

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 Mr. Jeff Anderchak

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

Official School Name Franklin Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 2401 Rochester Road

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

City Sewickley State PA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 15143-8606

County Allegheny County

Telephone (412) 366-9663 Fax (412) 366-5852

Web site/URL http://www.northallegheny.org/Domain/236 E-mail janderchak@northallegheny.org

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Dr. Robert Scherrer E-mail rscherrer@northallegheny.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name North Allegheny School District Tel. (412) 366-2100

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. Kevin Mahler
(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):
- 7 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 3 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 2 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools

12 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	24	24	48
1	33	29	62
2	35	28	63
3	26	35	61
4	41	29	70
5	40	36	76
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	199	181	380

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 34 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 0 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 65 % 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: 3%

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	4
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	6
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	10
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	379
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.026
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

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

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Mandarin Chinese; Hindi; Telagu; Spanish; Greek; Japanese; Vietnamese; Punjabi; Arabic

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 1 %
Total number students who qualify: 5
8. Students receiving special education services: 8 %
32 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- 3 Autism
- 0 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 0 Emotional Disturbance
- 3 Hearing Impairment
- 0 Mental Retardation
- 0 Multiple Disabilities
- 0 Orthopedic Impairment
- 2 Other Health Impaired
- 7 Specific Learning Disability
- 17 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: 9
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	17
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	11
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	8
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

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

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

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

It is our mission to prepare all students for success in a changing world.

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

Located in Franklin Park Borough, which, in 2016, was ranked by WalletHub as the most desirable city in which to live in Pennsylvania, Franklin Elementary School is one of seven elementary schools in the North Allegheny School District. Originally constructed in 1936 to serve a rural community, the school has undergone several renovation projects in its 81 year existence to evolve with the changing community. Franklin Park Borough has blossomed into a desirable suburban community given the strength of the school system, property values, its development possibilities and location. The area attracts many professionals (doctors, lawyers, software engineers, investment bankers, scientists/researchers, professors, just to name a few) that work for large firms/corporations/universities in the city of Pittsburgh. Franklin parents are highly educated individuals whose value for education drives them to partner with the school to ensure a rich and meaningful experience for their children. Additionally, Franklin is the most culturally diverse elementary school in our district, with nearly 40% of our students coming from an Asian or Indian background. Our diverse community helps to create a culture of acceptance, respect, and understanding in our schoolhouse in which we embrace the uniqueness of our students/families and expand our perspectives by learning with and through others in our neighborhood.

Just this year, Franklin Elementary School has received the following accolades:

- 1) We were ranked the #1 elementary school in Pennsylvania based on School Performance Profile (SPP) score, which was 99.8.
- 2) Niche.com ranked Franklin as the #2 school in the Pittsburgh area, #25 in the state of Pennsylvania, and #67 in America.
- 3) Niche.com ranked Franklin teachers are the #18 Best Teachers in America.

At Franklin, however, we know that a school's greatness is measured in a wide variety of ways, many of which are not quantifiable. Our school mantra, "At Franklin, we do our best every day and in every way" is the guiding principle that keeps all stakeholders focused on being positive citizens that are committed to personal growth everyday.

As a staff this year, we have been focusing our professional development efforts on the growth mindset. More specifically, we have become enamored with the idea/concept of "grit." We know that individuals with deep passion and long range perseverance will remain steadfast to their commitment to completing a task, solving a problem, overcoming all obstacles. We are working deliberately to establish a school environment that cultivates grit in our students, staff, and parents. This concept has guided our professional development at the building level and will continue to be our guiding light in the future.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

The North Allegheny English-Language Arts program emphasizes explicit, systematic instruction in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, writing, listening, speaking, grammar, and spelling. The foundation of the program is high-quality children's literature and informational texts which expose students to a variety of genres. The program prioritizes and sequences essential skills and strategies into a clear, organized model for instruction. The program provides ample practice and application of these skills, using a variety of meaningful tools and activities suited to different types of learners and classroom settings to reinforce instruction and learning. The writing component of this program is rich and includes a variety of assignments where students will have the opportunity to practice and enhance their writing skills. The assessment program includes both formal and informal assessments to ensure mastery or diagnosis of reading difficulties throughout the year.

The North Allegheny School District provides a sequential mathematics curriculum for all students, kindergarten through twelfth grade. Mathematics education in the District is based on standards at each grade level. Established by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and the Pennsylvania Department of Education, these Standards specify what students need to know and how they will apply such knowledge.

As implemented by the teachers, the District's Math Standards reflect the increasingly rigorous competencies that students are expected to achieve and demonstrate as they progress through school. These competencies include understanding of mathematical concepts, facility in problem-solving, capacity to make connections among mathematical ideas and other areas of knowledge, fluency in communication via mathematical symbols and conventional language, proficiency in mathematical reasoning, dexterity in the mathematical analysis of data, and mastery of basic computation skills.

The achievement of these competencies requires more than textual or technological resources. It requires prolonged and sustained interaction between teachers and students. Only through such interaction can curricular materials become meaningful. The role of the teachers in mathematics instruction is crucial as they are the ones who help the students to understand not simply how but why mathematics works.

The 2010 science department curriculum review identified some changes that will be phased in to the NASD elementary science program through the 2014-15 school year. The goals for all elementary students are not just to teach science content, but to develop scientific literacy that will stay with them throughout their education at NA and beyond. In particular, elementary students will be given the opportunity to be exposed to the following skill sets:

- A) An emphasis on developing science process skills
- B) Activities that emphasize inquiry-based learning
- C) Developing skills of prediction and application
- D) Cultivating learning through the students' own natural curiosity
- E) Learning discipline-specific content as outlined below, by grade level

In the North Allegheny School District, social studies education is a vital component of a well-rounded educational experience. It prepares students to function successfully in an increasingly expanded global community. It is also the primary medium through which students are prepared to become capable, responsible citizens who are willing to meaningfully participate in the nation's democracy, and to contribute to its multicultural society.

To assist students in becoming the best and most informed citizens that they can be, the North Allegheny School District provides a comprehensive social studies curriculum for all students, kindergarten through twelfth grade. The curriculum includes elements from the Social Sciences and the four strands of social studies, namely: Civics and Government; Economics; History; and Geography.

A quality education in social studies is essential to all students. This education helps to develop in students an understanding and appreciation of the experiences of the past, the realities of the present, and the possibilities for the future. Through inquiry-based learning, problem solving, analytical thinking, reasoned decision-making, and utilization of technology, students are provided with the skills necessary to live and compete effectively in a global community.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

At Franklin, we are committed to the whole child. While our academics are rich and rigorous, we work deliberately to infuse the arts into each child's daily life. All students in Grades K-5 receive weekly instruction in what we refer to as "special areas" ~ physical education, art, music, and library. This instruction is provided by a certified teacher with a specialization in each particular field. Each special area has a robust, systemic curriculum that is developmentally based and student centered. Students in Grades 1-5 receive 45 minutes of special area per day; kindergarten receives 30 minutes per day. Additionally, we have what we call Integrated Arts (IA). Integrated Arts occurs on Mondays and provides students an extra 60 minutes of instruction in the "specials." IA time is used to "integrate" the special areas/arts with general education curriculum. These integrated activities are related to a building theme. This year's theme is, "The Franklin Zoo." Accordingly, activities provided to students during this time focus on animals, zoos, etc.

The general music curriculum is a creative and active learning experience in which all K-5 students participate. Centered around an understanding and use at different levels of rhythm, melody, harmony, form, timbre, and creativity, the music curriculum incorporates a wide variety of teaching techniques and approaches drawn from the Gordon Music Learning Theory, Dalcroze Eurhythmics, Kodaly Method, and the Orff approach. The book series Game Plan creatively ties these methods together in a grade by grade plan that provides instructional consistency while fostering individual creativity. Students are exposed to musical literature, historical context, and cultural diversity through singing, instrumentation, and movement. The music department also offers orchestra instruction starting in Grade 3, band instruction starting in Grade 4, and chorus instruction starting in Grade 4. Presently, Franklin Elementary has over 100 students in the orchestra program, over 60 students in the band program, and nearly 150 students in the Choral program.

The goal of the physical education program is to provide students with the knowledge and skills to value and apply physical activity and its benefits for a lifetime. Through active participation in movement and sport, students foster an appreciation for personal fitness and other social skills vital to becoming healthy, productive members of the community. Each lesson is carefully designed to maximize the amount of time students are engaged in moderate to vigorous physical activity. Lesson design can include creative movement, adventure education, individual activities, aerobic endurance, muscular fitness, and team sports. Students also acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to address health concerns at various stages of development. By connecting academic content to real-life scenarios, students understand the impact of personal choice and external factors on individual health and the overall health of the community.

The elementary art program develops the foundational understanding and skills in the visual arts. Students practice artistic activities that develop creative strategies, skills, and habits of mind. This work supports design literacy in the language of visual composition and expression. Through the art curriculum, students acquire procedural knowledge, skill, and craftsmanship through the art making process; develop an understanding of the meaning and purpose of visual art; explore our rich and diverse historical and cultural heritage through the study of visual art; and develop aesthetic judgment that supports the making and understanding of rich meaning in art.

Our library program is designed to ensure that all students and staff become effective users of ideas and information in the technology driven global community of the 21st century. The school library provides access to information in various print and digital formats, functioning as an integral part of the total curriculum. Students develop an appreciation for literature, demonstrate effective information literacy skills, employ critical thinking, problem solving, and decision making skills, and access a variety of technological resources. The school librarian, working collaboratively with students, teachers, administrators, and the community, provides instructional experiences while assuming an essential role in

the learning process.

Our special area teachers are also utilized to support students' growth and progress in the general education curriculum. When our special area teachers have unassigned time (that is, time that is not scheduled for direct instruction or their contractual planning/prep time), they push into classrooms to support targeted students. This could be leading a "center," reading with a small group of students, providing math support, etc.

Franklin has access to a "Technology Integrator" for 2.5 days per week (50%). This teaching professional provides professional development, individualized support, and teaching assistance to the staff. A co-teaching model is most often utilized in which the Tech Integrator and classroom teacher co-facilitate lessons that infuse technology into the instructional design. From green screen projects to movie trailers to breakout boxes, the Tech Integrator continues to lead the way. The Tech Integrator is also a critical player in our 1:1 technology initiative. This initiative, called Focus 2020, is a 5 year plan in which all students will be issued an individual device (iPad or PC) as a learning tool. The initial steps in this plan have focused on teacher training/professional development.

At Franklin, we believe that quality school counseling programs can have a powerful impact on student achievement and contribute significantly to school initiatives. Our school counseling program is a collaborative effort benefitting students, parents, teachers, administrators, and the overall community. Our school counseling program is an integral part of the students' daily educational environment. Our School Counselor uses her expertise to provide counseling, instruction, consultation, prevention, and intervention services to support the school's mission and to enhance the learning process and assist students in making informed positive choices.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Recently, our school completed a book study of the book "The Art and Science of Teaching" by Dr. Marzano. Through this book study, we focused our efforts on communicating learning goals, helping student effectively interact with knowledge, establishing effective relationships, and engaging students. The fruits of our past labor are being fully realized in the present time. A visit into a Franklin classroom finds students actively engaged (minds-on and hands-on) in meaningful learning activities that are differentiated to meet individual needs. Teachers act not as the sage on stage, but rather, as the guide on the side who facilitate learning. Formative and summative assessments help educators to make data-driven decisions regarding instructional design and pacing.

Differentiated instruction has become the norm at Franklin. While we are not in full implementation of the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS), which will occur in the 2017-2018 school year, we are focusing on differentiated core instruction that occurs in the general education classroom. Teachers use guided reading, flexible grouping, and center activities to provide tiered and targeted instruction to students. Building specialists provide both pull-out and push-in support for students.

Our Elementary Student Assistance Program (ESAP) is the process we utilize with the goal of maximizing students' success by reviewing information, formulating plans for intervention, and monitoring student progress. This is a success-oriented course of action that uses specific intervention strategies to identify and address barriers to learning, such as academic, medical, social, behavioral, and/or attendance concerns. This program includes an ESAP teacher (essentially an "interventionist") with the flexibility in her schedule to meet with students as an additional intervention possibility. This individual provides both remediation and enrichment to students in any and all content areas.

Data collected through DIBELS, curriculum-based assessments, and standardized tests (Iowa Test of Basic Skills, CogAT, and PSSA) help to identify students who qualify for remediation and enrichment within the building. Beyond the differentiated instruction provided in the classroom, we offer a continuum of support services aimed at meeting each child's needs.

PSSA data shows that students at Franklin are achieving at extraordinary rates. Last year, 95% of students

in grades 3-5 were Proficient or Advanced on the PSSA ELA, while, 88% were Proficient or Advanced on the PSSA Math. Scores at all grade levels at Franklin exceeded our District average and far exceeded the State average. PVAAS data shows great growth in Grades 4 and 5, with all teachers in both grade levels performing in the Dark Blue, Light Blue, or Green performance levels; which is to say that there is evidence that the teachers' group of students met or exceeded the standard for PA Academic Growth. Although our student achievement indicators are extremely high, we continue to analyze all available data to continually refine our practices to maximize our success and student growth. In March 2017, the Franklin principal met individually with a member of the State's PVAAS Core Team to more closely examine Franklin's growth measures. The team member was so impressed by our results, action plans, and articulation that she asked the principal if he would be willing to share our story with others at the state level.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

The school's motto ~"At Franklin, we do our best every day and in every way," serves as the galvanizing force that guides everything we do. We strive to do our best, individually and collectively, at everything within our control. Students are encouraged not just to do their best academically, but to do their best in all areas; we strive to be the best students, the best artists, the best musicians, the best friends that they can be at all times. Students and staff are reminded that they don't have to "be" the best, but rather, they have to "do" their best. The momentum we achieve when everyone in the school community is committed to doing his/her best is unstoppable and permeates all components of the learning environment. Students are motivated by seeing the teachers and staff continually push themselves to their limits, parents are then inspired by the internal drive of their children to grow and progress, and the principal is moved by the collective power of an entire community of learners dedicated to putting our best foot forward.

Staff at Franklin know that the principal operates an "open door" policy which promotes open dialogue. It is during these communication sessions that we can develop specific action plans to support staff as needed. Staff members are encouraged to attend professional development sessions offered by the district and/or seminars and conferences outside of the district to advance their personal growth. When teachers attend outside conferences or seminars, they share their learning with all Franklin staff upon their return. Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings are also utilized as a vehicle to offer support and professional development to staff on an ongoing basis. At Franklin, we recognize that we learn best with and through others; to that end, staff members open share ideas, strategies, interventions that they have found to be effective with colleagues. This supportive network of teachers helping teachers is empowering and adds to the collaborative, family-like culture within our school.

Our school's Bully Prevention Program is the basis on which our positive environment is built. Annually, we have a kick-off Bully Prevention Program assembly/event that refocuses our school on being good citizens and supporting a positive environment. We then identify monthly themes (honestly, responsibility, fairness, etc.) around which teachers design specific classroom lessons and construct class meetings. Students who are "caught being good" are rewarded by receiving a "PAW" that indicates they were observed positively demonstrating the monthly theme. These PAWS are collected on a bulletin board for all to see, and at the end of each month a student from each grade level is randomly selected to receive a very special reward.

Last year, the North Allegheny School District administered a School Climate survey to students, staff, and parents for the first time in recent history. The results/responses from the survey from all Franklin stakeholders were overwhelmingly positive with regard to the school environment, student engagement, and safety. In fact, Franklin received perfect scores/marks in many categories. These results were not surprising to us; they simply reiterated that which we already know: that Franklin is a safe, positive, collaborative, student-centered, and supportive learning environment with high expectations. From this School Climate Survey, we identified areas in which we would like to improve and established actionable goals. One goal was to improve the frequency of positive communication provided to parents. To that end, the Principal implemented a Positive Communication Incentive Program. To date, we have logged over 500 examples of unsolicited positive communication provided by Franklin staff to Franklin parents.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

The strength of Franklin Elementary School truly is the people involved in the school community. We enjoy an incredibly strong home-school connection that is the foundation from which our school success is built. Our Parent-Faculty Association (PFA), which boasts nearly 100% participation, is an active group that has a daily presence in our schoolhouse. From Franklin Mart to Muffins With Mom/Donuts With Dad to parent volunteers in the classroom to the donation of 8 Promethean Boards in our classrooms, the PFA plays a critical role in enhancing the school experience for the school community.

We are continually looking for community service projects and/or charitable organizations to support. Through a 5 year commitment with the Kilimanjaro Education Foundation, we raised funds that were used to build and supply a full library to a school in Tanzania. Most recently, we have focused our efforts on more localized projects. Just since this January (2017), we have raised over \$26,000 for local projects: \$3,531 was raised through a Penny War for the Pennies From Heaven Foundation of Pittsburgh Children's Hospital; just under \$10,000 was raised through Jump Rope for the Heart for the American Heart Association; and over \$14,000 was raised for a St. Baldrick's Day head-shaving event to raise funds for childhood cancer research. Indeed, the Franklin community is a generous one committed to giving back to others who are not as fortunate as us.

We also enjoy a strong connection to our local police department. Specifically, we have partnered with a Franklin Park police officer to pilot a school safety program that is focused on critical incident response. Built on the basis of observation, communication, and proactive safety measures, we have developed procedures that tactics that will be deployed in the event our school encounters an emergency situation. We are confident in stating that we are the safest school in our region, if not in the entire state of Pennsylvania due to the specific and tactical training (including combat training, weapons disarming training, and live-time simulations) provided to us by this officer.

3. Professional Development:

The North Allegheny School District is committed to the concept of professional development that is uniquely coordinated and supported by the District. Our model consists of various components which have a positive and meaningful impact on student learning and achievement through a continuous and systemic approach to research-based professional development. Our Focus 2020 Initiative has driven a large number of the professional development topics this school year with topics focused on iPad utilization, Google Drive, Nearpod, and blended learning, just to name a few. All professional staff members are required to obtain a designated number of professional development hours related to "technology" each year. Additionally, the Technology Integrator at our building also offers weekly "tech chats" focused on technology infusion at the elementary level. These sessions, which are offered before the instructional day begins, are specifically targeted to the needs (collective and individual) of Franklin teachers.

Based on Spring 2016 BrightBytes survey, 35% of teachers are spending more than 17 hours of technology-related professional development; this percentage doubled from 2 years ago. The amount of professional development teachers participate in is important because research shows that 14 hours of high quality professional development on a single topic is needed because the effect is statistically significant.

Throughout the course of the school year, teachers also participate in eleven in-service days with targeted topics and goals to support student achievement. Topics this year include, but were not limited to: technology, STEM, MTSS, implementation of new math program (GoMath!), diversity, data retreat, the growth mindset, and crisis response.

The building principal holds monthly Staff Meetings and PLC (professional learning community) meetings to provide additional opportunities for staff to grow professionally. One primary focus of these sessions is data analysis, during which times we closely examine interventions in place for students and the progress these students are demonstrating due to the interventions. Another major focus of Staff Meetings and PLC meetings is the further exploration of grit and the growth mindset. We have used the books "Grit- The Power of Passion and Perseverance" by Angela Duckworth and "Mindset. The New Psychology of Success" by Carol Dweck as our guides for these discussions.

4. School Leadership:

The principal's philosophy is best summarized by Dr. James Comer's quote, "No significant learning occurs without a significant relationship." Franklin Elementary School provides a warm, caring, personalized learning environment in which mutual respect is the common denominator. The principal places a premium on building strong, trusting relationships with all stakeholders and treating everyone with dignity, respect, and compassion. It is the principal's belief that individuals (be they students or staff) will be far

more invested personally, will work harder, will demonstrated great pride and dedication, and will take greater ownership in a cause when they sincerely believe that they are in a safe, supportive environment in which their leader is sincerely concerned about them as an individual.

At Franklin, we initially focus our efforts on building strong relationships with students and parents. The principal models his philosophical approach for others by referring to every child by name and being knowledgeable of family backgrounds & dynamics. Teachers are empowered to make decisions and contribute to the continued evolution and excellence of our school. The principal fosters a work environment in which teachers feel safe taking risks and trying new ideas, an environment of distributed leadership in which teachers are supremely invested because they have a significant voice in how we operate, an environment of open communication and dialogue among all stakeholders, and an environment of trust and mutual respect. We are in this together, and there is no place we'd rather be!

The principal believes that the single most important responsibility of the school leader is to select exceptional staff members to work with students and families. He is not interested in the candidate with the highest GPA or the most extensive resume. Rather, he is interested in the educator that cares, is focused on doing good things for kids, is in education for all the right reasons, and possesses all the intangibles...flexibility, collaboration, creativity, personality, strong work ethic, etc... that make a great teacher and even better human being. Once these educators are secured, the principal trusts them, supports them, encourages them, challenges them, and cultivates them to become a cohesive unit with one common goal...doing good things for kids!

The Principal's Advisory Committee (PAC) meets bi-monthly to address building specific issues and concerns. There is no set agenda for this meeting; rather, it is an open forum for staff members to bring forward any issues they feel need addressed within the building. The committee consists of the building principal and a representative from each grade level (K-5) and each department (special areas, support staff, paraprofessionals).

In the event the principal is not in the building, there is a chain of command in place that identifies teacher leaders who are equipped to handle any immediate issues that may arise. These teacher-leaders also serve on the building Crisis Response Team and Crisis Intervention Team. Specialized training has been provided to those on the Crisis Intervention Team as part of our collaborative work with a local police officer as previously indicated in this application.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The North Allegheny School District has embarked on a 5 year journey that includes 2 major initiatives...the FOCUS 2020 Technology Initiative and the implementation of an MTSS program. While we have not historically utilized an MTSS or RtI model, our ESAP (Elementary Student Assistance Program) has served as the model used by our school to support students in needs, gather data and documentation on the effectiveness of interventions, and make recommendations regarding next best steps. This model, whose goals are to maximize the student's success by reviewing information, formulating plans for intervention, and monitoring student progress, is a success-oriented course of action that uses specific intervention strategies to identify and address barriers to learning, such as academic, medical, social, behavioral, and/or attendance. While we have found great success with this program, we have begun the transition to an MTSS model. This year, we focused our efforts on examining Tier I ~ the core, general education curriculum where universal screenings are administered to identify students in need. We know that approximately 80% of students nation-wide will respond favorably to Tier I interventions; in fact, the percentage here at Franklin is significantly higher than 80%. Teachers at Franklin have always excelled at differentiating and personalizing their instruction to meet students' diverse needs, so the migration to this model has been embraced.

The FOCUS 2020 Initiative was born from one of our District's Comprehensive Planning goals and is rooted in the belief that we are obligated to provide our students with a technology-rich environment which is reflective of the world beyond the walls of our schoolhouse. To this end, we have mapped the course of a 5 year implementation plan that will provide all students with greater access to technology as part of their routine school day. Professional development as well as technology measures are integral components of the initiative, especially in the infancy stages of this endeavor.

These are just two brief examples of how the Franklin Staff demonstrates its commitment to educational excellence. While we have earned outstanding student achievement scores/marks/accolades over the years, we are not content to rest on our laurels. Rather, we continue to challenge ourselves, embrace new challenges, invest in the future, and evolve with the changing educational landscape so that our students can continue to achieve at high levels and become future leaders. It is this commitment to excellence that sets our staff apart from the rest!