on the Farm, the principal shares the importance of balanced living, as well as a section on individual staff members called The Spotlight On... In the section, "Caught in the Act of Greatness", effective and innovative staff practices or strategies are highlighted.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Encouraging family and community participation is another area where the school theme, Together We Can, is highlighted. The school and PTA work closely together to reach out to the surrounding community and business partners. For academic support from the general community, Farmland initiated "Bullis Buddies." High school students from Bullis School, a co-educational college preparatory day school, come to Farmland bi-weekly to tutor students. The program has been well-received and exceedingly successful. Farmland also partners with local restaurants to host fundraising events to benefit the school's academic programs. A portion of the evening's proceeds is donated to Farmland.

Farmland also offers monthly walk-through tours to prospective parents. These are particularly well attended by parents bringing children from other countries. In addition, due to the high mobility rate and large percentage of ELL students, the ELL team holds an annual Back to School Night, providing information and interpreters for new families to educate them on the expectations and culture of the school. To keep families up to date on school events and curricular foci, each grade level team, specialists team, and the ELL team provide monthly newsletters. The ELL team includes explanation of Federal Holidays, highlights interesting and educational local points of interest, and explains cultural practices.

The principal sends out the monthly Barnyard Bulletin to keep the community up-to-date on Farmland's many activities, accomplishments, and educational programs and opportunities. In addition, the Principal sends a Weekly Principal Connect ED letter informing families to share relevant timely information and events for the coming week. Parents are invited and encouraged to take part in the School Improvement

Plan (SIP) committee. In addition, the principal holds a monthly Principal's Coffee. Each month has a different theme ranging from welcoming new families, sharing the SIP and academic data, teaching growth mindset, and ensuring internet safety for children.

Teachers hold Parent-Teacher Conferences in November and parents are encouraged to email, phone, or set up additional meetings throughout the year to discuss the child's progress. All family correspondence is replied to within twenty-four hours. Grade level teams send home quarterly newsletters outlining the curriculum indicators for all core subjects. The teams also send monthly or weekly emails to provide specific information and events for that time frame.

Families are encouraged to volunteer in a manner convenient for them, including working with small groups of students, preparing materials at home, attending field trips, or volunteering in the lunchroom, playground, book rooms, or Media Center.

3. Professional Development:

The Core Team (Principal, Assistant Principal, Staff Development Teacher, and Reading Specialist) is invited to quarterly principal curriculum update meetings for macro- and micro-learning experiences. System initiatives, such as equity training, standards-based grading, guided reading, instructional coaching, and changes in academic programs are rolled out in a trainer-of-trainer model.

A crucial part of the SIP is the year-long professional development (PD) action plan advanced by the principal with concurrence from the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) and staff. Teachers' needs are met through different PD topics and settings to build staff capacity. At Farmland, two staff meetings are scheduled each month to provide ongoing, job-embedded professional development. The first Tuesday is devoted to macro-learning experiences aligned to our school improvement plan (SIP) and is facilitated by different ILT members. Each meeting has an equity focus or growth mindset strategy to apply in the classroom for micro-learning. Participant learning (Guskey's Level 2) data is gathered after each PD session. The third Tuesday of the month is devoted to a second staff meeting for analyzing student work aligned with the SIP goals. Grade level teams examine student work to come to a common understanding of proficiency based on county rubrics. ELL, special education teachers, and Core Team members join various grade level teams to contribute to these discussions. By the end of the meetings, grade levels have had the opportunity to identify patterns of students' misunderstanding or lack of knowledge to plan adjustment for their follow-up instruction.

On the second Tuesday, the ILT meets to review and analyze multiple sources of data and to determine next steps for professional development in a shared leadership approach. Farmland planning templates, peer visits, teachers' reflections and learning from staff meetings and teacher/student voice surveys are discussed as ways to move staff forward. Differentiated staff meetings are planned at this time. The ILT monitors student progress, instructional practices, and steps toward school improvement.

The Core Team meets regularly to discuss the big picture for the year, timing and implementation of county and school initiatives, student data, staff input, and new and struggling teacher supports. The Core Team reads professional texts, such as *Got Data? Now What? Creating and Leading Cultures of Inquiry*, to refine teams' data discussion protocols, improve instructional use of data, and develop plans to build stronger professional learning communities.

4. School Leadership:

The Principal is key to creating and clearly communicating a vision for the school that will lead to greater student achievement and development of staff in accomplishing this vision. The Principal is a strong advocate of the philosophy of shared leadership and the inverted leadership hierarchy in which administration supports staff to be successful in supporting and guiding our students. A believer of the importance of the "collective brain," the Principal empowers each staff member to be an active voice in decision-making, either directly or through working with the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT). The Instructional Leadership Team focuses on teaching and learning, equity, and social-emotional goals. The

staff approves the SIP, and the ILT continues throughout the year to monitor and assess progress of the data, implementation of county initiatives, and continued staff development needs.

Grade level teams meet regularly for long-range quarterly planning and curriculum study. They also collaboratively plan weekly for all content areas. The Principal meets weekly with each grade level team for Academic Intervention Meetings (AIMs) to examine student progress, identify strengths and weaknesses, recognize patterns, and determine and plan appropriate interventions.

The Principal meets weekly with the Special Education Team including the Learning for Independence (LFI) Teachers, Resource Special Education Teacher, Speech Teachers, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, Psychologist, and 504 Coordinator to review and plan special education meetings. The principal chairs these meetings with the assistant principal as backup.

The Administration meets monthly for an Operations Committee Meeting focused on the operations of the school. This committee is comprised of the Building Service Manager, Administrative Secretary, Food Services Manager, an union representative from both the teaching professional staff and supporting service professional staff, Transportation Supervisor, assistant principal and principal.

The professional growth and fulfillment of individual staff career goals is critical for the school. Administration offers opportunities and resources for all staff to gain additional skills and attend trainings and conferences to advance their goals, and engage in peer observations both within and without the school. Administration completes the county Professional Growth Evaluation system of informal and formal observations and evaluations, assigns key staff to work with staff, and collaborates closely with Consulting Teachers.

The Administration works closely with the PTA (President, Board, and Chairs) to build strong school-home relationships and plans activities to make Farmland a focal point of the community and a welcoming environment for all.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Our academic success is mainly due to strong first teaching, as teachers diligently examine data at weekly collaborative team planning meetings. The instructional cycle of assess, plan, instruct, and reteach often provides students with a “double-dose” of instruction. The use of appropriate intervention strategies reinforces teaching and learning, as well as having extra support by para-educators. Grade level weekly Collaborative Action Plan meetings with administration examine root causes and assumptions that result in narrowing instructional gaps.

Teachers embrace a culture of professional growth through use of strategies from our equity and diversity training. They greet students by name and make personal connections as students enter the classrooms; the teachers’ body language and expressions convey messages that all students are important and capable. Classrooms are student-centered and culturally responsive, which is key because of the many different cultures represented in each classroom. Our SIP goal of fostering a growth mindset in all students from kindergarten to fifth has been actively adopted school-wide by teachers who work creatively to change their students’ mindsets.

A few years ago, Farmland made the decision to focus on the critical thinking components of understanding and reasoning to enrich students’ thinking and problem solving skills. This focus and exposure has led to increased academic success for students and will benefit them for their lifetimes. All students are expected to demonstrate such academic success skills as persistence and intellectual risk-taking. Creative thinking is fostered by explicit instruction on flexibility, originality, and fluency. Metacognition, evaluation, and elaboration are also taught explicitly. Each one is sequentially introduced to age-appropriate grade levels throughout the year which results in a cohesive implementation school-wide.

Collaboration is explicitly taught to engage all students in the learning process. Equitable classroom practices are regularly implemented to build relationships with students. For example, to ensure that all students are called on during class, teachers utilize a variety of strategies, including calling sticks and numbered heads. Students have benefited from the implementation of Talk Moves. The teachers provide many opportunities for students to share their thinking with partners and heterogeneous table groups, as well as expand upon or agree/disagree with other viewpoints. Oral rehearsals enable all students to enhance their language development and writing skills. Teachers seek to create risk-free environments in which students understand that mistakes are necessary steps to learning and not to be ashamed of making.