

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mrs. Mallory Kirby

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

Official School Name Montgomery Intermediate School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 700 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive

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

City Montgomery State TX Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 77356-4384

County Montgomery County

Telephone (936) 276-4700 Fax _____

Web site/URL http://schools.misd.org/page/mis.ho
mepage E-mail mallory.kirby@misd.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. Beau Rees E-mail brees@misd.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Montgomery Independent School District Tel. (936) 276-2000

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. Ken Thomet
(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):
- 6 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 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	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	318	344	662
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	318	344	662

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 3 % Black or African American
 - 14 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 78 % White
 - 3 % 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: 0%

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	0
(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)]	0
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	0
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.000
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	0

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 2 %
14 Total number ELL

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

Spanish

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 25 %
Total number students who qualify: 163

8. Students receiving special education services: 14 %
90 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>8</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>14</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>26</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>3</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>25</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>7</u> Mental Retardation	<u>5</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>2</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</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	2
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.	10
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	10
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 24:1
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%	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.

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

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

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.
It is the mission of MIS to reach EACH child, each day, in the way they learn best, in order to promote individual SUCCESS.

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

Montgomery Intermediate School in Montgomery, Texas has an established tradition of achievement and excellence worthy of National Blue Ribbon status. The MIS educational philosophy places focus on students as individuals with diverse academic, social, emotional, cultural, and physical needs. In support of that philosophy, the mission statement “to reach each child, each day, in the way they learn best, in order to promote individual success” is one taken to heart by the MIS staff.

Montgomery, Texas is a growing community located in southeast Texas. Known as the birthplace of the Lone Star flag of Texas, the historic town of Montgomery is only about 2 square miles. However, the surrounding area consists of approximately 60,000 who consider themselves residents. Montgomery Independent School District serves more than 8,300 students and covers 231.1 miles of Montgomery County. The Montgomery community is made up of both suburban-type neighborhoods and more isolated rural areas.

Montgomery Intermediate School currently serves 662 fifth grade students. The population of MIS is comprised of 14% Hispanic, 3% African-American, and 78% White students, with 24.6% of the student population qualifying for a free/reduced lunch program based on family income.

Montgomery Intermediate School has repeatedly received recognition from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) for high levels of student achievement on state assessments. Most recently, MIS was recognized for being in the top 25% of Texas schools for student progress and closing performance gaps on the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR).

MIS uses strategies, activities, and programs that enrich student learning, offer leadership opportunities for students, and involve families and community members. Students attend art, music, and physical education classes in learning cohorts with students from other classrooms, offering unique opportunities to learn and socialize. Weekly enrichment times known as E-Tracks are built into the schedule. Students join E-Tracks groups based on their interests and work collaboratively with other students to focus their learning and create products to share with parents and community members. Student led clubs offer opportunities for interest-based social interaction and leadership development. Student recognitions and celebrations, instructional planning focused on student interest and learning styles, and daily tutorial/enrichment blocks targeting individual needs provide students with opportunities to reach high levels of social-emotional development and academic achievement. Activities that focus on physical movement and tactile learning, including an array of flexible seating options throughout the school, are commonplace at MIS. A multicultural fair held at MIS celebrates the diversity of the Montgomery community and highlights the various cultures that make up the student population.

Montgomery Intermediate School prides itself on celebrating academic growth, civic-minded actions, and good character. MIS staff members understand the importance of celebrations and recognitions, celebrating even small amounts of progress toward student goals. Students are featured on morning announcements, celebrated in classrooms, and recognized in weekly communications from the school principal. No celebration is too small, as the staff recognizes that celebrating growth and progress is meaningful to foster student motivation, a feeling of belonging, and a sense of value. Staff recognitions are important, as well, creating a supportive environment where all stakeholders are valuable members of the learning community.

MIS values partnerships with families and community members, involving all stakeholders in creating an environment focused on student-centered learning. Parents are involved in the education of their children through constant communication, a welcoming atmosphere, and participation in parent organizations. Mentor programs allow students to learn collaboratively, build leadership capacity, and foster relationships with volunteers. MIS works to include families and community members through events such as Science Curriculum Night, Meet the Teacher, New Student Breakfasts, and a Veterans’ Day program. During these special events, academic learning and civic-mindedness are on display. Many of these events are sponsored by community organizations, and participation is consistently high. Parents and community members anticipate the programs, some of which are seen as annual traditions.

For a number of years, Montgomery Intermediate School has exclusively served fifth grade students. This has presented a challenge and perceived urgency in building authentic relationships and understanding the needs of each individual student. Forming relationships with students and gathering data from multiple sources to measure achievement are especially important, as time is limited with these students. The first days of school are spent doing just that, engaging in reciprocal conversations, sharing and reflecting on values and experiences, and building a learning community that respects students as individuals. Placing focus on the social-emotional and academic needs of each student, their interests, and what motivates them helps staff members accelerate a deep, authentic understanding of each student as an individual. The principal often says, “We have one year with these kiddos. We have to make it the very best!”

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Montgomery ISD utilizes a curriculum developed by teachers in alignment with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). MISD's Aligned Curriculum (MAC) was developed to focus on building the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to create accomplished citizens and lifelong learners. Lessons and activities are developed with the TEKS, student engagement, and civic learning in mind. Foundational skills are acquired through gradual release of responsibility, where students move from dependence into independence as they learn, becoming self-evaluative learners. Differentiated instruction, project based learning, interactive journaling, and flexible grouping shape the instructional environment at MIS. A variety of engagement strategies are used to help advance academic achievement in all curricular areas. Teachers create learning environments that encourage movement in and out of groups and stations within the classroom. Reciprocal feedback between teachers and students is frequent and meaningful. Students are given time to summarize, reflect on, and share their learning to establish more meaningful, personalized connections.

The focus of the reading/English language arts (ELA) curriculum is to offer students ample opportunity to engage in authentic listening, speaking, writing, and thinking tasks for a variety of purposes, including problem solving. MIS utilizes the Balanced Literacy Model to support the TEKS. This model promotes meeting students at their current reading and writing levels and working to develop growth from that point through individualized instruction and scaffolding. The Balanced Literacy Model supports flexible grouping opportunities as students engage in read-alouds, modeled writing, shared/interactive reading and writing, reading and writing workshop, and independent reading and writing. Through assessment data, observations, and feedback, teachers identify the instructional needs of students and plan differentiated lessons and activities to address those needs. The TEKS are supported through mini-lessons, small group instruction, independent work, and conferencing.

Montgomery Intermediate School's curricular approach to mathematics is designed to prepare students to use patterns and relationships to connect mathematical concepts and their application to the real world. The TEKS are supported through interactive lessons that foster connections between mathematics and everyday life skills, supporting a deeper understanding of the standards. Small group instruction helps target the academic needs of individual students. Daily mathematics instruction is balanced through building computational skills, mental math, reasoning, problem solving, and conceptual understanding. Whole group and small group learning occurs during math instruction. Instructional strategies and flexible grouping vary based on student need. MIS students keep math journals to enhance mathematical and communication skills. Math journals are used to record data, set learning goals, review concepts, and to make learning connections across the curriculum. Math journals are individualized in their creation, ensuring they are meaningful, individualized learning tools for students.

The science curriculum was created to build a meaningful relationship between science and everyday life through active engagement in inquiry-based, hands-on activities and problem solving tasks. Hands-on activities and learning allows for a richer understanding of the science TEKS. Students are supported to act, think, and communicate like scientists as they make meaning by observing, questioning, investigating, measuring, experimenting, analyzing, and thinking critically within and beyond the classroom. MIS students utilize a science notebook where they journal and record their learning, promoting opportunities for reflection and cross-curricular connections. At least one-half of student learning during science is spent engaged in classroom or outdoor investigations, increasing student engagement.

In order to promote a richer, more global understanding of the TEKS, social studies instruction is embedded throughout the reading and writing curriculum. Using biographies, poetry, and historical documents and artifacts, students survey United States History through the embedded study of geography, economics, cultures, and government events to better understand the world in which they live. Beyond the social studies curriculum, additional opportunities for high-levels of student engagement and civic learning are woven throughout all curricular areas and provide opportunities for students to build capacity for leadership, have a

voice in decisions, and improve their community. MIS students author essays on their personal American Hero, then collaborate with a local civic organization. Students participate in annual student-led Veterans' Day programs that honor community members. Elections are held for leadership opportunities on the campus of MIS. Students also participate with a local agency in a water conservation program, empowering them to apply their learning to school and home environments.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Montgomery Intermediate School provides numerous opportunities for students to prosper outside the traditional core curricular areas. Students attend art and music classes weekly and participate in physical education three times per week, each block lasting 55 minutes. Students are grouped for art, music, and physical education in learning cohorts comprised of students from different classrooms, offering opportunities for students to socialize and learn with students outside their homeroom setting.

Montgomery Intermediate School's art teacher implements a TEKS-based curriculum that incorporates cross-curricular connections, supporting students in profound, meaningful learning. Students regularly engage in mathematical connections, written response, and digital art design. Students learn about the foundations of art through the lens of observation and perception, creative expression to communicate personal experiences, art history and cultural links, and critical evaluation of art created by themselves and others. Flexible grouping encourages collaboration and varied learning communities. Students participate in art competitions both locally and in partnership with the Texas Renaissance Festival and the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. Art Smart, an art club sponsored by MIS, offers students additional opportunities to learn about art through socialization, individual creativity, various media, and special products. The art teacher also collaborates with students on an annual fundraising program where framed student art is sold to help fund additional art education opportunities at MIS.

All students at MIS attend music classes weekly. The music curriculum, based on the TEKS, highlights musical literacy. Students describe and analyze sound, then read, write, and reproduce music notation. Students collaborate with others and work independently to express themselves creatively through singing and playing instruments. The MIS music teacher guides students in understanding the historical and cultural relevance of music, evaluating music, and responding to music. The Vocal Elite choir is a competitive singing group comprised of 100 MIS students selected through an audition process. The choir, well-known in the community, holds concerts and performs at school board meetings and numerous community events. Vocal Elite members extend their musical knowledge to a professional application, with additional musical literacy learning, as well as performance experience and etiquette.

The TEKS-based physical education (PE) program at Montgomery Intermediate School was designed to allow diverse experiences for students through collaborative, cross-curricular lessons. The MIS PE coach works to create a positive learning environment that encourages student involvement, no matter their knowledge or physical ability. Students learn the knowledge and skills for movement and enjoyment, social development through physical activity, and the importance of living a healthy lifestyle. Building on prior knowledge acquired in earlier grade levels, students at MIS apply various movements in game-like situations through the demonstration of balance, form, accuracy, and smooth combinations of locomotor skills. Students learn to set physical goals for themselves and monitor their progress at various intervals throughout the school year, celebrating progress and reflecting on growth. Opportunities for social development are incorporated throughout the PE curriculum, supporting students in seeking strategies, following rules and procedures, collaborating with others, and finding solutions through teamwork and sportsmanship. The physical education teacher sponsors a "Punt, Pass, Kick" competition, a school-wide field day, and other activities to involve all stakeholders in the PE program at MIS.

Technology instruction and application for MIS students is embedded in all areas of the curriculum. Instructional environments support technology through the guided use of game-based learning platforms and presentation software. Instruction in technology use and application is based on the TEKS. With support from the MIS instructional coach, teachers examine the curriculum and guide students in TEKS mastery. Students use technology applications to discover new knowledge, communicate learning, and collaborate with others. MIS provides open access to a computer lab, as well as mobile laptop and tablet labs.

Classrooms average 8 to 10 devices for student use and are equipped with interactive boards to enhance instruction. Students practice digital citizenship and engage in research and information fluency. Additional learning opportunities are offered to students through technology club or robotics club membership.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

To support high levels of student achievement, Montgomery Intermediate School teachers use an array of instructional methods, interventions, and assessments that reflect the needs of individual students, as well as the needs of the group. Instruction is designed to capture and sustain student interest by making connections to relevant experiences, providing opportunities for student choice and creativity, and seamlessly integrating technology. Project based learning, flexible grouping, direct instruction, and independent discovery are just some of the instructional methods used by teachers at MIS. Guided by the TEKS and district curriculum, pacing is varied to meet the needs of students.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Montgomery Intermediate School promotes a culture of celebration and a climate where individuals are valuable and celebrated for effort and growth. MIS believes that viewing students as individuals with diverse, specific needs helps to promote high levels of academic success. Progress toward goals, whether behavioral or academic, are celebrated as part of the school culture. The staff of MIS recognizes that students feel motivated and empowered to be successful when they are learning in a supportive, encouraging environment.

The first days of the school year at MIS are focused on establishing relationships with students and developing an understanding of what motivates them, what their needs are, and how they learn best. Staff members feel a sense of urgency in forming relationships with their students, as students attend MIS exclusively during their fifth grade year. Through the use of school-wide learning style assessments and other measures, data is used to create learning environments that support student learning preferences and interests, maximizing student engagement and achievement levels. MIS staff members believe that student-centered instruction calls for the inclusion of student voice in instructional design. Teachers work with students to track progress and celebrate growth, no matter how small. Throngs of students arrive in the front office daily to receive recognition, praise, and incentives for meeting goals and making progress. Environments where students are celebrated by others helps to establish a team mentality, giving a sense of being part of something great.

While staff members work hard to create an environment where students feel empowered and celebrated, the administrators and parent organizations work hard to create the same for the MIS staff. Teachers are given numerous leadership opportunities, enabling them to grow professionally by representing MIS on committees and sharing learning with their peers. MISD Premier Praise cards are completed, submitted to the superintendent, and presented to staff members to recognize accomplishments or show appreciation. The campus Shout Out board is a place where staff members can post a note or “shout out” to a colleague as recognition. Staff socials offer time to socialize and build relationships outside the school environment. The MIS parent organization regularly organizes luncheons and other treats to remind staff members they are valued, supported, and appreciated.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Parental involvement is a crucial component of student success, and Montgomery Intermediate School prides itself on offering a variety of events that encourage family and community involvement in the educational environment.

Families are encouraged to visit MIS to see the great things taking place in classrooms daily. The active campus parent organization works hard to offer families flexibility in supporting MIS, thus supporting a strong home/school connection. The school sponsors curriculum nights, learning showcases, a Veteran’s Day program, and a host of other activities open to parent and community participation. A series of parenting workshops are held in the evenings to offer parents practical tips on communication, creating confident children, and positive discipline strategies. The school counselor offers additional parent resources, including strategies for parenting after a divorce. Several mentorship programs, one specifically targeted to fathers or other male family members, provide opportunities for parents to play an active role in the academic and social-emotional development of MIS students. Special events honoring parents, grandparents, and parental figures in the lives of students are annual traditions that attract hundreds of family members to the campus of MIS. The campus principal sends weekly communication to parents and holds a “Principal Powwow” to answer parent questions and offer information about MIS during a summer orientation, which is videoed and posted on the school’s website for review or viewing by new students and their families. Social media is updated with student and staff celebrations and information on events, keeping parents and community members informed and updated in real-time. An annual reading program is implemented where families are encouraged to read a specific book at home with their students to focus

on family literacy and the benefits of reading aloud, further supporting student achievement through a strong home/school connection.

Montgomery Intermediate School partners with local businesses and community members to garner support and establish relationships benefiting all MIS stakeholders. Through these partnerships, students and staff members receive recognitions through the donation of a variety of goods and services. MIS facilitates family support through these partnerships, as well, offering school supplies, clothing, and meals to families struggling financially. Many of these strategies and partnerships have been in place for years and continue to offer support that directly and indirectly influence the academic achievement, wellness, and character of MIS students.

3. Professional Development:

Professional development at Montgomery Intermediate School is designed with student achievement in mind and guided by assessment data. Professional development is hands on, addresses real instructional challenges, and is collaborative in nature. MIS utilizes a variety of professional learning opportunities that include learning from colleagues, independently, and through outside resources.

Montgomery Independent School District has a facility dedicated to professional learning. Much of the professional learning that supports district initiatives takes place there, led by instructional leaders in MISD. MIS leadership facilitates ongoing professional learning that targets campus needs, sending weekly emails that include links to professional learning and encouraging staff members to seek personalized opportunities to target individual needs or interests to better classroom instruction and student achievement. Additional learning opportunities are utilized through a partnership with the local TEA Education Service Center. Professional learning targets the TEKS, and assessment data is used to guide decisions about professional learning needs.

MISD has implemented an instructional coach model, where teaching professionals support instructional strategies and technology integration. Professional development opportunities are facilitated by the MIS instructional coach through a “Cookies with Coach” workshop format, instructional modeling, and team-teaching opportunities, enabling teachers to build capacity for best practices with support in a practical, authentic environment. MIS staff members work closely with a teacher who specializes in strategies to reach English language learners. This teacher offers professional learning and collaborates with teachers to model and offer in-class support of instructional strategies to develop proficiency in student listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

The MIS teaching staff is viewed as a valuable resource of professional experience. MIS staff members are provided formal opportunities to share their experiences with professional learning, student success, and instructional strategies for differentiation and intervention. Because students only attend MIS as fifth graders, staff members place on-going focus on the correlation between positive relationships and student achievement, strategies for building relationships, and data collection and analysis. Much of this professional learning occurs in collaborative groups of MIS staff members, discussing and sharing strategies that have shown to be effective.

Campus administrators engage in professional learning to facilitate school improvement. Administrators from across the district form learning cohorts, supporting collaborative learning and problem solving opportunities. Some administrative professional learning targets district needs, while more personalized learning is encouraged through book studies and professional conferences where learning addresses areas identified through annual campus needs assessments.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership philosophy of the administrative team at Montgomery Intermediate School aligns with the school mission “to reach each child, each day, in the way they learn best, in order to promote individual success.” The leadership team at MIS consists of the school principal, the assistant principal, and the counselor.

The principal, as campus leader, is responsible for shaping the culture of the school, leading curriculum development, and facilitating school improvement. The assistant principal facilitates a variety of student supports, including behavioral supports, Section 504 meetings and student accommodations, and student attendance. The counselor works to support students identified as at-risk, facilitates character education, and supports teachers in the tutorial and intervention process. All three administrators collaborate with teachers in data collection and analysis, participate in PLCs, and provide resources to staff members and students alike, supporting the learning environment and working toward school improvement by being present, active members of the learning community.

Montgomery Intermediate School administrators are visible and involved, visiting classrooms daily and participating in morning announcements where they share in celebrating student and staff member success. With a growth mindset in place, the MIS administrative team understands the importance of growing together, accepting challenges, and recognizing students and staff members in the growth process. The principal recognizes that any amount of growth is worth celebrating, and it is commonplace to celebrate students making even small amounts of progress in order to motivate them to continue working toward their goals.

An open-door policy is important to administrators, creating an environment where teachers, parents, and students feel welcome to communicate. Families are welcomed to MIS with an annual “Principal Powwow” summer orientation, offering information about the school and curriculum. Parents and community members know they are welcome on campus for formal or informal conferences, classroom volunteering opportunities, or lunch visits. The campus principal sends weekly communication concerning upcoming events and celebrations. Students are invited to share things with administrators daily, offering students a voice in their education and an opportunity for personal interactions and relationship building. Teachers feel respected and valued by administrators and are an active part of the decision-making process on the campus. High levels of teacher retention are consistent at MIS. Staff members are seen as leaders, trusted to make autonomous instructional decisions.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The one practice that makes the most significant impact on student success at Montgomery Intermediate School is the culture of celebration. The culture of celebration at MIS is an intentional, meaningful strategy in support of the social-emotional and academic growth and success of its students. MIS staff members value showing students that learning and self-worth are not measured by test scores. The true measure of success is reflected in hard work, persistence, and growth. Celebrating progress and achievement, no matter small, is a daily occurrence.

In support of the educational philosophy of MIS, celebrations are designed to appeal to individual students with diverse academic, social, emotional, cultural, and physical needs. Staff members understand that meaningful celebrations and recognitions vary from person to person. In order to reach students on a personal level and understand what motivates them, strong relationships are paramount. As school begins, focus is placed on establishing relationships with students. Interest inventory data is used to create environments where learning styles and student interests are valued. Discussions take place to solicit information about how students feel about recognitions. Personalized celebrations support increased levels of student motivation and engagement in the learning process.

MIS staff members understand that many students thrive on public recognition, while others do not. A personalized note from a staff member is meaningful to some students, while others prefer positive phone calls to families. Many students relish positive attention or lunch with a staff member over hearing their name on the morning announcements. Others thrive on seeing their photograph posted on social media. Students showing progress or improvement in any area, whether behaviorally, socially, or academically, may be sent to the office with a Celebration Stick. Those students are featured on announcements and awarded with a gumball from a special machine as an incentive. Bear Brigade status is awarded to students for high levels of academic achievement. Golden Tickets are given to students who set a positive example for others by showing respect, good citizenship, and responsibility. Awards assemblies throughout the year recognize students for a variety of achievements and accomplishments beyond academic success, as well. These celebrations, while seemingly simple to some, help motivate and recognize students for their efforts, promoting an environment where progress toward a goal is considered something positive and worthy of celebration.