

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 Ms. Penny L Brooks

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

Official School Name Midway Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 5511 Midway Road

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

City Church Road State VA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 23833-3310

County Dinwiddie County

Telephone (804) 265-4205 Fax _____

Web site/URL _____

s/ http://www.dinwiddie.k12.va.us/me E-mail pbrooks@dcpsnet.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. Kari Weston E-mail kweston@dcpsnet.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Dinwiddie County Public Schools Tel. (804) 469-4190

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mrs. Mary Benjamin
(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)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 7 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	30	36	66
1	31	35	66
2	34	29	63
3	34	30	64
4	29	28	57
5	38	37	75
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	196	195	391

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 % Asian
 - 10 % Black or African American
 - 2 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 84 % White
 - 4 % 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: 16%

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	27
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	36
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	63
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	391
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.161
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	16

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 42 %
Total number students who qualify: 163

8. Students receiving special education services: 12 %
49 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.

- 2 Autism
- 0 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 1 Emotional Disturbance
- 0 Hearing Impairment
- 0 Mental Retardation
- 0 Multiple Disabilities
- 0 Orthopedic Impairment
- 13 Other Health Impaired
- 24 Specific Learning Disability
- 9 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: 2
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	18
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	11
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	3
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 22:1
12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	95%	97%
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.
Provide students with the most individualized education possible by offering developmentally appropriate programs; students enter school and progress through all grades ready to achieve 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

Midway Elementary School is a public elementary school located in the rural farming community of Dinwiddie County about 30 minutes south of Richmond, VA. Midway was founded in 1911 and spring of 2017 marks the 100th year anniversary of its first graduating class consisting of five students. Midway remained a high school until 1965 at which time it became an elementary school. In the past, Midway was an upper primary school housing fourth through seventh grades. Since the early nineties, Midway has operated as an elementary school and currently houses 395 students in grades kindergarten through fifth grade.

track and field day; Spelling Bee both at the school and district level; recorder and ukulele lessons; an after school drama club which allows students to perform an original production; student newspaper created with the assistance of the school counselor; Safety Patrol program; and, Good Citizens recognized monthly by the local Ruritan club.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Midway Elementary School provides a rigorous curriculum based on the Virginia Standards of Learning and as outlined in the Dinwiddie County Public School's pacing guide in the four core areas of English, Mathematics, Science and History. Students are provided with differentiated instruction in whole group, small group, and individualized settings. Teachers work collaboratively together to share best practices and resources. Bloom's Taxonomy is utilized by teachers to ask higher level thinking questions. Monthly Data Talks focus on individual student's strengths and weaknesses and decisions are based on providing opportunities for each student to reach his/her highest academic potential.

Reading/English Language Arts: Midway Elementary School provides instruction in the areas of reading, oral language and writing in all grades. Beginning in kindergarten, student friendly objectives focus on a balanced literacy program which includes phonemic awareness, phonics, comprehension, vocabulary, word study, and guided/shared reading and writing. Students are highly engaged in daily lessons involving listening, speaking, reading and writing. Formal and informal assessments which include pre and post-testing, county created benchmarks, PALS (Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening), QRIs (Qualitative Reading Inventory), DRAs (Developmental Reading Inventory), weekly assessments and running records are utilized to determine the reading level for each student. The use of leveled readers from our vast reading room, learner stations/centers, small groups and intensive direct instruction in reading are keys in providing daily differentiated instruction. Technology is also incorporated by the use of researched based reading programs and applications on Chromebooks, tablets, and iPads. Time is also set aside daily for modeling reading metacognition strategies by the use of teacher read alouds. Students also participate in sustained silent reading daily for pleasure.

Mathematics: Midway Elementary School implements a balanced math program that provides opportunities for students to practice problem solving using mathematical concepts. Students are engaged daily in purposeful practice of skills, concepts, thinking and the use of strategies in the areas of number and number sense, computation and estimation, measurement, geometry, probability and statistics, and patterns, functions and algebra. The instructional focus is on students' abilities to connect to the real world and be versed at communicating mathematically. Manipulatives are incorporated to assist in providing concrete hands on experiences. Teachers utilize a data chart weekly to plot each student's progress and plan for remediation. Differentiated instruction is based on each student's level of understanding. Group work is used to encourage "math talk" and different ways to solve mathematical problems. Formal and informal assessments which include pre- and post-testing, county created benchmarks, math mastery concepts' quizzes, and weekly assessments are utilized to determine math skill development. Technology is also incorporated by the use of researched based mathematical programs and applications on Chromebooks, tablets, and iPads.

Science: Midway Elementary School provides hands on experiments in kindergarten through fifth grade which are directly correlated to the scientific process in the areas of Earth Science, Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Student friendly objectives focus on the following strands: Scientific Investigation, Reasoning, and Logic; Force, Motion, and Energy; Matter; Life Processes; Living Systems; Interrelationships in Earth/Space Systems; Earth Patterns, Cycles, and Change; and Earth Resources. Goals for skill acquisition in the area of science are targeted at safety, instructional technology, investigation and understanding, and application. Technology, STEAM activities, field trips, and guest speakers support our science curriculum. Students are involved in problem-based learning and scientific inquiry requiring them to use reasoning skills with conceptual understanding.

Social Studies/History/Civic Learning and Engagement: Midway Elementary School focuses on providing instructional opportunities for students to be engaged in activities targeted at acquiring the knowledge of the history that shaped our country and in developing skills necessary to be a productive member of a democratic society. Lessons targeted at history, geography, civics and economics are provided in all grades. Midway is located in an area rich in the history of the Civil War and provides a multitude of field trip

experiences to make history come alive for students. Community leaders and retired teachers also present relevant lessons for learners. Leveled readers about people and events in history are also incorporated into social studies lessons. Students demonstrating outstanding citizenship are recognized monthly with a medal from the Wilson-Hebron-Ford Ruritan Club.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Midway Elementary students are afforded a multitude of opportunities which support the acquisition of essential skills and knowledge in addition to the four core content areas. Students participate in art, music, physical education (twice) and library for 45 minutes each week. Resource teachers incorporate state standards into their instruction; for example, the librarian integrates English objectives like reinforcing reading comprehension strategies in fiction and nonfiction texts. The music teacher directs a monthly curriculum based program: Each grade level performs during their evening grade level PTO meeting. Programs reinforce content instruction in social studies and science. The music teacher also aligns many of her lessons to the core content areas; for example, fifth graders create their own musical instruments. They present their instrument to peers and demonstrate their understanding of sound waves, pitch, amplitude, vibration, crest, trough, wavelength, compression and rarefaction. Students receive reinforcement of math skills during physical education classes; specifically, students practice their addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division facts while performing warm up exercises. Art classes provide opportunities for students to creatively demonstrate their knowledge of skills; such as, students in kindergarten participating in lessons involving mixing primary colors and using their sense of sight.

The music, art and fifth grade teachers sponsor an after school drama club for fifth grade students. Students learn all aspects of acting to include voice projection, creating an original performance and designing a set for the stage. Students design and create their own costumes and stage decorations. They perform for both the student body and after school for families.

A class set of ukuleles were purchased by the PTO. The music teacher volunteers after school to tutor interested students in learning how to play the ukulele. In addition to students learning how to play the recorder and performing at the end of year awards program, students will also showcase their talents playing the ukuleles.

The art teacher utilizes Estonia, an online portal for parents to view their child's art work. Students participate in various art contests to include the Flying Squirrels (Richmond baseball team) and the Bank of Southside Virginia. Several students have won these contests. In addition, fifth graders leave their mark on Midway by designing a cement slab with their art work. The cement slab is added to the landscape around the school's flagpole at the end of their elementary career.

A traditional track and field day is held each June. The physical education teacher creates heats for each student to demonstrate the acquisition of essential skills in physical education. Students perform in various heats and are awarded with ribbons for first through fourth place. The annual Field Day is a huge community event. High school students volunteer and assist Midway staff in ensuring a safe and fun day for all.

The school nurse visits classrooms to provide instruction in the area of health and nutrition. For example, first graders receive a hands on demonstration of proper dental hygiene and are given a toothbrush and toothpaste to take home.

The ITRT (Instructional Technology Resource Teacher) provides students and teachers with a plethora of ideas and ways to incorporate technology consistently throughout lessons. Students in third, fourth and fifth grades participate in the Hour of Code to promote coding and critical thinking skills. Laptops, Chromebooks, iPads, Nooks, and computer labs are utilized by all grades to engage students in reading and math. Classroom teachers are adept at incorporating technology into their instruction and teaching students to use various forms. Before school technology sessions are offered each spring to provide students in this rural community the opportunity to use online resources in preparation for state assessments.

Students participate in lessons conducted by the School Counselor. Topics ranging from Family Life, character traits, bullying prevention, maintaining friendships, career awareness, to acts of kindness are provided. Students are able to explore various careers by attending the annual Career Day. The School Counselor provides classroom guidance lessons, small group lessons, and individual sessions to support students. Upper elementary students are also encouraged to participate in the Newspaper Club, the Safety Patrol program and the SHO (Students Helping Others) Club sponsored by the School Counselor.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Teachers utilize effective instructional approaches and strategies to meet the needs of students including direct explicit instruction; skill based instruction, modeling, remediation, small group instruction, learner stations, literacy centers, and individualized instruction. Students participate in problem-based learning, hands on experiments involving the scientific process, the use of manipulatives, and technology to maximize learning opportunities. STEM and STEAM activities provide integration of essential skills and concepts.

Teamwork is the key to providing differentiated instruction to our diverse learners. Special education teachers collaborate with general education colleagues to provide support both inclusively in the general and special education setting. The reading interventionist pushes in classrooms daily to provide small group reading instruction. PALS tutors provide another layer of remediation to kindergarten through third grade students who are not meeting state benchmarks. Resource teachers provide 30 minutes of daily support to classroom teachers. The ITRT spends three days each week to support classroom teachers in incorporating technology into lessons. In addition, the gifted resource teacher also provides weekly enrichment instruction both inclusively and as a pull out model. Paraprofessionals, parent volunteers, community members and high school cadets can also be found weekly supporting students. Students in grades third through fifth also complete a daily spiral review of skills in each core content area correlated to released test items. After school remediation and acceleration opportunities are provided by teachers in the areas of reading and math. A healthy level of competition among teachers and grade levels add an extra layer to striving for academic excellence.

The Child Study Team comprised of the principal, classroom teacher, school counselor and parent(s) meets biweekly to discuss concerns and review strategies in place for assistance. Student Action Plans are implemented and monitored as needed every four weeks in the areas of reading, math, attendance, and/or behavior. Intervention and remediation efforts are tailored to meet the needs of each student.

All classroom teachers teach reading daily and provide small group guided reading lessons. Midway's only reading interventionist supports students in grades first through fifth by utilizing the push-in method. Students are provided with intense remediation in reading comprehension, word study, decoding, fluency, and vocabulary based on data. Data driven decisions are consistently implemented to target individual needs. Varied leveled readers/texts are utilized and correlated to science, math, and social science standards of learning.

All classroom teachers teach math daily by providing whole group, small group and remediation lessons. Multi-level word problems provide students with real world opportunities to practice mathematical skills and concepts. Students are given daily math problems to solve and data charts are used weekly to guide acceleration and remediation efforts.

A variety of formal and informal assessments are utilized to consistently monitor student progress. Student Growth Assessments/benchmarks are administered online by the use of PowerSchool for reading and math quarterly to monitor students' strengths and weaknesses in grades second through fifth. Teacher created common assessments mirror the rigor of state tests and are aligned to the state testing Blueprints. Data Talks are held monthly to guide intervention and remediation efforts. To maintain high levels of achievement, acceleration of skills for students as needed is also provided.

Each spring, students in grades third through fifth participate in reading and math reviews. Fifth grade students also participate in reviews for science and social science. Students rotate through four to five teachers weekly and receive targeted instruction directly correlated to the state tests and based on data

collected from assessments.

Technology is utilized on a daily basis to provide opportunities for acceleration. Programs such as Study Island, Reading Eggs, Reading Eggspress, and Math Seeds provide research based lessons where teachers can monitor skill acquisition of students. Students maintain high levels of engagement participating in activities involving and using technology.

Midway Elementary strives to keep parents informed of their child's progress. Monday Folders are sent home weekly which include results on weekly assessments. Report cards are sent home quarterly and progress reports are sent home mid-quarter. Parents have access to their child's grades and attendance through the Parent Portal. Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled formerly twice per year. However, teachers pride themselves on consistently maintaining communication with their families. Remind Me App and Class DoJo are also utilized by many teachers.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Midway Elementary School is a safe place where high expectations set the stage for optimal learning. Failure is not an option. Our staff strives to fulfill the school's mission by providing the best possible education to students.

Midway can best be described as a family. The teachers and staff not only collaborate and work together, they possess a genuine and sincere concern for each other, the students and their families. From the cafeteria staff, to the bus drivers, to the custodial staff, to the office staff, to the paraprofessionals, to the teachers—the Midway pride is contagious. Students are greeted daily by name with a smile. The school and its community are valued and cherished. A strong connection is forged with each family and maintained by constant communication; such as, weekly newsletters; monthly Midway Messenger; daily communication; user friendly website; Midway PTO Facebook page; conferences; emails; use of Remind Me app and Class DoJo; and, phone calls.

Midway provides an environment that goes above and beyond to support the academic, emotional, and social development of each child. Teachers use data to support decisions academically; they can be found outside the school day working to find additional ways to reach each learner.

The school counselor provides guidance lessons to help support the emotional and social development of each student. Forms are also available for students to complete to request a time to visit and talk with the counselor. No problem is dismissed or too small if it is getting in the way of a student's progress.

Midway affords students and staff with a variety of ways to motivate and celebrate successes: Classroom teachers provide incentives to encourage students to return assignments and model appropriate behavior; outstanding citizenship and perfect attendance are recognized monthly; a ticket system with incentives is used for students in third, fourth, and fifth grade; a pep rally is held annually prior to state testing; students receiving a perfect score on state testing attend an additional field trip; the PTO in conjunction with the principal, school counselor, and parent volunteers monitor the cafeteria monthly for teachers to enjoy duty-free lunch; the principal provides monthly appreciation treats for all staff; monthly drawings are held at staff meetings; the PTO provides monthly Teacher Treat Tuesdays; a holiday program is presented by staff to students; and, every student at Midway is recognized at the end of year grade level award assembly.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Midway Elementary School is a committed community. Strong relationships exist between the school and the community. An open door policy is maintained and feedback is encouraged. A committed PTO provides an abundance of support and resources: Financially, they coordinate a fall and spring fundraiser—iPads have been purchased to support instruction; educational programs such as Theatre IV and Mad Scientist supplement state standards; books are purchased for the library; students also receive awards/incentives; for example, SweetFrog, Mega Blast celebration, and pizza and ice cream parties. The PTO coordinates our Volunteer program—volunteers complete Monday folders; they provide supervision during duty-free lunch days; support instruction in classrooms; assist resource teachers (art, music, and library) during kindergarten resource; can be found on a daily basis providing support anywhere and everywhere it is needed. Countless hours of volunteering are recorded each year and volunteers are invited to an annual appreciation luncheon.

Community partnerships with local churches, the Ruritan Club, Dinwiddie High School (DHS), the county and the Board of Supervisors, Petersburg National Battlefield and Pamplin Historical Parks, and local colleges and universities are maintained throughout the school year. Church members assist staff at curbside service by greeting students each morning; they provide assistance for younger students during lunch; and, they donate school supplies, food and clothing for families in need. DHS Teacher Cadets assist in classrooms; DHS Hundred Milers Club assist with Field Day; and National Honor & Beta Club students

act as mentors for students. The Appomattox River Soil and Water District, Virginia Tech Outreach, and farmers located in the county also provide events and activities for students; Southside College, Longwood University, and Virginia State University students participate in practicum experiences and provide another level of support to students and teachers.

The School Leadership team meets monthly to continuously monitor the Continuous Improvement Plan. Students' academic achievements and challenges are reviewed and discussed consistently. Parents are kept informed through various modes of communication: Honor Roll students are published in the local newspaper; Outstanding Citizens are included in the monthly Messenger; social media is used to highlight special events and accomplishments; Blackboard Connect is utilized for calls home; parents are invited to attend Child Study meetings and parent-teacher conferences.

Beginning with the annual Meet the Teacher event held in August, and ending with the Field Day, Midway families remain engaged and committed throughout the school year. They are invited to monthly PTO performances; encouraged to attend field trips and join their child(ren) for lunch; and participate in various activities such as the Book Fair, Family Movie Night, Santa's Workshop, Read Across America, and Career Day.

3. Professional Development:

DCPS (Dinwiddie County Public Schools) has embarked on a professional development plan that encourages innovation and is aligned to keeping up with technological advances. The county provided a conference style professional development entitled iDCPS to kick off the school year. Sessions were offered to all county employees including bus drivers, bookkeepers, cafeteria staff and maintenance workers. DCPS searched for expertise within the county as well as out to provide authentic and relevant professional development. The conference included the use of Google+ to stay connected and Idea Alley to display countless STEM/STEAM activities for students of all ages. Multiple sessions included hands on exploration of Chromebooks (a 1:1 initiative). DCPS continued this pursuit throughout the school year by bringing in a guest speaker, George Courous, and providing an early release day for additional professional development at each school building.

Midway Elementary School embraces the concept of a Professional Learning Community by participating in continuous learning and the use of innovation by tapping into the expertise that exists within its building and empowering others to share their effective practices. Grade levels provide professional development with hands on demonstrations at each monthly staff meeting; for example, the fifth grade team presented a STEM activity and participants formed teams to create a bridge using limited resources; the fourth grade team introduced Kahoot! and, all participants competed to answer grade content specific questions; the principal presented an activity incorporating the use of plastic plates in small groups as whiteboards to use when comparing and contrasting content. The ITRT teacher also provides professional development opportunities incorporating new technology; for example; makey-makeys, littleBits, SphereO, coding, and the use of reading and math programs using Chromebooks. The School Leadership Team is another avenue to gain valuable professional development—school leaders maintain an open dialogue of continuous improvement and professional development to enhance student achievement.

Other professional development activities include: New teachers are partnered with a mentor and attend monthly new teacher meetings designed to cover a vast array of topics including classroom management, creating assessments, and components of the teacher evaluation system; peer observations within the building and the county; instructional rounds; summer institutes and classes; grants offered through local colleges and universities (such as VISTA where teachers are given funds and resources to supplement science instruction); Simple K-12 (online professional development tool); Department of Education instructional videos; as well as, opportunities to participate in conferences and collaborate with educational specialists.

4. School Leadership:

Midway Elementary School can best be described as a Professional Learning Community where staff is empowered to participate in shared leadership and decision making. The School Leadership Team is comprised of grade level team leaders, the resource team leader, the reading interventionist, the special education team leader, the school counselor, principal, and the PTO President. The team meets monthly to analyze and discuss data relevant to student success. The team works collaboratively continuously throughout the school year to create and monitor the School Improvement Plan.

Monthly Data Talks are held with each grade level to discuss individual strengths and weaknesses in math and reading and to brainstorm strategies for implementation to target needed areas; for example, an additional 30 minute intensive remediation time was created for the reading interventionist and the librarian to work with certain individuals as soon as they arrive to school each morning by providing specific instruction targeted at skill acquisition.

Grade levels work collaboratively in teams to communicate and plan on a weekly basis. Data drives instructional decisions and lesson delivery is based on meeting the needs of all learners. Resource teachers (art, music, physical education, and library) push into classes each morning to support instruction. Special education teachers and the reading interventionist also provide another level of differentiation to meet diverse learner needs.

Additionally, the principal and the school counselor work closely together to focus on student achievement; to discuss strategies through the Child Study Committee process to target specific remediation strategies; to foster emotional and social development; to ensure all policies of the Code of Conduct are consistently upheld; as well as, to continually monitor the pulse of the student body, families, and staff. Communication is vital in ensuring continued success. The principal utilizes a weekly bulletin sent electronically to keep all stakeholders informed; monthly staff meetings are held where professional development is the responsibility of each grade level; staff time is honored and protected by sharing organizational information and policies on the Google Drive; the school's master calendar is also maintained using Google Calendar.

Lastly, teachers and staff are valued and recognized at least monthly by displays of appreciation from administration. Monthly drawings are held to reward teachers for their hard work, commitment, and dedication. A teacher is selected monthly by a peer and recognized for how he/she does "great things differently (based on the book written by Todd Whitaker)."

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Midway Elementary School has experienced continued success in maintaining its quest for academic excellence. Students continue to exceed federal and state benchmarks in both English: Reading and Mathematics despite the increase in population and in the subgroups of economically disadvantaged and students with disabilities. Failure is not an option, and the mission of Midway drives the commitment of all stakeholders—students will be provided the opportunity for the most individualized education possible.

Collaboration, data driven decisions, and differentiation create the framework for teachers to utilize highly effective teaching strategies incorporating shared resources across the curriculum. The School Leadership team, classroom teachers, special education teachers, resource teachers, paraprofessionals, the gifted resource teacher and specialists (speech-language pathologist and occupational therapist) collaborate constantly to collect, review, and analyze data in order to create differentiated lessons and assessments to reach the needs of each learner. A typical snapshot of a reading lesson often includes the following: a small group of students working with the general education teacher; a small group of students receiving remediation from the reading interventionist; a small group of students working cooperatively to complete a project/assignment; a few students working on an extension exercise involving technology; and, a few students working independently with word sorts or fluency activities. This same classroom may look entirely different when it comes to a math lesson—a small group receiving re-teaching on a math concept based on the daily warm up; students working in pairs using task cards and iPads with QR codes to monitor accuracy; a small group working on higher level math problems requiring advanced critical thinking skills—participating in “math talks”—discussing multiple ways to reach the same solution; and, a student working one-on-one with a volunteer to practice math facts. The bottom line is: Teachers at Midway do whatever it takes to ensure the success of all students.

One practice that contributes to the continued success of Midway does not exist; we believe it is the combination of a committed community and tightly aligned systems that assists in consistently high academic achievement for all students.