

Part I – Eligibility Certification

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. All nominated public schools must meet the state's performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group and all subgroups, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2018 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2012 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, or 2017.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
9. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
10. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
11. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
12. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2017-2018) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 7 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	16	12	28
K	29	37	66
1	34	33	67
2	31	26	57
3	31	40	71
4	30	44	74
5	31	35	66
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	202	227	429

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 4 % Black or African American
 - 13 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 78 % 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: 11%

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	20
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	32
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	52
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	460
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.11
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	11

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 45 %
Total number students who qualify: 191

8. Students receiving special education services: 10 %
44 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>2</u> Autism | <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>4</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>3</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>6</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>24</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: 8
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.	19
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	9
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	7
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

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%	96%	97%	97%
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 help each child reach their potential academically, socially, and emotionally.

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

As you walk down the halls of Huntertown Elementary you will hear the sounds of students engaging in learning. You will see hallways alive with student work. You will see positive behavior expectations posted in all areas. You will see students engaged in technology, creating art, working on projects, reading, and engaged in communication using Kagan structures. You will see staff engaging students in conversations about learning. You will see teachers engaged in dialogue around data and curriculum in Professional Learning Communities (PLC). You will see parents volunteering in classrooms. You will see a school that believes in the whole child.

Huntertown is located in Versailles, Kentucky in Woodford County. Founded in 1792, Versailles is in Central Kentucky surrounded by farmland and some of the most famous horse farms in the Bluegrass Region. The total population of Woodford County is around 8,500 and serves 3,950 students. In 1981, the doors of Huntertown opened. At that time the school population consisted of primarily Caucasian, middle-classed families. Over the years, the community has expanded exponentially with an increase in our Hispanic population. At one point Huntertown served over 800 students, however, three years ago the district redistricted and currently serves a little over 400.

Huntertown is a school focused on small town traditions. Many of the staff members have taught here for over two decades. This has created a strong community. Huntertown is a school-wide Title I school with 45% free/reduced enrollment, 10% special education, and 10% English Language Learners (ELL). Over the past few years, our Hispanic numbers continue to grow. This presented a challenge to reach our newest students. A local church partners with us to provide a Hispanic outreach program, Avanza. Once a week our Hispanic students are bused to the church for Avanza. At Avanza, students are provided, activity, food and tutoring. The school works with the church to provide work that is on the child's instructional level. This partnership has helped our Hispanic students not only show academic growth but also gain language skills and confidence. Another partnership that provides opportunities for our students us is our partnership with the local parks and recreation. They provide opportunities for students to engage in physical activities such as Girls on the Run, Boys on the Court, soccer, basketball, archery, and lacrosse.

Each child is provided weekly instruction in core academics, non-core academics, and social-emotional curriculum. Huntertown provides a rigorous curriculum based on the Kentucky Common Core Academic Standards. Classroom teachers use the standards to create engaging lessons that challenge and meet the needs of our learners. The Jan Richardson Guided Reading structure is used daily. Students are engaged in reading text, discussing, and writing to demonstrate understanding. In math, teachers focus on using Concrete-Representational-Abstract (CRA) structures to design instruction. Through this method students are able to understand and apply mathematical knowledge. Our teachers integrate Kagan structures into all areas in order to increase student engagement and build relationships. The use of Kagan structures have been invaluable for our ELL and economically disadvantaged students.

We have a strong Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS). Teachers teach students how to be safe, responsible, and respectful in all areas. Students are rewarded and retaught as needed. Teachers also teach Second-Steps for social and emotional support. This is followed up by our guidance counselor in the classroom twice a month. Additionally, we celebrate students for being "Bucket Fillers". A Bucket Filler is someone who fills someone's bucket by being kind and helpful. Students are recognized for being a Bucket Filler by having their names announced and receive rewards. Further, administration celebrates students who are Bucket Fillers by mailing them post cards with specific reasons they are bucket fillers.

We have a strong Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) to problem solve students who are not achieving the level of expectations. At MTSS meetings, administration, school psychologist, counselor, and teachers meet to discuss each child that is not achieving at the expected level and create an intervention plan. This plan could be for academics or social emotional. Either way, we put interventions in place to meet the child's needs. With an intervention block built into our master schedule, we are able to meet the needs of all students.

Huntertown is proud of our academic excellence. For three years, we have been able to celebrate being a "School of Distinction" as determined by our end of the year state test. This past year, although our scores increased our state no longer recognizes schools as being a School of Distinction. For the past four years, we have continued to make gains in our core academic areas. We continue to work as a staff to evaluate our programs annually and determine needed changes and professional learning.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

At Huntertown, we provide a rigorous, engaging curriculum for all students. Our mission is to facilitate the development of each student's intellect, character, and physical and mental health. We aspire to help each student to become a productive, responsible citizen. Our curriculum and instructional practices are aligned to the Kentucky Academic Standards based on the Common Core. Our district has set pacing guides that all schools follow in order to ensure that students who are transient are exposed to all the curriculum. However, as a school, our teachers have autonomy to design and teach the content using engagement strategies. Our staff has been trained in Kagan structures thus embed them into all subjects.

Reading has been our targeted focus for several years based on data from several sources. Even though we continue to make significant gains each year in reading, we keep it as a focus because not all groups are being equally successful. We adopted the Jan Richardson's approach to guided reading three years ago and have seen gains with our struggling readers. Guided reading is a research-based approach to teaching reading that is an essential part of a balanced and comprehensive literacy program that provides explicit instruction in comprehension, writing, work knowledge, and fluency. Each day students receive 120 minutes of literacy instruction. Students are assessed on a regular basis using formative, summative assessments, Benchmark Assessment System (BAS), Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) Measure of Academic Progress (MAP), and FastBridge. Students who do not meet the grade level expectations are placed in interventions.

Students are engaged mathematically through various structures based on the Kentucky Academic Standards. The core of mathematics instruction matches current research that shows students maximize success in mathematics when actively engage in math, work on long application-based problems, and are provided the opportunity to struggle and receive feedback around that struggle. Students are provided ample opportunities to dialogue with peers about numbers, concepts, problem solving strategies, and the learning as a whole. The use of "Math/Number Talks" and "Kagan Cooperative Learning Structures" are two powerful examples of the engagement strategies that are present in core instruction. Teachers meet in PLCs to design lessons around the Common Core and the CRA sequence of instruction. Initial instruction of the skill/concept focuses on the use of concrete objects. When students demonstrate mastery on a skill of using objects, students then receive instruction and opportunity to describe and perform the concept/skill with models, drawings, and/or other types of representation of the skill/concept. Only after showing mastery with a skill/concept in the Concrete and Representational phrase will students be provided modeling and activities on performing the skill/concept using only numbers and mathematical symbols to demonstrate an Abstract level of understanding.

Our science program is focused on hands-on learning. Our teachers utilize Amplify interactive science resources to enhance their lessons. The foundational lesson is based on the Next Generation Science Standards with the use of National Geographic Textbook. Teachers integrate science into English Language Arts (ELA) by reading non-fiction books and writing about science content. In addition, teachers integrate experiments and STEM activities to increase student engagement. These activities help to deepen student understanding of concepts. After the Experiments and STEM activities, students use a critical lens to write about their thinking. This is an importation part of our science program. Further, in fourth grade, students participate in the Kentucky 4-H program. 4-H is an independent, non-profit, partner of the Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service and the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture.

At Huntertown we use integrated social studies methods where teaches integrate social studies into the ELA curriculum. This cross-curricular approach supports a multitude of learners, especially our ELL students who may not have experiences or exposure to language that emerges through the lens of social studies instruction. We use trade books to read and study the different themes in our core content. Children are exposed to biographies, first-hand accounts, diaries, etc. In addition, we use Flocabulary and Scholastic Magazine to teach current events. Students work to make connections with our past and our present.

Our preschool program is a comprehensive early education program serving at-risk, special needs and typically developing student in half sessions four days a week. Using developmentally appropriate practices, the Kentucky Early Childhood Standards are the basis for teaching and learning and are aligned to Kentucky Academic Standards for Kindergarten. Preschool teachers use the Teaching Strategies Gold curriculum and assessment system to measure learning at a minimum of three checkpoints a year. Students entering kindergarten at Huntertown score at 78% ready on the Brigance kindergarten screener compared to 64% county wide and 51% statewide.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

It is Huntertown's belief that we educate the whole child. All students are offered 60 minutes of non-core instruction daily in one of more of the following areas: visual arts, media/library, physical education, music and Chinese. In addition, students utilize technology in the media center and also in classrooms.

Each week students participate in one hour of music/creative movement instruction. Our program utilizes the Orff Schulwerk philosophy, providing students with numerous experimental learning opportunities before beginning to label musical concepts. The elements of music and dance are addressed through a variety of songs and activities. Students sing, chant, play instruments, improve/adapt songs and games, and improvise music and dance. Students have access to tubanos, djembes, xylophones, ukuleles, recorders and a variety of unpitched percussion instruments. Each grade level has a month during the school year that they perform. The performance highlights pieces they have composed or choreographed. Additionally, after school musical clubs are available for students in grades 2-5. For the last three years, student in grades 4-5 have participated in honor choir with fifth being invited to participate in string orchestra.

Students receive one hour of visual arts weekly. The focus is on creating and designing art through various mediums while allowing students to explore their own national talent. Students are taught to reflect and often use Kagan strategies to have conversations about art. Students also learn about a variety of artists that create art from all around the world. All grades display their art in numerous contests, programs, and showcases throughout the school year designed to feature and exhibit student's creative skills and artistic growth. Many of our students have won awards for projects they have created.

All students participate in one hour of physical education weekly. Our school utilizes FUNDamental Integrative Training (FIT) which incorporates activities to enhance skills related components of physical fitness. The program integrates age appropriate types of physical fitness. Students are given the opportunity to make choices to increase their endurance level. Students learn and practice a variety of movement skills while playing game and having fun.

The Library Media Center offers students a wide array of activities. On a weekly basis, students listen to stories read aloud corresponding to their classroom curriculum, check out books from a variety of genres, and acquire knowledge in media skills such as parts of a book, story elements, characteristics of different genres, and research skills. Students are encouraged to take Accelerated Reading tests weekly which assesses their comprehension of books they are reading. This assessment provides valuable information on the child's reading level. Makerspace is another aspect of our Library Media Center. Students work collaboratively with hands-on STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics) activities while having enriching discussions centered on their findings. Throughout the year, the library hosts various events such as decorating book character pumpkins, "Hour of Code", two books fair, visiting artist, book signings, and a spelling bee. It is a hub of activity for the school.

Technology is integrated throughout our school in all grades. Our school 1:1 Chromebooks in intermediate. Primary grades have enough iPads for 1:2. Additionally, we have two computer labs for student's access. Some school-wide technology programs that our student's use are: IXL, Lexia, Reading Plus, Prodigy Math, Reflect Math, and Accelerated Reader. Teachers incorporate technology into their lessons and students create products to reflect their learning by employing G Suite for Education. Students use Google Slides for presenting researched material, Google Drawings to depict math concepts, Google Docs to type their written work, etc. Our school has a Student Technology Leadership Program (STLP). This group of students meets weekly creating products using technology. Coding is practiced within our Library Media Center during the

"Hour of Code" and throughout the year.

We are fortunate to have a partnership with the University of Kentucky and Confucius Institute to offer Chinese to our students. We have had Chinese in our school for five years. The funding is provided through a Confucius Grant to develop Language, Culture and a partnership with China. The grant allows our students go gain a global perspective and supports global readiness in the Chinese language and cultural.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Huntertown teachers work together in Professional Learning Communities (PLC) to create high quality lessons based on student needs. This collaborative cultures empowers teachers to look at each child and work together to plan lessons to meet the needs of tier I, II and III. In PLCs teachers use formative assessments based on daily lessons, Measure of Academic Progress (a universal screener), summative assessments, end-of-the-unit assessment, Developmental Reading Assessment, and FASTbridge to determine extra supports or enrichment that are needed.

Tier I, core instruction, is planned for all students. Teachers flexibly group students within the classroom to provide differentiated core instruction. Teachers utilize Kagan strategies during core class in most subjects. Kagan structures provide a way for students who may not have the vocabulary, confidence, or skills to communicate effectively, a voice. Through the structures students practice academics and social skills. Teachers also utilize technology. Teachers incorporate technology into lessons by allowing students to research and create. Students use Google to present and share their work with other students and the teacher.

When the PLC determines, based on data, that students need more support to be successful it is brought up to the Multi-tiered Systems of Support Team (MTSS). Through this system we analyze data for each student that we feel may need extra support. The team uses a problem solving approach. The team places the student in a tier II or III intervention designed to meet their needs.

School-wide, approximately 15-20% of our student may need tier II supports. Tier II support is based on skills that students may not have mastered in the tier I instruction. In the primary grades, tier II reading support is an hour block 2-4 times a week that supports all areas of our literacy instruction with a focus on essential skills that student have not mastered. Students rotate through essential skills groups that may include word work, familiar text, unfamiliar text, and writing. Student progress is continually monitored to determine success. In our intermediate grades, tier II reading is twice a week with a focus on skills in targeted groups. In math tier II students are pulled into skills groups 2-3 times a week for 30 minutes, based on progress toward current skills that are being taught.

On an average annually, 1%-5% of our student population will require tier III supports. Interventions at tier III are intense in nature and do not replace tier I or II but instead layer another level of support. These interventions are 20-30 minutes daily. The MTSS team works with the classroom teacher to look at data to determine need. The students are placed into research based interventions and progress monitored weekly to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention to math the need. Some examples of interventions used at tier III are: Reading Recovery, Do the Math, Connected Math, Comprehensive Intervention Model (CIM), Road to Code, Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI), and Touch Math.

According to our end of the year state test, Kentucky Performance Rating for Educational Progress (K-PREP) Assessment the two groups that show an achievement gap are the economically disadvantaged and Hispanic groups. Using our Kagan structures, intentionally interventions, community partnerships, and technology, we continue to narrow the gap between all students and our gap students.

In order to continue to be a high performing school, we are dedicated to empowering our teachers to continue learning. This coming summer administration along with six teachers will be attending the Kagan Summer Institute to continue our knowledge. In addition, six of our staff members will be attending Kagan Structures for Little Ones. Further, all of our classroom teachers will be attending a one day literacy training that supports our adopted Jan Richardson structures. Additionally, staff will attend science, behavior, and

writing professional learning. We have a structure in place to learn from others. We will continue to provide students with the best quality instruction while continuing to learn.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

When you walk into a classroom, you will see students in team. They have created an identify by giving themselves a name and a team "cheer". Some teachers create special handshakes for students others attend ballgames and social events. Teachers and staff believe that not only are we a community, we must operate as one. Kagan provides a structure for team building and class building. This is especially important for our economically challenged and Hispanic students. Kagan structures provide a "safe" environment where they can be free to share ideas and express their thoughts. Teachers use this structure and others they have created to build a strong relationship with each child. This relationship is what motivates students to want to come to school and do their very best. They are part of a whole. As a school we feel that the benefits and structures of Kagan are important to all of our students and their success academically and socially.

One way that we create a positive culture is by creating an environment where students are taught to be safe, respectful, and responsible. Our Positive Behavior Intervention and Support System (PBIS) is structured to empower students. Students are taught "The Wildcat Way" which is our PBIS system. The key to an effective PBIS system is being creating a positive climate. We recently had an external audit through the University of Louisville looking at our PBIS. We were proud of the results of 16:1 positives. A component of our PBIS is behavior intervention. If a child struggles with PBIS the guidance counselor, school psychologist or administration will create social groups to reteach behaviors. These groups meet as needed to help students be successful. This year we have had a group who struggled with taking responsibly and also a good who worked on being respectful.

Leadership believes that teachers are the experts in their classroom. All teachers are part of a PLC where they can share information with their peers on how to improve student learning. In addition, we have academic committees that are led by experts in the building. Teachers feel valued when they can learn from peers. As a staff, we create out goals for the year. We align our professional planning to those goals. The teachers are part of the process. Additionally, teachers have a voice in new curriculum and district pacing guides.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Parent involvement can mean different things to each family. No matter what the activity, positive parent involvement can make a dramatic difference in a child's success. In our school, we are fortunate to have a climate that promotes involvement. During the 2015-2016 school year, our parents logged 2996 hours of volunteer time. However, even with these numbers we would like to have more. Here are some strategies that we have used to engage parent and families in our building.

"Take-Home Tote" - This organizational tool provides each k-2 student with a tote bag to organize homework. In this tote, each student receives at least one book that is on his/her reading level. This provides appropriate reading material to many homes that may otherwise not have books, and inform the parent of their child's reading level. Parents are encouraged to read with their child.

Avanza Tutoring - A local church has partnered with us to provide tutoring for our Hispanic families. The language barrier can add difficulty in reaching these families. For this reason, our school partners with a local church to provide an after school tutoring program titled "Avanza". Each week 47+ students are bused to a local church to work with 20 community volunteers on homework, reading, and math skills for 2 hours. Many of our Hispanic parents do not speak English and find it extremely difficult to assist with homework. Avanza is essential to bridge this gap.

Watch D.O.G.S (Dads of Great Students) - This national program invites fathers or father figures to volunteer at their child's school. The program is overseen by our guidance counselor who coordinates scheduling and identifies opportunities for WatchDOGS to a positive role model during the day. WatchDOG dads and volunteers perform a variety of tasks during their volunteer day including welcoming

students, monitoring the lunch room, and helping in the classroom with small groups of students on classwork.

Family Nights - We offer literacy night, Hispanic nights, Book Fair Family Night, Parent Universities, WatchDOGS Nights, and parent conferences. We communicate with parents through a one-call system, Facebook, paper and electronic newsletters and phone calls.

PTO - Our PTO organizes events to increase parental involvement. Some including a back to school ice cream social, 5K Trick or Trot, Fall Festival, and the entrepreneurial fair and chili cook off.

3. Professional Development:

Each spring, teachers and administrators reflect on our academic achievement and create a school improvement plan. Part of the plan is analyzing data to determine areas of focus for the upcoming school year. The areas of focus drive the professional development (PD) plan for the upcoming school year. This year our plan focused on literacy and creating a more engaging classroom to meet the needs of our Hispanic and economically challenged students. After creating our school improvement plan and aligning our professional development plan, administration meets with the curriculum and instruction department (C&I) at the district level and shares the school improvement vision. The C & I department partners with our school and schedules sessions for the "Best Practice Academy". The Best Practice Academy is a two week long academy of professional learning that is intended to align with the district and schools' professional development plan. One week is scheduled at the beginning of summer and one at the end of summer. Each teacher is required to complete 30 hours of professional learning during the school year aligned with the school areas of focus and aligned with their personal growth plan. Even with intentional planning there are areas that are not easy to accommodate during Best Practice Academy. Our non-core areas attend sessions on engagement during Best Practice but then are given the opportunity to seek out and attend sessions during the school year that are more aligned with their content areas. Each year our music teacher attend the Orff conference and our library media specialist attends the annual technology conference. The sessions our visual arts teacher and physical education teacher attends vary from year to year but we seek to find sessions that meet their individual needs.

In addition to our non-core areas, we encourage teachers to seek out PD if there is an area of need that we see after the school year begins. We believe that if we spend PD monies on learning that it should impact the entire staff. After a teacher attends a PD session, we ask that teacher to present an overview of their information to the staff in 2-6 mini sessions after school. We are in the process of empowering teachers in the building to become content specialist in order to train and model for our new staff members. This will create teacher leaders and offer a support base.

4. School Leadership:

The principal at Hunteartown believes in a shared leadership approach. Although she sees herself as an academic leaders, she knows that staff in her building may have expert knowledge in areas that she does not. Her goals is to create a community of lifelong learners who are not followers but rather leaders. She strongly believes that you must have high morals and encourage positive relationships, respect, professional growth, and strong work ethic. She begins by focusing on each staff members' strength. When focusing on strengths of the staff, each individual is free to push themselves to become a leader in that area.

The administrative dean works hands on with teachers in the classroom. She attends grade level Professional Learning Communities (PLC) weekly and provides input on instructional practice, curriculum ideas, and engagement strategies. She goes into classrooms and models strategies for teachers and assists with creation of assessments. In addition she works closely with other administrative deans and the district to ensure that our teachers have all the materials and information they need to be successful.

Our Family Resource coordinator works with the community to assist the school with building relationships with our economically disadvantaged families and our Hispanic families. She supports the families with basic needs but also initiates programs that bring the families into the school. This year she

collaborated to host two Hispanic family nights. She partners with a local church to provide tutoring for Hispanic families. She also hosts fun nights like books and blankets where families work together to create a blanket.

Kentucky requires all school to have a Site Base Decision Making Council. This council is made up of three teachers, two parents and the principal. This council creates policies and procedures for the school and reports back to the school and community. Some of the policies that they oversee are curriculum, scheduling, discipline, assessment, and budget. The council meets monthly and ensures that our policies are followed and revised as necessary. The council is responsible for looking at the budget to ensure that funding is allocated for resources that support the school-wide focus. They are diligent about ensure that resources are focused on student achievement. The principal must report to the council monthly on programs, resources, activities happening in school and data. The council makes suggestions to areas that need to be more of a focus based on data.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Eight years ago when I became the principal of Huntertown I was welcomed by an amazing staff, but a school that had flat-lined academically for five years. After observing and talking with key individuals I realized the weakness was not in the staff but in their lack of a structure to be successful. Although many things play into Huntertown's success, I believe that the main one that helped empower teachers to be the best they could be is the PLC (Professional Learning Community) process.

The PLC process is the structure in our building that ensures that children learn. Four years ago, our staff was trained in the PLC process by Rick Dufour. The process is built around asking four crucial questions.

What are students expected to learn? Teachers began to meet to look at the Kentucky standards and pacing guides. Teachers wrote out essential standards and decided how the standards would be taught. They then created the assessment to measure the essential standard. Creating the assessment first gave a framework for creating effective lessons because the target was already set. After this step, each teacher plans their lesson to fit their personality and teaching style.

How will we know they are learning? After the essential standard is taught, teachers bring the data back to PLCs and analyze it with their peers. This step has led to some powerful conversations and changes in teaching strategies and authentic conversations around effective lessons.

How will we respond when they don't learn? This is the intervention step. After teachers look at their data, they determine what students need extra support and bring it to our lead intervention team. It can mean a whole group teach or targeted interventions with groups or individuals.

How will we respond if they already know it? When we meet together and identify students as a PLC who already know the essential skills, we are able to meet their needs through peer tutoring, extension activities, technology like Khan Academy, and independent studies. Before we began the PLC process this group was unidentified.

Through the PLC process the focus is on students' learning. It requires transparency with your peers but the pay off is amazing. PLCs have empowered teachers to own their data. It has been an enlightening journey that has moved our school forward.