

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 Mrs. Christine Lemerond

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

Official School Name Shakerag Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 10885 Rogers Circle

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

Johns Creek GA 30097-1927
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Fulton County

Telephone (470) 254-3880

Fax (470) 254-3886

Web site/URL
http://www.shakeragelementary.co
m

E-mail Lemerond@fultonschools.org

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Dr. Jeff Rose

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail rosej@fultonschools.org

District Name Fulton County Schools Tel. (470) 254-3600

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 Ms. Linda Bryant

(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):
- 59 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 19 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 18 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 96 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	26	40
K	32	40	72
1	46	49	95
2	47	47	94
3	60	43	103
4	51	80	131
5	93	65	158
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	343	350	693

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 60 % Asian
 - 8 % Black or African American
 - 5 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 22 % White
 - 5 % 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: 14%

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	58
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	44
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	102
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	729
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.14
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	14

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 12 %
86 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Arabic, Chinese, Farsi/Persian, Filipino/Tagalog, French, Gujarati, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, other African, other Asian, other Indian, Polish, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Turkish, Urdu, Vietnamese

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 6 %
Total number students who qualify: 42

8. Students receiving special education services: 8 %
52 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>5</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>2</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>6</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>5</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>13</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>20</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</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: 2
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	32
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	18
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	12
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	5

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 22:1

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

Required Information	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	97%	97%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 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.

Celebrating Learning. Inspiring Leaders.

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

This year, Shakerag Elementary School celebrates 20 years of learning. We opened in August of 1997 and each year have worked hard to challenge all learners that walk through our doors. Shakerag is located in the northeastern tip of Fulton County, approximately 35 miles north of Atlanta, Georgia. Our students reside in homes that are situated in over 24 neighborhoods in the suburban setting surrounding the school. The area has grown substantially, predominantly in the development of subdivisions, small shopping centers, churches, and the Johns Creek Technology Center, a vast compilation of technology-centered businesses.

The name, Shakerag, was selected because of its historical significance within the local community. Some speculate that the name refers to the rag shaken to tell passing trains, and maybe stage coaches, to stop to get the mail. Another famous legend involved a bobcat that terrorized the community's laundry. The wives would do their laundry and hang clothes to dry out back overnight. During the night, an animal would rip the laundry off the line and scatter it all over the backyard. One night, a resident saw a bobcat shaking the rags. From then on everyone knew who was shaking their rags. Even though they let the bobcat go, the name lived on in the community.

Our school is demographically diverse, having around 700 students whose families come from all over the world (approximately 60% Asian, 22% Caucasian, 8% African-American, 5% Hispanic, and 5% Multi-racial). Approximately 12% of our students qualify as English Language Learners (ELL), 35% of our students are eligible for Fulton County's Talented and Gifted (TAG) program, and 8% qualify for Special Education services. Currently, approximately 6% of our students qualify for free or reduced meal status. All of these students are served through our amazing teaching staff of almost 70 strong.

The Shakerag community provides an incredible opportunity to support and partner together working towards our unified goals. It is very rare that we will find a child who does not have parents and teachers joining forces to advocate for their best interest. This united front and collaborative effort is a true key to our success.

Academically, Shakerag consistently performs high on statewide assessments and has been recognized for such by the Governor's Office of Student Achievement. We have also worked toward making consistent gains on our College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI), a comprehensive school improvement, accountability, and communications tool. In 2014-2015, we earned an 89%, then reached 96% in 2015-2016, with our most recent score of 98% in 2016-2017.

With high achievement comes the challenge of making sure we are supporting all levels of learners. We meet this challenge through the implementation of the workshop model, personalized learning strategies, and the recent addition of Project Based Learning (PBL). We aim to support the development of 21st century skills using technology integration. We are fortunate to have a wide range of technology available for our students. Every class is equipped with an interactive white board, and students in grades 3-5 are one-to-one with Dell laptops, while students in grades preK – 2 have access to iPads and Chromebooks in the classroom. The availability and variety of technology at Shakerag allows us to provide diverse opportunities for our students to interact with an increasing number of technology programs and resources each day to catalog their learning.

While we have always had a solid foundation for high academic achievement, recent societal changes have lead us to begin focusing more on the social and emotional well-being of our children. As a high performing school, we often see children putting undue pressure on themselves as they continue to advance and excel at an extremely high rate. Even though most of the time children meet this challenge with success, they often struggle when they do not meet their goals on the first try. We have begun incorporating growth mindset strategies along with Steven Covey's 7 Habits to support building students' character and promoting leadership from within.

As a community, we pull together to ensure our students know they are loved and cared for by all. The entire Shakerag community is committed to academic success, positive social and emotional interactions,

and digital citizenship through the character values of leadership, kindness, and respect.

As we wrap up each year, we celebrate our learning journey with our Shakerag Showcase. This is an evening where we open our doors to the community and students take the lead in celebrating their learning throughout the year in a museum type setting. It is truly a night where our mission shines, “Celebrating Learning. Inspiring Leaders.” The halls of our school are filled with pride on this evening as the students explain their thinking, teachers get to display student growth, and parents get to see how wonderful their children truly are at school.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Shakerag is organized to include preK through grade five. We follow the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE), adhere to the Fulton County Continuous Achievement guidelines, and differentiate instruction to help meet the needs of each student. Our quest in the classroom is to foster success for students and to enable them to become self-directed, productive problem solvers and thinkers. In connection with personalized learning, teachers provide specific ways for all students to learn without assuming one's road map for learning is identical to another student's. Instruction may be presented whole group, small group, or one-on-one within or outside of the general education setting to help each student reach their potential.

The core curriculum includes the following: English Language Arts (ELA), mathematics, social studies, science, and health. While each area is looked at independently, we work to integrate content as much as possible to maximize authenticity in teaching. We place emphasis on writing across the curriculum as this is a key foundational skill that students will rely upon throughout life.

One thing unique to Fulton County Schools is our Continuous Achievement model. Continuous Achievement allows students in grades K-12 to demonstrate mastery of standards at a pace that is appropriate to each student's readiness level. In the areas of ELA and math, students are given opportunities to take diagnostic placement assessments that will determine if they are prepared for on grade level course content, advanced placement (grade level standards with the grade above standards introduced), or even accelerated placement (standards up to a full grade or more ahead).

The ELA Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE) include reading literary, informational, foundational, writing, language, and speaking and listening standards. The foundations of our ELA program are based on five pillars: Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension. We aim to teach all students academic-language skills to include inferential and narrative language and vocabulary. In the primary setting, students work toward developing awareness of segments of sounds in speech and how they link to letters, decoding words, analyzing word parts, and then combining segments to write and recognize words. As students gain a solid foundation in phonemic awareness and phonics, they progress towards increasing their vocabulary, fluency, and reading comprehension skills.

Explicit writing instruction is an integral part of our ELA curriculum. Students focus on narrative, informational, and opinion writing following the writer's workshop model. We currently use the Lucy Calkins Writing Units of Study. These units build on each other ensuring vertical alignment.

The math standards in grades K-2 include a focus on counting and cardinality, geometry, measurement, data, numbers and operations of base ten, and operations and algebraic thinking. In grades 3-5, numbers and operations with fractions replace counting and cardinality. As a district, teams analyzed standards across grade levels and prioritized them into units ensuring solid mathematical foundations are taught and mastered. The units progress and build upon each other year after year. The eight Standards of Mathematical Practice focus on problem-solving strategies and abstract thinking and reasoning skills, which are interwoven across all units.

In science, students focus on earth, physical, and life sciences. Similar to other core content areas, the science standards build from kindergarten all the way up through high school. The units are written to focus on science and engineering practices and encourage scientific inquiry as well as engineering design. With the recent changes in science curriculum (2016), our objectives have created more opportunities to research, build, and debate based on scientific evidence.

While we integrate social studies content, the specific standards focus on historical, geographical, government/civic, and economic understandings. Each grade level has an overall focus that guides their units. Kindergarten begins with Foundations of America, 1st grade focuses on Our American Heritage, and 2nd grade concentrates on Georgia, My State. Once students enter 3rd grade, they begin to take a journey

through U.S. History beginning with American Indian Cultures and wrapping up with Industrialization to the Digital Age in 5th grade. Map and globe skills, along with informational processing skills, are gradually introduced and then taught throughout the units. Primary and secondary sources are used to make content come to life.

We find ourselves very fortunate to house a Georgia preK program in our building. Within the program, students focus on the Opening the World of Learning (OWL) curriculum which aligns with the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS). Students study reading, writing, mathematics, science, social studies, art, music, and physical development. Social and emotional growth are also an integral part of the PreK program. The teachers use Conscious Discipline and Second Step curriculums for social and emotional development.

We have compared student data of our kindergarten students who have attended a preK program and those who have not. Those who have attended, especially within our school, start kindergarten prepared with a solid foundation of prerequisite skills and are ready to continue their learning journey. Our preK classes are a part of our school culture, just like any other grade. These students transition to kindergarten knowing our routines, procedures, and expectations.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

We have worked hard to provide our students with five days of non-core content area "specials" that allow them to explore the worlds of art, music, physical education, and Advanced Strategies Lab (ASL), a program developed and supported by Shakerag. Students in grades K-5 attend art, music, and ASL one day per week and physical education (PE) two days per week for 45 minutes each session. In addition to their weekly "specials" classes, students also receive instruction in the Media Center and are supported by our school guidance counselor.

These programs reinforce our efforts as a school to strengthen the whole child and focus on areas beyond the core content, providing additional opportunities for students to shine. The teachers in these areas try to support the core content by finding ways to integrate the general education curriculum with their specific content standards. They also aid us with creative scheduling so that we can find opportunities for teachers to participate in extended planning sessions. These sessions allow teachers to work as Professional Learning Communities (PLC) where they analyze data and plan engaging units.

When visiting our non-core content areas, you will find the following:

Our Advanced Strategies Lab (ASL) is a STEM-based program where students engage in engineering, robotics, LEGOs, and coding lessons that require students to follow the Engineering Design Process. This model challenges students to think critically and problem solve. The collaboration and challenging curriculum forces our students to think outside the box and learn that it is ok to make mistakes.

The art curriculum focuses on art history, art criticism, aesthetics, and art production. Our art teacher supports students in looking at, talking about, and creating art using a variety of media. In addition, students are introduced to digital creation using Tinkercad and 3D printing.

In music, students build skills progressively to support their acquisition of knowledge in music history, music theory, performing, playing instruments, and reading and writing music. Interactive programs, such as Quaver, extend the learning of music beyond the classroom walls. Students in grades 3-5 are also given an opportunity to audition for our after-school chorus and musical theater programs. Each year there is a major musical production put on for all students and the community.

PE is developed to get students moving and promote the importance of staying healthy and being physically fit at a young age. Students participate in guided practice, skill-based games, and team sports to apply the standards. In addition to attending PE twice a week, every three weeks students in grades K-5 begin one morning in the gym for Power Up for 30. This program allows students to go straight to the gym until the morning bell rings. Students get to choose activities from different stations to participate in with their peers.

In addition to the non-core courses listed above, students in PreK - 5th grade are encouraged to visit the Media Center at least two times a month as a class. Students are welcome to attend individually as often as they would like. The Media Center's mission is to ensure that students and staff are effective users of ideas, information, and technology. The Media & Educational Technology Instructor (METI) offers collaborative, standards-based, technology-rich instruction for students to stimulate interest in reading, viewing and using information, ideas, and technology. The METI also guides our work in teaching all Shakerag students how to be good digital citizens which resulted in us becoming a certified Common Sense School.

In addition to the technology skills developed in our Media Center, Shakerag works diligently to ensure our students are advancing in their use of 21st century skills. Our goal is to integrate technology into the curriculum through the regular use of interactive white boards, laptops, iPads, and computers. Through district support, as well as the support of local funds, students in grades 3-5 are one-to-one with devices and students in PreK - 2nd grade have anywhere from 7-16 mobile devices readily available for use in their classrooms. Technology has become a traditional tool for our students.

Guidance and counseling lessons play a critical role in making sure our children have a solid social and emotional foundation. Our school counselor provides a comprehensive school counseling plan with a focus on academic, personal/social, and career domains through individual, small group, and classroom guidance lessons. In addition to formal groups, our guidance counselor finds roles and opportunities that build positive social, emotional, and self-help skills to benefit the whole child (i.e. "lunch bunch", Move Crew, Student Lighthouse Team).

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

We utilize the workshop model in both ELA and math to personalize learning to meet each student's readiness level. This model allows our teachers to use gradual release techniques to model through mini-lessons, guide student learning through small group and one-on-one instruction, and allows for independent practice during stations.

Our balanced literacy framework follows the path of modeled, shared, guided, and independent reading/writing opportunities. Flexible guided reading groups allow teachers to explicitly instruct students based on their current reading level and focus on specific skill deficits using appropriately leveled text. The reading and writing workshop models both call for long stretches of independent reading and writing to support building student stamina. Individual conferencing during independent reading and writing also allows teachers to work one-on-one with students to set individual learning goals and provide specific feedback.

The workshop model in math allows teachers to focus on a mini-lesson, then break into smaller flexible skill groups where teachers can capitalize on student strengths and weaknesses. Number Talks are often used to begin the block so students can practice mental math strategies. Manipulatives are frequently used so students can model composing and decomposing numbers and provide concrete examples. Written expression is incorporated into math as students are expected to explain their thinking through constructed responses.

In addition to daily curriculum instruction, we provide a 30-minute Intervention and Enrichment (I/E) block that is used to support students in the Response to Intervention (RTI) process and challenge those that may need additional enrichment. Progress monitoring data and monthly Student Collaboration Team (SCT) meetings help teachers discuss the progress of all students and make necessary adjustments to targeted supports in academic areas, as well as behavior. These meetings also help us focus on any subgroups that may not be performing at a consistent level with our general population.

When reviewing our data, we noticed that our special education students and those receiving accommodations often had a higher percentage of students scoring at the beginning learner level when compared to all learners. The special education team frequently meets to collect data points, review progress on learning goals, and make program adjustments as necessary to support closing the achievement

gap within these subgroups.

This year Shakerag has embarked on the Project Based Learning (PBL) journey. We supported teachers in building their understanding of how to effectively develop an integrated unit of study. Our goal continues to be content alignment across multiple disciplines to develop critical thinking skills and the ability to solve real-world problems.

In addition to our instructional efforts in the general education setting, we offer a variety of support programs for students who are performing both below and above grade level expectations. For students who are performing below grade level, we offer special education services, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and the Early Intervention Program (EIP) for students who are at-risk of not meeting and/or maintaining grade level expectations. Our after-school Extended Learning program provides additional opportunities for our 3rd and 5th grade students to prepare for our state standardized assessment.

The needs of students who are performing above grade level are met through our advanced and accelerated placement options, in addition to a full-day enrichment program called Talented and Gifted (TAG) for those who are eligible. TAG provides avenues for intellectually advanced and exceptionally creative students to enrich and expand upon the core curriculum through challenging activities and educational experiences that address the diverse needs of these individuals.

For us to effectively use the instructional strategies noted above, data collection plays a vital role. It helps us assess student mastery of content, so we know how to best meet their individual needs. Our testing program is aligned with the State of Georgia and Fulton County Schools. Each year, we look at the following standardized tests: Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS) (Grade K), Iowa (Grades 3 & 5), Georgia Milestones (Grades 3-5), and ACCESS for ELLs (Grades K-5). In addition to using standardized test results, we use benchmark assessments such as FastBridge, Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), district diagnostic placement tests, and grade level common formative and summative assessments to guide our work. Each of these assessments provides us with data on how we can support students individually and collectively.

The dedication and support we receive from our families, community, and teachers are what allows us to continue to be a high performing school. As a team, we reflect on our school-wide data and instructional practices to continue student and community growth. We review our progress with many stakeholder groups and use this information to make necessary adjustments to our instructional practices and establish our strategic plan goals.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Establishing a good climate for learning is an important focus at Shakerag. We want our school to be a place where teachers and students feel safe, respected, and cared for, and where there are high expectations for appropriate student behavior.

Shakerag upholds the ideal of each student working towards self-management and taking ownership for their actions while promoting “Leadership, Kindness, and Respect.” These are our three focus areas for our Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework. Promoting positive behavior requires a concerted effort of effective classroom management techniques and behavior management strategies reinforced by teachers and parents. Parental involvement processes are designed to enable parents, teachers, and school administrators to work collaboratively to improve and enhance academic, social, and emotional performance.

In addition to our PBIS initiatives, we are also a Leader in Me school and utilize the 7 Habits of Highly Effective Kids to promote positive character and leadership development within our children.

This year we have worked to increase our student and teacher recognition programs. While we hope to instill that the most enduring rewards for hard work are intrinsic, public recognition also helps to promote and reinforce positive expectations. As students model our school-wide expectations, they can work towards earning “Fin-tastic Shark” tickets that are collected by homeroom. At the end of each quarter, we draw tickets and recognize winners with a certificate and the opportunity to participate in a special activity. In addition to earning “Fin-tastic Shark” tickets, every quarter each teacher in the building identifies one “Super Shark” who is recognized at an assembly in front of their peers, as well as their parents, for demonstrating the 7 Habits.

Additionally, the staff is encouraged to write “Fin-tastic” teacher write-ups for their peers each month. Those recognitions are shared with the staff member and then three or more write-ups are drawn at each faculty meeting and shared with the entire staff. Thanks to the support of our Shakerag Foundation, we can provide incentives for staff members when their names are drawn and celebrate all of their hard work and accomplishments.

One of our strategic plan initiatives is to focus on the whole child. We hope that a clear focus on a positive school climate, as well as the recent addition of growth mindset videos and class meeting discussion questions, will continue to create a supportive environment that promotes social, emotional, and academic growth for both students and staff.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

We currently have a School Governance Council (SGC), our Parent Teacher Association (PTA), the Shakerag Foundation, and a variety of business partners that work collectively to generously support Shakerag through strategic guidance, decision making, community events, program implementation, and financial contributions.

Shakerag’s SGC consists of parents, school staff members, community members, and the principal. The purpose of the SGC is to provide members of the council with a leadership role in school-based decisions. They are responsible for supporting the principal in making decisions regarding the strategic direction of the school, approving the annual budget and resource allocations, managing the requests for flexibility process, participating in the hiring of a principal if a vacancy occurs, and providing annual feedback on the principal’s performance.

Our PTA plays a tremendous role in hosting school-wide events and activities such as our fall carnival and family fun nights (BINGO, school dance, movie night, etc.) to enhance our community involvement. They

also provide academic enrichment programs such as Science Fun, which is a science lab that students in grades PreK-5 participate in at least two times a year and Artist Day which promotes the arts and international affairs by bringing in members of the community.

The Shakerag Foundation and our community business partners have played a key role in providing incentives and financial contributions for school events and teacher recognition. They have also worked collaboratively to support school spirit nights that are scheduled to promote spending time with family and friends on our “community nights.” Community nights are held one night a month and are a time where all schools in our learning community, elementary, middle, and high, do not assign homework or studying to encourage families to spend quality time with each other.

In addition to programs offered within the school, we promote and support giving back to the community. We collaborate with our PTA and local Girl Scout troops to select charity and community outreach programs that we partner with throughout the year. We also host an annual “Sharks Have Heart” heart walk with proceeds donated to the American Heart Association. We believe these programs foster goodwill and assist our students in recognizing the value of helping others in need.

Communication is critical in maintaining family and community awareness and involvement. We are very fortunate to live in a digital age where we can utilize a variety of tools to foster such communication. Weekly communications are shared both at the classroom and school level through emails, newsletters, and websites. Twitter, ClassDojo, classroom blogs, and/or portfolio posts through programs such as Seesaw and Google Classroom are often used to allow stakeholders the ability to see what is happening in the classroom.

3. Professional Development:

We continually reflect on ways we can improve the instructional effectiveness of all teaching staff. Each year we align our professional development (PD) plan with district and school-wide initiatives outlined in our strategic plan. These goals are often established based on current student performance outcomes and targeted areas for growth.

As a district, we continue to focus on the seven principles of personalized learning while our school-specific plan is focused on Project Based Learning. Both initiatives aim to provide instructional practices that challenge our students at an appropriate level.

We offer opportunities for teachers to engage in a variety of types of professional learning. As a district, teachers are provided with two district PD days and, as a school, we offer four additional days focused on our school initiatives. In addition to full days of learning, our monthly faculty meetings are also focused on targeted needs. We use this time to allow our teacher leaders to guide the sharing of best practices through EdCamp style sessions where teachers choose a quick mini-lesson on a specific topic and staff members pick the session they would like to attend. Our teacher leaders also take the initiative to provide “pop-in” training sessions on specific topics that are announced to the staff and attendance is made optional. These teacher leaders provide follow-up and one-on-one support as requested.

In addition to formal staff-wide trainings, we have established content vertical team committees. One representative from each grade level meets monthly as a collaborative team to discuss topics related to the specific content area. Each member redelivers the content to their grade level team. We also utilize our vertical teams to provide feedback and guidance on the alignment of instructional practices and implementation of resources.

Opportunities are offered monthly for our new teachers to review Fulton County standards and expectations in alignment with the Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System. These opportunities allow our new teachers to grow and collaborate with one another on a regular basis.

It is important that the administrators within our building are strong instructional leaders. If administrators are not leading the professional learning, they are participating alongside the teachers. It is critical that the

administrative team models the expectations and possesses a solid understanding of the instructional strategies desired.

In aligning all of our efforts and initiatives, we ensure that we maintain a focused approach. In connection with each professional development activity, an accountability and/or follow-up measure is put in place so we can ensure these new learning experiences are put into practice.

4. School Leadership:

As a community, we work hard to maintain a strong family atmosphere at Shakerag. We have established a clear focus and work towards the development of each teacher and child while looking at ways to maintain a positive culture and climate. All of our leadership groups play an important role in overseeing our growth as a school and identifying our strengths and targeted focus areas for improvement. Through the utilization of shared leadership practices, we have established a collaborative atmosphere where all stakeholders have a vested interest in everyone's success.

When working with our leadership teams, we are guided by what is in the best interest of the whole child. While academics and data analysis play a critical role in the decision-making process, we are very reflective of how we can support children not only academically, but also socially and emotionally. Transparent communication and frequent opportunities for stakeholders to share feedback and take an active role in the decision-making process establishes buy-in, thereby opening the door to smoother transitions when change is required.

There are a variety of leadership groups with which the principal engages to ensure we are closely monitoring and supporting the needs of all students. The administrative team is comprised of the principal, assistant principal, Curriculum Support Teacher (CST), Instructional Support Teacher (IST) (special education), counselor, and Intervention and Enrichment Coach. This team of leaders often supports the principal in making final decisions based on the feedback from other leadership groups. They closely monitor instructional practices and individual student and teacher concerns.

The leadership team is formed from members of the administrative team and one representative from each grade level. This team provides vital feedback on instructional practices and the impacts they have on their respective teams. They also closely support school safety, as well as operational and logistical matters.

Aside from staff groups, our School Governance Council (SGC) has a cross representation with a variety of stakeholders to provide a global perspective. Shakerag's SGC also monitors the collection of data and alignment of goals in relation to our school strategic plan. The SGC is also charged with making sure we are effectively managing our school's resources.

Throughout all of these groups, the principal often uses feedback loops to share information allowing those members to go back to their teams and/or stakeholder groups to collect additional comments. When the teams meet again, any further data is reviewed in an effort to make an informed decision. Final decisions are made in alignment with our strategic plan goals and what is in the best interest of all children.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

We attribute our success to multiple practices, but the implementation of the workshop model allows teachers to analyze data and then personalize instruction to challenge students at an appropriate level that meets their needs. This begins with the implementation of our Continuous Achievement model which identifies students' appropriate grade placement. Once student levels are identified, teachers utilize a wide variety of assessment results to identify individual student strengths and weaknesses. These results are then used to guide teachers in their planning and implementation of the workshop model. Within this model, students are engaged in a variety of learning activities ranging from whole group mini lessons to guided practice, and independent application of skills. Students are coached explicitly to verbalize their needs, so they can become self-advocates and actively participate in the learning process. Teachers pay close attention to details and foster connections, so that learning can be relevant and meaningful. During rotations, students participate in flexible small group instruction that targets their current needs. Since teachers work with students across multiple levels, they must be proficient in analyzing content standards across multiple grades and incorporating them into their instructional model through differentiation and personalized learning.

Through the use of one-on-one conferencing, students set challenging learning goals while their teacher provides specific feedback and just-in-time direct instruction promoting individual growth. Both a compliment and teaching point are given within a conference. This is where students of all levels, both high achieving and struggling learners, grow at a rapid pace due to personalized instruction. Student partnerships and peer feedback are strategies incorporated within this model that allow students to support and challenge one another in their learning.

When students are not working directly with a teacher, they are found scattered around the room working in collaborative groups and/or applying their learning to independent practices. This often includes the use of technology. Teachers utilize various applications to post differentiated assignments and/or use adaptive software that supports students at an appropriate learning level.

Intertwined with the workshop model, teachers use personalized learning strategies to enhance student learning which allows our students to articulate exactly where they are as learners and work at a pace that is conducive to their individual learning needs. The natural connections between the workshop model and personalized learning allows our teachers to ensure student voice and choice is occurring using varied instructional strategies, co-planning learning, and just-in-time direct instruction.

The workshop model lends itself to supporting students at a variety of stages in their learning development. By targeting instruction to meet students where they are in their learning progression, we can truly support and engage students so that no one is left behind or waiting to be challenged.