

**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 Ms. Lori Staton Teague

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

Official School Name Mountain View Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 20 Burger Circle

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

City Buena Vista                      State VA                      Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 24416-4620

County Rockbridge County

Telephone (540) 261-2418

Fax (540) 261-8082

Web site/URL

<http://mves.rockbridge.k12.va.us/default.html>

E-mail lori\_teague@rockbridge.k12.va.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\*Dr. Phillip Thompson

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

E-mail  
phillip\_thompson@rockbridge.k12.va.us

District Name Rockbridge County Public Schools                      Tel. (540) 463-7386

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. David McDaniel

(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):
- 4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 6 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
<b>PreK</b>	0	0	0
<b>K</b>	8	11	19
<b>1</b>	12	7	19
<b>2</b>	12	14	26
<b>3</b>	12	9	21
<b>4</b>	14	12	26
<b>5</b>	9	10	19
<b>6</b>	0	0	0
<b>7</b>	0	0	0
<b>8</b>	0	0	0
<b>9</b>	0	0	0
<b>10</b>	0	0	0
<b>11</b>	0	0	0
<b>12 or higher</b>	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	67	63	130

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 1 % Asian
  - 2 % Black or African American
  - 0 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 95 % White
  - 2 % 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.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	4
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	18
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	22
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	136
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.162
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	16

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 53 %  
Total number students who qualify: 68

8. Students receiving special education services: 19 %  
24 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.

- 6 Autism
- 0 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 0 Emotional Disturbance
- 0 Hearing Impairment
- 2 Mental Retardation
- 0 Multiple Disabilities
- 0 Orthopedic Impairment
- 4 Other Health Impaired
- 5 Specific Learning Disability
- 6 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: 8
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	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	9
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	6
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	5
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 14:1
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	95%	96%	95%	96%	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.

<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.

Mountain View Elementary School is a community of students, parents, and staff that is dedicated to the development of every individual's desire to learn and achieve. Together we provide a safe, loving, and

supportive environment that fosters curiosity, builds confidence and a lifelong passion for learning. Mountain View's mission is to have each student not only achieve his or her greatest academic potential but also exhibit personal integrity beyond their time here at Mountain View.

**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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Nestled at the base of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Mountain View Elementary School (MVE) has been the focal point of the South River community for nearly 100 years. Opening in 1917, it was initially a consolidated school for grades 1 – 12 and was the very first school in Virginia to offer classes in woodworking, home economics and industrial arts. Though many things have changed in the years since we began, one thing has not – the collective focus on the accomplishment of individual students and maintaining our tight-knit community.

time at MVE. Staff members not only expect this but model this for our students. We treat each other like family, celebrating and suffering with each other. Our students and their families are also this atmosphere where everyone matters and is the biggest contributor to our students' academic success.

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

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

The Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) establish the core content instruction at Mountain View Elementary (MVE). All elementary schools within the Rockbridge County Public School (RCPS) division use curriculum guides aligned with state standards that provide consistency throughout the division. These guides provide pacing of core content courses and specify common assessments in reading and math in grades 2-5.

**Language:** A 120-minute block is devoted to language arts instruction daily. Teachers access a variety of resources that support the K-5 curriculum. The Journeys reading series (Houghton-Mifflin Harcourt) is the core reading program adopted by RCPS and represents one resource used by MVE teachers. Instruction reflects a balanced literacy diet addressing fluency, word study, comprehension, vocabulary, and writing. Teachers incorporate instructional approaches that include leveled reading materials, developmental word study, repeated readings of familiar texts and reader's theater to develop oral reading fluency. Graphic organizers support the acquisition of comprehension and writing skills. Teachers tend not to rely on a specific program for all instruction, but instead identify student needs and select appropriate materials. Teachers often select trade books that allow for cross-curricular connections.

Assessment data drives our instruction. K-2 teachers use data from the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) to plan instruction and intervention. PALS Quick Checks provide a snapshot of student growth in all areas of literacy. 3-5 teachers rely on common assessment and benchmark performance data.

Assessment results drive the direct interventions provided by teachers. Cat Academy is a dedicated thirty minutes of intervention and enrichment time for all students. While specialists often pull students during this time, classroom teachers also deliver direct interventions for students. Additional support personnel assist during Cat Academy time in K-5. During the 2015-2016 school year, 95% of our kindergarten and second grade students met or exceeded the spring PALS benchmark while 100% of our first graders met or exceeded the PALS spring benchmark! Our average spring PALS scores exceed the benchmarks in K-2.

**Math:** MVE students have a 90 minute block of Math instruction daily in grades K-5. Furthermore, students have an additional 30 minutes of intervention/ enrichment daily. The RCPS Curriculum/Pacing Guides direct math instruction. K-2 teachers use the "Math Connects" series (Macmillian McGraw-Hill). 3-5 teachers use the enVision Math series (Scott Foresman).

For grades 2-5, the RCPS Math Curriculum/ Pacing guides include common assessments. Teachers use manipulatives, Smartboard activities, and online games. K-5 teachers use IXL Math online for whole group and individual practice and review. IXL is also used for formative assessments. One unique feature of math instruction at MVE is that our 3-5 math teacher delivers instruction for three consecutive years, which fosters an understanding of each student as they develop skills during this period.

**Science:** Students have 30 minutes of science instruction daily and teachers use district pacing guides based on the Virginia SOLs. Teachers take advantage of our rural location and proximity to the South River as students monitor water quality throughout the year. A greenhouse and an outdoor learning area with a pond and raised flower beds are on site. Our whole school participates in the Trout in the Classroom project sponsored by Trout Unlimited. For eight years, MVE raised baby trout from eggs to fingerlings with an annual Fish Day celebration to release the babies into the river. MVE partners with Boxerwood Nature Center and Woodland Garden to provide education programs and field trips for students. Boxerwood staff delivers instruction in watershed pollution, water monitoring, food chains, food webs and other conservation and stewardship topics.

**Social Studies:** MVE students enjoy 30 minutes of social studies instruction daily in grades K-5 using RCPS pacing guides based on the VA SOLs. MVE is located in a historic part of Virginia so teachers bring history to life through a variety of field trips in addition to classroom instruction. K-2 students enjoy field trips to the Frontier Culture Museum in Staunton, Virginia where they discover how early communities

dressed, ate, worked and played. Students travel to Woodrow Wilson's birthplace and visit an authentic Monacan Indian village in our new Natural Bridge State Park. 3-5 students visit Monticello, Jamestown, Williamsburg, Washington D.C., and our own historic town of Lexington, Virginia.

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

In addition to core classes, MVE students are exposed to a variety of other classes during the school day. Students enjoy art, music, physical education, library, Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM), foreign language, guidance and other enrichment opportunities, including after school Cat Clubs.

All K-5 students have three 30 minute sessions of music instruction weekly instruction includes curriculum that incorporates children's literature and music. MVE has two extremely popular musical performances each year. MVE staff participate in these productions, building set pieces, play writing and delivering speaking parts. Students perform for parents and friends with a special day time performance including local nursing home residents.

Our part time guidance counselor provides a bi-weekly 30-minute session for all K-5 students. Lessons focus on healthy choices, family life curriculum, digital citizenship and character education. Our librarian schedules two 30 minute visits per week with all students. One session dedicated to skills and the other for checking out books.

K-5 students have 30 minutes of PE daily. K-2 receive an additional 15 minutes of recess each day. Students in grade 3-5 enjoy an archery unit funded by a grant from the National Wild Turkey Federation and fishing instruction through a donation of fishing poles by Trout Unlimited. PE instruction focuses on being active, good nutrition and health. Our local YMCA does a series of lessons during PE called Healthy Hearts, promoting healthy snack choices and staying active.

STEM class is a new addition to MVE. Each Friday students in grades 3-5 enjoy a 30-minute block of STEM activities emphasizing higher level thinking and creative problem solving. Students are introduced to cutting edge technology including a 3D printer. Students identified in grades 4 and 5 for enrichment, receive an additional 30 minutes of STEM instruction.

Through a partnership with Washington and Lee University, we offer a number of foreign languages. Students at each grade level have been introduced to Japanese, Chinese, German, French and Spanish. Students not only learn the language but explore cultures and traditions associated with each language.

Struggling students in grades 2-5 are invited to participate in our after school Wildcats program two days each week, receiving assistance with homework and individual skills assistance in reading and math. Teachers instruct groups of 10 or fewer for Wildcats. Bus transportation is provided for our Wildcats.

MVE students can join after school clubs each semester. Over 93% of our students participated in at least one club this year. With our Paw Parents financial support, we offer a diverse selection of activities. Students traveled to a local farm to learn animal care, met a children's author and visited a local newspaper. They took guitar lessons, sewing and cooking lessons and crafts. Zumba, line dancing, softball, reader's theater, detective club, game strategy and tea parties were other options. 4th and 5th grade girls could join Women In Technology and Science (WITS), promoting female science and math interests. Girls travel once a week to the W&L University campus and participate in lab activities designed by university students. Students can also run for SCA office in grades 3-5. There are campaign speeches and posters displayed. 73% of students in grades 3-5 ran for an SCA office in 2016.

Each classroom at MVE has a Smartboard, document camera and at least two student computers. MVE has a dedicated computer lab, as well as a mobile lab that can be used in all classrooms. We are a wireless facility. Students, even in first grade, use computers for research and writing. As part of our STEM class, students also have access to a 3D printer. Two separate grants funded iPad mobile labs in our Title I and guidance classrooms. The iPads have a variety of apps that are used frequently during instructional time. Title I maintains a Facebook page as well as a webpage that informs parents about upcoming conferences and tools

on how to help their children with reading. Our parents have online access to teacher grade books through a parent portal with our student information system, Tyler Sys. MVE also has a school-wide Facebook page and a web page where parents, community members and students can access announcements, homework assignments and enjoy photos.

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

Mountain View Elementary School is a Title I school. For the last 8 years MVE has included a dedicated intervention and enrichment time built in to each school day. K-5 students have 60 minutes dedicated to reading and math intervention or enrichment. We call this time Cat Academy.

Special services for students with IEPs, including speech language therapy or occupational therapy, may also occur during Cat Academy. Since these services often take students out of the regular classroom, students miss valuable instructional time. However, by separating these related services from core class time, students do not miss out classroom instruction.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

For students and teachers alike, MVE is synonymous with “family”. At MVE, we have high expectations, but we also love and support each other. While we are accountable for our choices, we also recognize that “tomorrow is a new day.”

Like a family, we celebrate our members. At MVE, we believe that every student deserves time in the spotlight. Each morning a student reads the announcements, leads the Pledge of Allegiance, and shares student and staff birthdays over the intercom. In addition to lunch menus and reminders, student and staff accomplishments are recognized at this time. After each grading period, students who attend school regularly, complete their work and display positive citizenship are recognized during the Top Cats school-wide celebration. Students play games, win prizes and enjoy snacks. Special guests including Spiderman, Mrs. Incredible and our own Super Wildcat participate in these celebrations.

Students often invite friends for special lunch dates with our guidance counselor in her office. Our principal routinely joins students for lunch in the cafeteria or treats smaller groups to lunch in the “fancy” conference room. Students are also quick to invite her to join them and ask daily to have lunch with her. Taking time to get to know each student and showing them that they matter is important to every adult at MVE.

Parents are important members of the MVE family. Establishing positive relationships and communicating with parents contributes to our success. Teachers develop relationships through daily communication and respond quickly to emails and texts from parents. Teachers not only seek advice and support with struggling students, but they also regularly share success stories with families. As a result, many relationships last long after students leave MVE. It’s not unusual to receive phone calls from former parents needing advice about their high school students!

Every staff member at MVE strives to ensure student success. Teachers routinely use planning periods to work with struggling students and provide assistance in other classrooms. It’s not unusual to see a fourth grade teacher helping with reading in 2nd grade, a 1st grade teacher reviewing math concepts with 3rd graders, or the 5th grade teacher working with 1st grade writers. This assistance is not dictated by a schedule but represents the culture at MVE. Each member of the MVE family unselfishly shares their time and knowledge. Everyone working together creates success for our students.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

MVE’s success is the result of a whole community of people who support our school. Partnerships with Washington and Lee University, Virginia Military Institute and Southern Virginia University give students opportunities for foreign language enrichment, classroom volunteers and gifted education partners. WLU’s Campus Kitchen provides 46 students with backpacks of food for their weekend. Our local Lion’s Club screens students for eye issues free of charge and helps provide glasses. Twenty students participated in a free dental clinic sponsored by Rockbridge Smiles. All dental services are provided here at MVE. Literacy volunteers from our local library and retired MVE teachers help in our classrooms.

Our parent organization (Paw Parents) sponsors a Fall Festival for families. There are game stations with prizes, family pumpkin decorating contests and costume competitions. Baked goods, snacks, hot dogs and barbecue, as well as donated craft items are for sale. This supports field trips to Jamestown, Williamsburg and Washington D.C., giving students opportunities to travel outside of Rockbridge County. Paw Parents also sponsor a cakewalk. This is a favorite for many members of our community. Cakes are donated, as are door prizes and raffle items to make this event a successful. This is a time for generations of families to come together, listen to some live bluegrass music and talk with their neighbors.

MVE enjoys giving back to our community. This is never more evident than on Veterans’ Day. Students

invite those who have served our country to be honored at a school-wide celebration. Parents, grandparents, uncles, brothers, cousins and neighbors are celebrated. Veteran guests are recognized during an assembly and given Mountain View medals, gift bags of t- shirts, hats and special art projects. Each veteran visits a classroom where they tell stories, answer questions and get to know the students. These veterans quickly become a part of our school family.

Our music programs are not just students singing a couple of songs, they are full-blown productions that involve everyone. From the custodians who make a stage full of props, the secretary waltzing with a teaching assistant as Santa and Mrs. Claus, teachers taking ‘elfie selfies’ in costume and our principal in a jack-in-the-box, it is truly a whole-school production. During the holiday season, Mountain View teachers, along with members of our community deliver food baskets and toys to families. This day of community service sets the tone for our own holiday celebrations.

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

The RCPS system provides district-wide programs of professional development that include evening sessions three times per year. While these sessions are often grade level or content-specific, opportunities also include vertical team meetings. Sessions have addressed K-5 writing instruction and strategies, response to intervention, the co-teaching model, and technology integration. District-level assessments are also constructed during these meetings. While Central Office staff members typically deliver this professional development, teachers from throughout the division have also provided training. MVE’s reading specialist provided a session on writing.

The MVE faculty also participated in school-wide book studies. All staff members read and discussed the book *Misunderstood Minds*. Resources from the related PBS website were accessed by faculty members during a teacher workday. The staff also read the book *Teach Like Your Hair’s on Fire*. Discussions of this text occurred during faculty meetings and were facilitated by the principal. Teachers identified personal and classroom connections and on-going conversations enhanced school-wide instructional practices.

Professional development at the building level is usually teacher-specific, reflecting individual needs. Teachers are encouraged to identify areas in which they need professional development and select methods that address those needs. The principal recognizes that a “one size fits all” approach to professional development is not advantageous and works to guarantee that professional development is always practical. She also encourages and facilitates conference and workshop attendance by providing professional leave during the school day. However, many teachers also participate in professional development after school, on weekends, and during the summer. These activities represent a variety of options that target their specific areas of instruction. Teachers enroll in university-based courses and participate in conferences sponsored by professional organizations. For example, the reading specialist attends and regularly presents at the Virginia State Reading Association conference and the speech-language pathologist attends the annual Speech-Language-Hearing Association of Virginia conference. The 3-5 Science teacher participated in the VISTA program at Virginia Tech, which provided strategies that enhanced her STEM instruction. The music teacher participates in the Silver Burdett Music Institute at Appalachian State University. One of the special education teachers works with a VCU-ACE group that provides strategies for working with students with Autism, new methods of instruction, and current best practices.

The collaborative environment at MVE ensures that teachers share their learning with each other. Teachers discuss their professional development experiences and provide colleagues with materials. This informal professional development enables everyone to benefit from these opportunities.

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

“Attitude Reflects Leadership.” Though it is a line from the movie “Remember the Titans”, it is also the driving ideology of our building under our current principal. Her leadership style is one of the reasons our school is extraordinary. Not only is she able to read people and situations well, she is also very hands-on. She stands in the center hallway each morning and greets every student entering the school. Rarely will

you catch her in her office. She is much more likely to be in classrooms, talking with students in the hallway or even serving lunch in the cafeteria. When she is in her office, there is often a student reading a story to her or sharing a story of academic success or extraordinary kindness that results in a prize from her massive treasure trunk. A formerly non-verbal student now makes special trips to her office in order to tell her something! While she is a very approachable principal, she is also firm when necessary.

She is the overall leader of our school, but doesn't attempt to micromanage teachers in their classrooms. She trusts her staff and their abilities, soliciting their opinions before making final decisions. Teachers are treated as professionals and leaders, trusted to construct lesson plans targeting required skills. She prefers to observe lessons and join in classroom activities rather than assigning and critiquing paperwork. When difficult circumstances arise, she trusts teachers' ability to handle most situations. She is quick to offer both support and discipline as students require it, working well with parents even when situations are difficult. Her expectations are consistent and fair for all staff and students at MVE.

Scheduling is one of her many gifts. The school schedule provides optimal instructional time with all necessary supports included. Her creative scheduling has upper grade teachers providing enrichment to lower grades students or working one-on-one with those who struggle. Academic time is fiercely protected, especially prior to SOL testing and the whole building, K-5, is focused on our school's success.

Our principal advocates for the students and faculty in every situation. When working with our Parent – Teacher organization, she spearheads projects that are the most beneficial for students. During leadership meetings at the local level, she articulates how county-wide changes affect our particular student population. When dealing with parents, social service organizations and even volunteers, she weighs the academic and social benefits for all situations.

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

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The implementation of Cat Academy, MVE’s intervention and enrichment program, represents the single most important practice contributing to student success. A dedicated 60 minutes of math and reading enrichment/intervention for all students every day, Cat Academy does not compete with regular classroom instruction time since students no longer have to be removed from classroom instruction for remediation.

Reviewing student performance data is a significant part of Cat Academy. After each grading period, a Response to Intervention (RtI) team that includes the classroom teacher, special education teacher, Title 1 reading specialist and the principal reviews student data, which includes individual students’ classroom performance, PALS/ QRI results, common assessment and nine-week benchmark results, SOL scores and teacher recommendations. The team determines, based on a set of indicators, if each student is in Tier 1, 2 or 3. Tier 1 students participate in foreign language enrichment, drama, critical thinking and problem solving, or STEM activities during Cat Academy. Tier 2 groups, which work on the acquisition of grade-level skills, are small, with a maximum of 5-6 students. Tier 3 students require more intensive interventions and students typically lack the basic skills needed to perform on grade level. Tier 3 instruction is only provided by a specialist or the regular classroom teacher and groups usually include no more than 2 students with 1 instructor. Throughout the nine weeks, informal data reviews also identify students requiring skill-specific interventions based upon classroom assessment performance. As a result, some students may temporarily join a Tier 2 or Tier 3 group until data indicates the mastery of certain skills.

Plans targeting each student’s specific needs are developed for all Tier 2 and Tier 3 students. During Cat Academy, classroom teachers have at least 3 additional instructors working with small groups, which allows the classroom teacher to focus on the neediest students. Teaching assistants, Title 1 reading specialist, the librarian, the music teacher, the PE teacher, and grade level teachers all participate in Cat Academy. A school-wide planning tool coordinates all skills and strategies addressed in Cat Academy, providing open communication between instructors.

Cat Academy exemplifies the MVE culture where everyone works together and demonstrates how the “whole village” helps our students achieve success. The fundamental belief that every student can be successful drives our teachers to give 100% every day and is the key to MVE’s success. There are “no excuses” for MVE students or teachers.