

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 Ms. Barbara A. Neilly M.Ed

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

Official School Name Connors-Emerson School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 11 Eagle Lake Road

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

City Bar Harbor State ME Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 04609-1043

County Hancock

Telephone (207) 288-3631 Fax (207) 288-3597

Web site/URL http://www.barhbr.com E-mail bneilly@mdirss.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. Marc Gousse Ed.D E-mail mgousse@mdirss.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Bar Harbor School District Tel. (207) 288-5040

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mrs. Kristi Losquadro
(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):
- 8 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 9 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	20	22	42
1	20	21	41
2	8	29	37
3	20	12	32
4	19	22	41
5	21	20	41
6	25	23	48
7	22	24	46
8	26	22	48
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	181	195	376

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 5 % Asian
 - 3 % Black or African American
 - 3 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 86 % White
 - 2 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2015 – 2016 school year: 8%

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	18
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	10
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	28
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	366
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.077
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	8

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 19 %
Total number students who qualify: 70

8. Students receiving special education services: 19 %
70 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.

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

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 25
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	25
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	26
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	17
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

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	95%	95%	95%	94%	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 X No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2004

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

CES develops life-long learners by emphasizing academic excellence, meaningful and exciting learning activities, and promotion of global awareness, personal and social responsibility, problem-solving, risk-taking, cooperation and compassion.

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 Conners-Emerson School (CES) is located in the town of Bar Harbor, on Mount Desert Island off the coast of Maine. The year-round population of 5,000 swells to 20,000 during the summer. Bar Harbor is home to two world renowned science labs, the Jackson Laboratory, noted for its genetic research and the Mount Desert Island Biological Lab, a biomedical marine lab studying regeneration of cells. The town also has The College of the Atlantic, a liberal arts college of human ecology and the Abbe Museum, the only Smithsonian affiliate in Maine, which centers on Native American history, culture, art and archaeology. In addition, Acadia National Park borders our town, bringing over two million visitors annually to our island.

The local economy is primarily based on the tourist and fishing industries, which employs the majority of parents as skilled or semi-skilled workers. Parents are also employed as professionals in the fields of education, health care and scientific research. Distinct cultural differences stem from the wide range of socio-economic backgrounds and family traditions that exist on the island.

With an enrollment of 376 students in grades K-8, CES has a somewhat diverse student body. Although the ethnic majority is white, 14% of our students who share different ethnic backgrounds. We have students who are bilingual and trilingual representing a variety of countries and cultures. Those countries' celebrations and traditions are shared in the classrooms and school throughout the year. One in five of our students' qualifies for free and reduced lunch status. In addition, 19% of our students receive special education services, with 14 % of our students identified for Gifted and Talented programs.

Our reputation for a dedicated and hardworking staff is well known, with fifty-four percent of our faculty who have advanced degrees or, are certified as Master Level Teachers. Throughout the years, we have often been sought after for collaboration with innovative grants, such as the National Science Foundation's Beacon Grant and the Maine Learning Technology Initiative (MLTI). In addition, we work closely with the University of Maine and the College of the Atlantic with pre-service teachers.

Since being named a 2004 Blue Ribbon School, our teachers have been working on deepening and expanding standards based teaching and learning. This has brought new rigor and challenge to our students in all academic subjects and specials area. We have continued with our pursuit of excellence. During the last five years, we have been awarded several grants including working with Dr. Ross Greene on Collaborative Problem Solving and the Perloff Foundation in the area of STEM education. Our teachers continue to attend and present at local, regional and national conferences, including presenting at the International Literacy Association Conference in 2015.

Our students consistently are recognized at the state and national level for their academic and performing arts achievements. In the past year, our Jazz Band was first in the state of Maine, our Math Team was 4th in the state, our Robotics Team placed 1st in programming in regionals and 1st for Teamwork at states. Nationally we have students recognized in Scholastic Writing and the American Math Competition.

We have expanded our academic and co-curricular offerings to meet the needs and interests of all of our students, giving them the options of taking advanced classes such as: geometry and AP French, as well as co-curricular offerings in the performing arts and athletics. Currently, 98% of our 5-8 graders participate in after school activities. From Destination Imagination to the Outdoors club, students are involved in our school.

As a school, we continue to challenge our thinking by looking at different ways in which to engage students through expeditionary and service learning units of study. Currently our seventh grade is working on an expeditionary learning unit (interdisciplinary and place-based), which will be exploring the effects of climate change on Mount Desert Island.

Our teachers are committed to the social, emotional and academic well-being of each student. We work as a team to ensure that each students' needs are being met, they are being appropriately challenged and supports are in place to foster success. Teachers work hard to design lessons, activities, units and assessments that

are standards-based, collaborative in nature and engaging, incorporating a variety of learning styles and integrated higher order thinking skills. Teachers have opportunities to participate in professional development in all content areas/grade spans as well as meeting with peers during teacher professional days, Professional Learning Community (PLC) time and team meetings. Our district and teachers are focusing teacher improvement plans/recertification around the ten elements of Effective Instruction and how, when woven into their craft, improve upon student achievement.

Historically, our mission has been and continues to be to have students leave the Connors-Emerson School as independent learners, confident in their abilities to participate in the wider communities in which they live. We have accomplished this through fostering a positive school culture and creating a sense of connectedness to the school community for all students.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

The Connors Emerson School, along with all other schools in the MDI Regional School System, has adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for Math and ELA, identifying Foundation, Focus and Graduation Standards from the CCSS for Math and ELA and the CCSS Literacy Anchor Standards for Science, Social Studies and Technical Subjects.

Our lower elementary teachers focus on developing each student's sense of wonder, imagination, observation and listening skills: assisting students to develop good learning habits and routine: and coaching students to become productive members of the school and classroom community. Students in the upper elementary grades and middle school actively build on foundational skills and content in the areas of reading, writing and math and engage in a purposeful scope and sequence in the areas of science and social studies.

K-2 reading instruction is divided equally between developing foundational skills in reading (print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, fluency) and strengthening reading comprehension of fiction and nonfiction text. Teachers use research-based materials and approaches developed by Fountas and Pinnell and Wilson (Foundations). Reading instruction in the upper elementary grades and middle school include whole group, small group and individual reading of a wide range of fiction and nonfiction within the context of a reading workshop model.

All students in grades K-8 are actively engaged in using the Teachers College Writing Units of Study, a research-based writing workshop approach that introduces and reinforces opinion/argument, informative and narrative writing. Students use their writing skills to write restaurant reviews, write personal letters to authors, construct biographies on their heroes, as well as integrating writing into all other areas of the curriculum.

Math instruction is aligned with the CCSS and is based on four elements: developing conceptual understanding, strategies, fluency and multi-step problem solving. In grades K-4, teachers use the Stepping Stones program along with a math menu approach for differentiation and skills practice. Students in grades 5-8 use a curriculum based upon EngageNY and emphasize problem-solving and real world application.

Our school has adopted the Next Generation Science Standards that provide a framework of disciplinary core ideas, science and engineering practices and crosscutting concepts. We have established community partnerships with the Jackson Laboratory, the MDI Biological Laboratory, College of the Atlantic and Acadia National Park to further enhance our students' scientific experiences and learning. With a focus on Science-Technology-Engineering-Arts-Math (STEAM), we are able to enrich all other content areas such as collaborating with Art to create models of silicone chocolate molds constructed with the help of our 3-D printers and creating learning experience in step with the Climate to Thrive initiative on our island.

Our robust Social Studies curriculum focuses on both the immediate world around us and a more global outlook, providing learning experiences that will promote thoughtful, engaged participants in our democracy. In the lower elementary grades, teachers focus on community building and the importance of being a good citizen of the class, school and community. In the upper elementary grades, the focus is on the use of topics to understand and practice the skills needed for research and civic engagement. In middle school, the students focus on topics through the lenses of geography, economics, civics and government and history.

To encourage civic engagement, our teachers and students design and implement both Service Learning Projects and expeditionary, place-based units within the school and in collaboration with our community partnerships. These cross-curricular projects focus on creative problem solving along with essential student input on the project direction, research, modes of communication and end product of the units. Current and recent examples include an informative website for visitors to Bar Harbor created by third graders, the

seventh graders are participating in an expedition to learn about their carbon footprints along with the local Climate to Thrive Initiative, and a public service announcement for Acadia National Park about the importance of preserving the peregrine falcon nesting grounds using a QR code that was created by our Robotics Team.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Students in grades K-8 have art class an average of 40 minutes/week over the course of three trimesters. Students explore different mediums from pottery to sketching while following a specific scope and sequence designed to foster creativity, art appreciation, artistic risk taking and technique.

General music classes are provided for students in grades K-6 for 40 minutes per week with the focus on understanding music and its many forms. All second graders learn to play the violin and have the opportunity to continue with that instrument or choice of other strings in our orchestras for grades 3-4 and 5-8 (30 minute/week individual instrument sectionals and 40 minutes/week orchestra practice). Students in fourth grade and above can choose a band instrument and join the grade 4, 5-6 band or our 7-8 band (30 minute/week individual instrument sectionals and 1-2 40 minute band practices). These musical groups perform a minimum of twice a year for the school and greater community.

Students in our orchestra participate in a district String Festival at our local high school. Students are invited to learn new music, experience being a part of a larger ensemble and perform that evening for the community.

Students in grades 5-8 have the option of joining our chorus and/or the acapella group, the Round Table. Each group meets once a week for 40 minutes and performs for the school and community during school concerts, community events and school talent shows.

The school organizes an annual Music Festival Week that introduces students in grades 7 and 8 to various forms of music and performing. Examples of offerings from our 2017 festival include World Dance, Forming a Band and Introduction to the Steel Drums. The festival lasts 4-5 days for 3 hours in the afternoons, ending in a culminating assembly for the school and community.

Movement and physical education are an important part of our students' day. Our students learn and practice new skills according to the national standards for physical education, benefit from additional movement to help with fitness and focus, and also participate in structured team activities. All students in grades K-8 have two 40 minute/week PE classes per week.

Our full-time School Counselor works with K-5 students on learning and practicing social and emotional skills, e.g. how to be a good friend and community member; making healthy decisions. This class meets for an average of 40 minutes/week for the younger grades and by trimester for the upper elementary grades. The school counselor also arranges speakers for grades 6-8 on current and relevant topics, e.g. college readiness, social networking and civil rights.

Students in grades 5-8 participate in Health classes. These classes are designed to educate the students in making healthy choices about fitness, nutrition, personal hygiene and foster discussions about important issues facing our youth today such as drugs, alcohol, sexual education and mental health.

French instruction begins in third grade, meeting once a week for 40 minutes. Students in grades 5-8 meet twice a week for 40 minutes. Our world language curriculum is aligned with national standards and is designed to move students to the novice high level in the areas of interpersonal communication, writing, listening and reading.

Students meet in our computer labs/library space for a minimum of 40 minutes per week. Depending upon grade level and ability, students work on coding, online safety, keyboarding skills, project design with our 3-D printers, and collaborative projects with other content areas. Our librarian works with students in all grades on research skills, navigating the library and building a love for reading.

Students in grades 5 and 6 have 1 to 1 iPads to use for their classwork. Students in grades 7 and 8 have 1 to 1 laptops supplied by the state through the MLTI program. Students in the younger grades have access to iPads, laptops and the computer lab.

There is a second grade Thinking Skills class that meets once/week for 40 minutes that focuses on thinking out of the box when problem solving, using imagination to develop solutions to problems and approaching problems with an open mind.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

CES uses a Response to Intervention (RTI) model to ensure that students are working with adequate support at the appropriate level of challenge. Tier 1 of our RTI program is quality and effective classroom instruction. Students needing Tier 2 support receive additional targeted assistance either within or outside of the classroom. For our primary grades, Development Reading Assessment (DRA) scores and running records are used as universal screeners in ELA and an early math thinking assessment for math. In grades 3-8, the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) ELA and Math MAP tests are used as a universal screener for our RTI program. Students who score below the 50th%ile are automatically eligible for RTI supports. Targeted support and progress monitoring are available at grades 3-6 through an RTI teacher who has scheduled consultation times with classroom teachers to discuss student progress and the effectiveness of implemented interventions. In grades 7 and 8, additional support is provided through use of adaptive math and reading software. Teachers in grades 7-8 also use the results from the NWEA assessments to aid in student placement with Math, including placement in advanced classes. Using the NWEA scores from Fall to Spring, teachers and administrators are able to determine if students have show a year's worth of growth in ELA and Math.

All K-8 teachers also use a variety of curriculum support software to further differentiate instruction and monitor progress. These include Lexia (word work), ReadLive (fluency/comprehension/vocabulary), ALEKS/IXL/DreamBox (mathematical instruction), Geobra (geometry/advanced mathematics) and other classroom/grade level specifics programs and applications. These programs do not replace teacher instruction, but are used for practice, skill reinforcement and extension.

We also have a sizeable group of students who are very talented and/or who are strong academically. To support differentiation for students who need extra challenge, our Gifted and Talented teacher works with teachers as well as offering advanced and enrichment classes and activities directly to students.

At CES, there is a gap of 12 percentage points in the area of ELA between the whole group scores and the scores of students with IEPs, compared with a gap of 35 percentage points between these groups at the state level. There is also a gap of 10 percentage points in the area of Mathematics between the whole group scores and the scores of students with IEPs, compared with a gap of 26 percentage points between these groups at the state level. In both ELA and Mathematics, CES has been working hard to ensure alignment between instruction offered by classroom teachers and by specialists including special education teachers through use of common materials and frameworks (e.g., Fountas and Pinnell guided reading levels; math exemplars), use of adaptive technology (e.g., Reading Plus, DreamBox) and clarity about standards and expectations (e.g., writing rubrics; math Foundation standards). Specialists are also doing more consultation with teachers on differentiation in the classroom and providing professional development on how to address common concerns through the math, writing and reading workshop model. In addition, there is a greater commitment to ensuring that double-dosing (e.g., Foundations in grades K-2; Tier 2 RTI support for math) is occurring in addition to classroom reading and math instruction in cases when students are able to benefit from direct access to the general curriculum. Special education teachers are included on the grade band teams, where they serve students to facilitate better communication with classroom colleagues who work with the same students. Lastly, there has been a district-wide commitment, which many CES educational technicians have benefited from, to include educational technicians in all professional development related to instruction.

Our teachers are committed to the social, emotional and academic well-being of each student. We work as a team to ensure that each students' needs are being met and that they are being appropriately challenged and

supports are in place to foster success. Teachers work hard to design lessons, activities, units and assessments that are standards-based, collaborative in nature and engaging, incorporating a variety of learning styles and integrated higher order thinking skills. Teachers have opportunities to participate in professional development in all content areas/grade spans as well as meeting with peers during teacher professional days, PLC time and team meetings. Our district and teachers are focusing teacher improvement plans/recertification around Ten Elements of Effective Instruction and how, when woven into their craft, improve upon student achievement.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

CES, though small, has a long standing tradition of connecting students to their passion and interests. The school offers myriad of opportunities for students to explore and experience a wide variety of academics, athletics and the performing arts. Last year, 98% of our grade 5-8 students were involved in outside co-curricular or extracurricular activities.

Each student is known by teachers, administrators, and staff. Students are acknowledged in the hallways, asked about their weekends, and encouraged throughout the day. CES students are engaged and have a voice. They routinely problem solve school issues, through the Civil Rights Group, Kids for Kindness, Student Council and the Young Humanitarian Society.

Teachers at all grade levels are encouraged to integrate choices, challenge and community building into teaching and learning across content areas. The school hosts many young, energetic student teachers and interns from College of the Atlantic who focus on making connections and who are greatly enjoyed by the students. The librarian works with many community partners to bring in authors and illustrators several times a year to meet with students and hosts a Business of Reading Day, when people throughout the community come to read a favorite story to students.

Students with disabilities are included in the life of the school and are well-accepted by their peers. The school holds an annual Special Needs Awareness Day that brings all students together to learn more about what their peers with disabilities face on a daily basis and to hear from an inspirational speaker who has overcome barriers to accomplish life goals.

Our academic co-curricular offerings currently include robotics, math team, solar cars, chess club and literary magazine. Students in the middle grades have elective afternoons when they can choose interesting activities such as 3-D printing, video editing, or learning an instrument. These afternoons are designed to build community and encourage teamwork.

Students are given multiple opportunities to connect with students of different ages. Reading buddies begin in kindergarten, and intermediate level classrooms partner with primary classrooms, for many activities throughout the year. Middle school students are encouraged to be Art and PE helpers, library aides, and mentors.

Teachers are also encouraged to explore their interests and passions, through the development of curriculum, and continued education through university classes, webinars, conferences and workshops. During the summer, teachers are able to write ‘instructional grants’ which allows a teacher to be paid to study or to work with colleagues to create new units of study. Teachers are encouraged and expected to observe in other classrooms, collaborate between grades/subject areas, and meet with grade span colleagues weekly, all of which help create a sense of community.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

We have a strong commitment to engage with our school families and the community at large. We strive for clear and consistent communication with our families. The school uses traditional approaches such as: the weekly school newsletter, school/ classroom websites, as well as parent and student-led conferences. School Messenger is used for mass emails or robocalls to keep our parents informed in a timely manner. Our monthly school board meetings are held at the school, which allow easy access for parents, teachers, students and community members to attend and often present.

The long cherished traditional events, which bring out the entire community include our Halloween Parade, with students, teachers and parents dressing up, as we march through town behind the school band; the annual March on Mount Desert Street, a community progressive dinner hosted by the local non-profits,

after attending a student play presented at the Abbe Museum, and our music concerts which are held throughout the year and are televised on our local cable channel.

The Open House in the fall is well attended by both families and community members, giving everyone a peek into the great things happening within our school. The local newspaper, the MDI Islander, and the school have developed a positive relationship, inviting reporters to join us for all of our events both inside and outside the classroom. These events include activities such as Geography Bees, poetry celebrations, author visits, athletic events and highlighting the many accomplishments of our students.

Conners-Emerson's Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA), sponsors arts night, elementary science fairs and pertinent parent talks. The PTSA also links the school with area businesses and non-profits. During each season, the school's PTSA offers activities which celebrate the season, such as holiday arts and crafts.

Our students and staff are well immersed in our local community. Over the years we have pioneered and partnered programs with the Abbe Museum, a local Native American museum, Acadia National Park, the Appalachian Mountain Club, the College of the Atlantic, the Criterion Theater, the Jackson Laboratory, the Mount Desert Island Bio Lab, Mount Desert Hospital, the University of Maine, the YMCA and YWCA, as well as many small businesses in our community.

We strive to give our students the experience of giving back to the community through many annual activities such as: the Business of Reading, a weeklong event that brings community members into each of the classrooms, sharing the importance of reading and books in their work. During November, students of mixed age groups work together decorating and filling boxes of food, which help to support families in need and the local food bank. In December our school joins the Seacoast Mission gathering toys and clothing. The older students help by loading a truck with gifts and essentials for communities along the Downeast Coast. In addition, we have recently built a school greenhouse, which will become an integral part of our students' education. They will learn how to grow and harvest produce, but also the importance of giving back as we intend to share our summer crop while partnering with the local food bank.

3. Professional Development:

All Conners-Emerson teachers, specialists, administrators and educational technicians actively engage in ongoing professional development at the individual, school and district level to continuously improve teaching and learning in alignment with district and school priorities and to address the needs of students. All Conners-Emerson classroom teachers, specialists and educational technicians participate regularly in multiple professional development opportunities: required common study release days with role-alike peers across district schools; on and off-site workshops; math, writing and reading labsites, district-wide professional development days; online or in-person coursework; district-wide collaboratories; technology and program implementation training. During the 2016-2017 school year thus far (typical of the past three years) Conners-Emerson staff have participated in opportunities related to improving content knowledge (small group reading instruction; science instruction, Foreign Language, Physical Education, literacy through attendance at national and regional conferences), implementing standards-based education (offered by the district), curriculum and instruction (workshops on effective instructional strategies, designing place-based learning, small group reading instruction, use of 3D printing), onsite math labsites and coaching with John Tapper (author of Solving for Why), peer-led math differentiation workshops at district professional development days, training to implement the Foundations program and an onsite American Sign Language course being taken voluntarily by some to prepare for a deaf student who began attending the school this year. The expectation is that teachers and specialists, based on data (assessment results, student growth, student surveys and classroom observation feedback) will reflect on strengths and areas of challenge and, in consultation with their supervisor, will choose options that address specific concerns; meet new expectations for curriculum, instruction and assessment; and deepen or expand current knowledge and skill.

Conners-Emerson teachers also have the opportunity every Monday after school to participate in a one-

hour PLC time with agendas designed by teachers. Additionally, Connors-Emerson teachers are supported to observe role-alike colleagues both at the school and in other schools across the district. There is a lot of professional trust placed in the staff and the level of engagement in offerings suggests that this is well placed. Twenty Connors-Emerson teachers are currently trained as mentors, eight of whom are currently mentoring new teachers. There is the high representation of Connors-Emerson teachers on voluntary district curriculum-related committees, and more than a dozen CES teachers in the past three years have hosted labsites and/or led peer-to-peer professional development on district workshop days.

4. School Leadership:

The Connors-Emerson principal and assistant principal work hard to collaboratively lead the school. The principal and assistant principal are both visible throughout the two buildings and are confident in their roles as instructional leaders. Both often attend professional development with their teachers. Their roles are deliberately overlapping so that both are aware of programming, understand student and family needs, and have relationships with all staff K-8 (as opposed to dividing the school by K-4 and 5-8). This allows them to have maximum flexibility and ensures that one of them is able to attend weekly team meetings with every group of teachers. Teachers are empowered to give feedback and to engage in collaborative problem-solving. The result is a distributed leadership model that ensures that decision making is made closest to the issue at hand. For example, teacher teams have worked closely with the principal and assistant principal to develop solutions for differentiation, connecting older and younger students, creating more common planning time, and completing the greenhouse project. Each year the school selects a school goal, an area where everyone will work to improve teaching and learning, along with what success would look like. Progress is revisited throughout the year.

At one time Connors-Emerson tried a more formal leadership team structure but this resulted in some feeling less empowered and did not result in widespread buy-in to decisions. The current distributed leadership model has proven much more powerful, allowing for weekly opportunities for teacher teams to raise issues, define challenges and brainstorm solutions. The principal worked hard to create a schedule to make this time available.

The staff at Connors Emerson is deeply concerned about the well-being of the students they serve. To that end, leadership structures focus on addressing specific needs as well as continuous improvement. There is a crisis team that meets weekly to discuss how the school will support students and families going through hard times. The team includes the guidance counselor, the nurse, school social worker, school resource officer, assistant principal and the principal and others who might be involved with providing support.

The principal ensures that budgets reflect instructional priorities and focused attention on teaching and learning and uses federal grant monies to provide personnel, enrichment, technology and/or teacher professional development. In addition, the principal and assistant principal work hard to build relationships with families, community service providers, and community organizations.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Our strategy is to simply do ‘Whatever it Takes’. We build relationships with our students and really get to know them. Students who are experiencing challenges are quickly identified and receive appropriate levels and types of support.

Teachers meet in teams with the administration on a weekly basis to discuss students of concern. Plans are developed for each student experiencing challenges. These plans include frequent check-ins, which allow for adjustments as needed. The plans can be formal or informal and allow for varying lengths of time, depending upon the individual. Students are placed according to their needs with the most qualified staff to deliver support services; personnel include- resource room teachers, speech and language clinicians, OT/PT, social worker, behavior, math and reading specialists. The school also works with outside consultants in the areas of behavior, reading and math, who work with our staff to improve delivery of instruction.

Our SST (Student Success Team) includes the administration, School Resource Officer, school nurse, guidance counselor and social worker. The team meets weekly to discuss families and students in crisis. This team is also able to make referrals to local agencies when needed.

The school’s RTI (Response to Intervention) strategies include: in our primary grades focusing on math and literacy with frequent formative assessments. The math and reading specialists are part of the primary weekly team meetings and help monitor students of concern. At the intermediate grades, we have an RTI teacher who works with the classroom teacher identifying students in need. The students meet with the RTI teacher on their deficit skills for short periods of intense instruction. The RTI teacher maintains and reviews data which include the formative assessments, as well as the NWEA (Northwest Evaluation Association). In grades 7-8, the content area teachers work with identified students during study halls and learning labs. Students in grade 3-8 take the NWEA in reading and math in the Fall and Spring. Teachers use this information to plan for instruction and set student goals.

In addition to identifying and supporting struggling learners, we also strive to enrich and challenge students that are on grade level and those that are above. Success looks different for all students and our staff prides itself on looking at students as individuals, targeting their needs and working together as a team to plan for success for every student.