

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

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mr. Chad Schroeder

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

Official School Name Washington Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1200 11th Avenue N.W.

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

City Rochester State MN Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 55901-1715

County Olmsted County

Telephone (507) 328-3800 Fax (507) 287-7846

Web site/URL http://www.rochester.k12.mn.us/washington E-mail chs Schroeder@rochester.k12.mn.us

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

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

Name of Superintendent\*Mr. Michael Munoz E-mail mimunoz@rochester.k12.mn.us  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Rochester Public School District Tel. (507) 328-4500

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 Ms. Julie Workman  
(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**

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The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group and all subgroups, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2017 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2011 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, or 2016.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
9. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
10. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
11. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
12. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2016-2017) unless otherwise stated.

### DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 16 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 4 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 5 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 25 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	3	1	4
K	37	24	61
1	34	24	58
2	40	18	58
3	31	24	55
4	30	29	59
5	36	25	61
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
<b>Total Students</b>	211	145	356

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 12 % Asian
  - 6 % Black or African American
  - 5 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 70 % White
  - 6 % 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: 4%

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	11
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	5
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	16
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	363
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.044
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	4

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

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):  
Anuak, Arabic, ASL Sign Language, Bengali, Cambodian, Chinese/Mandari, Darsi/Farsi, French, Gujarati, Hindi, Italian, Japanese/Ok, Korean, Lao, Laotian, Portugese, Somali, Spanish, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, Vietnamese

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 16 %  
Total number students who qualify: 56
8. Students receiving special education services: 13 %  
46 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.

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

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 3
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	16
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	9
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	15
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	5

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 22:1
12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

<b>Required Information</b>	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012
Daily student attendance	95%	92%	92%	94%	93%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

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

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

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2007

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

Mission: Washington is a Core Knowledge school where children build a solid foundation of essential knowledge, skills, and character which develops well-educated citizens and continuous learners. Vision: Fostering a thirst for knowledge.

**16. For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

District wide schools/programs (Washington Choice) is a school located within Rochester Public Schools that delivers the curriculum in a different manner than our neighborhood schools. Washington Elementary is tuition free to students and transportation is provided to eligible students that are enrolled in Washington. Families must enroll by filling out and submitting an application to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in a few ways. First, families can visit [www.rochester.k12.mn.us/districtwide](http://www.rochester.k12.mn.us/districtwide) and follow the instructions. Fill out the form online and press submit. Secondly, families can print the PDF form and mail or drop it off at the Department of Elementary and Secondary, Edison Administration Building. Third, families can fill out the form either online or in person at the Edison Administration Building. If siblings of students currently attend Washington Elementary, those children will have preference in the selection process. However, families still need to use the same application process listed above. Families will need to indicate on the form that their child has a sibling currently enrolled in Washington Elementary. Students are selected to attend Washington through a randomized computer system that is facilitated by the District office. As mentioned above, any families of incoming kindergartners who have accurately completed the application process and who have siblings that are current Washington students are placed on a sibling preference list.

## **PART III – SUMMARY**

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Washington School is one of five elementary “district-wide” programs in the Rochester Public Schools, a large and diverse district serving approximately 17,500 students in southeastern Minnesota. As an alternative to the curriculum offered in our district’s neighborhood schools, Washington’s curriculum is based on the Core Knowledge Sequence, a solid, sequential body of factual information that balances content with high expectations for mastery of reading, writing, math, and technology skills. Core Knowledge helps our school achieve its mission of building “to inspire, challenge, and empower all students with the knowledge and skills required to reach their full potential to contribute to future generations, and to become involved members of a global community.” Washington serves approximately 360 students in single-grade classrooms, kindergarten through fifth grade. Our curriculum, small school size, low student and staff mobility, focused learning environment, collaborative relationships, academic culture, and strong home-school connections provide a unique mix of essential elements that foster high student achievement and a “thirst for knowledge.”

Core Knowledge is a rich and rigorous body of information in American and world history, geography, science, literature, music and art that builds through the grades to become a solid foundation for life-long learning. The engaging content of exciting historical events, fascinating experiences in nature, magnificent works of art and music, and beautifully-crafted classic literature captivates students’ imaginations and provides models for their own creative expression.

With very few exceptions, students who begin school at Washington as kindergartners stay and complete six years of education through the fifth grade. The size and stability of student and staff populations promotes a focused and productive learning environment that includes accountability, familiarity, and meaningful academic and personal histories. In addition to strong and supportive relationships, the character education program helps provide a school environment that is orderly, respectful and productive. The focus at Washington is on learning.

As a Professional Learning Community, the highly-qualified staff at Washington is deeply committed to delivering the curriculum content and continuously improving instruction. Teachers continually study and align state, district, Core Knowledge, and testing requirements to determine the scope and sequence of instruction. This process results in a deep understanding of curriculum content and high expectations for student achievement. Formative and summative assessment data are analyzed at team, staff, and site leadership meetings and shared holistically at Site Council meetings to monitor student progress, provide differentiated educational opportunities, and ensure high academic achievement for all students.

Members of the Washington learning community have formed very effective collaborative working relationships that reach from home to school and across grade levels to support and address the needs of students. Our school is guided by our Site Leadership, a group of staff who create, promote, and monitor our site goals, develop our measurement and reporting plan, assess our professional development needs and seek feedback from all staff on the resources and support needed to effectively meet our goals. We also have a Site Council, a group of elected parents and teachers who monitor by-laws and provide assistance and feedback to the entire school community. Students are involved in measuring their learning progress and they are held responsible for completing their learning tasks. Parents are informed about school activities and expectations through newsletters, conferences, report cards, websites, Twitter, Facebook and long-range curriculum plans. They are expected to support the students’ completion of regular homework assignments. Parents also have a strong presence as volunteers in the classrooms, as facilitators of enrichment and extracurricular activities (Math Masters, Foreign Language Club, Enrichment Club, Family Fun events), and through participation in PTA activities. The strong home to school connection at Washington supports a culture where achievement is valued and learning is celebrated.

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

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

Washington Elementary School’s language arts curriculum has been chosen based on the latest and most comprehensive research on learning and instruction. In addition to focused instruction emphasizing skill development, reading and writing instruction is woven and supported throughout the school day as students are challenged and engaged by content area reading and writing experiences.

The reading curricula at Washington include five major skill components that are critical to successfully teaching children to read: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension. Skill instruction in each of these areas is presented to students in a scope and sequence that is prioritized to provide appropriate instructional emphasis as readers develop through the elementary years. Early primary grades have a strong focus on phonemic awareness and explicit phonics instruction. Emphasis shifts to fluency, vocabulary and comprehension as students progress.

Our language arts curricula is a combination of the Core Knowledge Sequence, Lucy Calkins Units of Study for Teaching Reading and Read Side by Side’s Collect, Interpret, and Apply (CIA). Our curricula align with the Common Core Standards and emphasize a balance of literary and informational text. Core Knowledge identifies classic children’s literature that exposes students to additional vocabulary and high-quality literary models. Curricula are viewed as resources and are supplemented with technology and teacher-created materials. Staff expertise is fundamental to the planning and implementation of reading instruction at Washington. The experienced staff at Washington has been trained extensively in teaching reading.

Washington’s math program reflects a belief that understanding mathematical concepts, fostering flexible thinking, and mastering computational skills, are essential components that enable students to become effective problem solvers. As part of this, students are expected to communicate their conceptual thinking. Our school’s math curriculum is aligned with the Minnesota Math Standards, and includes content from the Core Knowledge Sequence and the Harcourt Math textbook series.

As stated above, Washington uses the Harcourt Math curriculum for each of our grade levels. In addition to the whole group core math instruction, our primary grade levels have utilized Primarily Math as an enrichment and critical thinking component. At some of the intermediate grade levels, we have imbedded Beyond Traditional Math and Math in Practice that promote project based learning, reasoning puzzles, open ended word problems that encourage conceptual thinking skills and focus on various math concepts. We also have a very successful Math Masters program for all grade levels, but specifically our fifth grade for the past twenty years. Fifth grade parent volunteers run weekly sessions for students from October through April each school year. In Math Masters, students work through a variety of math concepts (i.e. probability and statistics, properties of numbers and logic to name a few) to promote excellence in thinking skills. We are currently in a math articulation process to review our math core curriculum. We are using our current documents that align to the Minnesota state standards and Core Knowledge curriculum as well as research from the National Center for Teaching Mathematics (NCTM), their guided principles, and eight teaching practices to help guide our next steps in teaching mathematics.

The Washington science curriculum is based on the Minnesota Science Standards and the Core Knowledge Sequence. Life science, earth science, physical science and human anatomy are taught at each grade level. The spiraling of science instruction allows students to develop deeper background knowledge and scientific process skills, facts, concepts, and vocabulary. Washington students experience a variety of hands-on learning opportunities through experiments and field trips. Some examples include: Quarry Hill Nature Center, Mayo High School Planetarium, the Mayo Clinic, and the Minnesota Science Museum. Staff are proud to partner with Mayo Clinic employees and other community groups to facilitate real-life experiences.

The Washington social studies curriculum is based on Minnesota Social Studies Standards and the Core Knowledge Sequence. It emphasizes instruction in world history, American history and geography at each grade level. Content in each area is organized in a chronological sequence that also spirals to promote depth

of understanding. For example, the study of Ancient Egypt (grade 1), Ancient Greece (grade 2), Ancient Rome (grade 3), Medieval History (grade 4) and Renaissance (grade 5) follows a chronological path through world history. The studies of the American Revolution (grade 1) and the U. S. Constitution (grade 2) spiral and are taught again at greater depth in fourth grade. By teaching world and American history at each grade, students can make important connections between the ancient and modern worlds.

Service learning is embedded into our curriculum and our school activities through relationships with: Sisters of Assisi Heights, Ronald McDonald house, Women's Shelter, American Cancer Society, Safety Patrol, and Student Council.

Our half day Pre-kindergarten District program was at Washington only during the 2015-2016 school year and identified special education students who needed additional programming prior to their kindergarten year. The curriculum for these students focused on targeted goals and services that were outlined in each student's individual education plan.

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

Test scores, teacher observations, and student portfolios are used to identify students who need additional challenge and enrichment within Gifted Services. As a matter of equity, the scores of all students in grades two through five are reviewed each spring to identify students who would benefit from gifted services.

Washington offers a variety of enrichment and advancement opportunities for gifted and talented students. Primary Education Thinking Skills (PETS) lessons are provided for all students in first grade twice a six-day cycle. PETS classes help students develop critical thinking and problem solving skills at an early age. These experiences are intended to help address inequities that children may have prior to entering school by building the background knowledge, vocabulary, and thinking and collaborative skills of young students. Plans are underway to expand the PETS program to second grade for 2017-2018 academic year.

Pull-out and co-taught classes in language arts/social studies and math/science provide enrichment and accelerated curriculum for identified students in grades three through five. These classes are taught by a gifted specialist two times each six-day cycle and use curriculum specifically designed to challenge gifted and talented students.

Washington's special areas offer essential skills instruction across the curriculum spectrum. All special area teachers collaborate with classroom teachers to develop interdisciplinary units that focus on Core Knowledge content for all students, kindergarten through fifth grade.

In the visual arts, the elements of art: color, line, form, shape, space, light and texture are taught. Students study well-known artists to develop an appreciation of the art masters. Students have multiple opportunities to create artwork using a variety of art media.

The music curriculum includes the study of: music theory, composers, musical styles, historical eras, plus orchestral and world instruments. Vocal music is emphasized with performing and recognizing intervals using Solfege hand signs and syllables. The sequential approach of the Kodaly method through folk song study complements the Core Knowledge curriculum. Students are taught to read, create, and improvise music vocally and instrumentally. Students in grades one through five have opportunities to perform in school musicals and plays.

Our physical education program uses the Rochester Public Schools physical education curriculum. The physical education curriculum focuses on sportsmanship, lifelong fitness, and sports & recreational skills. Students set fitness goals, maintain data, and monitor their progress based on the National standards for Physical Education.

The library media curriculum teaches the ability to access and evaluate print and electronic resources. Library navigation skills are taught to encourage life-long readers. Classroom teachers and the library media specialist work collaboratively to reinforce reading strategies and improve reading comprehension. A

primary goal of the library media specialist is to empower students to be critical thinkers, enthusiastic readers, skillful researchers, and ethical users of information.

All elementary schools within our District operate on a six day letter cycle (A-F). Each day all students are exposed to one of four specialized classes (art, music, physical education, and library media) that are outlined above. Within the six day cycle, students receive two thirty minute music and physical education classes, one thirty minute library media class, and one forty-five minute art class.

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

Washington's Direct-Interactive teaching model follows a cycle that includes: activating prior knowledge, checking previous work, presenting new material, providing student practice, immediate feedback from the teacher, independent practice and regular and spiral reviews. The Authentic Instruction model is used for the presentation of information that is meaningful to students with a focus on higher-order thinking (Bloom's Taxonomy), depth of knowledge, real-world applications and social interactions. Although teacher-directed learning is valued at Washington, the Active Learning method, which actively engages children in their learning through hands-on and real-life experiences, is also utilized as an important part of comprehensive and effective instruction.

Washington is a learning community that has high expectations for all students. As a result, classroom teachers, specialists, and special area teachers all work collaboratively to plan instruction and monitor student progress through monthly data analysis. Staff meet in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and vertical PLCs multiple times each month to analyze student data. Data is derived from the following assessments: Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA), Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA), running records, sight words, a teacher developed Kindergarten tool kit, Independent Reading Level Assessment (IRLA), and informal assessments. Staff make informed decisions, adapt instruction, adjust instructional groups and differentiate curriculum based on the results of the data. As a building, we prioritize our highly qualified paraprofessionals' schedules to maximize student contact as they work collaboratively with classroom teachers to increase student achievement.

Instruction focuses on content delivery and the intervention or enrichment needs of individual students. Washington staff use an arsenal of strategies to effectively differentiate instruction and improve the learning of all students. Teachers implement: collaborative learning, small and large group instruction, discussion, hands-on activities, student projects, technology based learning and individual interventions. Student learning is supported at home through the use of online programs such as Newsela, IXL and Spelling City.

All students are valued at Washington. Two multi-grade special education homerooms assist special learners in the areas of Learning Disabilities (LD), Emotional Behavioral Disorders (EBD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and other needs. Additional support for these students comes from mental health practitioners, social workers, and other special education professionals. These multi-grade classrooms teach students from the same rigorous curriculum as the general education classrooms with consideration given to accommodations per students' needs.

## **PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS**

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

Washington utilizes Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) which includes intervention strategies designed to decrease disruptive behavior and promote positive choices. At Washington, students strive to earn Dolphin Dollars for demonstrating exemplary behaviors, academic achievements, and positive peer relationships. All staff recognize and reward students through the use of Dolphin Dollars. During the current school year, students have earned these recognitions at a 15:1 ratio of positive behaviors. Students work together as they earn these rewards toward common goals which earns school-wide rewards such as Wacky Hair days, Popcorn Fridays, and other rewards. At a more personal level, students are recognized during a weekly school-wide announcement which describes the achievement or behavior that is celebrated with Dolphin of the Week Awards. This good news is also shared with peers, parents, and the community on school bulletin boards and our Facebook page.

The Washington Running Club is another activity where students and staff participate together towards common goals of physical fitness and mental clarity. Students participate by running a mile each day for 25 days leading up to a community wide race, The Med-City Kids Marathon. In addition, Washington has many other highlights such as: our annual floor hockey league, track and field days, Lego League, foreign language clubs and weekly enrichment clubs.

Our Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is very active in encouraging a positive environment for both students and staff. PTA spearheads a large school-wide science fair, read-a-thon, family fun nights, and by providing funds to support classroom needs as well as school-wide initiatives. Our PTA supports staff by providing financial support to allow staff to purchase additional resources for classrooms. Our teachers feel supported and appreciated by the PTA as they provide meals for parent/teacher conferences, coordinate an array of teacher appreciation week activities, and send special treats and tokens of appreciation throughout the year.

Washington has many traditions that create a family-like culture for staff. Due to our small school size, longevity and experience of staff, we are able to closely mentor new staff and easily collaborate across grade levels. Our Social Committee is purposeful in planning staff recognition and appreciation events where we are continually working on building and maintaining relationships with colleagues such as Fabulous Photo Fridays, Happy Grams, Coffee Talks, staff lounge potlucks and holiday parties.

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

Students at Washington benefit from collaborating with parents and community organizations. Staff have successfully partnered with Mayo Clinic through Mayo's Brain Waves Program allowing students to learn how the brain works through active hands-on activities. Mayo Clinic cardiologists lead heart dissections with our fourth grade students providing hands-on experiences to support science objectives.

Our Lego League and science fair programs are coordinated by parent volunteers. Students use teamwork and apply the scientific process through experimentation. These programs are also connected with our community's Lego Robotic competition and Gateway Science Fair.

One of our most popular enrichment programs is Math Masters. This is an opportunity for students to participate in collaborative critical thinking skills and problem solving enrichments. Students are coached by trained volunteers and work together in collaborative groups. A highlight of this program is the fifth grade statewide competition in which students showcase all that they have learned throughout the years.

Through the utilization of technology, parents and community members are informed about school happenings and student learning. For example, students share their learning by blogging, taking pictures of their learning and uploading to Seesaw. Facebook and Twitter are used to share successes, pose questions for other educators, highlights of the day, and communicate upcoming events and school needs.

Academic success is dependent upon supporting families. One way families' basic needs are met is through Food for Friends, a local church connection in which backpacks of food are provided weekly for families in need. All Pro Dads meets monthly and provides opportunities for positive interactions between students and their important male role models. This program focuses on different themes each month to promote character development, citizenship, and strong family relationships. All Pro Dads and Food for Friends directly impact our students' academic and emotional well-being.

Our students are not only supported by their families, but also by the community. High school students, college students, and retired professionals work with our students to help ensure mastery of all skills. For example, in a first grade classroom, volunteers help students with buddy reading through listening, encouraging and asking comprehension questions. Not only does this support reading, it also supports multi-generational and community connections.

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

The comprehensive staff development program at Washington Elementary is the cornerstone to building a highly-qualified teaching staff and high student academic achievement. Rochester Public Schools has a comprehensive staff development system that starts with a three-year mentorship and induction program to support and retain new teachers. The annual school improvement plan, that is developed and written by our site leadership team, directs and guides staff development activities. In addition, each site has a staff development budget that designates funds for classes, workshops and conferences that support district and site improvement goals. Staff may enroll in professional development classes, participate in book study groups, attend workshops and/or conferences, observe peers, or develop action research projects.

Administrators participate in monthly principal, curriculum and instruction, and district leadership meetings. At these meetings administrators explore new and current initiatives, collaborate with colleagues, and share and discuss current research based practices. Examples include exploring National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) research on mathematical practices to provide equitable instruction for all students, deepen the learning for students, and ways to implement culturally relevant teaching.

Teachers value collaborating in professional learning communities (PLCs). They meet regularly in grade level and vertical teams to collect and analyze data. Teachers use this information to plan interventions and enrichments, modify instruction, develop common assessments, monitor student progress and align curriculum.

As a small school, we require efficient and creative use of our resources since many of our teachers are shared with other schools. Collaboration with the site gifted specialists as well as the reading support teacher, and special education teachers offer opportunities to share expertise to meet the needs of students.

In addition to establishing goals for district and site improvement, teachers complete a self-evaluation process based on the Class Tool, a diagnostic tool that provides data on teacher effectiveness and effective teaching practices. Using the Class Tool helps teachers better understand how their interactions with students in the classroom affect student learning. The Class Tool encourages deeper reflection of practices and social interactions within the classroom. As part of the growth process, teachers set personalized Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Results-oriented, Time-bound (SMART) goals that are aligned with the site goals and are based on student driven data.

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

At Washington, we share a philosophy that effective leadership starts with a common mission and vision for all stakeholders, who work as a team to reach common goals.

Washington is a choice school within the larger Rochester Public School District. As such, we have a shared leadership philosophy that consists of principal, teachers, support staff and parents. The principal fosters input from stakeholders through site leadership, staff meetings, site council, community listening

posts, student council, and the Parent Teacher Association (PTA).

Decisions are made through data-driven initiatives, research and discussion. Each summer, staff participates in a data retreat to develop site goals for the next year. Disaggregation of data is led by the principal and instructional coaches. Teachers focus on the needs of individuals and small groups of students by taking a deep look at data.

Each month Washington's leadership team meets to brainstorm school-wide initiatives that impact student learning and building culture. The leadership team consists of the principal, primary and intermediate level teachers, a special area teacher, and an instructional coach. This leadership team provides guidance and staff input on school-wide initiatives.

Our Site Council is integral to our school improvement process and directly supports student learning at Washington. Parents and staff meet monthly as a Site Council board to review school data, site goals and discuss ways to support student achievement. The site council actively participates in the adoption process for new curriculum. Last spring, Site Council reviewed and approved Lucy Calkins Units of Study for Teaching Reading and Read Side by Side's Collect, Interpret, and Apply (CIA). Site Council is currently working with staff in the initial steps towards a math curriculum adoption.

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

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A vital contributor to the success at Washington is the commitment to the Core Knowledge philosophy of developing culturally literate citizens. The curriculum is specific and sequenced from kindergarten through fifth grade. Core Knowledge creates a culture that promotes a desire to learn and an excitement for learning. Core Knowledge provides continuity of knowledge and skills in math, reading, writing, social studies, science, art, music, and literature. Our staff has embraced and enhanced the richness, rigor and depth of this curriculum. Practices are preserved with the mentoring of new teachers and leadership. Teachers have protected time each day for Core Knowledge as Washington school believes this base of knowledge not only enhances students' skills but also develops culturally literate learners.

Our teachers adhere to the philosophy that every grade level builds knowledge for future learning. Core Knowledge is specifically designed so that primary grades build the foundational knowledge and intermediate grades build upon this for deeper understanding. Core Knowledge is purposefully planned and aligned across grade levels, which allow students to experience deep analysis of content. High expectations in the Core Knowledge curriculum build consistency and equity. This depth of curriculum provides a strong foundation for future learning.

Implementing the Core Knowledge Curriculum has a direct impact on student achievement. Providing a well-balanced and spiraling curriculum full of history, civics, biographies, character education, scientific principles, and rich literature supports equity for all learners. While some students are able to travel and experience first-hand the culture and history of our country, all students have equal access to these experiences through virtual field trips, literature, and rich classroom discussions. The high rigor and expectations of the Core Knowledge Sequence requires all students to learn and achieve at high levels.