

U.S. Department of Education
2018 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 Dr. William Lee Hill

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

Official School Name Alconbury Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address Unit 5609

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

RAF Alconbury, Huntingdon, United

Kingdom

City

DD

State

09470-5609

Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County USA

Telephone (011) 441-4808

Fax

Web site/URL <https://www.dodea.edu/alconburyes/>

E-mail William.Hill@eu.dodea.edu

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Mr. Kent Worford

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

E-mail Kent.Worford@eu.dodea.edu

District Name Europe West Tel. (314) 268-4360

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. Frank Roehl

(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 2018 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 2012 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: 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, or 2017.
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 (2017-2018) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 10 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 5 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 5 High schools
 - 1 K-12 schools
- 21 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
 - Rural or small city/town
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2017 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	14	7	21
K	20	9	29
1	14	12	26
2	14	7	21
3	20	9	29
4	20	16	36
5	14	18	32
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	116	78	194

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 3 % Asian
 - 5 % Black or African American
 - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 69 % White
 - 17 % 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 2016 – 2017 school year: 34%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain.

Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2016 – 2017 school year: 33.8%

Alconbury Elementary School is located on RAF Alconbury, United Kingdom. We serve the dependents of U.S. military, U.S. government civilians and contractors who are regularly relocated every 2-4 years.

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, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	32
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	39
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	71
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	210
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.34
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	34

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 5%
10 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
2 Japanese, 5 Spanish, 1 Bosnian, 2 Tagalog

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 21%
Total number students who qualify: 40

8. Students receiving special education services: 13 %
25 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>0</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>1</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>2</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>3</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>11</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>1</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 4
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, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	11
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	9
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a 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.	4

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 18:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	95%	97%	95%
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 2017.

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.

We provide opportunities for students to excel academically and develop characteristics which lead to responsible citizenship in a safe learning environment.

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

Opening in 1955, Alconbury Elementary School (AES) has a proud history of drawing upon its unique community, diversity and talented staff to build a community of learners. We are located on Alconbury Royal Air Force Base, in Cambridgeshire, United Kingdom. Our professional learning community includes 24 teachers, and 5 support personnel. Nearly two hundred students are currently enrolled in AES, ranging from preschool through fifth grade. Our stakeholders consist of military and civilian families that work at Royal Air Force Bases Alconbury and Molesworth. They provide combat and operational support to mission partners and tenant units including, the Joint Analysis Center, the NATO Intelligence Fusion Center, AFRICOM J2-M, as well as various shops from 423rd Air Base Group squadrons, to include the 501st's only Combat Arms Training Facility.

Our learning environment provides differentiated instruction to meet the academic, personal and social needs of our student population. There are several key strategies that we use to encourage and challenge all students to develop their full potential. The DoDEA curriculum challenges students to become prepared for college and careers in the 21st century. Teachers collaborate to understand vertical alignment of standards and plan with intentionality using the College and Career Readiness standards. The standards promote student-centered and project-based learning. Within classrooms students are active problem-solvers, collaborate with each other, and are learning to critique their own reasoning as well as that of others. Data drives instruction so that students receive carefully aligned instruction for their needs. AES classrooms are active and full of student participation and collaboration, fostering self-motivation and social interaction. Diagnostic teaching is conducted using students' individual performance results to adjust and direct instruction. Our strengths in implementing best teaching practices, validating student personal contributions, interpreting assessment data, and peer collaboration in the classroom result in high standardized test scores.

Every student at AES knows and understands our kid-friendly motto of Be Smart! Be Kind! and Be Safe!. A culture of high expectations is integrated into our classrooms experiences across the curriculum and is evident in our Vision Statement: “To be among the world’s leaders in education, enriching the lives of military-connected students and the communities in which they live.” It is also exemplified in our thematic “Go Green Team” approach towards Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM) initiatives, which include the Cambridge environmental services, PTA, and base engineers. We provide our students with hands-on building experiences with recycled materials, Read Across America activities, Battle of the Books competitions, Science Fairs, Digital Robotics Competitions, and a mentor program which involves military parents and volunteers; classrooms use guest speakers and volunteers within our community to provide an enriching and motivating educational experience for our students.

Curriculum resources are selected to address individual learning styles and needs. This is exemplified by our school's use of College and Career Ready (CCR) Math and Science, Guided Reading, and inquiry-based instruction. School Support Specialists focus on providing more intensive leveled interventions in a smaller setting. Identified students participate in Gifted Education as well as Special Education Services. Specialists and classroom teachers co-teach and co-plan to meet the learning needs of students with different abilities in the most appropriate, least restrictive environment. Collaboration between specialists and classroom teachers result in a multi-faceted, differentiated curriculum. Test scores show current teaching practices are very successful. We have a very robust Continuous School Improvement (CSI) plan and to prepare students to function as responsible citizens in our global society.

Our highly motivated learning community and cultural opportunities combine to create and extend the traditional classroom experience in powerful ways. Students are provided rich educational experiences to prepare them to be leaders and citizens in a global community at the earliest age. Shared leadership and decision making by all stakeholders create high expectations for everyone involved in the school community.

In addition to the CCR curriculum elements, students at AES study British culture, Spanish language and science, technology, engineering, art and math opportunities through a variety of partnerships with the

Cambridgeshire community. A typical elementary host nation lesson on communities and government will not only describe the American president and congressmen but also include the king or queen, and the customs and practices of the British culture. Our vision statement integrates research-based teaching practices, built upon the bedrock of our community, have resulted in high academic performance, worthy of consideration for a National Blue Ribbon school.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Reading/ELA

Our teaching staff ensures every student meets or exceeds DoDEA literacy expectations for reading, writing, listening and speaking by engaging students in differentiated/flexible groups, using technology supported instructional practices and providing targeted support. All students at AES have a standards-based, challenging learning experience that focuses on the College and Career Ready Standards. We provide many opportunities for productive struggle and reasoning with research and writing journals. This year we are finalizing our Reading Streets program in preparation for new College and Career Reading Standards for Literacy (CCRSL) that will have a stronger focus on non-fiction pieces and greater emphasis on text features. Our language program provides opportunities to integrate other subject areas to include science, math, social studies, history, and civic learning. All 3-5 grade-level classroom teachers are trained in the use of the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System (BAS) and are able to pinpoint literacy levels with every student in their classroom. Classroom teachers 3-5 use the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI), an online reading assessment, to evaluate their students. AES supplements our literacy curriculum with programs that support learners of all abilities and skills. We have a very effective reading support services through the Read 180 program (3-5) and through the Leveled Literacy Intervention System (LLI) designed to support struggling readers in grades K-3. Our school-wide initiative for school improvement utilized the 6 +1 Trait Model for teaching, assessing, and evaluating students' writing. We incorporate writer's workshop, peer editing, writing conferences, and Daily Oral Language activities into our literacy program.

Mathematics

We initiated a three-year College and Career Ready Standards for Mathematics (CCRSM) professional development plan in school year 2015-2016 to increase student achievement in math. In addition, we implemented the Go Math curriculum in school year 2016-2017. This three-year extensive professional development focused on teaching new strategies, building expertise in curricular content and consistently collaborating with colleagues and resulted in a very successful execution across all grade levels. We regularly collaborate in vertically aligned work-groups so teachers stay informed of other grade-level expectations. We integrated the Standards for Mathematical Practice (SMPs) in our lesson planning and teaching to ensure our students understand the concepts of math, develop reasoning/problem solving and mathematical communication skills. We are seeing daily success as we infuse a balanced curriculum with hands-on learning, problem solving, mathematical discourse, conceptual development, and procedural skills practice into math instruction. We provide our students with an instructional sequence that is focused on their ability to reason and think mathematically. For struggling students, we have found that using small, guided math groups spur growth and understanding of the essential elements needed to progress to the next level. In our school-wide initiatives, we use graphic organizers, word walls for math vocabulary, models and manipulative, and we have incorporated ongoing quarterly assessing of students using curriculum embedded performance assessments (CEPA) to monitor progress and evaluate mastery.

Science

We implemented the FOSS Science programs alongside the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and the DoDEA College and Career Ready Standards for Science (CCRSS). Our school is leading the way with implementation and teachers are excited about the professional development and the positive engagement of our students in the hand-on activities. Our goals are to assist students in becoming critical consumers of scientific information related to their everyday lives and to prepare students with interests in science careers to pursue knowledge in the fields of science, engineering, technology and mathematics (STEM). We make every effort to actively engage students in scientific and engineering practices and facilitating lessons geared towards investigating phenomena and solving real world problems. Learning experiences are designed to engage students using the engineering design process. We provide opportunities to apply crosscutting concepts to deepen their understanding of core ideas and to advance their understanding of the world. We host an annual science fair for students who conduct their own research, work cooperatively with peers and family members to showcase what they have learned. This year, our Education Technologist (ET) and Gifted Education (GE) teachers are collaborating on a robotics team in which students are designing,

building, and programing their own robot.

Social Studies

Our approach to social studies is an integrated part of our literacy curriculum. We teach social responsibility, history, and civic engagement integrating lessons to incorporate reading, writing, listening and speaking. Teachers use research based strategies such as cooperative learning, project based, jigsaw exercises to provide a hands on approach to their learning of social studies. Students take responsibility for their learning which is reflected in high achievement on standardized tests. In addition, we ensure our students have 21st century citizenship skills as reflected in our student-friendly school motto at AES is “Be Smart, Be Kind, Be Safe”. Classroom and school rules all flow from this axiom. We encourage all students to cultivate and nurture their own personal growth, social relationships, as well as civic responsibilities. Our regular study of holidays and special commemorative days compliments and adds interest to our literacy practices and outcomes.

Preschool: Sure Start is an early intervention program for families with 4 year old children, having limited early childhood educational opportunities. The program is based on the stateside Head Start program for children needing more time and attention to ensure school readiness. The curriculum uses the Creative Curriculum© program and supports the social-emotional, language, physical, cognitive, literacy, math, social studies, science, art, music, and technology opportunities for students. The curriculum is organized to support student investigations, fine and gross motor skills, simple to more complex tasks, and concrete to abstract concepts. Parents volunteer regularly and receive parent education. The Sure Start teacher collaborates with the kindergarten teachers, 1st grade teachers, and other personnel who may offer strategies and interventions to assist these at-risk students.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

At Alconbury Elementary School, we teach the whole student. The entire curriculum represents a cognizant and methodical selection of knowledge, skills and values: a selection that shapes the way teaching, learning and assessment processes are organized by addressing questions such as what, why, when and how students learn. We offer a wide variety of programs that enhance our student’s strengths and abilities meeting the needs of the complete child. Each student in grades kindergarten through fifth grade receives fifty-five minutes of art, music, physical education (PE), and cultural studies, also known as host nation. Our visual arts department is one area in which many of our students excel. There is extensive exposure to many forms of art and art media. Drawing lessons emphasize right brain activities. Drawing with children promotes the study and application of the elements of art activities based on “seeing like an artist.” Use of different types of art media include, but are not limited to, graphite, oil pastel, tempera paint, watercolor, acrylic, pastels, tissue paper, paper, clay, and crafts. We study famous art and artists and include seeing elements of art within an art piece. Craft units include weaving, plaster, pipe cleaners, sequins, and more, while units on clay and pottery with a student designed piece are also incorporated. Color wheel activities that include the science and design of color and its properties are addressed too. Art vocabulary is blended within the use of math, reading, and science into the art program. Finally, the base and school offer art exhibitions to showcase the talent of our students.

Our students display their talents through visual arts and music. Musical expression experiences include singing, instrumental playing, musical listening, and dancing. Students study and perform with musical instruments as they listen to great musical masterpieces. Students learn to listen, analyze, and describe different genres of music. Music class also emphasizes the understanding of how composition relates to other disciplines such as math, reading, and science. Students have the opportunity to participate and perform in a choir show. Students develop their talents through music and art, and physically too. Our school uses the program called SPARK. SPARK is dedicated to creating, implementing, and evaluating research based programs that promote lifelong wellness. SPARK strives to improve the health of children by disseminating evidence-based physical education. Fitness assessments are given twice yearly. Students learn the importance of staying physically and mentally healthy. Students learn to analyze and synthesize their fitness gram by looking at their graphs and understanding what the numbers represent. We bring math in emphasizing our cross-curriculum program. These graphs show what areas of fitness each individual student needs to improve. Students are expected to use terms such intersection, time, and distance to

evaluate themselves and improve their fitness. Students are taught the importance of knowing their heart rate, being flexible, the components of being fit, and dynamic and static stretching.

We believe that planned breaks and physical activity enhances our students' success in the classroom. We strive for our students to be physically and mentally healthy by providing them structured physical activities to build both team and individual competencies. Our students participate in Red Ribbon Week, Dental Health Month, vision and hearing screening, internet safety, drug awareness, and fire safety. In working with different agencies on base, we are able to provide our students a well-rounded nutritional and healthy way of life. We provide our students with British and Spanish cultural activities to build their world citizen awareness. Our host nation program provides students with a cross-cultural and language acquisition focus to develop an appreciation and understanding of the culture and language of the United Kingdom. The Host nation teacher plans and facilitates student participation in activities which build appreciation and understanding of the culture of the country in which they are located.

Our world language and Spanish cultural program prepare our students to meet the 21st century challenges of being citizens in a global community. The program emphasizes language acquisition in three modes of communication, interpersonal, interpretive and presentational from kindergarten through third grade, for ninety minutes a week. Each grade performs at the end of the year with a play, completely in Spanish, in which parents are invited to see their children. For the fourth and fifth graders, Spanish club is offered as an after school activity. Students research a Spanish speaking country and learn about their culture. At the end of the year, each student will present their projects to the school and the community along with a taste of the food from their country. These presentations are very successful and our school community celebrates them with us.

Technology is used as a cross curricular tool to enhance our curriculum. We use digital resources in a variety of ways to support teaching and learning, for example: electronic grade books, learning games, and real time feedback on teacher and students performance. Our media center/library enhances our students' ability to use technology with the use of databases and books for research. Our media specialist sees and understands what the classroom teachers are doing and provides guidance to extend/enrich the learning of the classroom. Collaboration with other educators and gathering accurate and current information for given curriculum needs supports all colleagues. Our information center promotes reading and the enjoyment of literature. Students are taught how books are organized and how to use the Dewey decimal system in hopes that all students will be comfortable going into any library. We explore all genres encouraging the love of reading accepting background experiences and cultural diversities; we believe reading is a family activity and support the community through parent reading nights, research evenings with Boy Scouts, and share resources with the homeschool community, assists students and faculty in the use of search strategies to access a variety of information.

We enrich our curriculum and take advantage of England's many cultural opportunities by giving our student's unique opportunities to explore British culture and histories. Excursions include Sacrewell Farm (using nature to study the environment), Think Tank (promoting hands on science to learn about the world), and Raptor Foundation (compare and contrast adaptations displayed by animals that enable them to survive in different environments, life cycle variations, animals behaviors, and physical characteristics). Tesco (British Grocery Store) helps students learn about healthy eating and how it affects the body. Cambridge Museums broaden our students' literacy of facts and concepts to real world learning. We believe cross-curricular teaching increases students' motivation for learning and their level of engagement. In contrast to learning skills in seclusion, when students participate in interdisciplinary skills they see the value of what they are learning and become more actively engaged.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

No student is left behind at AES. Our school culture of high expectations for every child revolves around an ongoing process of needs assessment using formative and summative assessments. We consistently collect, analyze and collaborate on assessment data to drive our instruction throughout the year. All students are assessed within the first four weeks of the school year to determine a baseline for reading, writing and mathematics, and develop needs based plans for each student. Based on the data, teachers determine the

needs, develop differentiated/flexible grouping for instruction and work with specialist to determine if students need additional support. Students that are performing below expectations on the assessments are given extra instruction to ensure their success. For students in grades K-3 our school offers Leveled Literacy Instruction (LLI) for those needing extra assistance in reading and in grades 4-5 we offer READ 180. LLI instruction is an intense reading comprehension, fluency and writing program to build necessary reading skills as quickly as possible. READ 180 provides an integrated reading intervention program through whole group, small group and a computerized program support to raise reading skills. We also have a math coach to provide assistance in the classroom or when needed, through pull out services.

Reading assessments include BAS (Benchmark Assessment System), SRI (Student Reading Inventory) and fluency passages with the classroom teachers. The students are in flexible groups in their classroom based on their reading ability. Students are assessed frequently to determine how quickly they can move to higher reading levels. Based on this close monitoring of reading, our school is on track to have 100% of the students on or above grade level expectations by the end of third grade. At the end of SY 16-17 only one student out of 30 was reading below expectations. Teachers use the Fountas Pinnell leveling system, an SRI score, as well as listening to students in small group instruction to determine a student's reading ability. Reading instruction is also integrated into the content areas of science and social studies.

All students are given a math assessment at the beginning of the year. All new students are also assessed when they arrive during the year. An item analysis is done with these assessments to determine the learning needs for the students. Teachers are implementing guided math groups to address the needs of students based on the information gathered from the assessments. Assessments are used at the end of each unit of study to determine whether any re-teaching needs to be done for students. Re-teaching and reinforcement is done through direct instruction, center activities and/or group teaching.

When students are in need of more intensive intervention their case is taken to the Case Study Committee (CSC) for further evaluation. Once their case has been presented a decision is made on whether to present a further assessment plan to the parents for consideration. If a student qualifies for more intensive help an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) can be written to help the student achieve. The general and special education teachers work together to create a plan for the student to operate and learn in the least restrictive environment. The core subjects of reading, writing and mathematics are addressed through these plans.

Students that speak a language other than English or live in a household that speaks a language other than English have the opportunity to receive additional support in all core subjects. Our school has a half time position for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teacher that works in the classroom dealing with the individual needs of these students.

The school has a full time gifted resource teacher to address the needs of students that function above expected grade level. The gifted resource teacher does additional testing with students and presents the testing, along with observations and interview information, to a committee for consideration. The student's needs are addressed within the classroom or a pull out program depending on the needs of the student. Their curriculum can be compacted in the classroom and additional learning opportunities planned for the student.

Our teachers use a variety of instructional techniques to ascertain that all students receive the instruction they need to continue to grow. Whole group instruction may be used to introduce a unit of study and then the students will be broken into small groups based on their needs. Students, particularly in the upper grades, are expected to lead learning groups and be involved with peer coaching. This allows students to learn from each other as well as the adults in the room. Teachers at the school have become adept at giving feedback to students and asking questions that will lead students to higher thinking.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Our strength in supporting our students comes from having excellent partnerships, committed volunteers and a school community that works together. Our personalized school community creates a “small town” environment, in which we know our students well. We know their strengths and the areas that need support and every child has many adults committed to their academic, personal and social growth. We, as a staff, frequently collaborate as students’ progress through the grades to be sure we are meeting all of their needs. We surround our students with our knowledge and use all avenues to help them grow academically as well as emotionally. Each week we devote 45 minutes to group collaboration. We discuss how our students are progressing academically and plan for our core curriculum. Once a month teachers work in groups to look at student work using a three stack protocol. This allows us to pinpoint the students that need additional instruction. Due to our size we have multi-age classes that allows for some of our students to spend two academic years with one teacher. We typically have 1.5 classes at each grade level. The specialists in the school work with students as they progress from one grade level to the next. This gives continuity in learning art, music, physical education and elementary Spanish.

In addition to our core curriculum, we offer a variety of opportunities for students to stretch their learning. Our after school clubs include robotics, math Olympiad, chess, choir, art and Spanish. These offerings allow students to delve deeper into their personal interests.

We work equally hard on being sure that our students are emotionally well and feel included socially. Friendship benches have been placed on the playground to allow students to give a nonverbal message that they are looking to be included in games. The adults and students on the playground are aware of the benches and take notice when someone needs help finding a way to be included in games. The school counselor works with groups of students on social skills too. Many students in our school have experienced a parent going on deployment of six months to a year. The military is extremely supportive of the school. They organize a special day each year for all of our students to experience what life might be like for their parents on a deployment. It is referred to as Camp Kudos. The school counselor also holds monthly deployment groups to allow the students to discuss how they are doing with a parent deployed.

We maintain high academic expectations within the school climate. Teaming, mentoring, observations, and collaboration among administration and teachers is supported and highly encouraged. Our expectations, activities, and events serve our students in building 21st Century skills and emphasize our commitment to the school family.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Alconbury Elementary School is a small but very connected community with great support from base command, parents, teachers, and students. We involve our community as a whole and devise strategies and activities to enhance student achievement and parent communication. Throughout the academic year we have student, parent, and school centered activities. In the fall, students participate in a vocabulary hat parade. The idea is to have the entire family help decorate a hat representing their word. It is a wonderful way to develop students’ vocabulary, get them excited about learning, and show who they are as an individual and share that experience with their family and the community. The PTA (Parent Teacher Association) is an active volunteer group supporting students and teachers alike. They sponsor various and engaging events throughout the year promoting hands on learning. The fall festival is the largest fund raiser of the year and through many supportive volunteers it continues to be a huge success supporting those engaging activities for our students. Many of the volunteers are young airmen and soldiers who donate their time to assist where needed for the benefit of the school. The money earned from the fall festival goes directly back to the school to help fund other exciting activities. Other school activities to encourage community and family involvement have included Donuts for Dads, Muffins for Moms, Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser, and the Scholastic Book Fair. During the holiday season, the school opened a holiday shop for the students. The community donated slightly used or new items for students to select as gifts for their

family. It was another great way for the community to help support the school.

Our base community goes above and beyond engaging AES students. The fire department provides an engaging learning experience for fire safety and preparedness during the month of October, also known as Fire Prevention Month. The commissary opens their doors during April, as known as the Month of the Military Child, and shows our students the facility and the process of making sure food arrives safely to the building. The law office also opens their doors during April and May. Students learn about the American judicial system and put on a mock trial ultimately with a jury of students deciding the final verdict.

Our School Advisory Committee (SAC) consists of administrators, parents, and teachers. They are responsible for developing goals and school wide activities that align with school initiatives such as CCR math and science and building a partnership with the school community. The committee facilitates supportive relationships with the command that positively impact the success of the several activities to include deployment group and camp kudos. Parents are encouraged to bring issues or ideas of improvement to the committee and ideas will be discussed for possible implementation. Parents and the community are informed of academic achievements and challenges through weekly and monthly school newsletters. The PTA also recognizes student success with grade appropriate activities and by supporting Battle of the Books, Read Across America and hosting the school spelling bee. Although Alconbury is a small base, we have a strong command with supportive parents that believe in the power of education. We have little turnover during the middle of the school year, as many commanders support extensions ensuring students are able to successfully complete their school year.

3. Professional Development:

Our Professional development is continuous, integrated and a vital part of our school culture and success. We are committed to being lifelong learners and model this in numerous ways. Everyone is committed to improving our programs and teaching effectiveness by studying our new curricular standards and their efficacy in the classroom, while they achieve individual goals of professional development and/or personal satisfaction in being part of the community of learners at Alconbury Elementary School. One of our initiatives to strengthen our teaching skills and raise student achievement school wide was for everyone to do a collaborative book read on "Classroom Instruction that Works: Best Practices" by Robert J. Marzano. This professional development was powerful, relevant and impacting as we read, discussed and evaluated the nine researched-based instructional strategies from McCree's meta-analysis of instruction in monthly professional learning team meetings. The biggest impact was that it provided us with a common language to discuss change and implement strategies into our teaching to increase student achievement.

Our approach to professional development for the implementation of CCR curriculum has been a collaborative model using technology and/or face-to-face instruction. During quarterly trainings, teachers are dedicated to building a better understanding of how their students will learn the skills. Teachers collaborate during full day trainings, as well as weekly sessions, to implement the standards and the curricular materials with fidelity. Assessment data is being compiled to evaluate the learning through looking at student work. Initial anecdotal data indicate a positive trend in achievement, especially in the ability of students to express their mathematical thinking. Our study of the standards creates a common language, improves and expands our knowledge base, and specifies the common goals and objectives of teachers throughout DoDEA. Everyone is committed to being a standards expert and incorporating the Standards of Mathematical Practices to create rich environments for our students to develop math skills.

We implemented the new science standards and FOSS resources with excitement and vigor. Full implementation was optional this year, but we decided that we would dedicate ourselves to full implementation and as a result the professional development sessions have been rich, productive and very positive as teachers embraced the new standards. Our students are excited and classroom science sessions enhanced, as a result of the professional development and motivated teaching. While the DANA center and district office provide in-service math trainings set the foundation, our local efforts and teacher-supporting-teacher professional development, engages us in the new materials and positively impacts our students. As a result of our shift from a directed study to an inquiry method we see students eagerly awaiting their science lessons. Our weekly collaborations and consistent professional development on standards and

teaching strategies is resulting in our students being about to think critically, support their work in writing and have purposeful discourse with their peers. The use of Schoology is providing an avenue for lesson discussions and standards in math, to access curriculum guides, and to find additional activities. Schoology is providing community conversations and information in science, robotics, gifted education, etc. Schoology is allowing teachers to participate in online classes. The Schoology platform is also being used as a way to deliver professional development to specialists within the school. This ensures opportunities for collaboration worldwide in DODEA centered on specific subject areas.

4. School Leadership:

The driving philosophy and structure at AES is one of shared leadership. The principal strongly encourages and supports teachers and staff to take leadership roles by building an atmosphere of respect and recognizing teacher excellence. He participates in all teacher curriculum training sessions to gain the content and scope/sequence knowledge to ensure he understands teacher concerns and needs. For example, he facilitated a school wide study on the book: Classroom Instruction that Works: Best Practices to strengthen our professional learning community and review research based best practices in our classes. His leadership style in promoting and supporting teacher leadership has resulted in a positive environment of shared ownership.

More than half our staff serves as chairpersons or officers assuming teacher leadership positions on committees. We developed strong relationships with the command leadership and PTA which results in numerous volunteers from our school community supporting and enhancing our 21st Century curriculum. Our very active PTA enriches our school with numerous curricular and extracurricular activities throughout the year. Our leadership team and teacher leaders are the backbone of our high performing school and ensure the success of all students. Our School Advisory Committee works with our military community to provide a coordinated process to address and resolves local issues. Representative teachers, the School Liaison Officer, the principal, and parent representatives serve on this advisory committee.

Our Continuous School Improvement (CSI) committee leads the school wide effort towards continuous improvement of teaching and learning. The goal of this committee is to lead, facilitate and monitor school wide efforts towards academic excellence. Shared decision-making, school wide collaboration, and a strong focus on student achievement are the hallmarks of our school improvement process. Our CSI process revolves around needs assessments, developing goals based on needs, implementing strategies and interventions, assessments, gathering and evaluating data and measuring progress towards our goals in a cyclic model. We created a school wide professional development plan that includes a staff book study on teaching practices and individual growth plans that each teacher develops. Shared understanding, consensus and collaboration is reflected in our committees, staff-meetings, and grade level groups. We consistently record results and minutes of meetings to ensure that CSI committee actions and implementation are monitored for success.

The CSI process is a critical and viable process and everyone is a valuable member of either the math or language arts committee. The primary responsibility is to discuss and advise the efficacy of the CSI goals. All recommendations of the committee are accepted by the majority of the staff. Committees, also, organize theme days or activities that support curricular goals. The language arts committee sponsors the Vocabulary Hat Parade and hosts Muffins for Mom with a finished piece of writing being shared with the mom. The math committee plans and organizes math game nights that reinforces and builds support for our math goals.

Teacher leaders and parent volunteer leaders are the backbone of our school. Grade level representatives work with the principal and committees to discuss policies and coordinate testing programs and schedules. The CSC chair works with the staff to schedule and lead efficient and effective IEP meetings. Our counselor leads several student groups: girls' group, deployment group, etc. She, also, organizes and leads the SST meetings. Our crisis management team is in position to react when called upon. We also have a safe response team when a student might become physical. They, also, serve as trainers. Our media specialist is the teacher representative on the PTA executive board. She organizes and oversees the biannual book fair, coordinates picture-taking days, informs teachers of upcoming PTA activities and

reports to us the decisions of the executive board. At AES, leadership at all levels is respected and expected. The willingness and dedication of our teacher leaders makes a positive difference.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Our one practice that has the greatest impact is our student-focused collaboration. We have a shared understanding and responsibility to ensure that “all” students reach their fullest potential. Collaboration synthesizes our school wide efforts to create and maintain a learning environment that is student-centered, stimulating and relevant. The strength of our collaboration time is that it is purposefully designed for consistency, revolves around student work, and focuses on DuFour’s four questions to enhance lesson planning and instruction. We know that data collection is powerful when it is used in collaboration towards improving instruction and increasing student achievement. Throughout the year, academic data, such as baseline math, SRI, BAS, and writing scores, are collected, reviewed and recorded on spreadsheets in common access files to ensure we know where our students are individually and as a group. Our effectiveness in quickly and efficiently determining students’ needs and abilities ensures that no student is left behind and that students are challenged to their abilities.

Student work is reviewed as a team and ideas and lesson plans are shared within each grade level, across grade levels, with school specialists. Informal collaboration occurs in addition to regularly scheduled meetings, as teammates work and talk during free moments. Coworkers support each other by sharing experiences, classroom successes, and individual talents. Articulation across grade levels is evident when classroom teachers use carefully planned staff development. We created the AES “Go Green!” and Green Team initiatives to enhance our school wide collaboration efforts in STEAM. We are constantly exploring ways to challenge our students and by integrating our math and science curriculum rollouts in a thematic environmental “Green” initiative strategy, and our students rise to the challenge.

Our goal is to give all students enrichment and a 21st Century education in how math and Science impact real world problems such as recycling and pollution. In collaborative partnerships with our school community, the PTA and Cambridgeshire environmental agency, we provide all students with education and hand-on activities on how to use recycled materials to build usable products. We also launched a digital robotics program for our students to enhance our gifted program and teach kids the power of programming with the Middle School. Our teachers and school volunteers coordinate and collaborate to enrich our musical, physical, artistic, STEAM, reading, and technological opportunities. We know that educating the whole child fosters academic, social and emotional well-being. Our high-performing AES educators and leaders are committed to excellent student achievement.