

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 Dr. Todd Dishong

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

Official School Name Lemont/Houserville Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 675 Elmwood Street 217 Scholl Street

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

City State College State PA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 16801-7292

County Centre County

Telephone (814) 231-5026 Fax _____

Web site/URL http://www.scasd.org/Domain/383 E-mail tdd14@scasd.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 O'Donnell E-mail rjo11@scasd.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name State College Area School District Tel. (814) 231-1011

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 Mrs. Amber Concepcion
(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):
- 8 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 11 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	34	29	63
1	30	32	62
2	24	28	52
3	31	33	64
4	25	31	56
5	26	25	51
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	170	178	348

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 2 % Asian
 - 0 % Black or African American
 - 1 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 89 % White
 - 7 % 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: 10%

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	11
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	24
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	35
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	356
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.098
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	10

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 16 %
Total number students who qualify: 53

8. Students receiving special education services: 17 %
21 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
- 1 Emotional Disturbance
- 0 Hearing Impairment
- 1 Mental Retardation
- 1 Multiple Disabilities
- 0 Orthopedic Impairment
- 5 Other Health Impaired
- 9 Specific Learning Disability
- 0 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: 5
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.	17
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 20:1
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%	96%	95%	95%
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.

To prepare students for lifelong success through excellence in education.

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

GET GRIT – DON'T QUIT is the Lemont-Houserville slogan where we promote perseverance and a “stick-to-it-tiveness” attitude through a growth mindset. Students know growth occurs through grappling and wrestling with challenging learning and situations in school and life.

Lemont and Houserville are “sister schools” within the State College Area School District that serve a combined total of 348 students in a K-2 and 3-5 building. We share the same families, students, and communities. Our school sit at the base of Mt. Nittany in State College, located in central Pennsylvania. We pride ourselves on living out our district pillars of having a culture of trust, relationships, and collaboration, being responsive in our teaching and to our learners, having high expectations for all, and welcoming everyone in a safe climate for learning and work. This occurs through the common values and expectations that all students, faculty, staff, and families share through our School Wide Positive Behavior Standards of being a S.T.A.R. Everyone within our community strives to Show Kindness, Take Responsibility, Act Safely, and Respect Everyone. Students are actively involved in “living out” these standards through being S.T.A.R. Ambassadors and being involved on the school leadership team. Our school has achieved “banner-status” the past three years (since we have begun), maintaining fidelity to the standards of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support. We have also been a model PBIS site for other schools and districts to visit.

While our two schools are academically strong and deliver English language arts (ELA) and Math through a differentiated workshop model and provide a rich thematic-unit based social studies and science curriculum, they are also an extension of the community where families and our Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) are partners in learning and developing the whole child through numerous social, emotional, cultural, and academic experiences such as our School Fun Run, Fall Fest, International Family Fun Night, Family Movie Nights, Book Fairs, Pizza and Basketball, Field Days, Jump Rope for Heart, and other special events such as the Daddy-Daughter Dance and Mother-Son Baseball Game. We also host numerous after school programs and intramurals such as track, skiing, and volleyball.

Our One Book One School One Community is a “marquee” event for our school and community as our Literacy Team and PTO work together in purchasing a common book for each child and faculty/staff member. Our selected book is shared by everyone and celebrated at a culminating activity with guest poets, musicians, and presenters where everyone is invited to attend. These events are well attended by our students and families. Our students, family, faculty and staff are active in service learning and serve others through numerous projects that include food collection for the local food bank, penny, book, and shoe drives, supply collection for our local animal shelter, letters to our troops and local senior care facilities, pollinator plant work as well as our Arts and Crafts Caring Fair. Students create crafts and sell them to peers. The money made from the fair is donated to various local and worldwide charities that are valued by our students.

A true team approach is taken at Lemont/Houserville amongst faculty, staff, and administration regarding student growth and professional learning. Monthly we use Measures of Academic Progress (M.A.P.) and Aimsweb data to analyze student information individually and collectively to strengthen our own teaching as we continually differentiate instruction to meet student needs. Weekly meetings occur with teachers, the principal, and instructional coach where we learn together as a community of professional learners and highlight our “glows and grows” in curriculum, teaching practices, and data analysis. Together, we participate in monthly book talks at Community Meetings where teachers and grade levels volunteer to present chapters of our shared book. Professional Learning Plans (PLP's) also occur, where grade levels and teachers meet to plan, observe other teachers, discuss practices, curriculum, and address student growth. Our specialist teachers also take an active role in cross-curricular activities incorporating reading, writing, math, and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) activities and strategies into the specialty areas.

A balanced, immersive, differentiated, approach to education and a culture and climate of “community” have been the key strategies that have encouraged and challenged all students to develop their full potential academically, physically, socially, and culturally at Lemont/Houserville Elementary School.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Our faculty and staff value our “Four Pillars.” We specifically focus on pillar two: Responsive Teaching and Learning and pillar three: High Expectations for All. Our curriculum cycle includes researching current practices; developing curriculum encompassing the PA Core Standards; providing professional development; considering, adopting, and purchasing resources; and evaluating the curriculum. The standards within our curriculum are vertically articulated from kindergarten through fifth grade. This curriculum is a living, breathing document that we adjust and adapt regularly based upon student need, data analysis, best practices and research. As we develop curriculum we utilize the Understanding by Design Framework (UbD) to create curriculum that supports students in developing understandings as they engage in meaningful and robust learning experiences across all content areas. Curriculum is written using a "backwards-design" approach – considering student outcomes as we design curriculum, assessment, and learning experiences.

ELA

Our reading curriculum is written through UbD based upon what students need to know, do and understand. Essential questions are the vehicle in which students arrive at these understandings. Teachers engage in multiple professional development opportunities to gain understanding of the curriculum and plan with the end goal in mind. Our extensive and diverse classroom libraries support our fiction and nonfiction units of study. Shared reading experiences, conferring and student choice in book selection help to round out our reading experience in ELA. This academic scaffolding ensures all learners, within our school community, reach their full potential.

Our writing curriculum is an ongoing creative process that gives our students a voice. It focuses on three forms of writing: narrative, informational and persuasive/opinion. Through the writing process students are encouraged to generate ideas, refine their thinking and edit work as developmentally appropriate. Students are given the opportunity to publish their work through a variety of venues. Writing is also embedded in our school community’s deep value of inquiry, reflection and collaboration.

Math

At Lemont/Houserville the success of the student is a joint collaborative effort between the grit and determination each student puts forth, the responsiveness of the teachers and the careful scaffolding of the curriculum built upon itself from one year to the next. In math, the curriculum is centered around five concepts: numbers and operations, measurement and data, geometry, algebraic thinking and mathematical practice. As the students progress through each grade, they revisit each concept and build upon previous knowledge learned through manipulatives and hands-on experiences.

Science

Within our thematic units, students engage in an inquiry stance to explore each of the four domains of science. During their time at Lemont/Houserville, students will study aspects of physical science, life science, earth and space science, and engineering design. They will engage in many hands-on activities while testing a hypothesis or creating solutions to real-life problems. At Lemont/Houserville, we strive to build a culture of curiosity where students feel empowered to learn. STEAM is also a focus of our library. At Houserville, students have an opportunity to explore interests and wonderings through science, technology, engineering, art, and math. Students are encouraged to collaborate and problem solve in a dynamic and engaging atmosphere.

Social Studies

At Lemont/Houserville, we encourage students to develop self-awareness, as well as an ability to appreciate and understand perspectives and cultures different from their own. Our social studies units are rooted in essential questions that act as a guide to navigate students’ learning and deepen understanding of themselves and the world around them. We focus learning in the each of the five disciplines: civics and government, geography, economics, history, and behavioral sciences.

While our curriculum encompasses the PA Core Standards, it truly is driven by being responsive to the needs of our students and best practices of teaching. Our curriculum is delivered by highly qualified teachers who embrace a growth mindset. On average, Lemont-Houserville teachers have sixteen years of teaching experience, yet continue to strive to learn and deliver quality instruction by putting students first.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Through music and art collaboration, students engage in responsive classroom activities that promote social and intellectual growth. Through observation and participation, students are encouraged to compare and contrast using elements and principles of art and music. Starting with the Renaissance and Baroque periods and continuing through Classical and Modern periods, students investigate the way music and art correspond with one another throughout history. By reinforcing these ideas multiple times throughout the week, students gain the knowledge to incorporate art and music vocabulary into their daily lives. This process enables students to look deeper at a work of art or music, question why the composer or artist created their masterpiece, and support their suppositions with evidence.

In the music classroom, projects are worked on collaboratively with the general classroom teachers. In 3rd and 4th grade, students compose a song based on a unit they are learning in the general classroom. In 5th grade, students practice their persuasive writing skills in a project that requires them to pick a favorite piece of music and describe, using the elements of music as evidence, why the class should choose their piece over another.

Our Physical Education is an essential component in shaping our students' desire to move and valuing a healthy and active lifestyle. Students are continuously introduced to numerous skills vital for current and future involvement in various forms of physical activity and given the knowledge needed to sustain lifelong, health-enhancing physical activity.

Students are encouraged to keep active during the day by participating in our individual (Houserville) or classroom (Lemont) walking/running program. Students and classrooms keep a daily log of their mileage accumulated during recess or activity time. At Houserville, we have several students that are in the 50-Mile Club and two students in the 100-Mile Club. At Lemont, we have one classroom that has recorded over 30 miles and one classroom that has almost twenty miles.

We are proud to have a Physical Education Library at Lemont. A few times during the month, the Physical Education Teacher reads short books about the importance of exercising daily, eating nutritious foods and living a healthy lifestyle.

Every year, our students participate in a district-wide Jump Rope For Heart event where the students raise money for the American Heart Association. Our students raised an amazing total of \$10,874.00 in donations this year.

Our school year concludes with a Field Day event with over 60 parent/teacher/support staff volunteers working together to create a fun atmosphere of physical activities for all of the students in our school to enjoy.

Students in our schools are immersed in learning experiences using technology that provide them opportunities to practice and hone 21st Century Skills. Students use a variety of technology tools to create meaningful content, communicate ideas, employ critical thinking skills and collaborate on group activities. As a Google Apps for Education school, our students have access to a variety of Google tools to suit specific needs, such as using Google Docs to coauthor and/or comment on others' work, or creating a presentation or research project with Google Slides. Student work may also be curated and reflected on through the use of Seesaw, an online portfolio. Using other apps and web tools, students are also able to use audio, video, and drawing tools to express, share and explain their ideas and thinking processes. Devices such as iPads, tablets, laptops, or Chromebooks are available in classrooms with a ratio of either 1:2 or 1:1, depending on the grade level. Due to this ratio, students have ready access to the programs, apps, and web tools they need, whenever the use of a device is warranted.

Another important skill that is fostered in our school is the responsible use of technology. Teachers facilitate Digital Citizenship lessons that highlight the importance of internet safety and how to respect one-another on online forums and groups. In accordance with the ISTE (International Society for Technology in Education) Standards, students from kindergarten through fifth grade participate in discussions and activities on online safety, our digital footprint, acting with respect online, information literacy, legal restrictions online (including copyright and plagiarism), email, and password protection.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

A true team approach is taken at our school amongst faculty, staff, and administration regarding instructional methods, interventions, and assessments. Our faculty is well versed in a variety of strategies and techniques to meet the diverse and individual needs of all students. Our ultimate goal is for all students to think critically and communicate and work collaboratively with their peers.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Our schools combine to form one supportive community that ignites learning through creating a sense of belonging for everyone.

We believe students learn best when expectations are high. In addition to state mandated objectives, students are encouraged to set their own academic goals and are offered choice in their reading and writing workshops. Teachers provide scaffolded and differentiated instruction to support student needs and interests. Recognizing all successes, large and small, along with providing student choice is motivational to our students.

Our S.T.A.R. Program presents common behavioral expectations for all and is reinforced through direct instruction, and peer modeling lessons. Our entire school community strives to Show kindness, Take responsibility, Act safely, and Respect everyone. This creates a supportive atmosphere where everyone feels valued and safe. Daily recognitions through S.T.A.R. tickets and announcements keep everyone motivated and moving in a positive direction. Fifth grade students model and teach lessons on S.T.A.R. behaviors to the younger grades. This positive culture is taught and embodied from K-5; it is a way of life and learning at both schools.

The values set forth in our S.T.A.R. initiative provide a foundation for an even broader outreach. Our students are actively involved in service projects throughout the school year. For example, each year our fifth graders host a Caring Fair that is multi-faceted. They create handcrafted items to be purchased by their younger peers. This encourages a giving spirit by providing a way for the younger students to acquire holiday gifts. The proceeds are donated to a charity of the student's choice. It is a heartwarming lesson when the fifth graders are asked to research charities and support one using their profits. In addition to fostering lifelong learners, we are nurturing lifelong givers.

We incorporate the social curriculum, Second Step Program, which focuses on teaching skills that strengthen students' ability to learn, manage emotions, show empathy, and solve problems. These skills have integrated social-emotional learning into classrooms, which decreases problem behaviors and increases whole-school success by promoting self-regulation, safety and support. The skills in this program promote emotional well-being, which transfers into higher self-esteem and feelings of belonging.

Our welcoming environment, where all people are clearly happy to be here, is the result of feeling valued as a professional and a member of a school family. Our schools have a community whiteboard where our staff writes notes of kindness, recognition, or gratitude to one another. Our school lives are often intertwined with our personal lives, so laughter and tears make us more than colleagues; we are a supportive family community.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

We are deeply committed to family and community engagement at Lemont/Houserville. Each year we hold community outreach events that are always well attended and supported. For example, International Fun Night is a school wide event where students may select a topic of interest and create a unique presentation. This year we had record turnout among teachers, students, families, and community members eager to learn more about different cultures. Students created foods unique to a country, constructed imaginative trifold displays and PowerPoint presentations, and engaged in performance art. Particularly noteworthy examples from this year included a student's presentation on the Indian artistic tradition of Henna, as well as memorable live performances of African dance and Scottish bagpipes. Furthermore, one of the third grade classes constructed a three dimensional replica of a traditional Masai tribe, as well as a three dimensional map of the Rift Valley, ancestral home of the Masai. In addition, they created jewelry, clothing, and headdresses of the Masai.

We also run an event called One Book - One School - One Community where we select a book to forge a collaborative educational experience between the school, families, and the local community. The books are generously donated by the local chapter of the American Association of University Women (AAUW). This year, we selected the National Geographic World Atlas to represent our connection with the Humphrey Fellows Program at Penn State University. The Humphrey Fellows are graduate students from diverse backgrounds who come to the school to educate the children on their culture or their unit of study. This year we had Fellows come from Cameroon, China, Moldova, Mexico, Armenia, Russia, Bosnia, Vietnam, and Cuba.

We also hold an annual school wide Fun Run event that raises money for the PTO. During this event teachers, families, and community members cheer on the students as they engage in outdoor physical activity. The funds raised from this event pay for school field trips, such as educational centers and live performances on the campus of Penn State, at our local community theater, and at Delta, the district's alternative school. For example, this year the K-2 students will be attending a production of Piggy and Elephant at the State Theatre, an historic local arts venue. Overall we see our mission as building strong bonds between the school, families, and the community, and we could not maintain our consistent level of success as a school without these linkages.

3. Professional Development:

The mission of our district is to prepare students for lifelong success through academic excellence. This monumental undertaking guides daily professional development opportunities at the district, building, and personal level.

Our district has transitioned to the Reader's Workshop Model. At the start of this transition, principals and educators attended district level trainings to learn about the components of a successful Reader's Workshop. Leaders and teachers had the opportunity to plan how to implement workshop at each grade level and building. After the sessions, grade level teams choose topics they would like to learn more about topics to enhance their teaching. For example, the kindergarten team wanted to see how other teachers were implementing Reader's Workshop and were provided time to observe others. The building's instructional coach and principal then facilitated conversations about the observations. Each teacher walked away with new strategies and ideas to try in the classroom.

One of our strengths as a community stems from the weekly opportunity to collaborate across grade levels at our buildings. During one of these sessions, we discovered our upper elementary students needed to be able to critically discuss and respond to a piece of literature at a deeper level. After identifying the need, an expert from the Central Intermediate Unit designed one hour grade level series to strengthen our understanding of close reading. Also, all staff read and discussed the book *Who's Doing the Work?* This shared reading experience encouraged educators to think about how to best scaffold instruction when asking students to think deeply and respond to texts. Students are now thinking critically across subjects and grade levels about various topics. Strong relationships within our buildings have allowed us to identify a need and develop a multi-pronged approach to success.

Our staff can enroll in Trade Time classes based on personal interests and professional development needs. The topics include, but are not limited to, best practices in instruction, meeting the needs of various learners, and developing curriculum knowledge. This year many educators attended classes, led by a local psychologist, addressing the power of mindfulness. Participants learned about what, why, and how mindfulness can impact all members of the learning community. Many teachers are now implementing mindfulness practices into their classrooms on a daily basis which benefits students and teachers.

By taking advantage of the plethora of professional development opportunities, our staff continually grows to help all students reach excellence.

4. School Leadership:

Many, when thinking of elementary school leadership, might identify one person who fulfills that role. In fact, the role of the principal is not bounded by duties as one would expect in our elementary school. He is a colleague and mentor who uses his leadership in a manner that builds and supports educators' leadership opportunities within the school. The principal is the leader who facilitates an effective learning community, inspires others to strive for excellence, and who aims to develop relationships among faculty, staff, students and families, within our school. However, professionals within our school become leaders in developing projects focused on strengthening our teaching and learning community and building an environment that focuses on the children within our school. Through this collaborative model, leadership at our schools is a shared experience.

Educators feel safe in taking risks by providing instructional models and extending practices within the school that enrich and foster a diverse learning environment. Teachers, curriculum coaches, and subject-specific teachers all become school leaders through this continued growth and exploration as they take classes and design instructional projects. Our school community collaborates with peers in providing the best learning experience possible for our students. By using untapped wisdom, the ability to merge the art and science of teaching that resides in the knowledge and experience of our teachers, we develop a faculty that continually learns, values and supports others, collaborates, and builds upon others' ideas in meeting our students' needs.

One example is our school's desire to build and strengthen our students' academic work in reading and working with nonfiction books. A committee composed of many of our colleagues designed and implemented a whole-school reading celebration that provided each student an atlas to have while participating in varied school-wide activities and projects. Through the tireless efforts of this group, we have extensive school-wide events that excite and motivate the students to use and enjoy the book in discovering countries from around the globe. This reading celebration includes activities, projects, resources and people within our community that help our students recognize the incredibly diverse world in which we live. It is not the work of one individual that creates a school of such distinction within our community; it is the actions, work, and support of all within our building that creates a learning environment where shared leadership flourishes.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

One practice we, at Lemont/Houserville, believe has been influential in our students' success is the daily implementation of the workshop model. We use the workshop model in reading, writing and math. The purpose of the model is to encourage a community of sharing and collaboration which fosters learning and generates new ideas in the classroom. The workshop model respects and motivates learners, which leads to student independence and success.

There are three main components to the model: mini lesson, work time, and debrief. The mini lesson is intended to be brief. It is a whole class learning experience focusing on a specific skill related to student needs falling within the curriculum guidelines.

Work time is when teachers confer with students on individual goals, students engage with their peers, collaborate on activities and share thinking related to the skill covered in the mini lesson. The debrief pulls the whole class back together to share their thinking as a community to emphasize what they have learned. It typically refers back to the mini lesson and focuses around these two questions: What did a classmate share that connects to my thinking? What can I share that connects to a classmates thinking?

Workshop is used to introduce concepts and allow time for students to explore ideas and practices presented to them in reading, writing, and math. Teachers work with students in small groups, or individually, to differentiate instruction to meet students where they are, which helps to increase student success because the concentration is on each individual student's needs.

Since we began the workshop model our MAP scores have met or exceeded our school's projected annual growth. We attribute this success to the implementation of workshop over the past three years. Similarly, our school has closed the achievement gap in Title I. We attribute part of this remarkable achievement to the workshop model and the response it allows us, as teachers, to give to our students

Our students are engaging in increased stamina during reading and writing in kindergarten through fifth grade. We attribute the stamina increase to the model providing students time to practice the skill and build upon it. We feel our students can verbally articulate their learning and are comfortable asking questions of one another to learn more and seek understanding because they respect one another's voice. This is derivative of the workshop model because of the collaboration and debrief that happens on a regular basis.

At Lemont/Houserville, the workshop model is a partnership between learner and teacher that supports student success.