

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 Pipal Sarah Von Esh

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

Official School Name Settles Bridge Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 600 James Burgess Rd

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

Suwanee GA 30024-1135
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Forsyth County

Telephone (770) 887-1883

Fax

Web site/URL

https://www.forsyth.k12.ga.us/settle
sbridge

E-mail svonesh@forsyth.k12.ga.us

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Dr. Jeffery Bearden

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail jbearden@forsyth.k12.ga.us

District Name Forsyth County Tel. (770) 887-2461

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mrs. Ann Crow

(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):
- 21 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 10 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 6 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 37 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	11	4	15
K	60	69	129
1	72	88	160
2	86	97	183
3	96	76	172
4	95	107	202
5	115	104	219
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	535	545	1080

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 44 % Asian
 - 5 % Black or African American
 - 6 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 40 % White
 - 4 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2016 – 2017 school year: 5%

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	39
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	19
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	58
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	1090
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.05
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 8%
91 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Dutch, Korean, Russian, Ukrainian, Bosnian, Romanian, German, Vietnamese, Nigerian, Darsi, Farsi, Persian, Arabic, Hebrew, Hindi, Gujarati, Other Indian, Other Asian

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 7%
Total number students who qualify: 72

8. Students receiving special education services: 18 %
195 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>21</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>2</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>18</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>30</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>15</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>3</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>102</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>1</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 1
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	3
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	49
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	19
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	13
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 23:1

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.

We pledge everyday to do our best, by providing students with challenging academics through best practices and engaging instruction, meeting everyone's needs through social and emotional learning and services, embracing cultural appreciation, and encouraging physical fitness.

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

Settles Bridge Elementary School is located in Suwanee, Georgia which is approximately 43 miles north of the city of Atlanta. The school was built to alleviate overcrowding at three other schools in our district, and is named after the historic Settles Bridge, which was used to cross the Chattahoochee River. The bridge was constructed in 1916 and was "one of the state's longest Pratt through-truss bridges." As one of the nation's top 11 fastest growing communities, Forsyth County's growth and increasing diversity have had a positive impact on our schools. Highly motivated students come to our classrooms locally, and from all over the world with over 22 different languages currently spoken in the homes of our families.

Settles Bridge is currently home to 1,080 students in grades kindergarten through five. Our student population consists of 535 males and 545 females. Approximately 40.2% are white, 44.9% are Asian, 4.7% are Black, 6.2% are Hispanic, and 3.7% are multiracial. All of our students live in single-family homes. We have 8.4% of our student population participating in the ESL (English as a Second Language) program, 8% participating in the free/reduced lunch program, and 17.9% receiving special education services through an IEP (Individualized Education Plan), including students served in speech, and two self-contained, Adapted Curriculum Autism classrooms (K-2 / 3-5).

In the past three years, Settles Bridge has faced some interesting challenges. Our student body has shifted from a predominately Caucasian school to a more diverse student population with the Asian population increasing dramatically. Many of the Asian students now attending our school have been in the United States less than 5 years. As the student population has become more diverse, teachers have developed a better understanding of the new cultures they encounter as well as the need to adjust instruction based on these students' unique set of academic skills and deficits.

Settles Bridge Elementary embraces the vision to "Be a star no matter where you are!" and reinforces that daily. While a star is our school's mascot, it is also the symbol for us because a star leads the way, rises above challenges, and shines no matter where it is to make a difference in our world! Our teachers and staff are highly committed to providing a well-rounded, rigorous, and authentic learning environment for all of our students. In addition to growing student leaders for success in an effort to meet the Forsyth County Learner Profile, teachers at Settles Bridge utilize a variety of instruction, research-based strategies, and innovative tools and resources to provide challenging, engaging, and authentic learning experiences at every grade level every day. Our teachers pride themselves on their professional competencies, and work to ensure all students' academic and social-emotional needs are met through quality, creative instruction.

A great emphasis is placed upon preparing students for a world outside of the classroom whether it is high-school, college, or a chosen career path. With that in mind, Settles Bridge teachers delve into the Reading/English Language Arts standards, teach foundational skills, and provide rich experiences through a balanced-literacy approach. We ensure that teachers have the necessary materials to reach students by providing access to two leveled reading libraries in the building, utilizing an instructional coach to ensure best practices are being modeled and implemented in the classroom, and providing quality job-embedded professional learning on a monthly basis tied back to teacher need.

Our teachers work diligently to ensure our students' needs are being met, and we continue to strive for excellence. We opened a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Math) lab in the 2013-14 school year, so that we could provide students with rich, hands-on, experiential learning. We felt students could benefit from additional science inquiry, problem solving, and collaborative learning. Subsequently, in the 2016-17 school year, we opened the STAR (Strategic Thinking and Reasoning) Lab where students are given a problem they must solve using collaborative thinking, communication, and reasoning. We continue to focus on integrating writing across the curriculum, so that students are able to see a connection between written work and the outside, real world. Our instructional coach models writing best practices in classrooms at every grade level on a weekly basis; and she plans with grade level teachers so that additional content standards are met through writing instruction. In addition to academics, our school promotes physical excellence with the annual increase in students receiving the Presidential Physical Fitness Award and healthy competition through field days. Many of our teachers hold Morning Meetings which

incorporate cultural appreciation as well as social-emotional learning opportunities. Our counselors partner with teachers and parents as they facilitate needs-based support groups as well as classroom social-emotional lessons and activities.

Each year, Settles Bridge staff partners with parents and students to host a Veterans' Day celebration to honor our local veterans. Another annual event is our Spring Fling where community businesses, our PTO, and our staff hosts a carnival for students and families. Our chorus performs the National Anthem at the Atlanta Braves Baseball games and the Gwinnett Gladiators' Hockey games each year. We have after school clubs which provide students an opportunity to pursue their passions.

At the core of all we do at Settles Bridge Elementary is the people, not the programs. We understand that at the foundation of every decision we make, every event we host, and every successful grade our students score is the relationships that are cultivated. Our vision is that every student and every adult who passes through Settles Bridge Elementary will be better for having done so, and we will all be stars no matter where we are.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Teachers at Settles Bridge Elementary (SBE) ensure that all students experience reasonable and challenging learning opportunities that guarantee the development of our vision to Be a Star No Matter Where You Are. The staff at SBE effectively collaborate, plan, and implement core curriculum instruction in English language arts, math, and social sciences aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE) and Forsyth County Schools' Learner Profile as well as life skills necessary for future success. Grade level curriculum maps are designed around the five tenets of the Learner Profile:

Pursue continuous learning by developing talents, interests, and passions while teaching to mastery. Exhibit strong personal qualities such as integrity and perseverance to achieve personal goals Utilize creative and critical thinking to define problems and create solutions as well as applying knowledge and skills to real world situations. Engage and contribute in a diverse society. Interact effectively and communicate responsibly through reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

Teachers at Settles Bridge implement an integrated balanced literacy framework for reading/ English language arts instruction. During the literacy block, teachers introduce and guide practice of the English Language Arts GSE through integrated social studies and science themes while students participate in guided reading, independent reading, word study, and both structured and unstructured writing opportunities. Two leveled reading libraries are utilized to provide teachers with the necessary instructional material to address the needs of emergent, on-level, and advanced readers. Students' instructional needs are assessed formally and informally through the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System. The results of these assessments guide teachers in the creation of mini-lessons utilizing fiction and non-fiction text to further students acquisition of decoding and/or comprehension skills. On any given day, one can observe whole group modeling of text, small group guided reading instruction, skill-based instruction, vocabulary/word work, individual conferencing about depth of knowledge and text analysis, and collaborative discussions amongst critical readers. The instructional coach provides teacher support by modeling reading and writing lessons in the classrooms along with providing grade level and individualized professional development opportunities.

One way our students demonstrate their mastery of reading, writing, listening, and speaking is by participating in the Optimist Club Oratorical Contest. Each year all of our fifth-grade students research, write, and prepare a three-minute speech on the topic of Optimism. Speeches are judged and scored under three criteria: poise, content of speech, and presentation delivery. School winners move on to the county competitions. In 2017, we had students place second and fifth at the Forsyth County Optimist Club competition.

The SBE mathematics program provides access to the GSE for all ability learners using a variety of instructional materials and scaffolding techniques. Each grade level plans instruction based on the domains and clusters identified in the GSE. Teachers utilize Number Talks to build mathematical fluency, develop conceptual understanding, and problem-solving skills. The EnVision MATH program by Pearson Learning provides teachers with the instructional materials to meet the needs of our diverse population including English Language Learners, advanced learners, and students participating in the Response To Intervention program at all levels. The EnVision program begins each lesson with an interactive, problem-based video, allowing students to interact with peers to determine appropriate solutions to real-world problems. This program also provides students with the necessary structured daily practice to build solid foundational skills through hands-on learning, concrete representation of abstract concepts, and a highly-engaging technology component that can be utilized to differentiate instruction.

At Settles Bridge, our students enjoy hands-on, experiential science instruction. A combination of teacher-created materials, structured investigation opportunities, and student discussion work in unison to ensure students develop the content knowledge necessary to satisfy the depth and rigor of the GSE. There are two unique, elective classes offered at Settles Bridge Elementary which complement and enrich the existing science curriculum. Students learn reasoning and creative problem solving in STAR lab (Strategic Thinking and Reasoning) and dive into integrated projects through STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and

Math). These cross-curricular courses are carefully planned using standards from each grade in an effort to fully support the classroom teacher.

We are proud of our commitment to integration of reading, writing, listening, and speaking with the Georgia Social Studies standards. Teachers use an inquiry, project-based format to pique curiosity and engagement. Our fifth-grade students, in cooperation with the 4-H club, participate in civic minded career cluster activities. These lessons build awareness of different career possibilities and provide fifth graders with forward thinking opportunities for exploration. Furthermore, our students integrate reading, writing, listening, & speaking standards with civic responsibility and real-world applications. For example, while studying Henry Ford and the Industrial Revolution, the fifth graders created an assembly line and manufactured scarves for a local homeless shelter. Fourth and fifth grade students write and produce our morning news show daily. Fourth grade students enrich their historical understanding by researching and participating in their version of a historical wax museum. Second graders are immersed in literature and learning about economics as they make and sell chocolate while reading *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, by Roald Dahl.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

In order to provide students with exposure to a wide range of skills beyond the core curriculum, Settles Bridge students participate in Art, Music, Physical Education (PE), Counseling, Strategic Thinking and Reasoning (STAR) lab, or Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) lab once every seven school days. Physical education classes are offered twice every seven days. Students' exposure to these areas in a seven-day rotation allows for all grade-alike teachers to engage in common planning time. Teachers use this common planning time to collaborate and make important decisions about students and instruction. We are proud of our special area rotation schedule that increases planning time for our teachers while also adding beneficial learning activities for the students.

Visual and performing arts are an integral part of our student's elementary curriculum. We believe that they are essential to developing the whole child. Our art and music teachers offer developmentally appropriate, sequential, and quality performance-based curricula to our students. Students are guided through multiple experiences that build mental constructs and develop self-expression. Students in each grade level share their passion and projects throughout the school year at chorus concerts and art shows. Our third graders, for example, participate in the highly anticipated recorder concert. Children practice and perform several selections to a packed crowd of parents and community members. Along with that, we have several children participate in the Forsyth County Elementary Honors Chorus each year. Our physical education (PE) department is committed to help students develop positive attitudes toward physical activities and a healthy lifestyle. They have adopted a sequential, developmentally appropriate curriculum that builds knowledge, skills, attitudes, and confidence needed to maintain a physically active and healthy life. In conjunction with our learner profile and state standards, the PE department has partnered with several outside companies to encourage integrity and achieving personal goals. They share a partnership with a local Dojo Martial Arts Organization and, most notably, Jump Rope for Heart in which they raised over \$10,000 for the American Heart Association. Their efforts are realized by an increasingly higher number of Presidential Fitness Award recipients each year.

The mission of the STAR lab is to help students reach a higher level of thought, imagination, and action. The STAR lab is not only designed to ensure that students leave school with skills to enhance their abilities to gather and analyze information, but it also is designed to develop critical thinking skills to problem solve and produce innovative ideas, products, and solutions. It was developed to provide tools students will need to meet the challenges of an increasingly complex world. Aligned with grade level standards, the curriculum involves learning about the design process, constructive and deconstructive thinking, working with others collaboratively, as well as reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

In the 2013- 2014 school year, we opened a STEM Lab to address our desire for growth in the sciences. It has become an active, student-centered learning space where students engage in questioning, problem solving, collaboration, and hands-on activities. The students learn to investigate global issues and develop solutions for real-world problems while applying the rigor of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Our STEM students have placed highly in Science Olympiad competition, regionally and at

the state level. Additionally, we host a Family Science Night at our school. Students and their families are able to participate in several fun, hands-on STEM activities such as making elephant toothpaste, puff cars, and glow in the dark slime.

Settles Bridge has two full-time counselors who deliver classroom guidance to students during the Specials rotation for each grade level. The lessons are aligned with American School Counselors Association (ASCA) Mindsets and Behaviors as well as Forsyth County School's Learner Profile and curriculum crosswalk for elementary counselors. These lessons support students' academic success and personal growth as well as aid in the development of healthy social and emotional behaviors and skills. In addition to classroom guidance, our counselors work with teachers to identify struggling students in social-emotional areas and provide counseling support groups throughout the year to help address these needs. In an effort to support school-wide character education, the counselors help to facilitate the implementation of the Book of the Month program. Each month, a book is selected by the principal to highlight a character trait. The counselors work with a team of teachers to create lessons for each homeroom to complete every Monday related to the character trait of the month. To further develop student leadership skills, the counselors started a select group of approximately 35 fifth-grade students called, Shine. Students for Shine are selected by application and recommendation only, and they meet as a team and perform service-related tasks throughout the year. Monthly activities and lesson topics include leadership, service, self-awareness, personal growth, accountability, and interpersonal skills.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

The success of every student is paramount at Settles Bridge, thus teachers employ a gradual release teaching strategy to allow for a greater depth of understanding and confidence when students apply knowledge. Implementing pre- and post-assessments, teachers use a backward design model where curriculum, instruction, and assessments are monitored and adjusted in ways that reflect student growth as well as needs for enrichment and/or remediation. Student data examination is inherent in teacher planning and professional practice. Anecdotal notes, running records, observations, and assessments provide opportunities for teachers to differentiate and plan to best meet student needs. All of our support teachers collaborate with grade levels and individual teachers to ensure that maximum support and enriching environments can be achieved. Teaching methods include an acknowledgement of learning styles, an understanding of optimal learning environments, and a deep appreciation for students as unique individuals who may need various modes of instruction. Teachers' lessons include activities that center on personalized instruction, intervention, explicit and systematic whole and small group instruction. Students in all grade levels are monitored and assessed using the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System along with informal running records to examine progress in the areas of fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension in both fiction and non-fiction work. The results from these assessments are used to maintain consistency in increasing rigor in regard to text complexity and stretching students' reading goals. Students are placed into flexible groups based on either a reading strategy or skill need. Teachers carefully design explicit lessons to help students analyze tasks, be flexible with various approaches, and choose appropriate actions to reach a goal such as decoding unknown words, monitoring text self-corrections, asking questions, and retelling the story or the main idea of a selection. Teaching skills involves practice and feedback to improve automaticity and fluency. As students become more proficient, the reading focus changes to derive deeper meaning from texts. Students learn how to annotate their texts to identify and analyze concepts such as figurative language, inferences, theme, author's purpose, dialogue use, and characterization. Additionally, students may be placed in the Early Intervention Program (EIP) if they are struggling in reading or math. These students receive an additional forty-five-minute reading and/or math segment daily. Students are initially identified through a universal screening process for lower grades (K-3) and standardized state test scores for upper grades (4-5). After the initial screening, teachers refer students during monthly Instructional Support Team (IST) meetings. This is a Response To Intervention, problem-solving meeting where all teachers on a team along with the Instructional Coach collaborate and brainstorm interventions to help a child be successful. To ensure that all students' academic needs are met, we provide both co-taught and resource segments for students at all grade levels who are supported through special education, English as a Second Language (ESL), or EIP services. Our teacher of gifted students utilizes a pull-out segment each day for every grade level so that she is able to address the Georgia Standards of Excellence at a deeper level for our students who qualify for gifted services. In addition, we have gifted-certified teachers at all grade levels who plan

with their teams to ensure we are infusing higher-level learning throughout the school day in all academic areas.

In an effort to enhance writing instruction, our school provides in-house training to unpack the writing standards and an in-depth study on improving young authors. The training provides teachers with a framework to create lessons that progress in levels of rigor and build on writing ability. Our instructional coach meets with teams and individual teachers to discuss instructional essentials in the classroom. Teachers choose lessons for which they would like modeling or support in the classroom. The lessons vary depending on the teacher and where he or she may need support. For instance, in the same grade level, even though all teachers are working on narrative writing, the instructional coach may model a lesson on developing details in one classroom and a lesson on peer collaboration in another. Teachers then meet as a team and with the coach to reflect on how the strategies are working and to determine the next appropriate steps in the development of young authors. Technology is an integral component of how our teachers differentiate instruction and engage students in learning. All classrooms have interactive whiteboards, Chromebooks, and laptop carts for additional computers if needed. Students are able to use technology to do research, improve study skills, read books, and find relevant connections to the classroom. They are able to create projects and presentations that meet their personal needs as learners in a globally diverse and technologically advanced world.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Settles Bridge Elementary (SBE) creates a student-supported culture through various means to ensure that our children are engaged and motivated to look for ways to grow and improve. Students know that their lives make a difference at Settles Bridge Elementary School. We are fortunate to have a thriving mentoring program with community volunteers as well as high school and middle school role models from our feeder schools serving as mentors. The purpose of this program is to provide students with encouragement, friendship, and additional positive role models. Participation in mentoring can help students feel more connected to school and their peers, increases academic motivation, confidence, and self-esteem. Mentors spend 30 minutes weekly with their SBE buddy; this time is spent listening, encouraging, and being a friend to their student partner. They may spend time reading books together, playing games, or just “hanging out” together.

The Shine program is an opportunity for students to develop leadership skills to serve as role models and demonstrate positive school culture through such acts as community service projects, welcoming new students, serving at school events, and assisting in duties throughout the building. These young leaders learn how to work together for the improvement of our school and support of fellow students. Shine students demonstrate the qualities that represent the culture of Settles Bridge.

Our student recognition program, Galaxy Awards, allows staff members to recognize students for their contribution to learning and working with others in and outside the classroom. Families are invited to attend a Galaxy Awards Breakfast and share in their child’s recognition for positively impacting our school culture. The Galaxy Award winners, with their families, are able to spend time with school leaders to praise the success of the children. Bringing students, parents, and educators together for the common goal of celebrating student success builds upon the strong culture of community.

New teachers to SBE are brought into the culture of our school through our New Educator Orientation (NEO) program. This tiered program developed by our administration, instructional coach, and teacher-leader team provides the foundation and support for integrating into the teaching profession as well as gaining experience into our school culture. Our new teachers work closely with a mentor along with the NEO team for professional development.

Our administration consistently supports all teachers and promotes “family first” when it comes to personal circumstances. They encourage professional growth while still modeling a work/ personal life balance. Administration often looks for ways to provide small treats for the staff such as hot cocoa on cold mornings, movie tickets for a “date night”, and jeans passes to reward teachers for their hard work. Appreciating the staff is a joint effort by the administration and the PTO, who provides teacher grants for classroom supplies and teacher luncheons.

The SBE Sunshine Committee dually serves as the social committee and the support staff in difficult times. They work to hosts and/or create opportunities for staff members to feel connected to each other. This sense of belonging in our school has been enhanced by baby and wedding showers, holiday parties, holiday-themed fun and games for staff at Halloween, winter holidays, and Valentine’s Day. Each day, we send out in an email and announce on the morning news the birthdays as one more way to honor and recognize our staff.

These school-based activities and organizations further the administration’s daily goal to create an environment where all students, staff, and volunteers feel valued and appreciated.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Settles Bridge Elementary is a part of greater family that is our community. Events such as Veteran’s Day Memorial Service bring families and the community at-large into Settles Bridge. Our students are directly

engaged with our veterans through chorus performances and student-written essay presentations. Our Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is an active part of this community event as they serve our invited United States Veterans and families home-made food and drinks for the celebration service. Veteran's Day brings our staff, students, families, and community together to celebrate and remember those who have served our country.

Our school works closely with the PTO to hold several family and community events throughout the year. Events such as Bingo Night, Movie Night, and Spring Fling not only bring families together to share in our school culture but also contribute to our surrounding community through local vendors and companies to provide services for these events. As a result, we have developed strong and lasting relationships with local businesses.

Through our music department, our students are involved in cultural community events throughout the area. For example, our chorus performs at several sporting events such as the Gwinnett Gladiators game. The music teacher put on the musical, *The Aristocats*, which was open to the community for several show performances, resulted in tremendous success and community attendance. All Settles Bridge Elementary students at every grade level are provided the opportunity to participate in a musical concert for their families. Events such as these allow our children to demonstrate learned skills and engage with those beyond our school walls.

Principal for a Day brought in a community leader to experience first-hand the current educational practices within our school. An executive from Forsyth Northside Hospital worked alongside our Principal for one day to gain understanding of student and teacher relationships, academic rigor, and social emotional development for our young community members.

To support our families and their schedules, we offer two Curriculum Nights that allow parents to meet with classroom teachers to learn about the academic and developmental expectations within the grade level. Curriculum night is offered in two sessions so that families can attend the time which best meets their schedules. The administration at SBE and community members at-large emphasize the importance of this event so that students are ensured success through unified support at school and at home.

3. Professional Development:

Teachers at SBE are committed to developing STARS by being a Super Star themselves. The climate of Settles Bridge is one of self-improvement and best practices that are focused on improving student achievement. Professional development integrates adult learning styles, teachers' professional experience, and teacher choice. Staff members participate in self-selected learning communities that align with the goals that mirror the Learner Profile and GSE. All teachers participated in vertical grade level POW (Perfecting Our Work) Teams. These teams centered on the DuFour's critical questions of professional learning: What do the student's need to know and be able to do? How will we know they have learned it? What will we do if they didn't learn it? and What will we do if they already know it? Many teachers used this opportunity to participate in book studies that promote a specific teaching strategy or pedagogy in the classroom. These communities resulted in the guiding work toward common school wide rubrics in writing, implementing Google Classroom, and creating vertical & horizontal relationships within our staff. Additionally, through the collaboration with county initiatives, fifth grade teachers developed Math Pathways, a framework for personalized instruction based on the developmental needs of their students in math.

Most of our teachers are frequently working to refine their craft through endorsements (including gifted, science, math, reading, and ESOL), advanced degrees (master's, specialist, and doctoral students), and workshops (Reading Horizons, Envision Math, and Picture Perfect Science). All teachers participated in District Collaboration Days and learning sessions with our Academic Instructional Coach.

School personnel are engaged in mentoring, coaching, and induction programs that support continuous instructional improvement. Teachers who are new to the profession along with those new to Settles Bridge participate in the New Educator Orientation (NEO) Induction program. The mission of the coaching and

Induction program is to support and retain highly qualified teachers at our school.

Teachers new to Settles Bridge participate in monthly NEO meetings focusing on school procedures and teacher evaluation rubrics. They are also paired with a grade level mentor for the school year to help support their work. Mentors receive mentor-specific training and are required to maintain records of their meetings to help support the mentor/ mentee relationship. Our NEO program is a tiered plan that allows us to differentiate the needs of teachers based on experience. Teachers who have been teaching less than 5 years participate in NEO 2. This group works with the Instructional Coach and NEO team to focus on an instructional improvement goal. Our Instructional Coach meets with the NEO groups and grade levels to support student focused improvement goals and offer professional learning in specific areas.

4. School Leadership:

Settles Bridge Elementary School (SBE) operates under shared governance and leadership that promotes and supports student performance, school effectiveness, and developing the whole child. The focus of our team is to meet the needs of all students and teachers academically, emotionally, and socially in order to develop our Stars “no matter where they are.” The leadership and staff at Settles Bridge deliberately foster a culture that is consistent with the school’s purpose and direction. Starting with the Forsyth County Schools’ Learner Profile, teachers pursue continuous learning, exhibit strong personal qualities, utilize creative and critical thinking, engage and contribute, and interact effectively.

Our leadership team meets monthly and works together to provide guidance to ensure that the students and staff have multiple opportunities to learn, grow, and succeed. We are committed to constant improvement at SBE. Our Principal is the instructional leader in our school. She is a visible model of our standards and works closely to develop relationships with her staff and community. She reads books with social and emotional positive themes on the morning news and can be seen daily around the building encouraging our students. She works diligently to ensure Settles Bridge has policies and practices in place that support the school’s purpose and direction which includes Forsyth County Board of Education policies, county and school staff handbooks, and student handbooks. The Principal is continually working in partnership with our Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), Local School Council, and school leaders. Her focus on student accomplishment is evident in these collaborations as new and innovative programs have been implemented including the Reading Horizons phonics program, and refurbishing the book room.

Settles Bridge has two Assistant Principals. The roles of our assistant principals include supervising daily school operations as they split the grade levels kindergarten through second grade and third through fifth. The primary role however, is to build relationships with teachers to support them in their work. They collaborate with teachers to define instructional needs, identify strategies/ interventions for students, and provide critical feedback to advance instruction.

Another integral part of our leadership at SBE is our Leadership Team and School Improvement Team. These teams are comprised of the Instructional Technology Specialist (ITS), Instructional Coach, the counselors, and representatives in each grade level along with our support departments including the special education and special area courses (art, music, PE). The School Improvement team provides a pivotal role in supporting staff members with professional development and growth. It is consistently supported by the governing body and given the autonomy to make decisions that most effectively maximize student instruction and achievement.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Student learning and relationships have always been at the heart of Settles Bridge and has the single -most effect on our success. The administrators, staff, and teachers ensure our vision to Be a Star No Matter Where You Are! We accomplish this through our focus on the school’s mission which is to provide students with challenging academics, social-emotional learning, physical fitness, and cultural appreciation. Our teachers understand that we must meet the needs of the whole child and are highly competent in caring for our students while simultaneously inspiring them to excel.

When walking into our school, people experience a positive, welcoming, and engaging environment. Visitors always comment on the inviting climate of our school. Building community is paramount at Settles Bridge Elementary and starts well before school calendar begins. Our Principal invests her time to visit neighborhoods holding a “Meet & Greet” for newly entering Kindergarten parents and students. Teachers ensure that the first parent contact is positive with a welcome note and phone call. Additionally, students and parents are welcomed in before classes begin to meet the teacher, see their classroom, and visit with their new and old friends. Throughout the year relationships are highlighted and maintained through curriculum nights, student led conferences, and monthly parent involvement opportunities.

In a continued effort to promote relationship-building, our Principal is committed to the wellbeing of the staff and begins each staff meeting with a “Tell me something good” session. Staff members use this as an opportunity to celebrate with each other the positive and exciting events happening in their classrooms, at home, or in the community in which they are involved. People love to share and celebrate staff members graduating with higher degrees, getting new homes, or making great progress with a new instructional strategy. Our teachers believe that they are responsible not only for the students in their homeroom but for all children at Settles Bridge. They work tirelessly to collaborate sharing best practices, and interventions to ensure academic and personal success.

While many schools in the metro-Atlanta area are diverse in population, several schools have remarkable achievement scores, and others have unique programs, the one thing that makes Settles Bridge Elementary stand out above all others is the focus on relationships. It has been said that ‘people don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.’ Settles Bridge Elementary has embraced this idea as fact, and we know the relationship is the foundation of all that we do. Each day the entire staff and student body recite in unison our creed which includes the line, “My life makes a difference at Settles Bridge Elementary.” This phrase is a daily reminder that each person has a special and unique gift to contribute to our school and our world and that their contributions are valued. Through this firm belief in relationships, our staff and students are supported in every facet to be successful now and into the future. Together we all make a difference. It is the one thing that makes us great!