

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):
- 19 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 9 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 4 High schools
 - 1 K-12 schools
- 33 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	10	21
K	26	12	38
1	24	13	37
2	19	29	48
3	21	24	45
4	27	28	55
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	128	116	244

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 28 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 % Asian
 - 5 % Black or African American
 - 2 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 65 % White
 - 0 % 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: 19%

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

We live in a community of bayous in which in-laws might live on a different bayou than the other half of a family. Many of our young parents live with their parents and move between their own parents and spouse's parents. This results in students moving from one bayou school to another. Also, we have many migrant working families who move from one bayou to another to find work.

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	19
(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)]	51
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	275
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.19
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	19

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %
2 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 50 %
Total number students who qualify: 123

8. Students receiving special education services: 12 %
29 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>0</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>1</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>10</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>3</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>12</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>1</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 2
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	11
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	6
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	4
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

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

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

Required Information	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013
Daily student attendance	94%	95%	95%	95%	94%
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.

Montegut Elementary School has adopted a growth mindset for our students, faculty, and stakeholders. We will use our past performance data to grow student knowledge and achievement so that student learning can reach its maximum level for all students. We will employ a standards-based curriculum to focus on continued growth for all students, as well as high behavioral expectations, in order to prepare them for the next stage in the journey to college and career readiness.

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

Montegut Elementary School (MES) is a 103 year old school on the National Register of Historic Places. Current teachers, students, and their parents can tell stories of when their grandparents and great-grandparents attended the school. The family names you hear at the school sound like a roll call from French settlements: Chauvin, Boudreaux, LeBoeuf, Theriot, Champagne, and Peltier, to name a few. Seafood, cattle, and sugarcane are important local resources and many students grow up knowing how to paddle pirogues, build duck blinds, and bait fishing lines.

The school is lucky! The school is in very close proximity to the Gulf of Mexico on beautiful Bayou Terrebonne. It is the southernmost school in Terrebonne Parish and one of the southernmost schools in the state of Louisiana. The school's proximity to the Gulf of Mexico has made it vulnerable to many hurricanes throughout its 103 years. While the community has seen extensive damage, the school has only suffered minor damage and remained open for the education of the community children.

Originally, the school housed grades 1 through 8 with nine classrooms and no air conditioning for the muggy climate and fireplaces for heat in the short winters. The school is built on support columns that originally raised it approximately 9 feet off the ground. Families tell stories of when the area under the school was open and used as a covered space for community events and roller skating. Eventually, the bottom of the school was enclosed to create more classroom space that included a cafeteria, an indoor breezeway space for students to stay dry on rainy days, and girls and boys restrooms. Today, we are a PreK through grade 4 school with two homeroom classes at each grade level. Since the original building, electric air conditioning has been added along with gas heaters, though they are rarely used.

This historic building now houses a modern school in which teachers use the latest technology and evidence based strategies such as alternative seating to engage students in important learning. Teachers communicate with parents in person, on paper, and with modern electronic means of communication such as apps and social media. During a recent walkthrough from district supervisors, the students were described as the most engaged elementary population in the district. Students feel supported and work hard to achieve success. Students, teachers, and school leaders focus on developing a growth mindset that focuses on what's next and recognizes that everyone can continue to learn and grow regardless of their current performance. Parents feel welcome to engage in the work of the school to support their children and other students in the school. The school is an integral part of the community, and the community is an integral part of the school.

School leaders strive daily to ensure that all teachers have the highest quality resources and instructional skills necessary to teach students. There is very little teacher turnover in the school which makes it possible to develop highly effective teachers. Walkthroughs conducted by school leaders provide teachers with frequent feedback. School leaders and teachers examine student data and investigate evidence-based strategies that can become effective school initiatives. They search out technology and resources necessary to develop core curriculum and student supports that reach and teach all students. This climate of continued growth for school leaders and teachers models growth mindset for students.

Students at MES grow academically through standards aligned core instruction. Teachers work to develop their own effectiveness through professional development activities, Professional Learning Communities, and collaboration with other teachers. Students receive individualized education through the Cubs Grow Time (Response to Intervention program) and MES Tutoring days which target gaps and grow knowledge at every tier from the highest performing students to the most at-risk. Students grow emotionally through a focus on growth that teaches them that they can improve and learn regardless of where they are today. If there is something they cannot do, it is because they cannot do it yet, and if they have learned all there is for their grade, there is always the next level to conquer. This gives them a sense of hope for their future and helps them to set goals for which they strive.

Students grow socially through participation in the Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS) plan as they earn rewards for making positive social choices as part of the PBIS reward system. Students participate in clubs that build social and academic skills such as the Garden Club and 4H. Students

participate in community activities that occur at school such as the MES Fall Festival or Spring Field Day to which families and community members are invited. Students are encouraged to participate in cultural programs outside of the school as well such as the children's Mardi Gras Krewe or athletic activities at the neighboring recreation complex.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Montegut Elementary provides students with rigorous standards-aligned assessments and instruction with high-quality curriculum materials that increase student achievement and teacher effectiveness. We believe that choosing a high-quality curriculum is the foremost strategy in providing instruction that leads to mastery and will close gaps in core content areas. Core materials are selected from the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) Tier 1 materials, meeting stringent standards for alignment and quality. Where gaps exist in materials, high-quality supplemental materials are sought and provided. The Louisiana Student Standards (LSS) drive instruction in ELA, math, and science, and Louisiana Standards and Grade Level Expectations drive instruction for social studies.

English Language Arts (ELA) instruction begins with foundational skills, continuing through mastery of reading comprehension and writing skills. PreK through grade 4 teachers are trained on what is appropriate for students at each stage of literacy development. Letter recognition and phonemic awareness instruction are prerequisites to phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency and comprehension. PreK to grade 2 teachers focus on foundational skills to build literate students: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, reading fluency, and reading comprehension. Grade 3 teachers transition from foundational skills to applied reading by increasing reading to gain information, develop understanding, and read for enjoyment. Grade 4 teachers deepen the purpose for reading to apply to debates, projects, and informational research. During each stage, students practice writing at the appropriate developmental stage. PreK - K students begin to scribble and write letters in response to stories. In grades 1 – 2, students begin to create complete sentences and paragraphs in response to text, supporting their writing with information from texts. Students in grades 3 - 4 write with more depth in response to standards-aligned, text-dependent prompts.

Math instruction follows the scope and sequence set by LDOE and LSS. Teachers use the Eureka program which is strongly aligned to Louisiana State Standards. Math instruction incorporates the three aspects of rigor so that students gain conceptual understanding, build fluency and procedural knowledge, and apply math to real-life math exercises. Students practice with fluency exercises, application problems, conceptual understanding instruction, and procedural skills daily. Teachers build conceptual understanding through representations and explanations: in early grades, students count, add and take away using manipulatives and real life objects and, by grade 4 conceptual understanding involves abstract thinking such as understanding that same fractions are equivalent if the fraction whole was comparable in the first place.

Social studies instruction moves beyond the book to become more personal. Rather than learning facts about history, economics, civics, and geography from books, students use informational sources to learn about the world and society. Students learn about topics such as elections by taking part in one, they learn about economics by in-depth study of the resources in their communities, they learn history by reading actual documents from the times being studied, and they learn geography through digital encounters with places close by and around the world. PreK and K students learn history from the elderly in the community who actually lived it. They visit the local Council on Aging and talk to people who describe how their lives were lived in comparison to how things are now. They participate in our Indian Program to learn hands-on, Native American traditions. We teach students about civic responsibilities such as following the law and caring for the poor in the form of penny drives for a variety of charitable organizations throughout the year. Science instruction has become more experiential, integrating science with technology, engineering, and math, through investigations rather than traditional instruction. The LSS for science are very similar to the Next Generation Science Standards which calls for focus and deeper investigation of fewer topics. These standards are new to Louisiana and to our school. Currently we are learning the best scope and sequence, the best curriculum materials, and new methods to assess student knowledge of these very complex standards.

Our PreK curriculum is driven by the Louisiana Early Learning and Development Standards for birth through age 5. Assessments and curriculum materials are selected from the Tier I Curriculum list and are organized into 5 domains: Approaches to Learning, Cognitive Development and General Knowledge Language and Literacy Development, Physical Well-Being and Motor Development, and Social-Emotional

Development. Student data for students in upper grades shows a higher rate of achievement for those who have been through the 4 year old program at MES.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

MES provides instruction in a number of other areas besides the core areas listed. These include literacy instruction through the school library program, technology instruction, health and PE, character education, and music and visual arts instruction. The music and arts instruction are integrated into core programs and enhance the learning in core classrooms. To encourage this integration, curriculum activities are included in lessons plans such as illustrating pages of a novel where pictures are not included with text. We hold a number of annual events including school programs with musical components, the school art show, and displayed student work that often includes illustrations based on classroom learning.

Our librarian takes an active role in delivering vital literacy instruction as well as providing multi-media instruction that supports students to gather information from text, video, and audio recordings. Every class has an opportunity to visit the library twice a week. The librarian also offers recess hours and many of our students love library so much they are more often found there during recess than they are outside. She is currently in the developing stages of a maker space for our students where they will have opportunities to use recess time to engage in engineering and coding investigations.

The computer lab teacher also integrates art into her technology lessons by teaching students the basic skills of word processing programs and challenging students to draw, cut, paste, and resize to create pictures electronically. She has developed learning targets for students to develop important skills such as keyboarding, using word processing programs, saving and manipulating digital files, and using Google tools. She integrates core subjects into this instruction through careful selection of texts, planning of challenging math activities, integration of social studies topics, and research of science topics using online tools.

To support physical and health education (PE/Health), our PE/Health teacher follows the LDOE grade level expectations for PE and Health. She worked with the computer lab teacher to apply for a Healthy Kids grant to purchase PE equipment and nutritional snacks to encourage students to make healthy lifestyle choices. She works with school leadership to ensure healthy snack alternatives are available for students during snack/ recess periods. Because she was previously a self-contained grade 2 teacher as well as an after-school tutor for other grades, she is able to integrate core content knowledge into PE activities such as counting, multiplication, social studies decision making, and science investigation.

The entire faculty supports character and values education for students. Teachers teach lessons on how students can develop growth mindsets for themselves. They teach lessons on positive character traits and examine with students how these traits “look” in different areas of the school such as the classroom, bus, cafeteria, and restrooms. Teachers teach and model good character traits and using positive values to make decisions that lead to personal success. When students exhibit behaviors that do not agree with these lessons on character and values, teachers remind and reteach students so that the lessons are consistently reinforced. These lessons are reinforced again in PE where the PE teacher provides instruction on character traits and decision making related to social interactions during play. In addition to this instruction, the character and values lessons are reflected in the school’s PBIS plan which rewards students for exhibiting good character traits and for making personal decisions that reflect positive values and growth mindset.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

MES ensures assessment and instruction aligned to the rigor of Louisiana State Standards (LSS). We begin by asking “What is this standard asking students to do?” Then, teachers create or identify assessments or collaborate with other teachers to create aligned assessments common to several schools. Teachers and school leaders have weekly conversations at which each assessment is broken down to determine alignment to the full rigor intended by the standard being assessed. Our school district has created assessment checklists for all core subjects that check alignment and rigor. These checklists give our grade level teams and administrators criteria for alignment around which our conversations center. Because we check assessment alignment first, instructional alignment is discussed and adjusted based on these important

conversations. The principal and instructional coach follow this up with classroom visits and feedback on the alignment of instruction in the classroom.

Because “every test is a reading test,” we push reading practice every chance we get with strategic use of literacy programs. We do not teach programs, but we use programs as important resources in our plan for increasing literacy development. We use Accelerated Reader to set goals for independent reading practice with self-selected books, and we use various sources to provide students with twice a week practice with non-fiction texts. We use STAR Reading data and a Lexile level-set assessment to monitor student growth in reading. We use the Achieve 3000 program to provide high-quality, informational text to students. Use of this program also allows us to monitor student growth in Lexile to gauge college and career readiness in grades 3 and 4.

We use a variety of assessments to gather data and monitor student growth for a complete picture of student results. We use DIBELS and STAR to assess early literacy and reading, and STAR to assess math skills. These are used for both benchmarking and progress monitoring. We use interim assessments from LDOE for math and district assessments for ELA to monitor growth for grades 3 and 4 specific to the LSS. PreK assessment and monitoring is done using TS Gold which is aligned to the Louisiana Early Learning and Development Standards. We use item analysis of classroom tests as formative assessments to determine the effectiveness of our instruction. We carefully examine results of end of year state testing for students in grades 3 and 4 as a measure of the cumulative effectiveness of their education beginning with PreK. Teachers of PreK through grade 2 are just as involved in the study of state assessments results as the teachers of those tested grades.

Cubs Grow Time and, our Response to Interventions program, provide every child with a dedicated time for instruction every day at their challenge level. For students achieving below benchmark scores (Tier 2 and 3 students), teacher-led small group lessons occur daily in which students practice reading and math skills to fill gaps. For average and above average students (Tier 1 students), Cubs Grow Time gives daily opportunities for challenging academic exercises in ELA and math with the support of a facilitating teacher. We have provided students with technology based supports accessible at school and home in the form of game-based instructional software programs supporting foundational ELA skills and math skills. Teachers’ “buy-in” is evident in their use of data from every assessment for ELA and math that allows us to see how students are growing in response to instruction. Teachers even examine behavior data which gives us insight into how the culture and climate serve to engage and encourage students to learn.

In order to close achievement gaps even further, we provide after-school tutoring two days a week for grades 1 through 4. The district provides funding for grades 1 and 4 for all schools. We use our Title 1 funds to provide teachers and transportation for grades 2 and 3 where needed, giving many students a second dose of intervention with a highly-qualified teacher. Our teachers approach instruction for Cubs Grow Time and after-school tutoring with “yes, we will” and “yes, we can” attitudes that foster similar attitudes in students.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Montegut Elementary School creates a climate where students are ready to learn and feel safe, take academic risks, work toward goals, and challenge themselves. We promote positivity for students and teachers built around both intrinsic values and extrinsic motivators. This is exemplified by our work in implementing growth mindset research and our Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS) plan.

We put growth mindset research into practice. Our growth mindset education improves attitudes and learning of students and teachers. Not settling for “good enough” started with the previous principal and has taken on more meaning as teachers and students learn about growth mindsets. Teachers implement strategies to promote growth mindset such as “The Power of Yet” and “Say This, Not That.” You will see growth mindset messages everywhere at MES. When students make statements such as “I didn’t make my goal,” you will very likely hear someone add on the word “yet” or ask them what they plan to do to meet their goal.

Our plan encourages students to make decisions based on adding value and quality to their school experience. We use “Cub Cash” to reward students for behaving in socially acceptable ways, choosing to do “the right thing” for themselves and peers in classrooms, and for participating in activities that lead to academic growth. Students spend “Cub Cash” by selecting from a menu of rewards such as “extra recess” and “eat with a friend.” Teachers ensure they recognize the value this positive behavior adds to the quality of their school experiences. As part of this focus on the value of positive behavior, we encourage good character and good citizenship. We model how this system of both extrinsic rewards and intrinsic values follows into adulthood with a system of teacher incentives. Teachers earn recognition from peers in the form of “Bear Bucks” that they spend for small gifts such as water bottles, fancy pens, and more. We promote positive school activities for students, teachers, parents, and administrators.

We acknowledge that school growth is primarily measured by how students’ progress in four core subjects. However, we recognize that growth for both students and staff is substantially impacted by the climate in which we are all learning. At MES, this is substantially impacted by the cultural characteristics of growth mindset and positive expectations. Providing a school environment that is orderly, supports students and teachers academically and emotionally, and focuses on growth for all is crucial.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Parents in our community are involved with their children’s education and social activities. To take advantage of this strength, we encourage parents to be at school as much as possible. When a parent calls to complain or ask questions, school leaders immediately invite them for a visit. Our Parent Teacher Club (PTC) meets monthly to plan activities and provide feedback to the leadership team. We have at least one teacher and/or one leadership team member attend the PTC meetings to collaborate and plan with parents. The parent workspace allows parents to engage in the work of education in cooperation with teachers. Parents sometimes share lunchtime with students which gives them a window into the social needs and experiences of students. Having parents on campus often gives us another advantage; more adults to model cooperative and socially acceptable behavior for an improved environment conducive to learning.

We engage parents in the learning of children through weekly feedback on behavior and academic performance. We have frequent, in-person contact with parents whose children are struggling. We use technology such as the Remind app, Facebook, and a school website to relay information about events and academic programs in the school. We provide several family learning nights each year to support all parents by providing them with training, strategies, and activities they can do at home to help improve their child’s school experience. This results in improved parental support and attendance for academic programs and activities. For parents who are reluctant to become involved, we believe our growth mindset and continued efforts will engage those who are “not involved yet.” We plan activities as well such as our quarterly school dances and learning nights which everyone finds fun.

We engage other community members by inviting local meteorologists, assistant district attorneys, motivational speakers, disc jockeys, and other community members to share their experiences. We invite high school and college students to engage at our school in the work of teachers, mentors, and positive models for our students, giving our students a deeper understanding for what it takes to have a successful community. We have received financial help and donations from community businesses dedicated to field trips for scientific discovery, teacher appreciation and recognition, and beautification of our school grounds. Asking and allowing community members to help gives them a sense of pride and accomplishment as well as an opportunity to add value back to the community.

3. Professional Development:

Teachers have three professional development (PD) days annually during which we have collaborated with other elementary schools to dive deeply into Louisiana State Student Standards (LSS) and aligned curriculum. During these PD days, teachers and leaders participate in learning sessions in the morning with working sessions in the afternoon to plan implementation. For example, ELA teachers in grades 3 and 4 use the Louisiana Guidebooks 2.0 as their aligned core curriculum. However, they still need supplemental materials for small group instruction. School leaders found that teachers were unsure of where to find text or how to select text for small groups. Teachers have access to a curriculum from a large publisher that is not mandated, but the published curriculum has an abundance of high-quality, fiction and non-fiction text that can be used with students. During one day of PD, teachers learned to access the supplemental materials from the published curriculum, then, collaborated to decide how they could use these resources for aligned, small group instruction.

In addition to PD days, teachers receive training and support during weekly mini-sessions in areas based on district and state mandates, teacher walkthrough data, and teacher requests. Examples include standards-aligned assessments, interventions, state assessment, alignment of instruction, using data to plan instruction, and technology such as Google tools for planning and instruction.

Classroom walkthroughs develop both teacher and leader effectiveness. After each visit, the teacher receives feedback regarding instructional alignment, pacing, student engagement, questioning, and student discussion in a “wows and wonders” format letting the teacher know what is most effective in their instruction and what needs follow-up. Leaders learn strategies from watching a variety of instructional activities during walkthroughs that are passed along when another teacher asks “what do I do when...?” Teachers complete walkthroughs of peers looking for targeted teaching behaviors such as student discourse or informal assessment strategies.

Professional Learning Communities are another powerful tool. Teachers meet twice weekly for sessions to learn from each other and from student data, student work, or other student outcomes. Each Monday, teachers and school leaders review assessments and lesson plans for alignment and rigor. Conversations, centered on standards-alignment and student results, help teachers reflect on instruction that has occurred and will be occurring. Each Wednesday, teams reflect on student data with regards to academics and behavior to plan for struggling students, students achieving above level, and how to accelerate those in the middle.

4. School Leadership:

Before becoming principal at MES, the current principal worked as a Title 1 coordinator, school administrator, and SRCL Grant Project Director at various schools throughout the district. This included working with the prior principal at Montegut Elementary on technology and benchmark assessment initiatives. Upon being named principal at MES, she continued to work with the prior principal to identify initiatives that were positively effecting learning and continue to deepen those initiatives. She took the best strategies and initiatives, learned through her experiences, and applied them at Montegut Elementary. Her knowledge of educational technology helped decisions for updating the technology and practices at the school, leading to effective technology use in improving student outcomes. The principal has a deep knowledge of standards and curriculum for PreK through grade 4 and supports alignment in the classroom

to improve student achievement in core subjects.

The school has an instructional coach who works to improve instruction and student outcomes. The instructional coach plans the school's Cubs Time Intervention and Enrichment Program including benchmarking assessments, intervention and enrichment assignments for students, monitoring the Cubs Grow Time for fidelity, and providing PD and feedback to teachers. She provides instructional coaching through classroom visits and feedback to improve effective instructional techniques. She ensures that teachers have the skills and resources necessary to deliver instruction effectively.

Both of these focus on five characteristics of leadership proven to have positive impact on student achievement. First, promote teacher development by encouraging teachers to continue professional learning. Second, take active part in making sure that curriculum and assessments are aligned to rigorous learning standards set forth by the Louisiana Department of Education. Third, establish school-wide goals, support teachers to write learning targets, and guide students to set personal goals for reading, math, and core subject report card grades. Fourth, look for aligned resources to help teachers meet goals. Last, work to ensure an environment in which students are comfortable, challenged academically, take risks, and grow.

The leadership team fosters a culture of growth and grit for students and teachers. Additional leadership team members are highly effective teachers who have the trust and respect of peer teachers. These team members help to bridge communications between faculty and school administration. They collect issues and topics to be addressed as well as information and suggestions from faculty and staff members. Our leadership team has an unwritten rule: problems must be accompanied by possible solutions that focus on helping students grow academically or socially.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The strategies that lead to academic success at Montegut Elementary have clearly measurable outcomes that can be tied directly back to actions that teachers and students take. These focus mainly on academic outcomes, student academic achievement, and accountability. The major strategies we credit for success are our weekly curriculum and assessment alignment conversations and our Cubs Grow Time for intervention and Enrichment. Other strategies are aimed at soft growth targets such as changing the mindset of students and adults to a growth mindset.

That said, our most important strategy for academic success and for closing learning gaps is our Cubs Grow Time (RTI). Every grade level from PreK through Grade 4 has dedicated time set aside each day during which every student receives intervention or enrichment instruction depending on their needs shown by data. During daily Cubs Grow Time, every student has an assigned teacher and activity that targets their challenge level. For students in need of intervention, Cubs Grow Time means teacher-led, small group instruction for ELA or math. For students achieving at level, Cubs Grow Time challenges them to reach a little further, work a little harder, or think a little deeper with non-fiction texts or math challenge exercises that are facilitated by a teacher or paraprofessional. Students achieving well-above level receive teacher facilitated challenges with material from a future grade level, challenge exercises that combine several skills, or text at 2-3 levels above their grade. In order to achieve this, we work with every available teacher and paraprofessional to ensure that all students receive high-quality learning activities.

We decide these groups based on a close examination of student data, classroom performance, behavior and other pertinent data. We use a system of consistent, continual reassessment of student progress to determine needs. Grade level teams and school leaders work together to ensure that placement is made for each student to the group that will best help that student grow, master, and excel at expected standards. We constantly monitor student data for growth, behavior changes, and teacher effectiveness and make changes as needed. These groups are fluid and if a student is not growing, we will quickly adjust the group, the material, or make another change that will ensure student growth.

The results for students are reflected in their data. Our K through 2nd graders benchmark in the top 5 schools in the district and state end of year test results continue to rise.