

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 Mrs. Cindy Giroux

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

Official School Name Community Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 15 Arnold Mills Road

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

City Cumberland State RI Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 02864-3015

County Providence County

Telephone (401) 333-5724 Fax (401) 333-1412

Web site/URL http://www.communityschoolri.com E-mail antoniodimanna@cumberlandschools.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. Robert Mitchell

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

E-mail
Robert.Mitchell@cumberlandschools.org

District Name Cumberland School District Tel. (401) 658-1600

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. Raymond Salvatore

(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):
- 5 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 8 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	53	50	103
1	46	47	93
2	56	51	107
3	54	36	90
4	69	51	120
5	55	42	97
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	333	277	610

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 2 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 92 % White
 - 1 % 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: 2%

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	12
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	2
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	14
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	571
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.025
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

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

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Spanish, Arabic, Urdu, Luganda

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 5 %
Total number students who qualify: 32

8. Students receiving special education services: 12 %
72 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.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <u>15</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>5</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>15</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>26</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>1</u> Mental Retardation | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| <u>2</u> Multiple Disabilities | <u>8</u> 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	29
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	9
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.	2

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 21:1
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%	98%
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.

The mission of Community School, a large, suburban elementary school comprised of high-achieving students, is to prepare all students to apply knowledge, and to achieve high academic and social standards by

implementing dynamic curriculum in a safe supportive environment that recognizes individual learning styles through a dedicated staff working in partnership with families and community.

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

Community School is the largest of five elementary schools in the suburban town of Cumberland, RI. Cumberland is a town with a population of about 34,000, fifteen miles north of Providence. As you drive through the neighborhoods, you will see mostly single family homes, townhouses, and condominiums as well as some local farms and restaurants. Community School was established in 1924 to replace the Cargill School House. As the population of the town increased, three major additions were added to the existing building, one in 1960, one in 1963 and the last one in 1998. Six hundred and ten academically and culturally diverse students in kindergarten through grade five attend Community School, with the majority being of white ethnicity. Community has been named a Commended School, by the Rhode Island Department of Education, due to high academic achievement as determined by student proficiency levels on the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). Community Schools is aptly named as we are a true community. All students, families, and community members are welcomed into the school and seen as essential to enabling the success of our students and teachers, academically, socially, and emotionally. Parents and families are involved and supportive of all academic and community initiatives that are undertaken.

The mission of Community School is to teach children in an environment, which constitutes consistency in learning and embraces the strengths of each individual student guiding their growth to excellence throughout their elementary school years. Students are familiar with the school mission statement and arrive at school ready to participate in rigorous, hands on learning activities each day with the goal of becoming college and career ready. Many supports are provided for students in order to achieve high academic performance. Students have time daily for math and reading intervention, where they practice skills and applications of Common Core State Standards (CCSS), seek out and receive additional instruction and support from either a classroom teacher or a specialist, in order to increase their level of achievement. Students attend optional homework clubs and before school programs in reading and math. Before school music and physical activity programs also run in order to meet the needs and interests of all students. A school psychologist and guidance counselor support all students and families academically, socially and emotionally as well through whole class, small group and one-on-one sessions.

Instruction at Community School looks different for each child. Personalized, blended learning is a practice used that motivates students and allows them choice and flexibility in pace with the use of technology. Students and teachers are well versed in Thinking Maps, which is a tool that enables students to tackle higher order tasks independently and own their learning. Teachers are dedicated and motivated to help their students become more successful. They instill a growth mindset within their students, by letting them know hard work and practice pays off. Teachers model perseverance and expect the same of their students. This has made Community School shine and the students keep growing and improving academically, socially, and emotionally.

Students at Community School are actively involved in the community. Because our mission involves guiding students' growth to excellence, students are encouraged and praised for participating in service learning projects and community building activities. The Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) team, made up of teachers and administrators, organize opportunities for students to participate and volunteer. Community School participates in a Happy Baskets program that provides meals for the less fortunate during the holiday seasons. The school teams with the local food pantry to provide food for the needy throughout the year. Many students also have the opportunity to deliver food to the pantry and see how it works. Students create cards to send to nursing home patients and soldiers to send well wishes and lift spirits. These are some of the activities students participate in that encourage our students to develop a sense of empathy and charity, which will lead them to be more productive members of society. The Community School Association (CSA) parent group, partners with the school to provide students with cultural enrichment programs. Students visit the state house, the zoo, and science museums. They meet authors, storytellers, dancers and scientists because of the CSA. Families are truly viewed as partners in their children's education.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Community School follows the district’s rigorous Common Core State Standards aligned curriculum for ELA/reading, math and science. High standards have been set for students to have rigorous learning experiences, differentiated instruction and personalized support to achieve high levels of achievement and success that will impact future learning.

The English Language Arts/Reading curriculum is rigorous and focuses on developing strong foundational skills that promote higher level thinking skills later. In kindergarten through grade two, there is a large focus on phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension and vocabulary development, whereas in grades 3-5, there is a larger focus on higher level thinking skills, comprehension and vocabulary through reinforcement of phonics and fluency. The foundational reading skills are developed beginning in kindergarten through direct and center-based instruction using Core Knowledge Language Arts. In grades three through five, Expeditionary Learning is utilized to provide a literature rich environment where there is a focus on both literature and informational text integrating both science and social studies into reading. Topics explored for social studies include: Westward Expansion, War of 1812, Asian and Chinese Civilizations, Human Rights, Civil Rights, The Revolutionary War, Community, and Colonial Times. Thinking Maps is a language of eight visual patterns each based on a fundamental thinking process and are used at each grade level to support students with organizing their thinking and plan projects.

Students work collaboratively and personalize their learning while developing thoughtful responses to varied texts, and critical thinking skills. Students are beginning to use Self-Regulated Strategy Development to think critically about written responses and narrative writing. Writing is incorporated daily into the ELA/reading curriculum. Teachers reflect on best practices and individual student growth to supplement the reading programs and provide more personalized instruction for individual students. The curriculum is in constant revision, teachers have worked all year to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses among the curriculum and have made adjustments to ensure students develop skills in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and comprehension. Teachers assure that each CCSS is properly addressed in each content area.

The students at Community are exposed to a rigorous and comprehensive math curriculum comprised of conceptual understanding, procedural skills and computational fluency, and application. In addition to using Eureka, teachers supplement math instruction with high quality math problem solving and skill practice connected to the CCSS. In the primary grades, the focus is predominantly on building strong number sense, fluency and computational skills among students. As students’ progress to intermediate grades, number sense and computation continues to be important, but students begin to depend more on those skills to apply their knowledge to real-world problems. Students solve problems using multiple representations and pathways, utilizing a multitude of models to represent responses instead of just computation. In order to ensure the development of these skills, teachers use manipulatives to enhance the conceptual understanding of skills. Blended learning is also a pathway to provide personalized math instruction in the core mathematics block. Students use programs like Zearn to view lessons and practice skills at differentiated and personalized levels. Teachers consistently review data and student performance to guide their instructional focus around the CCSS. The lessons and concepts taught at each grade level are studied and reviewed regularly through curriculum mapping to determine if additional support or instruction is necessary to ensure students are meeting standards and developing conceptual understanding of the math concepts.

The science curriculum is focused around the vision of twenty-first century learners, critical thinkers, and problem solvers. Students learn about earth, life, and physical sciences. Lessons are developed around specific topics as determined by the state’s grade span expectations for science and the Foss Science kits, such as properties of matter, energy transfer, forces and motion, ecosystems, life cycles, earth’s systems, and engineering. Students participate in hands-on inquiry tasks, explorations, analysis and then respond to analytical questions about their learning through discussion and writing. Students use and develop many of the skills and strategies needed for finding meaning in informational texts during their science block as well.

The kindergarten curriculum at Community has recently begun to implement more of a developmental philosophy. It is important to think about the whole child, especially during the critical developmental years of children. Students in kindergarten are given the opportunity to receive well developed, thoughtful instruction that directs them to exploratory learning through play, while considering students social emotional needs simultaneously. The teachers are in the process of piloting the Boston K-2 program. Students are deeply involved in discussion, analysis, critical thinking and problem-solving related to their learning. The independence and curiosity possessed by these students is amazing.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Multi-disciplined learning is essential to developing the whole child. At Community, teachers work at integrating special area subjects into the classroom. All students at Community participate in forty minutes of art, music, library/STEM each week, and eighty to one hundred twenty minutes a week of physical education. The skills they learn in these areas have application both in the classroom and the real world. The art and music curriculums at Community are currently being aligned to the CCSS that our district recently adopted. Students in art and music are asked to apply knowledge and skills they have acquired through core subjects. In music, students use communication skills, literacy skills and mathematics to work collaboratively, read music, play music and perform in shows which include singing, playing instruments, and dancing. All students at Community are also artists. Students use geometry and measurement to plan and complete artwork. They learn about art history through the integration of literature and work collaboratively to showcase their projects in creative ways. Students at Community embrace the opportunity to think critically, work collaboratively and apply their vast knowledge across the curriculum areas. Teachers recognize the importance of core subjects and work to ensure that students understand the connection and application of essential skills. The Library Media curriculum is designed around the American Association of School Librarian standards. While in the library, students learn how to interact with varied texts. They are exposed to authentic literature, listen to book talks and give their own. Students are taught technology skills and learn to apply them in research. Students also participate in STEM activities designed around the RI Science Grade Span Expectations for engineering. Collaboration, critical thinking and problem solving are essential skills that students engage in to build structures and explore different aspects of science. Students enjoy the hands-on, exploratory activities that allow them to work cooperatively and engage them in high level thinking. Community's physical education curriculum is designed around the Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE) national standards. Teachers create instructional activities and assessments to ensure the appropriate development of skills and then monitor progress. Students are always aware of what they should comprehend, apply and demonstrate at the conclusion of each unit. Students work cooperatively while completing physical tasks and games. They are introduced to outdoor activities and shown exercises that they could use in daily routines in order to stress the health benefits of being physically active. Students look forward to physical education class. It is a comfortable environment where they are able to positively release energy and give themselves a brain break. The teachers stress to students the importance of having fun with physical activity, which carries over through the rest of the day and provides students a way to incorporate physical activity into their lives both in school and at home. The school nurse at Community works with students in kindergarten through grade five to instill concepts of healthy living and hygiene. She guides students in decision-making, evaluating, accessing and utilizing health information, as well as discussing the impact health has on a community. Students learn about mental health, nutrition, prevention and control of disease, safety and injury prevention, as well as substance abuse, family life and sexuality. Students in fifth grade also have the opportunity to participate in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) classes and learn about how and why CPR is important. Health classes are interactive and depend on core knowledge in order to build knowledge of students. The school nurse works at providing applicable information with students and encourages them to think critically, be inquisitive and make an impact on the community at large. The Cumberland Public Schools Counseling Program developed a comprehensive K-12 developmental program that follows the American School Counselor Association National Model. The school counselor works with students to provide them with opportunities for academic, career and personal/social growth while helping prepare them to become responsible, contributing members of a global society through a partnership with school, home, and local community. She works to create a foundation for making informed decisions, developing appropriate social skills and linking education to career exploration, by teaching conflict resolution, anti-bullying, study skills, diversity, personal safety, career awareness and transition strategies. Students value the content taught

through guidance, because the counselor works with teachers to inspire students to reach their full potential, and utilizes a preventative and proactive approach to build lifelong learners. Students visit the counselor when needed. They make self-referrals, but are also encouraged by their teacher to seek the help of the school counselor. Students learn essential skills to become valuable community members through collaborative work, discussion and role-play. Students also participate in organizations, like a kindness club, which was created to encourage students to think of others within the building, but also work on service learning projects. Students look forward to being part of these clubs, and value the opportunities provided to them through the guidance program.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Community School utilizes research-based best practices to create a growth mindset in students and teachers that allows for an increase of student growth and achievement. The school's improvement plan sets goals for improvement in literacy, mathematics, and science. A focus is placed on both foundational and higher level critical thinking skills. Students are starting to track their learning based on standards and achievement, in order to set goals for their future learning. We promote a data-driven instructional plan, where we analyze student progress toward a goal and determine what instructional supports are needed to help them meet their goals. Teachers recognize the importance of student ownership of learning and frequently utilize the gradual release of responsibility model. Each student participates in both a literacy and math intervention block, where they work toward meeting the goals they set based on the standards and enhancing their overall skills. Students are held accountable for their learning and are expected to be respectful, responsible and ready to learn. During these intervention blocks, many teachers utilize various levels of blended learning to provide personalized interventions to students. The station rotation model is most commonly used and allows for students to use technology to learn, meet with classroom teachers and interventionists, and collaborate with their peers. Students have come to find this block of time valuable because they are able to seek out help, ask questions, and enhance their learning using their own learning style and pace, while still having choices. Teachers use this time to provide explicit instruction in specific literacy, math, and science topics or to provide challenges for students to extend their learning. Tiered instruction is provided for students who need additional academic support. Students in kindergarten and grade one are assessed three times a year in both literacy and math using AIMS Web Plus. Students in grades three through five are assessed using the literacy and math Star Enterprise assessments. The data provides individualized information about student literacy and math proficiency. Students that fall between the tenth and twenty-fourth national percentile are considered in the "strategic" category and are provided with a tier 2 reading or math intervention from a reading specialist or math interventionist. Students are considered to be "intensive" if they fall below the ninth percentile and receive a tier 3 intervention from a specialist. Meetings are held with teachers and specialists to discuss student progress, classroom assessments and anecdotal data before making a final decision about tiered support for students. Students that receive interventions from a specialist are provided with explicit instruction based on their individual needs. Research-based interventions and programs are in place to enhance student learning and target specific areas of deficiency. Technology is utilized to allow students to reinforce and practice skills while the teacher is able to provide focused instruction to other students. Differentiated instruction is essential because it allows each student to target specific skills and standards in which they struggle. Bi-weekly progress monitoring allows for classroom teachers and specialists to continually evaluate student progress and target areas of instructional needs. Students have also begun tracking their bi-weekly progress, which is a powerful experience that drives them to work toward their goals, feel success and maintain a growth mindset. Opportunities for learning are ongoing at our school. We are cognizant of the needs of all our students, and ensure that we provide as many opportunities for higher end learners as for struggling learners. Problem-based learning is more applicable for these learners. Many of these students have begun to work on robotic and coding problems with the school's media specialist, if they have interest in that area. Other students utilize blended learning to widen areas of knowledge and challenge themselves across the curricular areas. Teachers work with these students to create activities and projects based on their learning styles and instructional needs. In addition to enhancing learning and thinking skills, this also prepares students to extend their learning, while maintaining and increasing performance rates.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

At Community School, our goal is to create an atmosphere where students work to become the best they can be. It is important to us that we instill the qualities of being respectful, responsible, and ready to learn, while having a growth mindset that enables them to become successful academically and contributing members of society.

Our schools Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program is the basis for creating and maintaining a positive, safe, comforting and rigorous environment for students. We use a positive approach to managing and motivating student behavior, motivation and academic success. Students receive intrinsic and extrinsic incentives to encourage growth across all areas of our school environment. Teachers reward students with whole class rewards when they meet their class goal by excelling academically, socially and behaviorally. Teachers utilize resources, like the guidance counselor and school psychologist, in many ways in order to support teachers emotionally and socially when needed. We believe, as a school community, that it is important to establish strong connections and relationships with all students, maintain continuity of expectations throughout the building, provide students with more praise than correction, have mutually respectful interactions, active engagement and involvement of all students during instruction and use prompting and redirecting strategies continuously in order to increase student learning and social interactions.

Teachers at Community are dedicated and work collaboratively to create an inspiring, positive, safe, and academically rich environment for all members of the school. Teachers are considered to be invaluable to our school by students, parents, and administration. Teachers have a strong voice, and ultimately set the stage for the overall atmosphere and cohesiveness of the building. PBIS also incorporates a teacher incentive in which teachers are rewarded for meeting the high standards of our building, and participate in community building activities to build relationships and increase problem solving capacity. When one speaks with teachers at Community, they often communicate their dedication and empathy for their students as well as the high levels of communication and collaboration that exist among and between grade level teachers.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Community School recognizes the importance of partnering with families and community members to increase our levels of success and continue to make improvements within our school. Our school is welcoming of parents and community members who often volunteer in classrooms, work with students, and assist with day to day activities to make our school better.

We have a strong partnership with families at Community because of our Community School Association (CSA) parent group. This group works with teachers and administrators to provide students with activities that enhance academics with activities like field trips to the zoo and museums as well as enrichment activities like storytellers and scientists. Our CSA values the learning that happens in our classrooms daily and encourage teachers to find ways for students to apply their learning outside the classroom. Students, teachers, and administrators work with community members to increase the learning in our school. We invite people from the community to visit our school to teach students about their various career paths and to share their favorite books as read alouds.

We partner with the local food bank to collect food, and “Pennies for Patients” to collect money to assist students diagnosed with blood cancers. Providing students with access to service learning projects teaches them the importance of a community and helps them to recognize the need to be productive members of society. Our school empowers students to be leaders in our community as well, and encourages them to participate on our School Improvement Team and contribute to service learning projects. Teachers, students, and community members work together to provide events that encourage family engagement each year. Some of these events include: welcome back to school celebrations, Color Run, book fairs, spirit

weeks, guest readers, science fairs, and career days. We continuously strive to increase opportunities to partner with parents and community members. Our strong family and community partnerships enhance the learning and success of our students, teachers, and administrators.

3. Professional Development:

Professional development is about building the capacity and proficiency of teachers. In order to do this effectively, Community School uses a creative approach and encourages teachers to seek out areas in which they need to further their knowledge or expertise. In the past, we have utilized teacher leaders, teacher experts, and administrators to provide professional development opportunities across the academic and social-emotional spectrum. By using the wealth of knowledge we have within our building and district, teachers have been exposed to blended learning strategies, writing strategies, math intervention strategies and programs and reading concept development activities. The reading and math specialists meet with district wide specialists to review district and school wide data, set goals, and determine focuses for professional development opportunities. In collaboration with the school principal and the School Improvement Team, Community School sets improvement goals, and encourages teachers to participate in professional learning communities and development in these areas. Teachers have the opportunity to set their own professional growth goals and choose professional development that align with the school's improvement plan goals and best practices. Providing teachers a choice in the focus of their professional development has shown greater motivation to implement new strategies and encourage new learning among colleagues. As a result, the capacity of teachers in the building willing to share experiences and run workshops has grown immensely and created a well- developed professional learning community. Our teachers are often on the cutting edge of new opportunities, doing research and looking to try new techniques that will increase student achievement. This results in much of the teacher driven professional development. In addition to building-based professional development, there are several district endorsed opportunities (Self-Regulated Strategy Development, Thinking Maps, Positive Behavior Intervention and Support, Curriculum Mapping) that build the capacity of the teacher in the classroom and allow for district-wide professional learning communities as well. The building principal attends professional development sessions along with teachers, at the district and building level. She also participates in learning walks, and ensures the implementation of district-sponsored professional development initiatives. Collaboration among the school community is essential in creating a successful learning environment for both teachers and students. Lifelong learning is something our school strives to instill in students; it is essential that teachers model the importance of lifelong learning as well.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership philosophy at Community School is to build agency and capacity among teachers. The school principal seeks out strengths among teachers and uses those strengths to empower teachers to make the school more successful. Teachers are encouraged to collaborate and think critically when faced with challenges, understanding the importance of working as a team. Lifelong learning is a value held by and encouraged by the school leader. The principal is a school leader in that she encourages shared leadership by building the skills of her teachers. She turns to her leadership team, which is made up of support staff, when making and discussing important decisions. The school principal values the opinion and knowledge of the school community when making instructional decisions. This creates an environment where teachers are empowered to make decisions in their classrooms that are innovative and continue to raise the level of expectations of all students in the classroom. For example, a fifth grade math teacher, during her intervention block, created standards based stations that held students accountable for their own learning, allowed them to make choices and set goals, and ultimately enabled students to master skills within each standard. There are teacher leaders throughout the building as well. Grade levels meet weekly to collaboratively plan lessons, field trips, and discuss daily routines, and instructional expectations. Respect is abundant among the faculty. Teachers value one another's opinions and seek out the advice of others especially when it means they are directly impacting their students. There are weekly Response to Intervention meetings where teachers consult with interventionists, speech language pathologists, special educators, and psychologists to adapt instruction in order to meet the needs of individual students. District leaders also believe in the importance of working as a team. When making curricular decisions and changes, teachers are asked to pilot programs and provide purposeful feedback that impacts decisions.

Teachers at Community researched team teaching at the elementary level and found data to support higher levels of student proficiency when the teacher was specializing in one subject. Because the district leadership values their teachers' expertise, the decision was made to allow teachers to team. This decision led to even higher achievement among students because teachers were able to become even stronger in their content area. Community School is a cohesive environment. The school leaders, teachers, parents, stakeholders as well as district administration share a common vision of leadership that drives the school to improve.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

School-wide behavioral expectations set the stage for all of the learning in our building. Community School uses the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program as a proactive approach to create a culture needed for all students to be academically and emotionally successful. Through this program, Community School has determined that students should be respectful, responsible and ready to learn. These expectations are explicitly taught and modeled throughout the course of the school year. PBIS yields a positive, safe and, comforting environment in which our students feel confident in trying new things and making mistakes that they will learn from. Students develop a love of school and look forward to arriving every day because it is a safe and positive environment, where teachers go out of their way to make connections with them and care about them. Incentives for meeting behavioral expectations and working hard are given routinely. This encourages students to stay focused and motivated. These rewards are meaningful to students because they have a voice in what the incentive will be. Classroom incentives range from pajama day to game day to movie day. School wide incentives include Irish Step Dancers, snow day, fall festival, extra recess and field day. We encourage our students to work hard, but we also give them the opportunity to have fun and play hard. We have seen that this mindset allows for higher expectations and motivation from students in the classroom. Faculty and staff also participate in this program, with the same behavioral expectations as the students. Luncheons and pot luck festivals allow faculty and staff the opportunity to communicate with one another and develop friendships that extend outside of school. A sense of empathy and respect for the community is evident by the teachers adopting school families at the holidays and providing all kinds of support, from dinners to clothing, to families in times of need. Having a respectful, responsible and ready to work mentality among the faculty and staff sets the tone for student expectations and is a model for what is expected of students. Since adopting PBIS, our school has grown socially, emotionally, and academically. We have learned to look at the whole child and have put supports in place to help all students reach their goals. There are weekly meetings where teachers discuss students who are struggling and determine interventions, like check-in and check-out, to help students become more successful. Data is collected on student performance weekly and communicated with students and parents to determine whether that support has helped or whether it needs to be adapted for each individual. These interventions have decreased the number of behavioral incidents that occur in the school and encourage students to be the best they can be. This program has helped us create a positive learning environment where students are successful, confident learners.