

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

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mrs. Jessica Ringgenberg

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

Official School Name Frederick Area Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 202 East Main Street PO Box 486

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

City Frederick State SD Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 57441-0486

County Brown County

Telephone (605) 329-2145 Fax (605) 329-2722

Web site/URL http://www.frederickarea.k12.sd.us E-mail Jessica.Ringgenberg@k12.sd.us

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. Jeff Kosters E-mail Jeff.Kosters@k12.sd.us  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Frederick Area School District 06-2 Tel. (605) 329-2145

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

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

*\*Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

## **Part I – Eligibility Certification**

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The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. All nominated public schools must meet the state's performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group and all subgroups, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2017 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2011 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, or 2016.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
9. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
10. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
11. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
12. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2016-2017) unless otherwise stated.

### DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 3 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	5	5	10
1	8	2	10
2	5	5	10
3	8	8	16
4	5	5	10
5	5	11	16
6	7	2	9
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	43	38	81

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 0 % Asian
  - 0 % Black or African American
  - 0 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 93 % 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: 1%

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	1
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	0
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	1
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	85
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.012
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	1

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):  
There are no English Language Learners (ELL) students in the school.

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 42 %  
Total number students who qualify: 34

8. Students receiving special education services: 17 %  
14 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.

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

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	7
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	5
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	3
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 12:1
12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

<b>Required Information</b>	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012
Daily student attendance	98%	97%	97%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.  
Yes  No   
If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

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

The Frederick Area School District's mission statement is: "Dedicated to a Quality Education for All Students."

16. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

## **PART III – SUMMARY**

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The Frederick Area School District is located in north eastern South Dakota. It is a small rural community in Brown County, approximately 352 square miles. The school district serves many other small communities in the area such as: Barnard, Westport, Columbia, Elm Lake, and Hecla. The school, which is housed in the town of Frederick, started as a 7-12 school in 1908. The elementary school was in the nearby town of Barnard. In 2002 the district made the decision to add on to the existing high school, combining the elementary, junior high, and high schools into one facility. The Frederick Elementary School is a K-6 school, but is housed in a building that holds PK-12 students. The total school population is 162 students. Family income is largely based on agriculture with almost half of our families receiving economic assistance. The poverty rate of 42% is the main indicator of Gap and Non-Gap students in the school. Tiered intervention services, school wide Title I services, technology interventions, strong teaching practices, and positive parental support all contribute to the high performance of the students and school. This small population makes the school a very welcoming place where parents, students, and community are treated like family. The school also serves as the hub for the community. Organizations host events at the school such as EMT trainings, Rise Up and Raise the Bar community development meetings, Day of Champions community service day, and Finn Fest a celebration of the community's unique culture all within the school. The school is proud to be partnered with these local organizations that allow our students to participate in the bigger picture of life as a contributing community member.

In 2009, the Frederick Area School District began to operate on a four-day school week. The calendar is set to have Fridays off for students so that they have time to spend with family, make appointments, or help with family farm chores without needing to miss valuable school time. Teachers come to school on two Fridays a month for professional development, staff meetings, and IEP meetings. There are also tutoring opportunities for all students called Enhancement that are offered for two hours on each of the Fridays the staff is present. Part of Enhancement time is for educational tutoring for those who need more direct instruction working on specific skills identified by the classroom teacher. Another opportunity that Enhancement has brought to us is the ability to expand on classroom learning and create fun themed activities that allow students of all abilities to work together on projects. Some of these examples include STEM projects, Health and Safety demonstrations/role play, reader's theatre and plays, technology integration, and writing workshops.

The Frederick Area School is also fortunate to be a 1:1 device school. Each classroom K-6 has enough iPads for each student to use throughout the day. Use of the iPads provides for unique learning opportunities for our students from games that teach basic math facts to creating movies based on a research paper. These tools have become a part of daily life in our classrooms.

Teachers in the school district attend many professional development opportunities throughout the school year. They strive to become stronger educators and desire to take their curriculum to the next level by enhancing lessons and making them more engaging. Teachers have tried to bring more concrete examples into the math classroom and have taken on the task of teaching our new state adopted science standards with more STEM activities. Teachers also took initiative this year with the development of cross-grade grouping activities during our Response to Intervention (RTI) time. Students are placed in groups by need, not by age level, in order to work on the similar needs that they have. Student groups and teachers rotate to be sure that all teachers understand student abilities and students move fluidly throughout these groups all year long. This teacher created initiative has been very powerful as our number of special education referrals has significantly dropped over the last couple of years. In fact, this year, the elementary referred only two students for further testing this year, well below the eight referred students from four years ago.

Our current data demonstrates the school's ability to drive instructions and motivate students to be successful. Even considering our higher poverty rate, the Frederick Elementary school still had 78.43% of its student attain proficient or higher on the state assessment in math and reading. This is well over the 62%(math) and 64%(reading) proficiency rates obtained the year prior. The school continues to push academic success with a goal of 85% of its students attaining a full year's growth in reading and math or 85% of its 3rd-6th grade students achieving a proficient or higher on the state assessment. This is not easily

attained and it says much about the dedication of our educators to strive to meet such goals. It takes a strong sense of educational practice, teamwork, community, and family support to make these goals a reality and the Frederick Area Elementary is pleased to have all of these components as part of its successful operation.

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

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

Core curriculum is based on state adopted standards. Teachers and administrators work together to make curriculum decisions and develop ideas to make it more engaging and accessible to all learners. Curriculum maps are created in all core subject areas to ensure that all content standards are addressed on an annual basis. Resources and State Content standards and pathways are evaluated annually with the main curriculum being on a rotating schedule to make sure that content and teaching practices stay current. These practices ensure a solid foundation of education practice and student learning.

English Language Arts is taught to all students in grades K-6 using the basal, grade-level reading series, Reading Street by Pearson. Early grades focus on more phonemic awareness, phonics, sight word, decoding, and early literacy skill instruction. Upper grades take the learning to read skill into more of a reading to learn skill with a heavier focus on reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition. An important focus of reading at this level includes skill work on both literary and informational text. All classroom teachers take advantage of the small group level readers that are provided with this series. These readers are differentiated and allow all student access to material that is at their level of understanding. Students in grades 1-6 are also assessed weekly through this reading curriculum, allowing teachers instant access to reports on skill deficiency and areas of need. In addition to basal reading work, students in grades K-6 are assessed using the AIMS web reading inventory system. This data is used to determine groupings of student and is a base for determining needs. The Reading Street program also provides grammar, writing, and spelling instructional materials to teachers and students. Teachers enhance the instruction in these areas by providing other activities, writing prompts, tools, and technology components to the lessons that keep material accessible and learners engaged.

Mathematics instruction in the Frederick Area Elementary School starts with the EnVision Math 2.0 series by Pearson. This series uses a blended instructional approach of Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI) methods and traditional mathematics instruction. This series was selected because it builds a strong foundation in number sense for all grades and presents a variety of methods and strategies for students to use to ensure all students have success with the content. Hands on models and activities as well as real life applications make math engaging for students. There is also a strong Smartboard component to this series that teachers utilize to explain mathematics in a simple, kid-friendly format. Teachers then supplement core math instruction with technology programs and Title I math intervention services. Title I math uses the EnVision 2.0 Intervention curriculum to assess and guide small group instruction in mathematics. Technology programs such as Dreambox and iXL allow students to work on skills in which they specifically need assistance. Dreambox math is an adaptive computer program that as students work to solve problems, the computer is adjusting its level of difficulty and determining each student's level of mastery. We believe that it is a combination of all of these programs that make our math program so successful.

Science standards have recently been updated in South Dakota and as such have provided a challenge to the Frederick Area School's students and teachers. Our current science series is A Closer Look by Macmillan. This series focuses more on scientific knowledge than it does on application and reasoning pieces required of the Next Generation Science Standards. The school's teachers and administrators are looking at adoption of a new science curriculum for all grades K-12 for the 2017-18 school year. In the meantime, teachers are busy supplementing the current curriculum by adding in more projects and experiments. Things like model making, robot building, and scientific task cards have been added to classrooms to meet the needs of the rigorous state science standards. These projects allow students to connect with scientific practices and principles on a deeper level.

Social studies content is taught to all students in grades K-6 using a newly adopted curriculum, Pearson's myWorld. Students meet grade level standards in the areas of history, economics, geography, and citizenship. Students in younger grades understand communities and learn about holidays and their significance. Students in upper elementary grades develop an appreciation for the world around them, learning about the geography of the United States, United States history, and about world cultures. Students

in the 4th grades are also provided the opportunity to learn more about South Dakota specifically as they go through their South Dakota History unit. Teachers once again take the base curriculum and enhance it by adding in more activities including art projects, small readers, student made presentations, research projects, and home-school connection projects and models. Students also study famous people and one well-loved project amongst the third grade is a "wax museum" where other students come into the classroom and push a button that starts the student explaining his/her person's significance in history. Many teachers use projects to make history come alive in the classroom while teaching students the characteristics necessary to be a positive contributing member of the community.

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

Art, Music, Physical Education, Health/Guidance, and Technology are taught to all students in grades K-6.

Art instruction is provided to all students for 90 minutes a month. Students learn about famous artists and study a variety techniques used by different artists. Classes are then given the opportunity to express themselves creatively using the techniques demonstrated in class. Students proudly display their creations in the hallways of the school. Students also create art pieces that go on display at the local museum for all community members to see. Students' art skills are also expanded on with many classroom projects having an art component in them. This may include exploring another culture or just working on fine motor skills.

All students participate in music instruction for 60 minutes a week, being taught by a highly qualified teacher. During general music class, students are exposed to basic note reading, rhythm, pitch, and instruments. Students explore some with music and movement and music and emotions as well. Students also study a variety of types of music in an effort to broaden their horizons on a cultural level. Students in 5th and 6th grades may also begin participating in the school's band program. For 60 minutes a week, band students meet and learn how to play the instrument of their choice as well as further develop their knowledge of music theory. Students demonstrate their musical talents to the community twice a year during our annual concerts. The gymnasium is always packed with excited families and community members to see what musical pieces our students have been learning.

Students in grades K-6 have physical education class for 50 minutes a week. These classes are taught by a highly qualified physical education teacher. During PE class, students learn about body movement and control. Motor skills learned include stretching, running, skipping, hopping, balance, and strength while basics in a variety of sports are also introduced. Learning sportsmanship and teamwork are also fundamental skills taught during each physical education class. Students are also provided recess time to enhance their social skills while playing games they have learned in class. During PE class, students are provided instruction of the physical skills and social skills necessary to build a healthy lifestyle.

Health instruction is provided by the general education teacher and guidance counselor. Guidance sessions are provided for 30 minutes weekly to all students in grades K-6. Teachers use the Growing Healthy program as the foundation of their health instruction. Topics covered include nutrition (based on the MyPlate website), personal safety, public safety, handling emotions, bullying, anti-drug use, sleep, and proper hygiene. Puberty is discussed in grades 5 and 6 with either the classroom teacher or nurse. Students in grade 5 also receive DARE instruction on the importance of saying no to drugs and the impact they may have on their future. During these instructional minutes students are given tools and knowledge necessary to lead an emotionally and physically healthy future.

Technology education is provided to all students, grades K-6 on a daily basis. All students go to the centrally located computer lab for at least 30 minutes a day. While in the computer lab with their classroom teacher, students receive instruction on proper keyboarding. They also learn skills in basic word processing and the use of data programs such as Microsoft Excel or Numbers and presentation tools such as Microsoft Powerpoint or Keynote. Students also use computer lab time to work on web based learning programs like Dreambox, iXL, Reading A-Z, or other educational websites of the teacher's choosing. Back in the classroom, students and teachers have the luxury of having one-to-one devices (iPads). Teachers use these tools to teach internet safety and proper research techniques. Students may create presentations or videos on iPads in order to share their learning with others. Fifth grade students also have a programming week where

a local 4-H group comes into the classroom and assists students in building robots. Students then have to program their robots to complete certain tasks. Put all of this together with the daily interactive Smartboard lessons that teachers use in reading and math classes and students have plenty of technology education to keep them engaged in learning while preparing them for the next generation of the workforce.

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

The Frederick Area Elementary School believes in differentiation of instruction and understands its importance in student learning. To determine student needs for reading and math, teachers are given a composite needs assessment to complete for their classrooms. This includes the student's Smarter Balanced scores (Grades 3-6), Pearson Reading Series Benchmark assessments covering comprehension, vocabulary, and reading skills, technology based programs (iXL and Dreambox Math), AIMS web, guided reading, and EnVision Math pre-test scores. Teachers also evaluate classroom assessments, daily work, and work habits. After close examination of the results of the needs assessment, the student's rating is determined and groups are set in place for differentiated instruction, Response to Interventions (RTI), and guided reading groups. Our teachers use various instructional approaches in teaching a whole group and more specific direct instruction in smaller group setting. Some of these tools may include activities from the Florida Site of Reading Research, Phonics for Reading Series, EnVision Math Intervention series activities, and technology based interventions.

A certified teacher is available for small group or one-on-one instruction. This teacher's time is allocated to the classrooms with the most need. An intervention teacher is available to each elementary classroom to help provide instruction in a small group or one-on-one setting. Paraprofessionals, under the supervision of a highly qualified teacher, may also work with students identified as needing help in any academic area.

Student progress is monitored continually by the intervention and classroom teachers. Informal assessments are conducted weekly and formal assessments are done every month. It is expected that each student make significant progress. If it is found that the student is not benefitting from the current strategies and interventions, he or she may be referred to another program within the school. Due to small class sizes, students may be referred or added to programs at any time.

One level of intervention that is provided as needed for struggling students includes further assessments, such as the Core Phonics Survey or Dreambox Math to better understand student strengths and weaknesses. After the student is identified as needing extra intervention services, general education and intervention teachers will facilitate strategies utilized to gain student growth in the areas of need. General education teachers, along with intervention teachers, complete progress monitoring using a technology based program (AIMS web). Students' progress is reviewed weekly and monthly, depending on the success of the interventions.

Students experiencing difficulty may also be referred to the school's Student Success Team (SST). A teacher can refer a student to this intervention team at any time. The needs of the student are quickly identified and previous intervention strategies are discussed. After receiving recommendations from the team, which includes teacher, administrators, and families, the general education teacher implements the newly suggested strategies and monitors their results. The team meets every 4-6 weeks to discuss the effectiveness of the interventions. The number of meetings for each child may vary depending on results. If recommendations do not have the desired effect, the student may be referred for further evaluation.

To maintain high performance levels, an annual data retreat is held each fall to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each grade level in reading and math. Data from the Smarter Balanced assessment, technology assessments, classroom assessments, and benchmark tests are closely examined. Weaknesses are traced back to specific common core strands and plans to implement strategies to reinforce low areas are brainstormed and implemented into future lesson plans. Goals are set to improve low performing areas and are monitored monthly throughout the school year at staff in-service times. Adjustments are made where needed to reassure high levels of achievement for all students.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### **1. School Climate/Culture:**

Part of the charm of the Frederick Area School is its small size. This allows the school to have more of a family feel than most. Students are greeted by name as they come into the school each morning. Elementary students wait in the lunchroom as buses arrive and are sent to class each day by the principal with the message "have a good day." Teachers and students greet each other in the hallways and may take some time to visit about things happening in each other's lives. The staff knows all students and greets them by first name. They often know many of their parents as well, even if the child is not in his/her class. Teachers know when new members arrive in families and when hardship has struck a household. We support students and families however we can, and families know they can call on us anytime.

Students are very comfortable with administration. Students know that the door is always open and that administration is there to support them in whatever ways we can. They may stop by the office to drop off a birthday treat or make a quick phone call. Students are also welcome in the office as a safe place for them to cool down as needed. Sometimes they just need someone to talk to and the office serves as a place for them to express themselves and their needs. Students feel empowered when they report incidents of bullying and administration works with classroom teachers in handling situations of bullying. Guidance counseling sessions are also held weekly in each classroom to discuss things like bullying, friendship, emotions, choices, and careers. Respect is an important part of the school culture and all staff make sure that students and teachers are respectful at all times. Lunchroom, recess, and hallway expectations are consistent with all teachers. All students are expected to treat each other with respect and to always keep safety in mind.

The Frederick Area School also celebrates student successes. Classroom teachers may have parties celebrating academic achievements. Pictures of classroom activities are taken and displayed on a television screen in the main hallway. Students often gather around this screen and discuss among themselves all of the things they see happening in the building. High school students write articles in the monthly newsletter about elementary school events. Fun themed dress weeks such as Homecoming and Read Across America provide a little fun and break-up of the normal routine for students. One of the best weeks we have had thus far was Random Acts of Kindness Week where students wrote kind notes to each other and put them on lockers. Students were so excited to come to school to see what neat things other students thought about them. This week has been long over, but the notes still remain as a reminder of the great things each student has to offer.

Teachers in the school get along well and are much more like friends than coworkers. They have time during staff meetings and in-services to share ideas together. Parents and administration often bring in treats or tokens of appreciation to staff members. Daily announcements are used to keep staff informed of what is happening in the school as well. Staff members are comfortable with each other and administration and make suggestions on how the school may be improved for themselves or for students. Many of the fun activities that are held in the school are done so because a staff member has created it and just wants to share. Providing a safe, fun, and positive environment for all is a key to the school's success.

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

Part of our successfulness in student achievement is involving our students' families and our community in our school environment. Our school holds a fall open house for back-to-school. While visiting classrooms, families and students meet the staff and their classroom teachers. Information is provided to families on creating a learning friendly home, reading and math skills, and homework tips. Ways to communicate with each other are established by phone and email so that the school and teachers are made available to families.

Communicating and involving our families is vital to our success. Thursday folders are sent home weekly as a communication tool providing upcoming events, projects, and schedules. The school and community

work together to produce a monthly newsletter called the FYI. Families and patrons of the community all receive a copy of the monthly newsletter. The school website houses much information that is accessible to all. The school also has an all call system it uses to keep families informed of important events. Academic conferences are also held twice a year to discuss student progress, however student grades may be accessed anytime via the internet.

There are many events that community and family members are invited to attend. School concerts, highlighting students' success in music, sports contests featuring our school athletes, science fairs, plays, and other classroom events are just a few community events that draw a crowd. Fun themed family nights tied to reading and math challenges involve community members, families, administrators, and teachers draw large crowds and increase interest in school programs. Themes of these events have included farming, pirates, superheroes and more. There is usually something special that happens on these nights that most families don't want to miss. Family and community volunteers are welcomed for classroom activities and events. Daily homework, special STEM projects, and nightly readers promote at-home learning and family involvement in learning.

Other ways our community is involved with the success of our students is the DARE program, Fire Prevention week with the local fire department visiting the school, farm safety presentations by local farmers, and electrical safety and awareness by the local electrical coop are some of the annual community events in the school. Students may also take field trips visiting local businesses. Goodie bags are provided to all students by the Westport Community Club on special occasions and a local church holds a winter coat and mitten drive for our students. Other businesses donate to various school events throughout the year. All of the above items show how much the community cares and its level of investment in our school and students.

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

After looking at data for the past few years and seeing the push for understanding of informational text, the Frederick Area School District decided to push ELA standards. This includes curriculum mapping and program improvement as well as professional development training in reading strategies. Teachers in grades K-6, along with the intervention and special education teachers, attended Advanced Applications in Reading course, which taught them how to utilize the teaching reading sourcebook and CORE testing. Once a program used by Title I and Special Education only, now every teacher has the same knowledge and skill set, allowing cohesive assessments and scope and sequencing of reading strategies throughout the elementary. Teachers were also given the opportunity to attend video trainings by Valerie Ellery, Creating Strategic Readers. This video and textbook series provides teachers successful strategies in teaching vocabulary, phonics, and comprehension. State provided professional development opportunities have also been utilized in teaching reading comprehension skills.

Although the school has focused more on reading over the last few years as determined by our annual data retreat needs, math professional development has not been forgotten. The school recently adopted a new math curriculum, EnVision 2.0 by Pearson. This common core math series is a blended approach to mathematics, combining Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI) and traditional mathematics to ensure students understanding of numbers while providing the structure needed for upper level mathematics later on in school. This series offers many individual learning options that teachers need time to learn about in order to properly implement into the classroom. Webinars provided by Pearson make sure that teachers are using the curriculum correctly as well as curriculum maps being created to ensure all standards are being appropriately addressed. The addition of Title I Math services being incorporated into each classroom and professional development on using the intervention material provided with the EnVision program make math a topic of discussion during teacher in-service time as well.

Professional development also include time for teachers to share with each other and teachers from other school things they are doing in their classrooms. Many teachers belong to other teacher organizations that allow them to grow as professionals. Student safety is also a large part of professional development, exploring topics such as Suicide Prevention, First Aid, Mandatory Reporting, and Building Safety have been a priority in school improvement. The Frederick Area School's goal in providing professional

development is to grow not only teachers that promote a fun, positive, and safe learning environment, but also that 85% of our students are proficient or higher in all academic levels.

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

The administration of the Frederick Area School believes that their primary purpose is to support the teachers and students of the school. Administrators have an open door policy. Teachers and students know they may pop into the office at any time to discuss whatever they like. The principal walks around the school often, visiting with teachers and students allows her to access needs of the day/week. The superintendent keeps the staff informed of all events going on in the school through daily emailed announcements. Communication is always open, honest, and friendly. Administration is also empathetic to the needs of the students and staff and jumps in whenever they are needed. This help may involve finding substitute teachers, making lesson plans for someone who needs to be unexpectedly gone, being the substitute teacher, assisting with student learning objectives, analyzing data, janitorial assistance, and offering teaching suggestions. The principal monitors student success closely and works with the teacher to make adjustments in learning programs and class schedules in order to best meet the needs of each student. Meetings and informal discussions are held with the principal often in order to build student success. The principal firmly believes that you cannot ask the staff to do what she is not willing to do herself. This builds trust and demonstrates to others the expectation of hard work.

Being such a small school, there are only 2 full time administrators on staff, the K-12 principal and the school superintendent. Leadership can sometimes be spread thin with all that is expected from the K-12 principal, so delegated leadership built on responsibility and trust are key to the school's success. The intervention teacher along with classroom teachers meet weekly to plan RTI sessions throughout the school. These teachers report to the principal weekly on what is happening within student groups and provide data showing the success or troubles with students in the school. In addition to the formal meeting, the intervention teacher spends time daily in each classroom and reports to the principal areas of success and concern that the principal may need to investigate and address. Teachers also come to the principal with ideas they want to try in their classroom or throughout the school. The new ideas are discussed and the teacher reports back on the effectiveness of their ideas. Teachers are also empowered in the selection of curriculum, holding meetings amongst themselves and attending webinars to determine which curriculum is desired for all subjects. Their suggestions are then reviewed by administration before adoption.

The school administration team meets weekly to discuss happenings and needs of the school. School policies are reviewed at these meetings as necessary so all administration is on the same page. Teacher and staff meetings allow time for administration to share policies with staff. The school board also reviews policies annually to make sure they are current and provide the standard structure on which the school operates. School leadership feels strongly that teachers are the reason for the success of the school and wants them to have the tools to feel empowered to teach students to the best of their ability and often provide the guidance necessary for this to be the reality.

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

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The Frederick Areas School's climate and culture are key to its success. Students are the number one priority of the school district and all staff strive to make sure that the individual needs of all students are met on a daily basis. When students come to school, they know they are in a safe environment that supports their learning needs. School staff, teachers, and administrators have built trusting relationships between the family and school environment. Students are provided opportunities to succeed socially, physically, emotionally, and academically.

All staff members expect high levels of student success and work tirelessly to provide instruction that allows students to meet those expectations. Teachers demonstrate high levels of academic concerns and communicate often with administration, families, and other teachers in order to better understand student needs and in what ways to push them to be more successful. Teachers use the challenging adopted curriculum as a base for instruction, but spend many hours enhancing the curriculum and attending professional development in order to provide alternative instructional strategies that drive student success. Student also take pride in their successes and are excited to share their achievements with their families and the community.

Positive communication is also another pillar of success in our school. Whether students share their successes in the school newsletter, on the television screen, or in the classroom, there is always something positive for them to share. All staff spread the good news of what is happening at school from events, to academic successes, to growth opportunities, there is much to be excited about. Community members are proud to belong to the Titan community and attend many events or contribute to a variety of projects that benefit the school, students, and staff. The Frederick Area School and all of its stakeholders truly strive to provide a quality education to all students.