

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Ms. Annie Kosek

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

Official School Name Littlebrook School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 39 Magnolia Lane

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

City Princeton State NJ Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 08540-4013

County Mercer County

Telephone (609) 806-4250 Fax (609) 806-4251

Web site/URL http://lb.princetonk12.org E-mail anniekosek@princetonk12.org

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Mr. Stephen Cochrane E-mail stevecochrane@princetonk12.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Princeton Public School District Tel. (609) 806-4200

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. Patrick Sullivan
(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):
- 4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 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	22	27	49
1	33	28	61
2	33	27	60
3	15	36	51
4	35	31	66
5	36	26	62
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	174	175	349

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 24 % Asian
 - 6 % Black or African American
 - 7 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 51 % White
 - 12 % 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: 12%

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	23
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	15
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	38
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	329
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.116
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	12

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 10 %
36 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Spanish, Serbian, Russian, Romanian, Moldovan, Persian/Farsi, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, Mandarin Chinese, Cantonese Chinese, French, Korean, Japanese, Italian, Hindi, German, Danish, Arabic, Bengali, Tamil, Gujarati

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 12 %
Total number students who qualify: 44
8. Students receiving special education services: 21 %
75 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.

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

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 14
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	19
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	15
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	12
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	5

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 18:1
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%	95%	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.

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
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.

Our mission is to prepare all students to lead lives of joy and purpose as knowledgeable, creative, and compassionate citizens of a global 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

Littlebrook Elementary School is tucked away in a quiet neighborhood of Princeton Township. Rich in diversity and culture, we are home to approximately 350 kindergarten through fifth grade students. Enriched by the Princeton community, our school serves a diverse, multicultural, and multilingual population. Recently named the best public school in New Jersey and the number three school in the nation by Niche.com, families move into the neighborhood specifically for the opportunity for their children to attend Littlebrook School.

We are dedicated to providing a learning environment that stimulates all aspects of the intellect and responds to the diverse needs of the entire school community. We believe that children learn best within a secure physical and emotional setting, respecting all learners. We are connected by our desire for our students to grow into responsible members of our community. Our environment is harmonious, where respect for all students, staff, and families serves as the cornerstone of all we do.

Littlebrook School is a place of partnership where educators work closely with one another, where relationships with families are forged, and where collaboration with individuals and organizations throughout our community and the world support the highest levels of teaching and learning. We are a true community of learners who strive to foster the pursuit of academic excellence and the development of creativity, responsibility, and respect. Our school is a place of innovation where curiosity is sparked, risk-taking is encouraged, and mistakes are viewed as opportunities for deeper understanding and creative problem solving.

The diversity of our school community is one of our greatest assets. We recognize and embrace individuality while building upon the idea that we are more alike than unlike, at school and in our global society. Littlebrook's beloved giraffe mascot, Ravioli, reminds us all of the importance of sticking our necks out for others by being caring and kind. Each day begins with Morning Meeting, where students are greeted with welcoming words and opportunities to make personal connections through sharing and group activities. Technology, critical thinking skills, and creativity are taught throughout the disciplines--literacy, mathematics, visual and performing arts, the sciences, and physical education. Our goal is to create lifelong learners who use their knowledge and unique strengths and talents to fulfill their personal mission.

Each year, we are honored to host artists and historians who work with our students in science, social studies, storytelling, and music. In May, our PTO supports a day-long Science Expo. Scientists from the Princeton area, many of them Littlebrook parents, create engaging, hands-on presentations within their areas of expertise. Children, staff, and families gather together to explore the wonder of science and increase awareness of a realm of incredible careers within the scientific community. We also celebrate our ongoing relationship with local senior citizens, connecting generations, as kindergartners and their "Grandpals" read together each week. In addition, our school participates in family-centered activities including our Family Creativity in the Arts evenings, Family Math nights, and International Fair. Our school is a caring place where every child is known, every culture valued, and kindness and courage are modeled.

The PTO is a valued partner in our school community, supporting special events, field trips, assemblies, and residencies throughout the year. They sponsor after school clubs in which students engage with teachers on a more personal level in programs that highlight both student and teacher interests. Every parent at Littlebrook is considered a valued member of our PTO, and many parents volunteer to support the Littlebrook Community.

We are fortuitous to be supported by the Princeton Education Foundation (PEF). Every year they offer grants to teachers to support innovative practices that foster excitement for learning. Recently, they have supplied grants for the arts, physical education, STEM projects, as well as health and wellness curriculum integration opportunities. Littlebrook teachers annually apply for and benefit from the receipt of these grants, supporting our continual efforts to raise the level of joy in learning and the overall success of our students.

Our "Joe Fund," a memorial fund named in honor of a beloved custodian, provides scholarships to children for extracurricular activities like drama, dancing, sports, and music lessons. The Joe Fund reflects the spirit of Littlebrook in its inclusion of all children in that it allows every child to have equal access to community resources. Funds are raised through donations as well as student-driven fund raising efforts.

At Littlebrook, we celebrate our shared values and unifying beliefs as echoed through our student created Littlebrook Peace Pledge:

At Littlebrook School I share and care.
I listen, follow rules, and I play fair.
I am responsible for what I say and do.
Respect all people, my environment too.
I'm honest and trustworthy, that makes me cool.
I am a great student, I am a great friend,
I am a great citizen at Littlebrook School.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

From the earliest ages students learn to identify themselves as readers and writers. Teachers work within a balanced literacy framework to meet the needs of all students.

Through integrated word study practices, utilizing Wilson Foundations and Words Their Way, a solid understanding of phonemic awareness, phonics, and spelling are emphasized. Vocabulary is interwoven throughout the content areas to bolster background knowledge and promote academic language.

Students work within the scope of learning progressions embedded throughout the Teachers' College Units of Study in Reading and Writing Workshop. Through mini-lessons, guided reading groups, strategy groups, and one-on-one conferring, teachers work in a naturally responsive, individualized way. This approach to reading and writing allows for differentiation of instruction based on student need, choice, and interest. We take pride in our culturally inclusive classroom libraries which mirror the diversity of our student body. Students self-select texts for reading from a rich bank of authentic literature and participate in book clubs where sophisticated conversations are held.

In Writer's Workshop, students find their voice. Mentor texts support understanding of writing across genres. Students frequently analyze their own work as well as that of their peers, and work in partnerships to reinforce the idea that we are a community of writers. Celebration of students as authors is an important part of the process. Publishing celebrations take place at the culmination of each unit of study.

Fostering a mindset for mathematical thinking and learning is the underlying theme across our Math curriculum. Utilizing the Everyday Math program aligned with Common Core State Standards, students develop the understandings and skills that promote lifelong mathematical power and open-ended thinking. As students explore mathematical concepts in ever-increasing depth, often working in partnerships, they engage in 21st century problem solving.

Applying math skills in other disciplines starts early. While planting seeds in the garden, first graders explore ratios to create optimum soils for plants and chart plant growth, and second graders use scale to graph data and plan a butterfly habitat. Throughout the grades, project-based learning encourages students to use math skills in novel ways. In fifth grade, students are flexibly grouped based on performance, which allows them to develop a passion for math. They create monthly projects for each math unit that extend their learning and provide challenges.

The goal of our science curriculum is to have students think and practice as scientists while nourishing their innate sense of wonder about both our natural and technological world. Our science program consists of grade-level classroom instruction and weekly lab science lessons, taught by a science specialist, that complement grade-level units. The units address both content and process skills linked to Next Generation Science standards. Our overarching approach is one of inquiry. Through well-designed investigations involving data collection, analysis, and reflection, students find answers to their questions, resolve how their findings fit in a broader understanding, and posit how to extend their investigation from new questions that arise. Learning opportunities include hatching chicks, observing monarch butterflies, creating simple machines, and designing an investigation of Wisconsin Fast Plants. The garden provides opportunities for children to grow and prepare foods using fresh herbs and vegetables, increasing student awareness of sustainability.

The mission of our social studies curriculum is to develop creative, collaborative, and independent thinking among students through inquiry, research, and analysis. Students are taught to analyze primary and secondary sources for content, audience, and point-of-view using a variety of resources. Our location allows us to enrich the curriculum, utilizing local historians to provide an authentic historical experience. Upper grades visit the Trenton Barracks and Washington Crossing, travel to Howell Living History farm, do a study of the Lenape including a visit from John Kraft, and a Civil War study culminates with a trip to

Gettysburg. Each of the younger grades ties their curriculum to the local community, affording a hands-on learning experience. This includes tours of local businesses and visits from firefighters and other service personnel. Children develop an understanding of the variety of human experiences and the diversity of our world, inspiring them to become responsible citizens in their communities and beyond.

Civic learning and engagement that begins at an early age stimulates creativity and builds 21st century skills. Our students engage in service-learning experiences annually, developed to help the larger community. Kindergartners, after earning money at home for doing chores, purchase and deliver healthy cereal to HomeFront. Fourth graders work to improve the lives of people in need by connecting with children at the Morristown Neighborhood House. They write pen-pal letters and provide nutritious snack packs. Fifth grade students express their gratitude for our veterans through letter-writing, attending local Veteran's Day celebrations, and making paracord bracelets for Operation Gratitude. At every grade, students develop a deeper and broader understanding of curricular concepts and their personal ability to affect change.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

At Littlebrook School we believe that the arts play an important role in the education of every child. The arts allow children to explore and develop talents while integrating curriculum. An arts education enriches students' lives and gives them opportunity to pursue interests outside of the four core subjects. Through our arts program, students at Littlebrook develop innovative thinking, creativity, and alternative ways to communicate and express human emotions.

Littlebrook's visual arts program allows students to become more aware of the world and its connection through art. It culminates in a yearly Family Arts Night that celebrates all of our students as artists. In weekly art classes, students develop a foundational understanding of art techniques using a wide variety of media, including drawing, painting, sculpture, printmaking, and textiles. Students develop an appreciation for art history and experience different cultures through the study of each culture's media and art.

Our elementary music program engages students in the performance, creation, and response to music. Twice-weekly music classes allow children to develop self-expression, creativity, and an appreciation of world cultures through a broad repertoire of music. Students are engaged in movement, instrumental performance, vocal performance, music composition, music literacy, and improvisation, developing an appreciation of both the art and science of music. In addition, all students in grades four and five participate in choir while students in grades 3-5 can participate in band or orchestra.

Littlebrook's Media Center provides a welcoming place for students to foster their love of reading. Students engage in weekly lessons, led by our media specialist, relating to literacy, research, and other content areas. The library, which houses over 20,000 titles featuring quality children's literature, is reflective of our commitment to diversity and multicultural values. For teachers, our media specialist maintains a professional resource library that highlights the most current trends in education.

At Littlebrook, we believe schools are a key setting for teaching public health issues and healthy living strategies. Through weekly health lessons, students in first through fifth grades engage in an age-appropriate and culturally sensitive health education program that encourages them to develop the knowledge, attitude, skills and behavior to adopt, maintain and enjoy lifelong, healthy habits. Using hands-on interactive activities, students explore physical, social, and emotional wellness, covering topics including responsible decision-making, character education, body systems, nutrition, resistance skills, first aid, safety, and disease prevention.

Physical Education (PE) is an integral part of the total learning process at Littlebrook. Students at each grade level participate in PE twice a week, in addition to daily recess. PE strives to develop each student's personal philosophy towards the growth, development, and maintenance of his or her well being, including a desired lifetime of activity. Each student has the opportunity to develop his or her potential through a wide range of physical activities.

Students begin Spanish classes taught by a certified Spanish teacher in first grade with fifteen minutes of instruction twice a week. At second grade and above, Spanish instruction increases to 35-minute classes three times each week using an immersion approach. Incorporation of general education curricula stressing literacy, math, science, and social studies helps students reinforce their learning while making connections to the new language.

Technology is seamlessly infused with the curriculum to enhance the learning process. It is a tool used to support differentiated instruction across all academic areas. Every grade level has access to iPads, Chromebooks, and to our computer lab. Each elementary classroom is equipped with an LCD projector, field sound system, computers, and wireless Internet access to enhance students' learning experiences. Students are encouraged to use interactive and innovative methods to reach higher levels of understanding. Through methods such as backchanneling, blogging, online journaling, virtual field trips, and Skype lessons, children explore a range of academic experiences. Teachers are encouraged and supported in the pursuit of the most engaging uses of technology.

The mission of our counseling program is to advocate for the equity and success of every student. Our school counselor collaborates with classroom teachers, other staff, parents, and community partners to maximize the development of educational, career, and personal/social competencies necessary for students to thrive as responsible citizens in a diverse and changing world. The school counselor teaches classes related to The Six Pillars of Character framework. These six pillars, Caring, Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness and Citizenship, serve as the basis of our character education curriculum.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Littlebrook School utilizes a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) to ensure that the needs of all students are met. Through collaboration, teachers work with students to reach their maximum potential. Use of assessment data plays a key role in monitoring student progress, guiding instruction, and in targeting instructional next steps. With this in mind, teachers can pinpoint goals and decide what interventions would be most appropriate for each child.

In September, students are administered the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) and are screened using the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). Data gleaned from these tools serves as a baseline, identifying areas of strength and need. Administered each trimester, teachers use this data along with ongoing formative assessments to develop learning goals and provide appropriate differentiated instruction.

This year Littlebrook implemented the STAR Math assessment. Administered quarterly, teachers receive a report of their students' progress toward NJ Core Curriculum Standards. Instructional resources are available for teachers to enrich and extend the application of students' mathematical skills while supporting those who are not yet meeting grade expectations.

Teachers understand and work within each child's zone of proximal development, incorporating differentiated instructional practices to meet the needs of all learners. Instruction is tailored to each student in a way that promotes joyful growth and stimulates a love of learning. Each grade explores units that are aligned to multiple intelligences and students are encouraged to express themselves through project-based activities. Some of these experiences include learning about astronomy in a portable planetarium and a "Walking Classroom" which enables children to exercise while listening to educational podcasts.

Formal assessments are paired with ongoing formative assessments to create a fuller picture of students' strengths and needs. Should further intervention be indicated, the Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) team reviews data, develops Specific Measurable Attainable Realistic Timely (SMART) goals, and recommends additional interventions.

By fifth grade, the percentage of students in our subgroups scoring at or above the state average on standardized tests increased. While most of our subgroups met the state average at each grade level, it was not consistent and there remains a gap of 10% or greater between the subgroups and the school's

performance. To minimize the achievement gap among African-American and special education students, and to ensure success for all students, we provide a variety of interventions. Teachers know their students as individuals and are able to provide differentiated support with flexible classroom groupings. Our school-designed Hurdles Program is available to any student in need of short term, concentrated instruction on a specific skill to “jump a hurdle” toward independence. When children require additional support, they may be referred to our Accelerated Intervention Services (AIS) program for more intensive intervention.

AIS teachers meet with students in push-in programs, small groups, or one-on-one pull-out sessions during our daily FOCUS period. Instruction is based on identified needs in language arts or math. Direct instruction may include guided reading using Fountas and Pinnell’s Leveled Literacy Intervention and multi-sensory phonics methods. In-class support for math uses hands-on methods, preteaching of vocabulary, and reteaching to support a solid foundation of skills. Throughout the learning process, teachers use formative assessment to determine need and the most efficient and effective ways to help students reach their goals.

English Language Learners (ELLs) receive one English as a Second Language (ESL) class per day with our ESL teacher, then continue in their general education classroom, immersed in English. Classroom teachers with identified students have been trained in Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP).

Should the MTSS not be sufficient to meet a student’s needs, they may be referred to the Child Study Team (CST) who conducts comprehensive evaluations. When a student qualifies for special education and related services, all efforts are made for instruction to take place in the least restrictive environment. Instructional assistance and in-class support provided by a special education teacher are services available to students within the general education setting. A replacement setting is available for students needing a smaller learning environment where instruction is provided directly by a special education teacher. Counseling, speech/language, occupational, and/or physical therapies are available to students as needed.

Littlebrook maintains high levels of student achievement using intentional and progressive educational strategies. Our staff is comprised of lifelong learners who value innovation and challenge students to meet and exceed expectations. Through differentiated instruction and our FOCUS period, student achievement is supported at every level.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Every stakeholder at Littlebrook is invested in helping students in becoming their best selves. Littlebrook students are part of an environment that values creativity and intrinsic curiosity. Fostering a growth mindset is key to students becoming resilient, joyful learners who are motivated to achieve. Students are inspired to think independently, work collaboratively and embrace their role as global citizens. Within this framework, the whole child is valued and individual differences are celebrated.

Upon entering Littlebrook School, a feeling of warmth surrounds you. As a Responsive Classroom school, children are greeted each morning as they enter. Morning Meetings begin each day in a positive way, helping students to become known to their teachers and peers. Social and emotional growth is promoted through our positive education program, as highlighted by The Six Pillars of Character. These values are reflected in the Littlebrook Peace Pledge, created by students and teachers. Students promise to be a great student, a great friend, and a great citizen at Littlebrook School.

Our school climate is reflective of our commitment to taking care of one another, our school, and community. Teachers work as a team to support one another in their own learning as they share ideas in a safe and respectful space where all perspectives are valued. We are empowered to enrich the lives of the children we serve by creating lessons collaboratively, stopping in to one another's classrooms to observe and learn, communicating openly, and celebrating milestones in one another's lives.

A perfect example of how working together creates a place where children's minds, hearts, and bodies are nourished is our school garden. Students actively plan, care for, and partake in the foods from our garden. We partner with Garden State on Your Plate to provide students with an exposure to a variety of nutritious fruits and vegetables. Families and community members volunteer to participate in these food tastings where students experience the culmination of our efforts.

Collectively, the unique qualities of each member of our school community help to create a healthy, productive, and joyful space where the whole child is nurtured and valued. We believe that the social curriculum is as important as the academic, and that children learn best when they are known and their strengths are acknowledged. As such, a culture of kindness and caring at Littlebrook drives all of our work.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Littlebrook offers varied events and opportunities in partnership with parents and larger community organizations that engage all school constituents.

Littlebrook's connections to McCarter Theatre, The Princeton Senior Resource Center, Princeton University, The Institute for Advanced Study, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Arm-in-Arm, HomeFront, Princeton YMCA, and Princeton Young Achievers provide opportunities and experiences that promote understanding of the world beyond the doors of the classroom. Through these programs students and families grow their connection to the community, realizing how they can better serve each other.

While Littlebrook utilizes various technology for effective communication, it is the human connection that is the heart of Littlebrook. Our school and classroom doors are always open to families who join classes to share stories about their culture or career. Parents and community members with STEM expertise or passion present at our annual Science Expo. Through hands-on scientific studies, the students are inspired to pursue their own wonderings and questions.

Each year, families are invited to participate in a variety of evening programs to strengthen academic achievement and home-school connections. Family Math and Family Art Nights allow families to experience hands-on cooperative learning, while enjoying higher-level and creative thinking activities

together. Additionally, families participate in a Creatively Green Festival where discarded items are reused and repurposed, supporting our noteworthy sustainability efforts.

Littlebrook welcomes students from around the world as families arrive in Princeton for career and educational opportunities. To help families acclimate, Littlebrook offers New Family Orientation in September. A Welcome Packet, written by our third graders, is a helpful resource to get to know the school and the larger Princeton community. Families also participate in International Night, where students gain an awareness of the various cultures represented in our school through family presentations that include ethnic dishes and art. Every year, we ensure that our new families feel embraced and comfortable in their new surroundings.

Littlebrook works tirelessly to ensure that all members of our community are aware of these opportunities and that no family is unable to partake in an event because of extenuating circumstances. While many of our opportunities are free, we are able to provide transportation and scholarships through our Joe Fund. We recognize the value of all our families and know that each one makes us a richer community.

3. Professional Development:

At Littlebrook we believe that life as a teacher begins the day you realize that you are always a learner. Within and beyond the district's plan for professional development, Littlebrook teachers look for opportunities to grow. Our professional development is driven by a staff deeply rooted in educational pursuits. This translates into a team of educators that integrate the most current educational trends into their practice, allowing them to be poised and ready to address the varying needs of all students.

As reflective practitioners we are dedicated to a vision in which innovation is ongoing. Therefore, it is our goal to extend learning beyond the walls of our classrooms. To illustrate this, 4th grade teachers new to the immigration curriculum visited the Tenement Museum. Our science teacher partnered with a naturalist to develop a program at a local nature reserve which supports the fifth grade wetlands study. As a whole, teachers at Littlebrook immerse themselves in learning that goes beyond the curriculum and creatively supports our work.

Collaboration amongst grade level teams occurs naturally throughout the day and year. Formal grade level meetings with our principal ensure that grade level programs remain cohesive and all students successfully engage in the curriculum. Another collaborative experience at Littlebrook involves our Professional Learning Communities. PLCs were created for teams of teachers to work together towards a common goal. This opportunity for collaboration was embraced by our principal who made time for this kind of work to happen. Collaboration extends to all new teachers; our district invests in our new teachers through mentorship and Littlebrook believes that collaboration is the root of mentorship. Teachers are paired with new colleagues as they assimilate to our learning community and develop their professional practice as educators. This partnership evolves over a seven year period and offers both the mentor and mentee a unique, collegial experience. It is this philosophy that allows Littlebrook to function in a collective capacity, looking to each other as resources.

Teachers at Littlebrook School have invested in a Responsive Classroom model which supports and develops problem solving skills. Classrooms utilize a morning meeting where students gather, greet one another and work together to develop community and to problem solve. This model sets the tone for positive classroom environments. It considers the whole child and focuses not just on academic development but social and emotional growth. Responsive Classroom, when utilized across grade levels, provides a framework for all students to feel valued and safe. Littlebrook as a community has embraced this approach through ongoing training and collaboration.

4. School Leadership:

“The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.” This quote by Aristotle represents an overarching theme at Littlebrook School. It is a collaborative learning community where every member has a voice and plays a vital role in ensuring success for all children. It is within this type of empowered community that we have

shown ourselves to be an exceptional school.

Littlebrook staff is comprised of creative and intuitive life-long learners invested in the whole child, beginning with our principal. Her democratic leadership style allows the building of relationships among all stakeholders. She has an open-door policy which ensures accessibility to all staff. She has daily interactions with nearly four hundred students including being visible in classrooms daily and hosting birthday lunches and school-wide assemblies in which she personally engages the entire student body.

Staff at Littlebrook engage in the decision making process via committees, which guide school-wide decisions. Committees at Littlebrook provide a gateway for all stakeholders to have a voice. Our award-winning green committee, led by our lab science teacher, recently developed a program to reduce our carbon footprint. Students are empowered to take responsibility for composting and recycling all materials generated by our school community.

As an advocate for students, each teacher becomes a leader, engaging every resource to create the best program possible. This may include coordinating efforts of the guidance counselor, social worker, instrumental music teacher, and community groups such as Big Brother/ Big Sister, or any other staff member, including custodial staff, that may connect well with a student.

Every parent of a Littlebrook student is a member of our Parent Teacher Organization. They maintain strong visibility in the building. Our PTO provides scholarships so all students can participate in every activity regardless of financial constraints. They organize special residencies and assemblies for the entire school population. They offer after-school clubs in partnership with teachers that highlight interests that extend the school experience in an innovative way. Littlebrook's PTO is an integral part of the unique opportunities afforded to our school community.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

At Littlebrook School, we strive to enhance achievement by developing relationships and instructional practices that recognize the potential, the passions, the readiness levels, and the learning styles of each student. To ensure that students are able to meet their full academic and social/emotional potential, differentiated instruction is an essential practice. Our FOCUS period highlights this dedication to each student's individuality.

The FOCUS period is a daily 30-minute period in every grade, created to provide learning opportunities for children depending on their needs, strengths, and interests. Students pursue topics of their own interest that enrich and extend their academic learning. It provides students with the opportunity, time, and resources to gain knowledge, understand concepts, and apply skills in innovative and creative projects of their choice. This period also allows for flexible scheduling of support programs. Students may leave the classroom for various types of instruction, i.e., supplemental instruction, academic intervention, speech therapy, occupational therapy, instrumental music lessons, social and life skills groups, and support for ELL on different days during the week without the burden of missing new curricular instruction.

Beginning in first grade, teachers guide students in developing interests and discovering individual passions during the FOCUS period. Students design projects with these goals in mind; learn something new, cultivate interest in the topic, and construct ways to share new knowledge. From grade to grade, the projects increase in depth and complexity. Our first graders may create illustrated joke books, pop-up villages of their neighborhoods, or write and perform original music. While in fifth grade, students may develop projects simulating the development of the wheel, design posters explaining the physics of baseball, or create interactive slideshows on Alexander Hamilton. FOCUS projects often spark further independent study for the student or for classmates.

Concepts and skills learned from all Littlebrook experiences are integrated into student projects. Students also have the opportunity to access the different talents and expertise of all of the Littlebrook staff. A student may meet with the art teacher to study styles of portraiture, the lab science teacher to study plant growth, or with the school librarian for research.

Students enjoy presenting their projects to classmates and the school community, and are particularly proud to show their work to the principal in a special meeting. Students look forward to FOCUS time, knowing that their questions and ideas will be valued and celebrated.