

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):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 3 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban
 - Rural or small city/town
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2017 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	19	22	41
1	26	18	44
2	18	17	35
3	23	19	42
4	21	19	40
5	12	17	29
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	119	112	231

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 0 % Black or African American
 - 1 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 91 % White
 - 7 % 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: 9%

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	11
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	10
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	21
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	227
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.09
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	9

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 50 %
Total number students who qualify: 115

8. Students receiving special education services: 20 %
47 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>4</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>1</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>17</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>12</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>32</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>3</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: 7
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	14
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	13
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	29
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

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 16:1

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	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2017.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school’s mission or vision statement.

To develop responsible, caring, engaged students who are ready to meet the opportunities ahead of them.

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

Marion Elementary School is stationed in Marion, KS, which is located in Marion County in southcentral Kansas. The town is positioned in the western portion of the Flint Hills, and is an hour or less drive away from seven cities with populations of 20,000 or more. The city population of Marion is 1,927 as of the 2010 census, and the median age is 44 years old. While the main employment source is agriculture and farming, due to the rural location of the town and district, many individuals work out of town and commute each day. The town of Marion was named after Francis “Swamp Fox” Marion, a Brigadier General during the American Revolutionary War. A historic town, Marion takes pride in their past and keeps small town values a priority.

Marion Elementary School is a part of the USD 408 Marion-Florence school district that serves the towns of Marion and Florence and covers 237 sq. miles of Marion County.

Built in 1960 as an elementary school for grades 3 through 6, Marion Elementary was constructed on a piece of land on the northeast side of Marion. In 1992, an additional wing and gymnasium was added on, in order to become a K-6 school, due to the closing of Bown Corby Elementary that same year. Another addition was added in 1998 to include eight new classrooms, this time to make more room for expanding enrollment.

As a Title I school, Marion Elementary serves Kindergarten through 5th grades, with Head Start Preschool located in the building. The school was home to sixth grade as well, until it was moved to the middle school building in 2015. Our school has one Title I teacher and two Title I support staff, who work with regular and special education teachers in order to serve each student in our building, ensuring improvement and success at all levels.

Marion Elementary is a place where students come first, and placing initiatives into our school is nothing new. Homework assistance, classroom guidance with the counselor, classroom meetings, our anti-bullying program, discipline program, one-to-one computers, book buddies, social/emotional curriculum, and STEM have been a few of the pieces that have been very influential in how we structure our school, while we prioritize making Marion Elementary the most successful it can be.

Other learning avenues brought about at Marion Elementary School have been created to help students grow individually. We have implemented programs, such as Coding Club, “Running Wild,” which is our running club, National Elementary Honor Society (NEHS), NAIA Character of Champions Reading Club with Tabor College, “Bigs” program with high school students, and Watch D.O.G.S. These have been very important to our school and will continue to be so in the future.

Having well rounded students is something we take pride in here at Marion Elementary School. Taking kids and exposing them to new experiences or interests takes place throughout the year and allows for growth. Fine Arts Day, STEM Night, Career Cruising, Field Day, Ag Awareness Day, Character Education Kick-off, field trips, and singing the National Anthem at a professional hockey game are some of the opportunities the students of Marion Elementary are presented and used for building interests.

Since Marion Elementary School does not have a mascot, the school has a theme each year which revolves around our Six Pillars of character education, classroom guidance, positive behavior intervention system (PBIS), and classroom décor. The new theme and slogan builds excitement every year, which gets our school year started out on a positive note. Our school assembly begins every morning with positivity and energy to start the day. Variety helps also, as every grade level has music and P.E. class, and fifth grade has band, each day as well.

Here at Marion Elementary School and in the USD 408 Marion-Florence school district, we have very low teacher turnover; and most teachers have taught at multiple grade levels, which allows for great discussion and support for all of our teachers. Those discussions occur at the grade levels (Friday morning collaboration, planning time), school level (faculty meetings, professional development/in-service, building improvement team), and district level (district student improvement team, administration meetings).

What happens outside of Marion Elementary also plays an important role in the success of the school. The Parent Advisory Council (PAC) has been extremely beneficial in their support through the years, such as by the purchasing of iPads for teachers, STEM Legos, indoor recess kits, classroom fans, gift certificates for teachers, Box Top collection, and fundraising for a new playground for the school.

We here at Marion Elementary are humbled to be nominated as a Blue Ribbon School and are excited to see how this could make our institution even more connected and successful moving forward.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

With Marion Elementary School being the lone elementary school in the district, decisions are decided by the staff and administration through piloting programs, discussions, and aligning curriculum with the state standards. The decision is sent on to the District Student Improvement Team (DSIT) for discussion and then approved by the USD 408 Board of Education (BOE). Each subject area is aligned with the Common Core Standards and are used to connect multiple subjects if and when possible. In order for the standards to be taught, I CAN statements are used to help with monitoring what has been taught in each subject.

Math Expressions is the curriculum being taught at Marion Elementary School and is in its third year since adoption. Each grade level spends seventy (70) minutes on average a day and teachers incorporate other subject areas when possible. Math Expressions is a ten year research based program that focuses on conceptual understanding with strong problems and understanding mathematics through real-world situations. This also allows for teachers to make connections between topics and subjects throughout the core subjects. With an online student activity book, students are given more tools to practice math concepts on a daily basis.

Our current reading curriculum is in a transition phase as we have decided and have been approved on a new series. As far as what is being used currently, Marion Elementary School uses the Harcourt Trophies series. Classroom teachers have been needing to supplement resources to cover Common Core Standards in order to successfully teach in the classroom. On average, teachers spend seventy-five (75) minutes a day on reading instruction and focus on key Common Core standards and concepts through daily practice.

The new reading program starting next school year, McGraw-Hill Wonders for K through 4th Grades, is another research based literacy program that gives the teachers many opportunities to integrate different subject(s) through stories in the textbook. This program allows for teachers to build strong literacy skills and to push students in complex texts. The program also has a key component in the Close Reading Companion that helps students organize their thoughts, cite evidence, and work on analytical writing. The online program offers teachers a data dashboard to analyze students. Students can easily access online learning tools to engage in activities related to literacy lessons. Fifth grade has adopted Houghton Mifflin Journeys for its reading program starting next year. It has the same components as Wonders, with more integration of social studies and science topics. This series will allow for a smooth transition to middle school.

Discovery Works is the curriculum used in Science at Marion Elementary, which is taught thirty (30) minutes on average at each grade level. While using the textbooks most days, the supplemental piece is important in order for the standards to be met throughout the school year. Some examples include the Star Base program for fifth grade, fourth grade Environment Fest and health speakers throughout the school year. But one of the most important ways the standards are met is through Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) projects and Project Based Learning (PBL) activities. Both use hands-on learning with students leading the lesson while teachers guide. Rubrics are used to grade and to give feedback to students in a quick manner. A science lab and STEM room are available for ample materials for staff to access every day.

Social Studies is taught every day for an average of thirty (30) minutes a day and McGraw Hill is used as the textbook program for kindergarten through fifth grade. Not only is social studies taught at its own time, but also is interconnected into reading in many grade levels on many different occasions. With the age of the curriculum, grade level teachers at Marion Elementary School must supplement in order for the standards to be taught. Novel studies at the intermediate level and picture books at the primary level are used for storytelling. CNN Kids, Time for Kids, and Scholastic Kids are used for current events and Discovery Education for historical videos. Walking field trips and speakers have been great resources for students to connect what is taught in the classroom and first-hand accounts about the topic.

Supplemental resources at Marion Elementary School are vital in order for each core subject to be taught correctly and the opportunity to incorporate other subjects into each other gives the teachers the ability to be creative throughout all curriculums. While Marion Elementary School does not follow a scope and sequence in the core subjects, teachers direct their teaching through “I CAN” statements which are connected to the state standards. This allows for more flexibility when supplemental resources should be used and more teacher discussions during collaboration.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

At Marion Elementary School, we have been made it a priority to make sure students have the opportunity to be engaged outside the four core curriculum areas. Marion Elementary has made sure every year that each student receives physical education (P.E.) and vocal/band each day. This allows for the students to be active and motivated by movement and expression. Our goal at Marion Elementary School is to introduce students to new and fun curriculums and programs that can make a difference in finding talents and interests that students may not know they have.

Physical education class take place each day for twenty-five (25) minutes a day and takes place in the Marion Elementary gymnasium. The two curriculums used in P.E. are Kansas Healthy Kids and Shape America. P.E. is taught in units and correlates with events (Olympics, sports seasons, etc.) or incorporates core subjects when possible. Also taught during the year are health, human growth and development, injury prevention and student body inventory (SBI) is taken every nine weeks. The SBI shows progress for parents throughout the school year by measuring height, weight, speed and flexibility. Swimming is also taught three times in the fall and spring at the indoor pool located across the street from Marion Elementary. To promote healthy lives, the P.E. teacher has monthly challenges that students can follow each day and bring back for a prize each month and the after-school club running wild.

For twenty-five (25) minutes a day, music is taught to each class through multiple resources. Students are taught band which is offered to fifth graders for thirty (30) minutes each day and is the beginning of foundations of instrumental music. Both teachers teach vocal music, with one teacher at the K-2 level and the other at grades 3-5. Songs and activities are used out of the music book, Making Music, while concert pieces are used through sheet music bought through the local music company and online resources. Another resource used throughout the school year to supplement is the game plan curriculum that focuses on rhythm, beats and movements. Each music teacher teaches with the guidance of the state standards and will incorporate core subject when possible.

Classroom guidance in each classroom is a piece we feel is extremely important to the wellbeing of our students. The school counselor leads a lesson in guidance, social-emotional learning, and/or character education with the intent of students taking what is learned and applying the strategies in the school day. Each class has classroom guidance every other week and every meeting reviews what was taught before and builds on to the next lesson. Using the social-emotional and school counseling standards in each lesson and in one-on-one session with students, Marion Elementary is making a difference in students learning of social and coping skills, self-worth, as well as career pathways and student inventories.

Coding is offered for grades three through five. Coding has been implemented and taught by the principal since 2015. Since Marion Elementary School is located in rural Kansas, an access for computer science was needed, and thus, coding has been a success every year. Code.org is used due for the amount of resources that each student has and build on their computer science knowledge throughout the curriculum. The Hour of Code is also used in first and second grades in the month of December to have each student introduced into computer science.

While art is not a class at Marion Elementary, the fine arts curriculum is incorporated through hands-on projects like STEM and PBL. We host a fine arts day each year that connects many state standards through the activities during the day. The standards were updated and approved this school year in order for a K-12 link for each grade level. Many classrooms incorporate art into their instruction to have a hands-on experience with the lesson that gives the students an avenue to be creative.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Here at Marion Elementary, we feel that having high expectations in our classrooms is vital in how we are successful with each student and we do this with early and data driven instruction. We use a variety of testing instruments to decipher where the needs are with each student and how each of those students needs are to be met. With the tools used and the data collected, we are able to differentiate our instruction to meet their needs.

Easy-CBM is used as the primary assessment tool throughout the year, as each student is tested three times a year to show a benchmark and then also progress monitored throughout the year in order to show a more detailed look at the progress of each student. Easy-CBM encompasses both reading and math which gives us detailed data for each student and provides the information needed to make decisions on grouping in Multi-Tier Systems of Support (MTSS). The Diagnostic Indicator of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) is also used at Kindergarten for phonemic awareness and for MTSS groups.

Also used as a data source are both the Northwest Evaluation Association Assessment (NWEA) which is used at the beginning and the end of each school year in order to show gains in math, reading, and language arts during a whole school year, and the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Reading Inventory (HMHRI). The data gathered through NWEA is used at the end of the year to begin placing students into MTSS groups for the following year. NWEA is also used to give more information to parents as to how well their student is improving and/or what improvements we as a school want to make through interventions. HMHRI is also given at the beginning and end of the school year, but also in December as a midway point to show reading growth in each student and what reading level each are at. We look at this data to see any correlations between scores on NWEA and HMHRI to spot any improvements that interventions may help with.

When using each of these assessment tools, we then can have a better picture of our students and discussions can be held of how grouping will be set up, what skill/skills will be taught and mastered, and what the goal is for each student. This allows for both leveling during MTSS and also skill building in each student. The higher-level students are grouped in larger sized groups and work on skills through book studies, project based learning, or goal led instruction. Lower level students are placed in smaller sized groups and work on specific skills that have been flagged as a weakness on progress monitoring and prior group work. Meetings between Title I, grade level teachers, and grade level Special Education teacher happen every three weeks during that grade level MTSS time.

Our student improvement team, REACH, meets every month for teachers to bring students to a group of other school staff and specialists in order to discuss issues or concerns that are being seen on assessments, and classroom and independent work. This allows for that teacher to receive intervention ideas to implement into the classroom. Once documentation and data has been collected, the teacher comes back to the team to discuss what is working, what did not, and what other interventions have been tried. If improvement is seen with the student, it is decided the interventions are working. When the interventions do not work, the team decides to try different interventions, a different skills group or even testing to see if the need is there for more help through an individualized education plan (IEP).

One method that Marion Elementary prides itself on is the incorporation of core subjects into each other. Grade level teachers at Marion Elementary try to find ways to incorporate each day and do so through PBL and STEM projects. Each grade level must do at least three (3) STEM projects a semester. All grade levels use project based learning through Interactive Distance Learning (IDL) courses that are often used as a resource that cannot be found in and around Marion County.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Marion Elementary School has put an emphasis on school climate and culture over the last seven years since the current principal has been at Marion Elementary. He believes that for students to feel welcomed, supported, and successful, faculty and staff need to make strong connections at the beginning of each day. Connections start with the relationships that are built between each stakeholder in and around the school. Each day, teachers have duties, in which they welcome students to school, as well as see them off at the end of the day. This ensures students safety, as well as allowing teachers to be able to form relationships with every student, not just their own.

Engaging students with positivity has been a strength through our Six Pillars Character Education program. Through this program, Marion Elementary faculty and staff nominate students for Character Winner of the Month. Each nominee earns a character sticker, as they have set an example to show how students are making an impact in the school by their good character. This also goes along with our Good News Call of the Day, in which the principal makes a phone call home to share and celebrate a student's achievement. Students also receive positive reinforcement incentives in the classroom with our Positive Behavior Interventions of Support (PBIS) program and our End-of-the-Year Awards Ceremony to celebrate achievement in each grade level.

Using the thought "What is best for students?" is how any decision is made in our school. Allowing everyone to have a voice makes everyone feel empowered and part of the solution. Faculty and staff meet every month for a faculty meeting that covers what is occurring in the school, as well as presentations given from staff on ideas that they have brought back from trainings, workshops, etc., or strategies that they have implemented in the classroom. This has allowed for our teachers to have a way to be leaders, and have the ability to be a part of workshops and trainings that will make a difference in the classroom and building.

Teachers are valued for their hard work and dedication by positive notes left by the Principal, the Twelve Days of Christmas for Teachers, recognition in faculty meetings, Parent Advisory Council (PAC) lunches, and appreciation days throughout the school year as well as fun staff collaboration meetings. Within the dynamics of Marion Elementary, the school climate has been a top priority and will strive to always improve in the future with the students and teachers first in mind.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

One of the goals in the mission statement of Marion Elementary is to encourage parental responsibility and involvement in their child's education. We offer many different ways for a positive connection between the school and families. The school hosts a back-to-school night before the first day of school so that parents and students can meet their teachers and start forming a relationship. Also, Family Read Night occurs every year in March in which families come to enjoy activities together revolving around books and reading. Watch DOGS was implemented this year in order to encourage more male participation in our school. Great success has been seen by the amount of volunteers throughout the school year and the positive feedback we have received from the volunteers. Marion Elementary also hosts family lunch days, Kindergarten round up, band and vocal student concerts, as well as field day. These are great opportunities for students and families to be involved in Marion Elementary.

Being a rural school, Marion Elementary must always find a way to use all of the resources available to our highest capabilities. Whether it be through donations from the local grocery store to our school for celebrations, having one of the town's business owners come in to give a presentation, or having parent volunteers come in to work one on one with students, Marion Elementary is always welcoming to anyone that wants to make our school better.

Tabor College student-athletes come to Marion Elementary every Tuesday to read to our students during lunch and play with them at recess. Community Christmas looks at helping out our students who are less

fortunate during the holidays and provides essentials for the families as well as presents for the students. Finally, having volunteers from our community and high school students in our classrooms every day has made a difference by students receiving one on one time and working on positive strategies.

Communication is also vital in connecting families and the community. We have a monthly school newsletter, e-mail/phone information system, and grade and district level social media platforms to go with our Building Improvement Team (BIT) and Parent Advisory Council (PAC). These committees and forms of communication have been a great outlet to get important information out to our patrons and community members on a daily basis.

Marion Elementary School strives to have positive engagement with families by getting them involved however possible. The community embraces what Marion Elementary School means to the town, and Marion Elementary wants to always be proactive in making sure everyone is invited to make the school better each day.

3. Professional Development:

Every year, Marion Elementary has set up Professional Development for the improvement of student achievement, with the thought in mind of how to challenge and build essential skills in each student at each grade level.

In our first year of the Kansas Education Systems Accreditation (KESA), Marion Elementary and USD 408 are prioritizing Professional Development (PD) through the 5 R's: relationships, relevance, responsive culture, rigor, and results. This measurement will allow for proper PD within Marion Elementary School in order to be able to attain goals set in KESA.

Professional development at Marion Elementary is developed beginning with discussions in the spring semester for the upcoming year. PD is talked about at the building and district level, by the administration team, District Student Improvement Team (DSIT), and core curriculum committees. These groups, along with faculty discussions, compile a list of topics by priority and set up in-service and PD days throughout the year. An example from this year would be the establishment of a timeline for adopting a new English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum for the 2018-2019 school year. Marion Elementary started the school year using curriculum samples from two different companies. Faculty collaboration was used for discussion, webinars were set up on two in-service days, and grade levels used samples from each curriculum in their classrooms. From that, a decision was brought to DSIT for approval regarding the curriculum before going to the Board of Education (BOE) later in the month.

Marion Elementary has set up PD for the improvement of student achievement and teaching in the classroom. The reason for the success at Marion Elementary is the relationship that is made between the two and how it can be effective. The use of our Core Subject Chair Committee gives Marion Elementary teachers the ability to meet on each core subject and discuss what can be improved upon through professional development, workshops, in-services and district meetings.

Marion Elementary uses many resources to improve as a staff, and incorporates what is learned into the classroom for the purpose of making students even more successful. The discussion of "How will this make Marion Elementary, the students and myself better?" takes place in each professional development opportunity, thus allowing Marion Elementary to excel as a school. Putting all of our knowledge together is what makes Marion Elementary achieve our goal of "Encouraging and enlightening lifelong learners."

4. School Leadership:

Marion Elementary has been led by the current Principal for the last seven years; and, he has carried the same mantra for the staff as he has when he started: The three C's. Compassion for each student each day in the classroom, confidence in each teacher's teaching and leadership, and be competitive in desiring to be

the best school possible. This has led to teachers having more freedom to implement new strategies, become more transparent in goal setting, and have a hand in the short and long-term success of Marion Elementary.

The principal has built a strong climate and culture, allowing teachers to be a part of decision making when that decision has a school wide effect. He sets the goals as the teachers lead discussions, implements strategies, and mediates decision making through collaboration between staff. This has allowed for more transparency and comfortability between principal and staff throughout the seven years.

The principal also oversees the duties and responsibilities of staff on a daily basis. This is an easier task due to mutual respect and understanding of what is being ask of each staff member. Expectations are known and completed to the best of their ability, in order for students to be successful.

Not only has the principal made a difference, but the staff has been on the forefront in making Marion Elementary a leader in excellence. Each teacher is on at least three committees each year in order for the success to continue and the groups must meet throughout the year. The whole staff takes this as a point of improvement and looks at how the school and their classroom can become better every year.

Marion Elementary Parent Advisory Council (PAC) and Marion Elementary School Building Improvement Team (MESBIT) lead an incredible connection with the school and community members. While led by the principal and teachers, this has allowed for more participation of the community, and allows the shared vision of the school by both stakeholders in and out of the school setting.

Everyone in the school has the ability to lead, and that is evident in the success at Marion Elementary. Everyone is allowed to have a voice and that has created a positive and successful environment for each person involved. It has allowed for leaders at many levels and provides us with knowledge to help each other succeed.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Marion Elementary has made many different decisions to improve the culture and academics throughout the years, but one strategy that has made our school and, more importantly, our students successful has been the data driven collaborations and discussions throughout the building. In those meetings, the decisions have been an important piece to improvement, and been successful for many years.

One portion of these discussions occur every other Friday, for a half hour, and gives teachers the ability to talk, schedule, and incorporate new strategies and ideas together as a building team. Math and ELA textbook adoption, new curriculum and behavior program implementation, improving progress monitoring and testing have been a few topics that have been the focal point in the time given. While only thirty minutes every other week, the time has been great to connect as a building and allowed for discussions between the primary and intermediate grades.

Another way data discussions happen at Marion Elementary are through our REACH team meetings. This is our student improvement team, which meets once a month. We gather to discuss students who are struggling, brainstorm ideas for interventions, and collect data to follow up to see if improvement is occurring. This has allowed our teachers to focus even more on individual students and needs that may not currently be met.

While the last two have made a difference, the biggest difference has come from grade level meetings every three weeks over each student at Marion Elementary School. While we use a progress monitoring system called Easy-CBM, these discussions between the grade level teachers, SPED teachers and the Title I team give more perspective into reasoning behind the data that has been collected. These meetings place students in small groups by level and skill difficulties in our Multi-Tier Systems of Support (MTSS).

These discussions revolve around the fact that each student can use more practice and/or be taught new content in order to show growth as an individual. Every meeting lasts until each student is placed into a group which matches their skill goals. This allows for more in-depth discussion as to how we increase each student's success, and what is going to be the most beneficial in the short and long term.

This has been the most instrumental in gauging student success and what we can do to be even better with for each student at Marion Elementary.