

***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      [ ] Choice

Name of Principal Mrs. Molly McCarthy

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

Official School Name Riddle Brook School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 230 New Boston Road

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

City Bedford      State NH      Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 03110-4318

County Hillsborough

Telephone (603) 471-1082      Fax (603) 472-7879

Web site/URL

<https://sites.google.com/a/bedfordnh>      E-mail mccarthym@sau25.net

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. Chip McGee      E-mail mcgeec@sau25.net  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Bedford School District      Tel. (603) 472-3755

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 Dr. William Kessler  
(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):
- 3 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 6 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                     | 36         | 24           | 60          |
| 1                     | 64         | 68           | 132         |
| 2                     | 68         | 64           | 132         |
| 3                     | 48         | 46           | 94          |
| 4                     | 68         | 59           | 127         |
| 5                     | 0          | 0            | 0           |
| 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> | 284        | 261          | 545         |

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 7 % Asian
  - 1 % Black or African American
  - 5 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 87 % White
  - 0 % 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   | 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 | 7      |
| (3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]  | 25     |
| (4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015   | 539    |
| (5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)   | 0.046  |
| (6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100  | 5      |

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):  
Chinese, Portuguese

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 2 %  
Total number students who qualify: 12

8. Students receiving special education services: 11 %  
62 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.

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

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 10
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   | 2                      |
| Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects   | 27                     |
| Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.  | 18                     |
| Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.  | 36                     |
| Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc. | 4                      |

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 20:1
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    | 96%       | 96%       | 97%       | 96%       | 96%       |
| High school graduation rate | 0%        | 0%        | 0%        | 0%        | 0%        |

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

| <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  No

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

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

The mission of Riddle Brook School is to create a safe, respectful, and responsive environment where each child can share the joy of lifelong learning together with school, home, and community members. Our

collaborative effort is founded on diversity, accountability, and shared responsibility. We are committed to academic excellence as we inspire individuals to achieve their highest potential and to be contributing members of society.

**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**

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Riddle Brook School is a neighborhood school of approximately 560 children ranging from kindergarten to Grade 4. As a result of the town's restructuring to a neighborhood school concept in 1999, RBS was created with newly formed teaching teams and school traditions. Building a new school and realigning grade level settings was a necessary step for Bedford as the town's population doubled in 20 years.

Bedford, sometimes considered a "bedroom town" for families employed in Boston, Manchester, NH or other cities, has understandably experienced tremendous growth in diversity as well as population. At RBS, it is common for us to welcome 40 to 50 transferred students each year from across the country or beyond. We are proud of our well tuned "Follow the Child" system to support and monitor those new students, as well as current students, both academically and socially-emotionally.

Our Follow the Child (RTI) approach to teaching actually began "organically/intuitively" with the opening of the school in 1999. Individual needs were and continue to be regularly monitored through Child Team. Along with a well defined curriculum based on researched best practice, we have been committed to early intervention. Both academic testing and teacher observation are important for the C.T.'s ongoing checks of academic and behavioral-social development. Interventions are provided as indicated. In addition to Reading and Math Support, RBS is proud to provide special education services to children, as needed, even without special education identification. Our youngsters receive those special services in addition to receiving regular direct teaching of all curriculum areas within their classrooms.

Our students have experience attending class with a wide variety of learners. RBS is the town's site for Intensive Needs, a program for children with multiple physical, behavioral, and learning disabilities. Additionally, our school is the setting for the NECC program (New England Center for Children), one of 33 across New England. NECC offers a highly structured approach with ABA and curriculum through Autism Encyclopedia. Like the children in Intensive Needs, the students in the NECC program attend their regular education classrooms, as appropriate. We are pleased to see the kindness and social emotional development for all children as they work and play together.

There is a community spirit here that encourages children emotionally, socially, culturally and physically. RBS sponsors a variety of activities that build relationships and promotes fun! Harvest Festival, a family Saturday fair, is filled with games, face painting, and teachers' own chili competition. There are many activities at Family Fun Night, a favorite being the auction for a variety of teacher hosted activities, including "Breakfast with Teacher," and "Squid Dissection." Other special happenings include the Father/Daughter and Mother/Son dances. Lastly, the June Field Days are joyous events as students show their friendly competition in races and other games.

Challenging academic opportunities happen outside the classroom as well as in a Math/Literacy Night for families that is filled with math games and reading challenges. The Invention Convention encourages creativity, resourcefulness and engineering skills. Artistic and performance skills are celebrated through our Art Fair, chorus concerts, and plays. Promoting reading while having some friendly competition is achieved through our annual Read-a-thon.

A very special annual event, which has become a "marker" for 4th graders, is Ellis Island Day. This activity is very integrated, involving research, writing, geography, history, and creativity. Each student learns about societal and cultural conditions of the late 1800's and creates a fictional character to portray in the reenactment, including the hustle through the chaotic Immigration Stations. Students love this event as they cheerfully clap for each other when they officially become US citizens. Parents are great cheerleaders too as they provide refreshments representative of the many countries of origin.

Another very special time at RBS, and an event that also has become a "marker" to our students, is the 4th Grade Clap-Out. It takes place on the last day of school as the class is preparing to board buses for their transition visit to their next school. In this rite of passage, the students parade through our school as the entire school body lines the halls with singing and clapping while parents cheer nearby. It is a festive time

filled with tears and laughter. It is a thrill to our staff that another Clap-Out day has emerged. Over the last few years, alumni, now seniors about to graduate, have returned to Riddle Brook to say good-bye. It is quite a coordinated event as many seniors, once RBS students, return for a happy “clap-out.”

In all these ways and more, RBS is a school where students are happy and thriving. We care about individual and collective growth and well-being in all domains. We celebrate each step forward as we continue the process of growing and learning.

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

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

The core curriculum at Riddle Brook School challenges and inspires all students to maintain high learning standards as they acquire foundational skills. Each curricula area is aligned with the Common Core Standards, focusing on critical-thinking, problem-solving, and analytical skills.

#### Reading/English Language Arts

A solid foundation and a love of reading fosters life-long learners. Aligning with current reading research and best practices, effective reading instruction includes phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Taught through direct, systematic instruction using research-based reading series, Scott Foresman’s Reading Street in Kindergarten and McGraw-Hill’s Wonders in grades 1-4, students are provided with instruction that includes flexible, small grouping, developed by teachers to meet all needs. Small group instruction provides opportunities to practice reading skills, target instruction, and extend the reading-writing connection through close reading. Additionally, small groups afford the teacher on-going diagnosis that guides instruction and assessment.

Early intervention is critical, and acquisition of reading skills is continuously monitored using a variety of standardized and informal assessments. Students who require support participate in flexible intervention models that balance instruction, and higher performing readers participate in an enriched readers’ group that offers opportunities to extend both reading and critical thinking skills using an inquiry based approach.

Reading is also promoted school-wide through Book Talks, which are simple, informal presentations designed to inspire others to read a good book. Students regularly prepare Book Talks and share them during announcements and on our school website.

Writing instruction blends craft with application. Students develop their craft through the Writer’s Workshop model, focusing on the writing process, crafts, and responses to text. Units of study include personal narratives, opinion writing, report writing, feature articles, essays, and revisions. Students are expected to regularly respond to text through evidence based writing and through reading response journals.

Promoting civic learning and engagement, RBS students design famous American scripts and create living museums that depict these individuals. Additionally, students write to soldiers throughout the year. These experiences create opportunities for reading and writing and increase awareness of current events around the world.

#### Mathematics

Mathematics offers many opportunities for students to be thinkers and problem solvers every day. Our core program for instruction is Everyday Mathematics. Included are six instructional strands: numbers/numeration, operations/computation, data/chance, measurement/reference frames, geometry, and patterns, functions, and algebra. In tier one, teachers implement this program and enhance its effectiveness with problem solving activities, using manipulatives to make sure that foundational math skills are taught effectively.

Early intervention includes both small-group and individual skill reinforcement or quick 10-minute skill sessions delivered by the math support teacher to solidify foundational skills. Students who require more targeted and intensive intervention participate in flexible groups with special educators who are trained in multi-sensory approaches from various math experts, making abstract learning concepts concrete and meaningful. Use of formative assessments helps highlight areas that require greater attention.

All students are given the opportunity to participate in math enrichment activities. Students who demonstrate firm understanding of concepts are provided opportunities to advance their

development. These student participate in Math Apps, a program delivered by our enrichment teacher that focuses on deeper levels of math exploration.

RBS staff strives to include our community members and families in our quest to become thinkers and problem solvers by hosting an annual Family Math/Literacy Night. Activities are open-ended and allow families to work together to solve problems. STEAM challenges, such as bridge building and coding, and literacy at this event helps students make inter-curriculum connections.

## Science

Using an inquiry model, as the K-4 science curriculum is designed so students develop and practice critical thinking skills and scientific method skills, aligning with the Next Generation Science Standards framework. Students participate in hands-on lessons and complete controlled experiments. Engaging leveled texts allow all students to participate in the application of close reading with content curriculum. Further extensions of technology, field trips, and special presentations enhance scientific inquiry. Students understand their roles as researchers as they use traditional sources and age-appropriate technology to study animals, biomes, and habitats, engaging future scientists and engineers as they explore the world around them.

## Social Studies

Social Studies fosters an understanding of geography, culture, economics, government, history, and citizenship. Fourth graders also participate in an Ellis Island unit, immersed in learning about their ancestral history and culminating with a reenactment of immigrating to America at the the turn of the century. Third and fourth graders experience democracy in action as they campaign to join the Principal's Council, which works closely with administrators to be school decision makers. Digital citizenship is also taught through the safe use of iPads and Chromebooks. Lastly, the Responsive Classroom philosophy, which allows students to be productive and caring members of our school community, interweaves civic responsibility throughout the school through conflict resolution, acceptance of differences, and cooperative learning.

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

Riddle Brook School teachers work as a team integrating arts and technology in core subjects. This provides challenging opportunities that inspire our students and celebrate their successes.

The Library program provides weekly access for K-4 students, and not only encourages a love of reading but provides lessons supporting core curriculum. Lessons are co-planned and taught by teachers, librarian, and technology specialist to engage students and to support classroom instructional goals. We utilize extensive digital resources that our librarian compiled for every grade level and unit taught. These subscription-based resources are available for K-4 students at home and school allowing students to research in a safe environment. We are proud to say that this endeavor was recognized by the NH School Library Media Association as the 2016 NH Outstanding Library Program.

In art, students in grades 1-4 meet weekly for drawing, painting, collage, printmaking, ceramics, and weaving lessons. The curriculum focuses on methods and materials for art making and developing 21st century skills of problem-solving, collaboration, communication, and creative thinking. Art clubs are offered for six weeks during third and fourth grade recesses. These clubs focus on higher concepts such as weaving, painting, murals, sculpture and STEAM activities. Students exhibit their work in a variety of community art shows such as local fairs, shows, and stores.

Physical Education provides weekly classes for grades 1-4. Recess PE Clubs work on higher level skills with a core group of students. We offer PE Central Challenge for third graders, PE Central Fitness Challenge for fourth graders, and volleyball and jump roping clubs for both grades. Grades 1-4 participate in the Heart Association fundraiser, Jump Rope For Heart, during March, which raises money for research with lessons designed to promote heart-wise health.

Music is a weekly class for grades 1-4. Students also participate in weekly recess clubs such as Grade 3 RBS Singers, Grade 4 Ukulele Club, Rhythmics, and after-school Strings Club. Fourth grade Rhythmics have the experience of performing in a Cabaret by singing a solo or duet. They also run the annual Toys for Tots collection at the winter concert. RBS participates in the National Anthem School Program, an initiative to encourage public singing of "The Star-Spangled Banner." Our Chorus led the anthem at a recent Monarchs hockey game.

The enrichment program enhances the educational experiences for every student at RBS. Kindergarteners work with fourth grade tutors programming robots or puzzling through a BreakoutEDU. First graders participate in STEAM units, inspiring students to build objects such as helicopters, or design a new set of "ears." During their enrichment weeks, second graders solve a mystery. This combines math and science with real detective skills as students investigate a crime scene and make an educated accusation. Third graders participate in an Inventions Unit, which encourages every child to create his/her own invention and present it at the annual Invention Convention. Fourth graders study their ancestry through our annual Ellis Island unit.

Technology is integrated into all curriculum areas in grades K-4. At RBS, technology is used as an integral tool in teaching and learning the core curriculum. Through frequent use of technology, students demonstrate appropriate digital citizenship skills while collaborating with others in developing innovative products. Technology is used to provide instruction in Flipped Lessons as well as a way for students to exhibit their learning through online presentations, videos, digital book creations, screencasts, and websites for digital portfolios. Technology is also utilized to meet virtually with outside experts and to participate in virtual field trips to enhance learning experiences. Our annual participation in the Hour of Code and learning how to program robots are examples of integrating critical thinking and problem-solving with multiple math skills. RBS was fortunate to have a fourth grade teacher win the Pat Keyes Technology Educator Award, which is given to an exceptional teacher who stands out from his/her peers in the area of technology integration and serves as a mentor in his/her district.

At RBS, our integrated arts teachers team together to produce the annual fourth grade play. As the oldest students in our school, all fourth graders participate in this musical production. The music teacher conducts the chorus and soloists, the librarian assists students with organizing the production, the PE teacher assists with choreography, and the art teacher facilitates students in creating beautiful scenery. The spring performance is a wonderful collaboration and fond memory for our students as they complete their elementary education at RBS.

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

The instructional approaches, methods, interventions, and assessments implemented at Riddle Brook School are driven by using all available resources to meet the diverse needs of every student. In order to best meet those needs, this longstanding practice focuses on early intervention and the blurring of lines between different types of supports and interventions. When working with a variety of unique learners, understanding and appreciating the benefits of fluid and flexible approaches is what allows instructional supports to be effective and ever-adapting.

RBS' Response to Intervention (RTI) model is comprised of four different tiers: reading and math support, team instruction, special education, and intensive needs special education. Our first tier of intervention gives students access to services that provide additional exposure and support to strengthen skills in particular instructional areas of need by using supplemental instructional resources. Such resources include Project Read and Professor Mahesh Sharma's math strategies, both of which allow for more hands-on learning experiences. Team Instruction, RBS' second tier of intervention, provides instruction by a special educator for students who require more intensive levels of academic support, but who do not currently meet the criteria for special education. Reading support staff, classroom teachers, and special educators work closely to monitor and review student progress. For example, if a child in reading support shows a need for additional support, he or she will be provided with short 10 minute skill sessions delivered throughout the week, commonly referred to as "zaps." Special education, which includes our Intensive Needs program, rounds out our third and fourth tiers of intervention. These programs provide the highest level of

remediation and are provided by special educators who are highly specialized in using explicit, multi-sensory approaches, such as Lindamood-Bell, Orton Gillingham, Wilson, Rave-O, and Applied Behavioral Analysis. In order to target the learning needs of students performing below grade level and/or with significant challenges and disabilities, this level of intervention typically occurs in one-on-one or small group settings.

Another example of the way RBS blurs the lines of intervention is by pushing in services, where special educators team teach with classroom teachers to differentiate instruction to meet diverse learner needs in the classroom. Along the school's RTI model, the enrichment program is an example of this type of instruction as the school's enrichment teacher delivers lessons at every grade level, working cooperatively with teachers to provide all students with opportunities for exploration outside of the standard grade level curriculum. Such programs include the Ellis Island Experience for fourth graders and Bear Mystery for second graders. These programs provide opportunities to challenge students in areas where they have a high level of ability, motivation, interest and commitment.

Playing a significant role in the RBS RTI model, classroom teachers are given the opportunity to bring student concerns to a team of school personnel who meet weekly, referred to as the Child Team, or CT. This team includes administration and the school's reading specialist, counselor, and various specialists who work together to determine the best course of action to meet students' individual needs, monitor student growth throughout the year, and refer to special education, when appropriate. Above and beyond CT, administration and the special education staff meet a minimum of five times a year to discuss, analyze, and track progress on all students at each grade level who receive any type of intervention(s). These meetings allow special educators to share strategies and insights on previous, current, or future students.

To monitor student progress, RBS uses a variety of assessments and progress monitoring tools including, but not limited to, Smarter Balanced, Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests, DIBELS Reading and Math, AIMSweb, and a number of informal assessments. Data gathered from these tools is used to form instructional groups, target methodologies, and track and measure progress towards school goals. Data analysis and its use towards guiding instruction is reflected by high levels of student achievement at RBS. For students who exceed academically, a similar model is used in which classroom teachers and the enrichment teacher collaborate to plan and monitor progress to ensure that students are availed the opportunity for continuous improvement and growth.

The benefits of early intervention, continuous progress monitoring, and staff collaboration have been instrumental to RBS' success. Intensifying and driving instruction using objective, diagnostic, and prescriptive measures to both remediate achievement gaps and extend learning through enrichment opportunities ensures that all students are given every opportunity to reach their highest levels of success.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

“Inspire, Challenge, Celebrate” is Riddle Brook’s motto, which aptly describes our school culture in many ways. Starting with school wide Morning Announcements and classroom Morning Meetings, and then woven throughout the day, we believe in inspiring our children to be their best. Our “Be The Boss of Me” campaign teaches and models meta-cognition, self-monitoring skills, and making healthy choices. By using humor and child friendly tools, children benefit from learning executive functioning skills, understanding growth mindsets, and seeing “grit” as a tool. The process of learning and growing is honored, not just the achievement.

In addition to RBS being an academically high performing school, we value the importance of having social and emotional well-being. Our school has long used the Responsive Classroom approach fostering the concept of community. Through other curricula, including “Zones of Regulation” and “Social Thinking,” students develop strategies to enhance their attention and manage emotions. We inspire personal responsibility, but also strive to be a community of respectful learners and kind considerate friends.

Challenging opportunities for both students and staff are numerous. Along with subject area enrichment offered for small group and whole class, other activities include Invention Convention, Mystery Festival and 4th grade play. Lunch-time clubs include Art and Walking Clubs, Chorus and Book Clubs, and Physical Education Central Challenge. Teachers hone their skills while participating in Teachers as Readers, Mentor partnerships, and voluntary committees. We really believe that we are all happiest when we feel competent and are contributing. There is a high bar for the entire school, but there is also caring, support and collegiality for reaching that bar.

Celebrations come often and in all sizes. We model and acknowledge academic achievements as well as displays of good character. Students contribute to collecting and packaging items for our Coat Drive, Toys for Tots, and Food Drive. PAWS awards are earned for acts of kindness to others. Teachers volunteer to read at the local book store on a selected Saturday. Some events are celebratory traditions that are long awaited, such as the Ellis Island reenactment of becoming citizens, and the 4th Grade Clap-Out. Monthly all school meetings showcase the students as they plan, prepare, and present to the entire school. Our Joy and Celebration Committee plans staff events such as the Super Bowl Chili party, special breakfasts, and holiday teacher-sing-along. There is a feeling of joy for staff and students at RBS, and a comforting sense of belonging.

While promoting a respectful community, we honor the individual and encourage each student to maximize his/her potential academically and socially. With the notable longevity of the staff and the frequent alumni visits, RBS is truly a school with heart that honors our motto: “Inspire, Challenge, Celebrate.”

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

A school is a place where students are prepared for the challenges and opportunities they will be presented with throughout life, but a school community is an extension of the core values and beliefs of the community as a whole. Connecting with school families and the greater Bedford community is a keystone of Riddle Brook School’s success.

Always striving for student success and continuous school improvement, RBS staff works with family and community members to help facilitate and participate in a number of events, activities, and programs. Parents and community members are provided with a myriad of opportunities to take part in any number of academic events, including science and engineering lessons with the district’s math and science facilitator, opportunities to lead “It’s a G.A.S.” (Great Artist Series) lessons in which students are exposed to art history, and the school’s annual Invention Convention, Ellis Island Day, and Math and Literacy Night. Fundraising events, including the school’s annual Family Fun Night, Harvest Festival, Scholastic

Book Fairs, and Mother/Son and Father/Daughter Dances, have raised a considerable sum of money to put towards school improvements. Other annual events, such as Meet and Greet at the start of each school year, Grandparents' Day honoring the community's senior citizens, and the fourth grade Clap Out at the end of the year (which now includes Bedford High School seniors who are RBS alumni) also provide families the opportunity to be full participants in core RBS traditions. The engagement of family and community members is a great source of pride for the RBS community, as the school has been named a Blue Ribbon Award Winning School for Excellence in Volunteerism each year since our school opened in 1999.

RBS also collaborates with a number of colleges and universities including, but not limited to, the University of New Hampshire, St. Anselm College, and Rivier University, to provide opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to complete their student teaching internships. RBS teachers take great pride in working with the next generation of teachers, leading by example through the use of best practice approaches, availing the interns the opportunity to work within a culture of professionalism, respect, and collaboration.

Lastly, engaging families and community members in the RBS community would not be possible without effective communication. Whether by orientations, open house nights, teacher web pages, weekly Principal Notes, or through RBS' presence on the web, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, all members of the RBS community are afforded a number of options to obtain information about school happenings and successes. RBS students, staff, and families are very proud to share those happenings and successes, and it is an honor to be a reflective voice of the Bedford community.

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

Empowering teachers to provide professional development and support for one another uniquely contributes to Riddle Brook School's philosophy of being well prepared to meet pedagogical and content area advances. Our community is rich in its focus of supporting student performance by promoting the positive connection between developing teacher skills and increasing student achievement through professional development activities, which are aligned with academic standards.

At RBS, teachers are encouraged to provide PD opportunities that share their unique skills. Administrators recognize and showcase the strengths of exceptional educators and advocate for learning through leadership and the observation of colleagues. In support of our academic goal of making sure students can use appropriate tools to solve problems, share, and present information, several RBS teachers have been called upon to highlight their skills. One example was our district's ambitious Future Ready Technology Conference. Many RBS teachers shared their expertise with different technology resources among district colleagues. Another example is the work of two RBS fourth grade teachers who created a curriculum uniquely suited to the academic challenge of making sense of problems and persevering through the problem-solving process. Their work with student driven, inquiry-based learning led them to take PD leadership roles by presenting locally and regionally at the Christa McAuliffe Technology Conference, New Hampshire Science Teachers Association Conference, and the Southeastern Regional Educational Service Center.

Just as best teaching practices recognize the diverse learning styles of students, RBS acknowledges the unique learning styles of its professional staff and strives to offer alternative opportunities including Flipped Professional Development. In addition to after school and during school workshops/trainings, Flipped PD provides opportunities for educators to access a series of topics with the purpose allowing teachers to participate in meaningful PD on their own time.

The BSD ensures that professional development is a thoughtful response to data driven, measurable goals set to increase student achievement. RBS educators have the opportunity to participate in workshops with experts and master teachers while receiving continued support throughout a practical application process. For example, this year we were privileged to have Bill Atwood share his unique mathematical innovations and practical ideas to increase student achievement. After meeting in a formal workshop setting, Bill spent time with each grade level modeling instruction with students and then was available for

discussion with teachers to promote the use of his practices.

Through all of its professional development endeavours, Riddle Brook School remains committed to academic excellence while inspiring students to achieve their maximum potential and contribute positively to their community.

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

At Riddle Brook School, collaboration is the cornerstone of our mission and vision. As such, teachers and staff members are empowered by the principal and assistant principal to bring forth and share ideas, strategies, and best practices while keeping in mind our common goal of improving student achievement.

Through venues such as Child Team (Response to Intervention), Principal's Council (parents/teachers), Principal's Advisory Group (students), Building Leadership Team and school-based committees, teachers, students and parents have an active voice in policies, programs, and systems within our school. The principal and assistant principal provide the structure and framework for addressing curricular or other school-based needs, as well as work with staff members who possess an aptitude in their area to help remedy that need. The administrative team values the insights and expertise that staff members offer.

As an example of this practice, the administrative team at RBS queried the staff about areas in which they needed professional development in order to improve their classroom instruction and environment. As a result, teachers had the opportunity to attend mini workshops in a variety of areas (special education, behavior management, reading/writing, technology, STEAM and Responsive Classroom), which were developed and presented by other RBS teachers. Each presenter possesses a particular strength and passion in the area in which he/she presented, and because the culture in our school is to share tools and methodologies for student improvement with colleagues, these presenters did not hesitate when they were asked to present at our workshop.

The RBS Building Leadership Team is comprised of curriculum leaders, specialists and facilitators - reading specialist, guidance counselor, technology specialist, assessment specialist, assistant principal/special education facilitator and principal. The goal of our weekly meetings is to reflect on our school's current practices, systems and results, and use that information to identify areas of improvement. One such area was that of close reading skills. Through collaboration with teachers, administrators and district colleagues, our reading specialist was able to secure a renowned leader in this area and bring her to our school and district. She worked closely with classroom teachers to model lessons with our students and provide additional professional development to our teachers. A plan was set forth for our reading specialist to provide ongoing support to our teachers by modeling lessons as well as observing lessons and providing feedback. We found great success in this model. As a result of this work, our language arts scores on the Smarter Balanced Assessment increased from the 82nd percentile to the 88th percentile for the same cohort of students (third to fourth grade) in a single year.

Collaborative leadership and a shared vision of student success are hallmarks of Riddle Brook School's culture, and as such, drive our practices, programs, and policies.

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

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The use of Professional Learning Communities has been embraced as a critical tool to support academic success for all members of our Riddle Brook School community, including both students and staff. This collaborative approach recognizes that no single teacher’s strengths are greater than the sum of everyone’s collective knowledge. As highlighted in our mission statement, “our collaborative effort is founded on diversity, accountability, and shared responsibility.”

Examples of PLC work: The Grade 4 PLC team recognized the need for students to develop higher level comprehension. The Grade 3 PLC identified writing as a weakness. The Grade 3 and 4 PLC teams, supported by the technology educator, created formative assessments, using tools such as Edmodo. Grade 4 formative assessments identified relative weaknesses in students’ ability to identify main ideas in non-fiction text. Grade 3 identified weaknesses in various writing areas: introduction, organization, elaboration, and transition words. Students were grouped according to the assessment results. Grade 4 worked on identifying key details and determining main ideas. Pacing of lessons, texts used for instruction, and integrated reading and writing activities were differentiated instruction techniques. Grade 3 students worked in groups for a 7 week intervention focused on strategy instruction/reinforcement to help boost students’ performance in relation to grade level writing expectations. Classroom teachers, special educators, reading specialist, and enrichment teacher collaborated to prepare lessons and deliver instruction. At the end of these loops, children took a summative assessment. The assessment documented increased proficiency in the targeted skills. The work within these PLC interventions contributed to improved student performance on grade 3 and 4 Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium Writing Claim, raising scores from 51% of students above standard to 63% of students above standard the following year.

Within PLCs, staff expertise is spread out and diversified, so that students can reap the greatest benefit from their participation in this instruction. We have observed that community engagement is high during intervention block. Students look forward to working with different teachers and schoolmates. Staff members look forward to working with and knowing all students within a grade level. Since the inception of PLCs, RBS staff have come to have a greater appreciation for their colleagues and the skills they share, model, and team teach. A trust and willingness to grow and improve oneself comes from being supported and connected to one’s PLC teammates. The collaborative efforts of our PLCs have yielded great success for all members of the RBS community.