

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 Mr. Stephen Waigand

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

Official School Name Rock Port Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 600 S Nebraska Street

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

City Rock Port State MO Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 64482-1128

County Atchison

Telephone (660) 744-6294 Fax (660) 744-5539

Web site/URL http://www.rockport.k12.mo.us/ E-mail swaigand@rockport.k12.mo.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. Craig Walker E-mail cwalker@rockport.k12.mo.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Rock Port R-II School District Tel. (660) 744-6298

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. Rich Dewhirst
(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):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 2 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	14	10	24
K	15	14	29
1	13	18	31
2	12	14	26
3	13	10	23
4	14	16	30
5	12	9	21
6	11	12	23
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	104	103	207

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 2 % Asian
 - 2 % Black or African American
 - 1 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 87 % White
 - 8 % 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: 5%

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	8
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	8
(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	336
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.048
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %
0 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 34 %
Total number students who qualify: 113
8. Students receiving special education services: 11 %
22 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.

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

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 1
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	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	15
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	10
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	5
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 13:1
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	96%	96%	97%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

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

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.
Yes 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.

Through leadership, dedication, innovation, and community partnership we will provide opportunities for all students to maximize their potential, and become caring, moral, and productive citizens.

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 Rock Port R-II School District is set in a rural farming community located in the very Northwest corner of Missouri. The families of our school district are hardworking, blue collar and work collectively to instill characteristics of hard work, honesty, respect, faith, and fellowship in our youth. The patrons of the Rock Port School District support several small, locally owned businesses, a local newspaper, bowling alley, various agricultural businesses, 6 churches, and a city park with a swimming pool and a golf course. Our community prides itself on creating an environment that is great for kids. Rock Port supports and runs numerous youth programs (swimming, golf, soccer, baseball, softball, drama, wrestling, summer reading, volleyball, 4-H, robotics, and basketball). The school district serves students and families from three communities: Langdon, Watson, and Rock Port. We currently serve 366 students pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade, and average roughly 25 students per class with each grade level having two classroom teachers. The staff is comprised of 47 certified and 21 non-certified members who work tirelessly to create a positive, supportive and collaborative learning environment. Rock Port R-II School District is comprised of Rock Port Elementary (grades PK-6) and Rock Port High School (grades 7-12) connected into one K-12 building.

The Rock Port School District has a long history of excellence in both academics and athletics. Over the past 17 years, our school district has scored above the 90th percentile on the annual performance report based on standards set by the Department of Education in the Missouri School Improvement Plan. The number of Missouri school districts that can make that same claim are few and far between. We have a history of nurturing, developing and inspiring our students academically, and preparing them for the next stage of their lives by igniting their passion for learning. Currently we offer fifteen dual credit classes, agricultural and vocational classes, trade programs, as well as a fine arts programs for all our students. The District has begun the journey of implementing STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) education into our classrooms. This school year, with the use of Project Lead The Way, our elementary has introduced hands on, project based learning that has emphasized critical thinking and problem solving. We look to extend this curriculum through our middle and high schools over the next two school years. The district has been able to provide a varied curriculum to our students to help connect with all learners.

The Rock Port School District created and developed a tradition of excellence in athletics. Our boys and girls programs have won 14 state championships in track and football. We have community members, parents, and coaches that invest in extracurricular activities to provide positive educational experiences beyond the school day hours. Currently the district offers scholar bowl, drama, band, chorus, art club, mass media, history club, student council, NHS, FFA, FCCLA, FBLA, dance, cheerleading, peer counselors, flags, twirling and many athletic teams for our students.

The Rock Port School District and community strive to help all students reach their full potential. Throughout a student's career we have implemented several layers of academic support to keep students on track. Programs such as half-day preschool for 3 year-olds, full-day preschool for 4 year-olds, Parents as Teachers, First Steps, and a certified special education teacher allows our students to come to kindergarten prepared to learn and be successful. Programs in the elementary including Title 1 math and reading, STARS reading, full-time elementary counselor, after-school tutoring, homework club, Talented and Gifted, DARE, and a library program focused on the skills of language all contribute to keeping our students a step ahead.

Once our students advance to middle and high school, there are numerous programs in place to support achievement and that allow us to identify students before they begin to struggle. These include tutoring, peer counseling, full-time counselor, Gradewatch assignment tracking, and guided study hall. The district offers various clubs for students to develop emotionally and socially to help them pursue their passions, such as drama club, art club, Jays for Jesus, and FCA.

There is a family feel to our school building, and our students, staff and community members are proud to be Blue Jays. We often fill our teacher openings with Blue Jay alumni because they want to come back and raise their families in our community. Our students excel academically, socially, emotionally and athletically because they are surrounded by educators and adults who love kids and understand the vital role they play in the development of our students. As our town motto proclaims, we have a proud past and a bold future. Go Big Blue!

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Rock Port Elementary has a district led and created curricular approach that aligns to the Missouri Learning Standards. Teachers have exceptional knowledge of the standards and teach those standards with great rigor. We use data driven testing to help us determine exactly where our students are, determine strengths and weaknesses and then set the necessary goals to make adjustments to help them succeed. Our district has high expectations for each child and works to ensure those goals are attained by increasing opportunities for direct, high quality student-teacher interaction. Technology integration is also an important component of our curriculum with a variety of media, documents, and Google Apps for Education (GAPE) embedded into the lessons.

ELA

Rock Port Elementary recognizes the importance of providing 90 minute ELA blocks at every grade level to allow tailored lessons to meet the students' differentiated needs. Writing is integrated across all curriculum areas to improve written expression of ideas and ability to show evidence to support their thinking.

A variety of programs are utilized in our building to assure student success and growth. After seeing a need for improving our reading foundational skills in our students, the Pathways to Reading program was embedded in grades K and 1. For the past 15 years, this program has served as a framework for teachers to assess and assist the development of student reading, writing, and spelling skills through small and large group instruction. As a result, our students have become more fluent readers and writers with an increase in overall ELA scores.

Rock Port Elementary also utilizes the Renaissance Learning Accelerated Reading Program (AR), in conjunction with the STAR Reading Resources to encourage reading for enjoyment while challenging students to meet individual fluency and comprehension goals. AR and STAR provides teachers with data specific to the individual student to help guide and improve student reading comprehension and achievement. Reports include the zone of proximal development which aides our teachers in determining reading levels in which students may choose independent reading materials from both the classroom collections and our school library.

Math

Rock Port Elementary also recognizes the importance of providing a 60 - 90 minute Math block at every grade level to allow tailored lessons to meet the students' differentiated needs. The math curriculum consists of staff developed units of study. We believe the mastery of all math facts is the foundation of all mathematical concepts. Grades 1-4 utilize the Rocket Math program to develop fact fluency. Students progress at varied rates through personalized goals. Renaissance Star 360 assessments are also used to gain achievement and growth data needed for progress monitoring and instructional planning.

The staff develops conceptual lessons that encourage students to discover and explore different strategies in solving problems. Furthermore, students are encouraged to verbalize not only their findings, but their thinking process as well. This is achieved through the practice of Number Talks. Daily lessons provide students with higher level thinking and reasoning skills by solving real-world problems through exploration and hands-on activities. These lessons encourage students to think outside the box to find alternative solutions to their problems.

Science

This past year, Rock Port Elementary adopted the Launch program for grades K-4 through Project Lead the Way (PLTW). This STEM program taps into students' exploratory nature through various activities with solutions to real-world problems. Our students engage in critical and creative thinking, build teamwork skills, and learn to persevere when faced with challenges. Students present their final design challenge to their parents and community during the quarterly STEM Showcase.

Grades 5 and 6 continue to utilize teacher created units to address the Missouri Learning Standards as well as the Grade Level Expectations by providing engaging, hands-on, and inquiry based activities for all

students. Field trips are used throughout the year to enrich classroom learning. Some of which include: SAC Air Museum, Eagle Days, and Soil & Water Conservation Field Day.

Social Studies

Teachers utilize a variety of available resources for social studies instruction. Some of which include: Scholastic News, Missouri Studies Weekly, informational texts, and teacher created resources. Many teachers use a cross-curricular approach to teach the social studies standards. Social studies units encompass government, history, maps and regions, economics, and communities. Missouri history is emphasized in third grade with a culminating field trip to Jefferson City where students observe the fundamental processes of our state government. This trip also includes stops along the way to tour other historical sites of Missouri history.

Preschool

Little Jays Preschool is a child-centered environment in which all children flourish in every domain of development. Designed to meet the individual needs of the children, Little Jays provides a learning environment that includes a balance of active play, social interactions and literacy development. Through hands-on learning opportunities, Little Jays' children are guided to create their own knowledge and make predictions about the world according to the information they have learned through experience and application. Letter recognition, phonemic awareness, number sense, vocabulary and communications skills are incorporated into daily instruction. The foundational learning that occurs in Little Jays Preschool prepares the students for a smooth transition into Kindergarten and paves the way for a lifetime of learning success.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Rock Port Elementary offers music, physical education, guidance/computers, art, and library classes for 50 minutes each week to grades K-6. Preschool has the opportunity for music, guidance, and library for 25 minutes each week. Band is also offered for 5th and 6th grade students for 45 minutes daily. Together with the core curriculum areas, our activity classes support the development of a well-rounded student.

Music

All K-6 students are involved in the music program at Rock Port Elementary. Students in grades K-3 prepare a musical performance in December and students in grades 4-6 prepare for a musical performance in the spring. This provides them the opportunity to grow through performing on stage, singing in front of their classmates, and developing a strong sense of self-confidence through performance. Students in music class engage in language, math, rhythm, and listening thus improving the skills and knowledge of music through the preparation of their songs. Music also has a very positive effect on a child's emotions and creativity.

Band

5th and 6th grade band builds upon the skills of terminology, counting rhythm, multi-tasking, team work, self-instruction, self-motivation, and emotion that are utilized in music and the core classrooms. For example when counting rhythms, the band teacher will make notes into money. Students know how to count when it comes to money so they count the notes and rhythms just as if they had the change in front of them. Rich conversations and connections to classroom content occur when students also see those words and terminology used within a piece of music. Our band class stresses the skills of multi-tasking and teamwork.

Technology

Students rotate between guidance and computers classes on a weekly basis for 50 minutes. Keyboarding, Google Classroom applications, and Digital Citizenship are the focus content areas for the elementary computers course. The skills learned through the computers course are seen on a daily basis within the classroom. The high school Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) students hosted a Hour of Code with all of our elementary students. This connected with Project Lead the Way Modules in grades K-4 that also complete computer programming on applications such as Scratch Jr., Tinker, Slow Pro, and Poplet.

Art

During this time, the students experience a variety of art mediums and processes. Math is consistently integrated into the various lessons including practice of using math tools such as rulers, compasses, and protractors. Geometry terminology is reinforced as well including, but not limited, to the difference between geometrical shapes and organic shapes, types of triangles, types of lines, and measurement of angles, lines, and circles. During this time cultural diversity is also reinforced. Students are exposed to art and techniques from around the world including, but not limited, to cultural masks, various mandalas, aboriginal art, and origami. Art is a time for students to tap into their imagination and exercise their right brain. All of their projects provide choice in concept and allow them to create something that expresses their own interests. They are exposed to various textures and mediums evoking their various senses and allowing them to build their fine motor skills.

Physical Education/Health/Nutrition

The Physical Education teacher and school nurse team up to provide information regarding healthy lifestyle habits. The Missouri Extension Office completes a Healthy Eating unit by visiting our elementary students weekly during the first semester of the school year. In addition Delta Dental visits with our students on the benefits of dental hygiene. An Atchison County Deputy completes the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program with our 6th grade students but also visits the lower elementary students weekly about safety. Workout Wednesdays have been incorporated once a month to promote exercise in the classroom through learning activities. Teachers and students dress up in their workout clothes for the day.

Library

The Library is the hub of our elementary school. The librarian connects with classrooms regarding current academic content and will pull books to have on display in the library during those units. For example, students traveling to the Renaissance Festival in Kansas City were connected to resources about that time period through library classes leading up to the trip. In addition, prior to the school Veterans Day assembly students connected what they learned from the library classes and in the classroom to have a meaningful and powerful question and answer session with local veterans. A Battle of the Books competition is held each spring semester against area county schools. Battle of the Books encourages students to read the latest award winning books and then they answer questions regarding the books as teams in a friendly competition format.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Rock Port Elementary is committed to the learning success of every child and believes all children can learn. Our dedicated staff is conscientious of all students' learning abilities and how each student can benefit from differentiated instruction. The priority is to determine where each child is academically, and what interventions or enrichment activities are needed.

Students are screened using STAR Reading, STAR Early Literacy, and STAR Math at least five times per year. Pathways to Reading Assessment is utilized in Kindergarten and first grade. In addition to these screenings, teacher created assessments are also used to determine each student's strengths and weaknesses.

Data gathered from the STAR and Pathways assessments guide teachers in forming flexible skill groups, planning instruction, determining interventions, and prioritizing student needs. All students receive grade level classroom instruction which is vertically aligned in all core areas and are provided individualized instruction. Ongoing assessments are essential to determine the student's progress and success. Rocket Math is an ongoing assessment we use for fact fluency.

We use the Tier approach for instruction and remediation. In Tier 1, teachers provide whole group instruction, small group instruction, and one-on-one instruction using a variety of manipulatives, songs, graphic organizers, literacy strategies, hands-on activities, and activity centers. In Tier 2, students performing below grade level in reading or math receive explicit Title One instruction daily in a small group setting with a reading or math resource teacher. As an additional layer, we have implemented a STARS (Soaring Towards Achievement in Reading Skills) program for those in need of reading support in a small group setting. The flexible pull-out groups focus on students' specific weaknesses. Progress monitoring is

done more frequently so that instruction can be modified. In Tier 3, students receive intense instruction using multi-sensory techniques and scaffolding in a special education room with constant monitoring of skills. Tier 3 support is also visible within the regular classroom. Students in danger of falling two years behind in reading are placed on a Reading Plan and receive intense tutoring after school and during summer school.

In an effort to ensure all students continue to meet Rock Port Elementary's high expectations, Homework Club and after school tutoring programs are available to all students from kindergarten to sixth grade. These programs meet three times a week allowing students time to work on individualized skills in a smaller group setting.

Students above level are challenged beyond the regular grade level curriculum through differentiated instruction through our TAG program. We also offer a robotics program to challenge students to work beyond regular classroom curriculum.

In addition to grade level curricular assessments, all students take the Renaissance Learning STAR Reading and Math assessments a minimum of five times yearly (baseline assessment in September, then at the end of each quarter thereafter). STAR assessments are customized, adaptive assessments taken electronically. Reports from these assessments are essential in analyzing student levels, growth, strengths, and areas of concern. These reports are also shared with parents on a regular basis.

Teachers also utilize the Renaissance Learning Accelerated Reader Program to challenge students to meet reading goals and to check on the understanding of the texts being read. Reports from Accelerated Reader help teachers and parents identify the type of texts that the students are reading, as well as the accuracy percentage of their comprehension.

All enrolled students in third through sixth grade take the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) in the spring of each year. Through this, students are assessed on their progress toward the mastery of the Missouri Learning Standards (MLS). This is a grade level standards-based assessment that measures English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, and Science (5th grade only) skills as set by the Missouri Department of Education. Excellence in achievement has been celebrated the past 17 years through receiving performance honors from the Missouri Department of Education. All students are recognized through a building level celebration.

Technology is an important tool in meeting the needs of students, enhancing instruction at all levels, and supplementing classroom instruction. At Rock Port Elementary, students from grades 3-6 are one-to-one with chromebook devices. Having these devices available allows our students to utilize GAFE (Google Apps for Education) and extensions. For example, a text-to-speech extension is used as a resource for students with dyslexia. Kindergarten through 2nd grade have iPads available to use and an elementary computer lab. All classrooms are equipped with Promethean boards to enhance instruction.

At Rock Port Elementary we believe in setting high expectations for our students. Students are challenged with rigorous activities, including webquests, novel studies, technology projects and presentations. Problem based learning challenges are incorporated into our curriculum; primarily through PLTW (Project Lead the Way) modules. Due to smaller class sizes, teachers are able to co-teach allowing for more cooperative learning opportunities. Peer teaching is modeled and encouraged which enriches deeper thinking and reasoning skills for all students.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

“It’s about people, not programs” is a motto that would fit Rock Port Elementary’s emphasis on students and teachers. Every week starts with a Monday Motivation meeting and music in the cafeteria with all students. Student Council members lead the school with the Pledge of Allegiance, celebrate student birthdays for the week, and state the character word for the month. The principal recognizes Blue Jays of the Week that display that month’s character word. All staff members (classroom and specials teachers, para-professionals, custodians, office, kitchen) nominate students each month. At the end of each month a local church provides all Blue Jays of the Week with a pizza party.

Our school has an Academic Excellence Celebration each year to celebrate student achievement on the Missouri Assessment Program tests. The entire elementary travels to a movie theater for a movie showing and snacks. Students are also rewarded for meeting reading and attendance goals each semester through small prizes and gift cards that can be used around the community. Students reaching 100 points in Accelerated Reader (AR) put their name on the AR Wall of Honor in the office. Individual classroom reward systems, quarterly academic pep rallies, and end of the year student awards assemblies also recognize outstanding achievement.

As part of our staff professional growth goals each staff member makes a positive phone call or face to face conversation to the parent/guardian of every student in their class at the beginning of the school year. Staff members utilize 2x10 strategies with students needing extra support and attention, spending two minutes a day just talking to that student for ten days. This year our school devoted a full time school counselor to the elementary to support various social and emotional student needs. A social worker also visits the school on a bi-weekly basis to assist teachers with strategies to help struggling students. She is available as well as a support for teachers needing professional advice or personal counseling.

Our school and school board are committed to keeping class sizes small to provide more individualized instruction for students. The average class in the elementary is 12-13 students. In addition adjustments have been made to the schedule to provide classroom teachers with 75 minutes of plan time each day with available times to meet as a lower elementary, upper elementary, and whole group for collaboration purposes. There is an emphasis by the superintendent and principal to be visible every day and to regularly communicate positive praises with staff by face to face conversations or post-it notes on their desks. Two teachers annually are recognized for excellence in the classroom through Teacher of the Year Awards with a monetary gift of \$500. In addition, teachers are reimbursed for their time if presenting to the staff at a professional development day, mentoring new staff, and receive tuition reimburse on higher education classes to advance their careers. The Rock Port School District feels very strongly about supporting the most influential part of any classroom...the teacher.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

The Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) that drives our efforts as a school was created through input from staff, administration, parents, community members, and students. Communication with all stakeholders is an essential part to continuing the success of Rock Port Elementary and the school district in general. Parent surveys were created to elicit feedback from families and community members about our school’s performance. Teachers created websites to communicate home classroom news and upcoming events. Our school celebrates successes with the community on a daily basis through Twitter (@RPBluejays). In addition, a WATCH D.O.G.S. (Dads Of Great Students) program has started this spring semester. It is a program to provide positive male role models an opportunity to spend the day interacting with our students in the classrooms and hallways.

Through our Project Lead the Way (PLTW) Program students and families have been introduced to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) opportunities. Rock Port Elementary hosts STEM Showcase Nights once per quarter. Students bring their parents, grandparents, and siblings with them to

school to show their latest project creation. The conversations students are having with family and community members regarding their thinking behind the project and what they learned from their successes and failures along the way have been powerful. The attendance and support for the STEM Showcase Nights have been incredible. Given the overwhelming response to our STEM initiative in the lower elementary grades a Robotics Club was formed as an after school offering for 5th and 6th grade students to continue to foster the love and curiosity of STEM-related fields. The director of the Atchison County Robotics Club is now attending the weekly club meetings to support our students.

Individual classrooms host community nights throughout the school year to support school achievement efforts. Kindergarten hosts a Family Fun Night near the beginning of the year to discuss kindergarten and display several games parents can play with their children to develop the skills necessary throughout the year. Third grade held a Technology Night to inform families of all the capabilities of chromebooks and Google classroom and how students can access and submit assignments online. Sixth grade has over a 25 year tradition of inviting veterans to our school to celebrate Veterans Day. School staff and community members pitched in to help label all of our elementary library with Accelerated Reader codes for students to access books at their levels. The town librarian comes around each month with books from the Atchison County Library Bookmobile for students to check out as well. Circulation numbers in the school and town libraries have increased as well as the growth through our quarterly benchmark reading scores.

3. Professional Development:

Because great teachers help create great students, we believe in supporting our talented staff by providing them the resources necessary to enhance content knowledge and pedagogical skills.

The district has an active Professional Development Committee that consists of staff who work with the administration to determine appropriate professional development activities for the improvement of student learning. Each year, a Professional Development Plan is created by the PDC committee and approved by the Board of Education to align academic standards and support school achievement and school improvement. From information collected through an annual needs assessment staff survey, PDC establishes district goals using backward design to ensure that “long-term” District PD goals are met. Professional development throughout the year establish the building blocks to reach the long- term goal(s).

Along with the district PDC committee, a Comprehensive School Improvement Planning committee (CSIP) composed of administration, board, staff, parents, students, and community members helped to establish those long term goals for the district. Not only are these goals established, but they are acted upon and continually monitored during TABS (Teacher, Administration, Board, Student) meetings, teacher and board meetings and through staff surveys.

Because of the fluidity of standards over recent years, professional development has been carefully focused on curriculum writing around the Grade Level Expectations, EOC’s, Common Core State Standards, and newly implemented Missouri Learning Standards. Part of our success can be credited to the establishment of a successful Professional Learning Community (PLC) model which helped transform the way we teach and students learn. Staff dedicated many hours unwrapping the standards in order to clarify their meaning before rewriting a more rigorous curriculum.

Working collaboratively in a PLC, we found great value in the expertise of our own content specific instructors on staff. Monthly scheduled staff professional development days provide the opportunity to learn from colleagues during breakout sessions of interest. Teacher reimbursement encourages those willing to present after school at PD sessions such as the high school TechCafe or the elementary EdU Cafe.

In addition to on-site professional development, the district encourages participation in a variety of high quality learning opportunities sponsored by the Northwest RPDC, DESE, and professional learning organizations and specialists. Collaboration with neighboring districts helps foster networks for teachers to learn and grow with other educators.

4. School Leadership:

The mission of the Rock Port R-II School District is through leadership, dedication, innovation, and community partnership we will provide opportunities for all students to maximize their potential, and become caring, moral, productive, and self-reliant citizens. Starting at the top, from the Board of Education, to the building level administrator, decision making has consistently focused on doing what is best for students.

During my five year career at Rock Port, all administrators have emphasized the importance of building and supporting relationships in the educational setting. The Rock Port R-II School District demonstrates a true passion and belief that strong, professional student relationships will enhance student achievement and increase the school culture and climate. The administration team meets regularly to discuss school culture, professional development, and student success. It is our goal through modeling and conversations to create a positive, safe and collaborative environment for both our staff and students. We use various avenues and resources to communicate and model our expectations. A few of the strategies we incorporate include: being visible during the school day and in our community, sending weekly bulletins to keep staff informed, publishing monthly letters in the local paper to keep our patrons apprised of activities and success in the school, hosting community outreach events monthly to perpetuate relationships with our community members, and our school twitter account @RPBlueJays is used as a vehicle to celebrate both student and school celebrations. The administrators that are hired here at Rock Port are all relationship focused and understand the power of connection.

The administrative team has worked together to ensure our classroom teachers have the resources and training needed to be most effective for our students. We have set high expectations for our students and staff to be above the norm and to self-reflect and assess the instruction and activities we are presenting each day to our students. Our district has spent a minimum of \$12,000 per year on professional development over the past five years to help train our staff, more than doubling the state requirement. Our board of education has offered a benefit of paying \$200 per credit hour for master level classes. Our board has made a commitment to lifelong learning knowing this will increase the growth of our teachers, which in turn will positively impact the learning experience of our students.

The elementary has used Check and Connect, F.I.S.H. Philosophy, SST (Student Support Team) to help build positive relationships between students and staff and identify students struggling or needing support. School leaders have a clear understanding that as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs explains, basic needs must be met before learning can take place. Through leadership, programs such as Backpack Buddies, Adopt a Student school supplies, winter coat drive, and the breakfast program have been started to benefit students most basic needs.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

First and foremost, the teachers and staff and Rock Port Elementary are truly devoted to “doing what’s best for students” each and every day. Our school has excellent teachers in the classroom who feel supported by administration, parents, and the community. There is a strong continuity in the elementary building with a very low turnover rate of administration and teachers. The consistency in staff allows for strong partnerships to form and strengthen over the years in support of student learning and their overall development.

There is a consistent approach to the expectation that all students can and will learn. Students enter kindergarten with a strong foundation in academic and social skills through two years of a preschool setting. Rock Port Elementary has a half day program for 3 year olds and a full day program for 4 year olds. The preschool program and lower elementary grades have established a strong foundation for the success in the upper elementary grades and beyond. In addition, the Soaring Toward Achievement in Reading Skills (STARS) Program was established to help students that were below grade level in reading but not low enough for Title I services. The tiered approach of grade level instruction, STARS, and Title I services provides students opportunities to gain the skills they need to grow towards mastery within their grade level. Homework Club and tutoring services are offered three days a week after school providing students with a safe and supported learning environment to complete homework and/or work on additional skills through individualized instruction.

There is a sense of pride that runs deep through our small community of 1300 residents. It is evident in the daily support the school receives from parents and family members. Parent-teacher conference for first and third quarters in nearly every classroom bolster a 100% participation rate. The Room Parents Organization consists of elementary parents that work to ensure our students and teachers are supported with materials and supplies in the classroom. The Room Parents have given generously to our teachers to support classroom and individual student projects, field trips to enhance classroom learning, and playground improvements to support the development of physically active children.

Through talented and dedicated staff, supportive families, and a tiered approach to academic skills mixed with many moments of fun and celebration it is the continual quest of Rock Port Elementary to see all students succeed.