

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):
- 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
 - 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 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| K | 67 | 48 | 115 |
| 1 | 51 | 68 | 119 |
| 2 | 65 | 54 | 119 |
| 3 | 68 | 66 | 134 |
| 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 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 | 251 | 236 | 487 |

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 23 % Black or African American
 - 8 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 59 % White
 - 9 % 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: 15%

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

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 | 30 |
| (2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year | 40 |
| (3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)] | 70 |
| (4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016 | 465 |
| (5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4) | 0.15 |
| (6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100 | 15 |

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 3%
15 Total number ELL

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

Gujarati, Spanish, Urdu, Afrikaans

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 100%
Total number students who qualify: 487

8. Students receiving special education services: 22 %
108 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>10</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>4</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>16</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>44</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>30</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>2</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: 3
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

| | Number of Staff |
|--|------------------------|
| Administrators | 2 |
| Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher. | 24 |
| Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc. | 10 |
| Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students. | 11 |
| 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 20:1

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 | 97% | 94% | 95% | 95% | 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.

Our Lake Forest South family will meet the essential needs of all learners by working together as a respectful community.

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

One of three kindergarten to third grade elementary schools in the Lake Forest School District, South Elementary, is located in the Hub of Delaware - the City of Harrington. Harrington grew quickly after its initial start in the mid-1800s, as a result of the industrial growth that followed the arrival of the Delaware Railroad. Since then, it has been home to canning factories, clothing manufacturers, a lumber company, box factory, and – most recently – the Harrington Fairgrounds, Raceway, and Casino. Additionally, the city is surrounded by agricultural properties and farms. These varied opportunities for employment and entertainment have shaped a diverse population of residents and, by extension, students at South Elementary.

Our 487 students begin each morning with a renewed pledge to stay “On Track for Success” – trying their best, respecting others, acting responsibly, controlling themselves, and showing kindness towards others. The pledge to stay "on track" is reiterated throughout the daily activities of the staff and students, as we all work together to develop responsible citizens. Students are encouraged to reach their full potential through a variety of academic, physical, and social opportunities during and outside of school hours.

Individual academic growth goals are set for each student at the start of the school year, and these goals are reached through both academic and social/emotional involvement on the part of the staff and parents. Data is analyzed regularly throughout the year, and adjustments to instruction and intervention are implemented as needed. Quarterly awards ceremonies highlight the success of students in all areas, including not only the core subjects of reading and math, but also art, music, physical education, technology, and library. Teachers nominate students for Super Spartan and Growth awards in early spring, based on exceptional behavior or academic growth in the classroom. The focus on academic excellence has been noted throughout the state of Delaware. South Elementary has received awards as a School of Continued Excellence in 2016 and as a Recognition School in 2015 and 2017.

The social and emotional health of the students is cultivated during lessons with the school counselor, and through involvement in the school’s Positive Behavior Support (PBS) activities and events. Through a partnership with our neighbors at W.T. Chipman Middle School, students work with older students to learn about the rich agricultural history of our area. Physical fitness is promoted on a regular basis not only in physical education classes, but also at extra events that are held throughout the school year. These events, including basketball skills clinics, soccer skills clinics, and the site-based Girls on the Run team, help the students develop healthy habits and skills while also teaching them the importance of teamwork and accountability.

With a population of students from diverse backgrounds, more than 50% of whom live at or below the poverty level, the school has been able to qualify for several programs that support the needs of the students and their families. Every student in the school is eligible to receive free breakfast and lunch, thanks to the Community Eligibility Partnership Grant. Additionally, a USDA grant has allowed students the opportunity to try a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables – including less common items such as persimmon, jicama, star fruit, and Grapples - on a bi-weekly basis throughout the school year. These programs provide the students with the foundation and knowledge they need to make healthy choices in and out of school.

Family involvement in the educational process is continuously developed, beginning with a Student/Family Compact that is signed at the beginning of each new school year to outline the expectations of the families, the students, and the staff. Parents and grandparents are encouraged to visit the school to volunteer in classrooms, have lunch with their children, assist with PBS events, and help with the semi-annual book fair. Additionally, the efforts of the family members are recognized and rewarded at Muffins for Moms, Danishes for Dads, and Granola for Grandparents. An Annual Mother-Son Dance, hosted by South Elementary for students throughout the District, allows our male students an often-rare chance to dress up and have a good time with their mothers. The school is supported by local organizations and businesses through assistance with fundraisers, field trips, and guest speakers for special events.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Harrington, Delaware, the home of Lake Forest South Elementary, is a town proud of its railroad history. That railway heritage played an integral part in our school design and still plays an equally important role in our instructional mission. The railroad motif that is proudly displayed in our hallways, combined with education professionals who understand the specific needs of each and every child, makes for the perfect atmosphere to promote student development. The motto “On Track for Success” sends the message to all the families of South Elementary that the vehicle of education knows no boundaries and the final destination for their children is, and will always be, student achievement.

All students of Lake Forest South Elementary are provided equal access to the Common Core state standards. Using rigorous teacher-constructed reading and mathematics curriculum, students are exposed to targeted reading and mathematics instruction daily. Special education students are exposed to the general education curriculum in all grades through their seamless inclusion into every classroom in our school. The Character Counts Framework Pillars of trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship are modeled and practiced daily by students and staff, to enhance the civic learning of each student. The engagement strategies used by the staff at South Elementary are targeted to accommodate a varied population of learners and learning modalities, in order to ensure success and academic achievement for every student who walks through the door.

A teacher-constructed reading curriculum, heavily supplemented with McGraw Hill Wonders reading resources, exposes students to targeted English Language Arts instruction for no less than ninety minutes each school day. Students are engaged in phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension lessons for a balanced reading blend. Teachers utilize popular works of fiction, short stories, timeless fables, and children’s poetry to engage students in literary adventures. Animals and popular figures in history compose the majority of the non-fiction text selections that engage students in informational text instruction. The daily use of technology is also encouraged for all students as each one is enrolled, instructed and monitored in age appropriate reading software. Lexia Core 5, Achieve 3000, and Smarty Ants are the main programs that are used by students from kindergarten to third grade. By incorporating differentiated small group instruction practices, leveled readers, and individualized software programs, South’s students are truly getting an individualized learning experience.

Mathematics instruction is also delivered with a combination of a teacher-created curriculum and supplements from Pearson Realize Envisions. Over ninety minutes of targeted math instruction is delivered daily, focusing on the common core strands of mathematic operations and algebraic thinking, number and operations in base 10 and fractions, measurement and data, and geometry. Student engagement is fostered by making real word connections to projects that students can identify with. Counting M&Ms, 100th day of school celebrations, and creative games to encourage math skills fluency all create an interest and love for numbers that furthers greater student engagement. Delivering a logical progression of these skills from grade to grade also helps to create a greater understanding of core math concepts. The use of the Envisions diagnostic toolkit for leading small group instruction, hands on manipulatives and the DreamBox Learning software platform are also used on a daily basis to further individualize the math instruction for each student.

Science instruction is designed to connect the students to big picture concepts that many are unable to experience in their home lives. Science instruction is driven by curriculum from Full Option Science System, Engineering is Elementary, and National Science Resources Center. Each provider offers science kits that utilize hands-on labs and real world science applications to help promote student interest. Kindergarten science units focus around Trees, Weather and Push-Pull-Go. The Tree unit allows children to compare and contrast the life cycle process of both evergreen and deciduous trees. The Weather unit allows students to record and predict their own daily weather, while at the same time learning valuable weather vocabulary. In Push-Pull- Go, students are introduced to the concept of forces and how they interact with one another. In first grade, students are introduced to the concept of what makes the day and night in the unit

Dark Days and Bright Nights. They gain hands-on experience with both land and aquatic species in the Organisms Unit, and conduct many experiments introducing them to the concept of matter in the Solids and Liquids unit. Second graders start the year off finding out why the world relies on insects. They quickly turn to the world of engineers and technology as they work on the Technology and Bridges Unit. As important as agriculture is to the state of Delaware, it's only fitting that the second grade digs deep into the Soils Unit to finish off the year. Third grade science classes spend a great deal of time examining the water of the world, and its impact on environmental engineering. They also learn about the many materials that make up this world of ours as they study their Earth Materials unit. As our students learn that the world is made up of different types of science, we hope to turn them on to the technology that just may drive the future.

Our social studies units are provided by the Delaware Recommended Curriculum. Social studies units are based on the content strands of geography, history, economics and civics. Social Studies in kindergarten introduces students to maps and globes and how to effectively participate in groups. First grade social studies students are introduced to the concepts of Chronological Thinking and The Roles of a Leader. Second grade classes start the year off with a unit on Respect. They then move on to the World Landforms and Climate, a history unit entitled How Do We Learn About Long Ago, and finish the year off with an introduction to wants and needs in their Economics Unit. Civics and Government start off the third grade units, to be followed by Local and National Geography and World Economics.

By helping to expose our students to science and social studies topics outside of our own area, we are able to raise awareness and excitement for each content area.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Lake Forest South Elementary School has five Learning Stations that give students opportunities to explore several additional curriculum areas. Students acquire essential skills and knowledge in each of these areas. The integration of Math, ELA, Science, and Social Studies is also a focus in all of the Learning Stations. All kindergarten through third grade students have a fifty minute weekly class in Library, Technology, Art, Music, and Physical Education.

Students in Library Class enjoy learning library skills which are differentiated by grade level. Younger students learn the parts of a book, book care, and the attributes of fiction and nonfiction books. Older students focus on genre, text features and conducting research. Students read Accelerated Reader books in the library and take corresponding quizzes. All students at South choose books to take home and enjoy with their family.

Teachers at South frequently use the library for student research for projects in the classroom. Our librarian also collects books for classroom teachers who need them for special activities. The Scholastic Book Fair is held at South two times per year. These book fairs are held during the regular Learning Station time and an additional evening event is held so that families can shop for books together.

Students in technology class use desktop computers each week. Students use student programs including Dream Box, Renaissance Learning, Lexia Core 5, Smarty Ants, Math Investigations, and Graph Club. Kindergarten and first grade students use Type to Learn, Jr. to become familiar with the keys on the keyboard. Second and third graders use the Type to Learn 4 program to begin using home row keys. This is especially important for our third graders who take the Smarter Balance Assessment solely on the computer. In the beginning of the year technology students learn the parts of the computer and keyboard. They use paper keyboards to help with mastering this skill.

Several weeks during the school year are devoted to testing. All students take the STAR Assessment three times per year in the lab. Third graders also take the Smarter Balance Assessment in the lab. The consistency of using the lab for these testing sessions benefits our students. All students in technology also complete several Internet Safety lessons throughout the year.

The Delaware Recommended Curriculum including Grade Level Expectations and Proficiency Level Expectations for Visual Art is used at South. Our art teacher provides many opportunities for our students to

become proficient in the various expectations of the curriculum. Using Blooms Taxonomy as a guide for the curriculum, students in art class at South are operating at the top of the pyramid. These areas include creating, evaluation, and analyzing. Students analyze many different pieces of artwork. When looking at a piece of artwork, students use art elements to describe what they see. Often times, the students' performance level exceeds the third grade level of proficiency.

All art lessons integrate at least one of the following: Math, ELA, and Social Studies. Many times multiple subjects are integrated. Third graders enjoy a Japanese Tea Ceremony using their own pinch pot that they create. Kindergartners do a still life of a watermelon after counting seeds and tasting the fruit. First graders illustrate a book and then conclude the project by presenting it. Students say the story, tell the story, use verbs to describe the action in the story and add a full sentence. All students at South have multiple opportunities throughout the school year to hone their art skills.

Our music room is lively room with daily singing and dancing. The Delaware Recommended Curriculum for Music is used at South to teach students using grade level expectations. The scope and sequence builds on introducing, developing and mastering proficiency. In class, students learn sight singing, reading and following lines of words in lyrics, rhythm, and speed of music. Math and ELA integrate into these lessons easily.

All students at South are encouraged to participate in the Winter Concert. The students practice their songs for several months to prepare for this concert. Families and friends fill the High School Auditorium for this popular evening performance. Second and third grade students are permitted to join the South Star Singers, an afterschool program.

In physical education class students engage in physical activity every week. If you peek in the gymnasium you might see students playing a running game, using speed stacks, completing an exercise circuit, or climbing a rock wall. Students also learn the importance of fitness and health. A main attraction of the school year is Jump Rope for Heart. The students enjoy raising money for a worthy cause and jumping rope.

All of the Learning Station classes offer students another way to acquire essential skills and knowledge to make them successful at South.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Lake Forest South uses student data to promote high quality learning and to create small group, differentiated instruction for the core curriculum. Following formative and summative assessments, groups are customized to provide re-teaching, pre-teaching or acceleration.

Universal screeners - including STAR Math, Reading, and Early Literacy, and DIBELS - are used throughout the year. The data from these screeners is used to place students into RtI (Response to Intervention) groups for reading and math. The data is reviewed throughout the school year and changes to the small groups are made as needed. In addition to teachers and paraprofessionals who provide direct instruction and intervention, we utilize an abundance of technology to supplement instruction. We have a computer lab that is available for student use throughout the day, and a mobile lab in each grade level. Each classroom has at least three desktop computers, an interactive white board and an ELMO document camera. The students are proficient in the use of a variety computer software and websites, which allows staff to further differentiate instruction and provide intervention.

Instructional planning reports through STAR resources provide the instructors with baseline data and progress monitoring information for every student. In math, Envisions resources are used to identify specific math skills to support growth with preview and acceleration opportunities. Progress monitoring is completed weekly or biweekly throughout a six-week RtI cycle. At the end of each six-week cycle, an end of cycle review is completed with the Student Support Team (SST); this team includes grade level teachers, a reading specialist, school psychologist, speech pathologist, school counselor, administration, family crisis therapist, and special education coordinator. As the team reviews each student's individual data, decisions

are made about placement in one of three tiers and all students receive tailored instruction to meet their needs during the designated 60 minutes of RtI. Tier 1 students receive enrichment or acceleration practice and instruction. Students who are not on track to meet benchmark are placed in tier 2 or tier 3, and decisions are made as to what changes should be made to help those students progress. Some changes may include the interventions being administered, the interventionist, or the amount of time an intervention is provided. The team also looks at external factors that might impact a student's academic achievement or growth.

South Elementary staff have made it a priority to close the achievement gap for low income students and students with disabilities. The staff set high expectations and provide rigorous instruction. During the 2017-18 school year, staff have participated in professional development centered around cultural diversity and engaging students' families. Staff members also participate in professional learning communities (PLCs) to discuss and plan for using highly engaging instructional strategies to meet the needs of all students. By providing an effective educational experience that encompasses the whole child, South will be a school that produces highly successful students.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

At Lake Forest South we begin each year welcoming our students with a “POP into PBS” assembly that sets the expectations and establishes the rules of conduct for the school year. Each student receives a train ticket that they are able to fill with punches as a result of displaying “On Track Behavior.” Students are then able to use their train tickets to purchase items from the PBS Store and/or pay for monthly PBS events. During the course of the year there are refreshers for the students, to remind them of the expectations. At the mid-point of the year and at the end of the year, students are recognized for being referral free and given the opportunity to be entered into a raffle to win various prizes.

To foster and support the growth of our students in the areas of academic, social and emotional needs we have put in place a number of supports. As a school we have identified various groups of students in each grade level, based on their academic, social or emotional needs and have provided them with small group counseling to address the area of concern. We have also partnered with our middle school to provide mentors to some of our second and third grade students. The Student Support Team meets every six weeks to discuss the academic needs of the students and the Tier II Behavior Team meets every quarter to discuss the needs of those students identified as needing behavioral supports.

At Lake Forest South, we convey to each teacher that they are a vital part of what we do and the success we achieve. Each year, teachers are given the opportunity to complete a survey that helps administration identify the strengths and the weaknesses, and gives feedback on how we can improve our practices. Teachers are celebrated for their successes as individuals and as grade levels. During the course of the year various tokens of appreciation are provided to teachers to remind them that they are valuable assets to Lake Forest South.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Lake Forest South looks to engage our families and community through a variety of events that encourage them to come and celebrate the successes of our students and school. We celebrate the successes with quarterly academic awards and middle of the year growth awards. During the school year, South host a variety of events to celebrate the families such as Granola for Grandparents, Muffins for Moms, and Danishes for Dads. To ensure that parents are kept abreast of the academic programs and the progress of their child we hold Open House in the beginning of the year and Parent/Teacher conferences twice a year. Additionally, families are encouraged to sit side-by-side with staff members on committees such as the PTO, PBS (Positive Behavior Support), district strategic planning team, and the school improvement team in order to provide input from the family perspective. Our Literacy Curriculum night encourages parents to come in after school and meet with and talk to their child’s teachers about what exactly they are learning and what they are using to learn it. During the thanksgiving holiday season, the cafeteria host and enormous feast to help bring our families together. Our Thanksgiving luncheon is a South Elementary tradition that has helped bring parents into our school for the right reasons. Another huge event that we are proud to be a part of is our Winter Concert that is held at our local high school. Students are invited to dress up and sing holiday songs with other students in their grade level. Parents are invited to attend and consistently pack the high school auditorium in order to hear the little voices sing about the joys of the holidays. Family fun night at Lake Forest South Elementary is held to invite the parents into the school environment to to play games and watch movies with their students. This type of event is sometimes run in conjunction with the book fair. Engaging our families and community through these successful events is a great way to celebrate our students and our school. We look forward to continuing these types of events and keeping our families and community involved in everything we do.

3. Professional Development:

Lake Forest South's approach to professional development is designed to provide staff members with resources and knowledge necessary to grow professionally and promote student achievement. Every staff member at Lake Forest South is empowered to be a self-directed and continuous learner, working each day to improve student outcomes.

Our innovative professional development program allows staff to participate in approximately 20 days of training each year, including those completed online and with professionals from a variety of educational fields. Each staff member's professional development experiences are personalized to meet their needs, are goal driven and are supported by tools and resources of exceptional quality. In our professional learning communities (PLC), teachers develop professional skills that equip them to design high-impact strategies for every student to experience success each day. Staff development is linked to student success, and the individuals are given opportunities to share best practices and collaborate with peers. We strive to provide students with education of the highest quality.

Our building-based professional development is aligned with our District Strategic Goals: Academic Success for Every Student; Partnerships with Families, Communities, and Businesses; and School Facilities and Learning Environments. Our District Strategic Goal 1 is aligned with the Common Core State Standards. To reach this goal, the district has identified strategies for increasing rigor in curriculum and instruction, aligning curriculum and instruction with the student academic standards, and developing a high-performing teacher corps. This development is achieved by providing professional development and support to gain excellent results for all students. Some of the activities that were utilized to build success within our school include planning for district and school professional development, with a focus on and alignment to the District Strategic Plan and commitment to Learning Focused Strategies.

Professional development opportunities are designed to deliver standards-based and curriculum-based practices through effective models in a cycle of continuous improvement. A consistent PLC model has

been adapted to allow staff members to analyze data and make instructional decisions based on student needs. Training topics are selected based on these needs, to ensure that staff members have the knowledge and resources necessary to promote student growth.

4. School Leadership:

At Lake Forest South Elementary, the principal's leadership philosophy is to cultivate a climate to promote intense learning and growth opportunities on a daily basis. The principal's goal as an educator is to help students grow academically, morally, and socially. By respecting the differences of each student's personality and learning style, the principal will enable each student to grow to become the lifelong learner and active citizen our society needs. As a staff leader, the principal's goal is to perpetuate reflection and growth among education professionals to suit the needs of themselves and their students. The principal's role is to administer policies and strategies that promote equity and excellence to ensure coherence between programs and practices linked to district goals.

The school leadership team includes the principal and assistant principal, who work together to provide time, space, and personnel resources to enhance student learning and growth. Additionally, department chairs help create a cohesive team of professionals who collaborate within grade levels and throughout the entire school. Special services professionals, including the school psychologist, speech and language therapist, school nurse, special education coordinator, and guidance counselor, work hand-in-hand with staff members to provide resources to suit the needs of our students. The school counselor and family crisis therapist have the responsibility of providing resources and assistance to families so that they have the ability to provide the necessary structure and support to the students. Parents are encouraged to participate in all educational decisions, and invited to attend school events throughout the year.

A master schedule is created to maximize the amount of daily instructional time for students. Each teacher's role is to model those expectations that cultivate the academic, social, behavioral, and moral growth of the students. Lake Forest South's approach to scheduling and deployment of staff is formulated to support the creation of short-term skill groups when necessary. Teachers have the flexibility to create and change skill groups based on student data and proficiency towards meeting grade-level standards. For example, the staff members in a grade level meet to discuss student data, and then group students from different classes who have similar academic or behavioral needs. These students are able to receive targeted instruction in areas of need, and adjustments are made to the groupings as students demonstrate growth.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

One practice that has been most instrumental to the school's success.

"It takes a village to raise a child." This mindset in our school community guides our actions each day, and the practice of building relationships has been instrumental in promoting student success in our school. Teachers, support staff, administrators, families, and community members work together in a variety of situations to help our students grow and achieve greatness. Our commitment to building relationships among our staff, with our students, with their families, and with our community partners sometimes requires us to be flexible, and to work outside our assigned duties.

Staff relationships are an important component to our overall school climate. We begin and end each school year with team-building activities and events. Our staff members support one another throughout the rest of the school year, during both personal and professional challenges and triumphs. In addition to collaborative planning for each grade-level team, we also provide opportunities for vertical articulation training across grade levels.

The relationships we have built with our community partners have allowed us to provide opportunities to our students that might otherwise not be available. Our local police department is a positive presence in our hallways, with officers stopping in to say hello and give high-fives to our little guys. They have also supported our positive behavior efforts by donating prizes for raffles, and have participated in our fundraising efforts. The fire department, a few blocks away, is always happy to host our students for field trips. A variety of other community businesses have assisted us in our fundraising efforts so that we can continue to improve the facilities and activities that are offered to our students.

The relationships with the families in our community play a huge role in the success of our students. We recognize the importance of these family relationships in a variety of ways throughout the year, including our Muffins for Moms, Danishes for Dads, and Granola for Grandparents breakfast events. We welcome classroom volunteers, and have grown a successful parent-teacher organization this year.

The most important relationships we have cultivated in our school are those with our students. Our staff members regularly go above and beyond to support, nurture, and show compassion to our students. These children know that, regardless of anything else that might be going on in their lives, they can come to school to a safe environment where they will know they matter. They are greeted by multiple staff members each morning, they play games with teachers on the playground, and a popular reward is to be able to eat lunch in the classroom with a teacher or administrator.

All of these relationships go hand-in-hand, and one cannot be as effective as it is without the support of the others. Our village is strong, and our school is successful as a result of the efforts of all involved.